

THE PROPHECY

(GOD'S ARMY)

by

Gregory Widen

FIRST DRAFT

"Slippery thing, angels"

--Found on a wall in death row,
San Quentin

With the sound of wind, of sand gritting against glass:

FADE UP ON:

A howling dust storm battering the doors and walls of a tiny woodplank church.

Inside, huddled together against the rage outside, are a small group of people. All in black, mostly elderly, they kneel in prayer.

Before them, on the cramped altar, lies a man. Dressed in the uniform of a general, surrounded by the silk softness of his casket.

He's an old man, far from the crump of battles, consumed now with stillness, listening to the prayers of old people. Of desert wind, moaning through thin wood.

The candle beside his head flickers and wanes in the ceaseless gusts, strains for life, then goes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

It's not the best part of town and probably never was. A place of seedy, anonymous brick flophouses shackled by rusting fire escapes, lying on an alley unique only for its bad drainage. It's here, in the dim, flinty light, that a figure enters.

Wearing a long coat and, despite the night, sunglasses, he pauses on the slimy asphalt and gazes up the sides of the flophouses, to their yellowish windows and competing Mexican radio stations. One window, dark and quiet on the third floor, catches his gaze.

There's a metal hand railing in the alley that the long-coated figure effortlessly pops up onto. Sunglasses focused on the window, he lowers himself into a motionless crouch, a perch, on the railing with the ease of a crow. Or a gargoyle.

DISSOLVE TO:

Dawn is a muddled, limp thing that does nothing to improve the alley. The figure is still there, a motionless gargoyle perched on the railing. Watching the window.

The shadows shorten, the air grows warmer, and now there's movement behind the window.

The sunglassed gargoyle drops down off the railing, jumps up to the first rung of the fire escape, and begins climbing.

BEHIND THE THIRD FLOOR WINDOW

Is a room as grim as we expect. Lumpy iron bed, sink that's been pissed into one too many times, and SIMON; a man in a tight sweater and dark sunglasses, busily emptying his pockets on the ruined dresser: loose change, a town paper's obituary column.

Simon's sunglassed eyes look up suddenly, his body stiffening. He whips around to face the window just as it EXPLODES into fragments.

The gargoyle LEAPS into the room on the trail of glass. Simon spins and THROWS himself against the intruder. The two STRUGGLE savagely across the room, SMASHING chairs.

Simon manages a grip on the gargoyle's face and POUNDS the back of his skull against the wall. The gargoyle gets his locked fists up and SWINGS them like a war club, SMACKING Simon's face and SPRAWLING him backwards onto the bed.

The two, across the room for each other, pause.

GARGOYLE

Where is it?

Simon's climbed to his feet, the two men in sunglasses now walking slow circles around each other.

SIMON

Leave me alone.

GARGOYLE

You've found it, haven't you?

SIMON

Fuck you.

The gargoyle drops his head and DRIVES himself into Simon, who HAMMERS the gargoyle with his fists. Blood SMEARS.

The gargoyle's gotten free a knife that he JAMS into Simon's leg. Pressing home his advantage, the gargoyle SLAMS Simon up against the wall. He TEARS open Simon's shirt, digging his fingers into the chest, RIPPING the skin aside, the fist plunging deep, CRACKING the sternum bone, pushing even further, toward the blood gouged pumping beneath---

--Simon PLOWS his knee up between the gargoyle's legs. Over and over. Till the grip loosens and Simon SHOVES him to one side, using the momentum and drives to SWING the body around and at the shattered window. The gargoyle SMACKS the frame and COLLAPSES, his head CRACKING on the sill and FORCING a shard of glass through his neck.

Simon moves to the window and brushes aside the gargoyle's

sunglasses, revealing two totally empty eye sockets. Pushing his thumbs into them, Simon uses the leverage to lift the gargoyle off the sill and push his body out the window.

The gargoyle bounces once on the fire escape, then spread-eagles thirty feet to the asphalt.

Somebody turns up their Mexcian radio station.

The gargoyle's a wreck.

But he manages, slowly --his shattered remains arguing every inch-- to climb first to his knees, then miserably to his feet. A bent, splattered, hopeless thing that manages to stumble three or four feet before being HIT by a freeway-speed firebird BOMBING down the alley.

The impact PINS the gargoyle to the grill and RAMS him into a brick wall, CRUSHING a chest that BELCHES out a sickly, bruised heart like a wet rag against the firebird's windshield.

THREE FLOORS ABOVE

Simon leans against his splintered window and looks down at the pinned and very finished body of the gargoyle. His own shirt and pants are a mess of torn blood and his breathing is difficult. Pain flashes across his forehead as he checks that his own sunglasses still sit snugly on the bridge of his nose.

At the sound of a distant siren Simon turns and quickly finishes packing his duffle bag. Stiffly pulling on an oversize surplus army jacket that partly conceals the damage beneath, he picks up the bag and painfully shuffles out.

DISSOLVE TO:

The gargoyle, still pinned to the wall by the firebird.

A FLASH bounces off his skin. Then another. He's being photographed. Go wide and find him in the middle of a police investigation. Bored blue uniforms, yellow barrier tape. The usual.

A plain jane sedan pulls up and deposits THOMAS DAGGET, thirties, tweed coat and steel notebook. He smiles at a couple of cops, ducks under the yellow barrier, and nods a greeting to an older uniform sergeant, BURROWS.

THOMAS DAGGET

Hey.

BURROWS

Hey.

THOMAS

(looks up at sky)

Thought those clouds this morning spelled rain for sure, but it's turned into a beautiful day, wouldn't you say, Sergeant Burrows?

Thomas takes a deep, healthy breath. Burrows just stares at him.

BURROWS

I warned you about that cheerful shit.

THOMAS

Sorry. I'm working on it.

He eyes finally make their way to the gargoyle.

THOMAS

What's the word?

BURROWS

Friend here did a half-gainer with a firebird tuck from the third floor.

THOMAS

Jumper?

BURROWS

Not unless he decided not to bother opening the window first.

THOMAS

Drugs? Alcohol?

BURROWS —

Well, he wasn't exactly in a condition to walk a chalk line when we got here. You're welcome to try and smell his breath if you like, that is if you can find the mouth.

THOMAS

Ghouls been by?

BURROWS

On their way. Willie promises a white paper tomorrow. Or Wednesday, depending on his golf game.

THOMAS

Firebird driver?

Burrows nods in the direction of a very shook up young man sitting on the curb.

BURROWS

Mr. Jiminez. Was taking a short cut to his job at a packing plant on San Pedro. First thing he remembers about the deceased is several vital organs bouncing off his windshield.

THOMAS

Have you had him walk a chalk line?

BURROWS

He's straight. Shook up some.

THOMAS

(looking at gargoyle)
Anything on him?

BURROWS

No wallet, license, nothing. He is missing one or two things, though.

THOMAS

Like?

BURROWS

His eyes.

THOMAS

(looking at tangled mess)
Along with everything else.

BURROWS

We've found everything else --and what fun that was, let me tell you-- but the eyes are still AWOL. Might just be stuck in the radiator grill. Little weird though.

THOMAS

What?

BURROWS

Both popping out together like that. Worth a page in my scrapbook.

INT. FLOPHOUSE

Burrows and Thomas coming up the stairs.

THOMAS

Who's the room registered under?

BURROWS

John Smith.

THOMAS

Anything interesting inside?

BURROWS

There are, what an intelligent, experienced detective like yourself could possibly construe as signs of a struggle.

They enter the room, which is, of course, totally trashed. Thomas steps over the splintered furniture.

BURROWS

Naturally nobody saw or heard anything.

THOMAS

In such a fine establishment as this?

Thomas looks at the splashes of blood, overturned dressers, a newspaper, the "Chimney Rock Republican"; one name in its obit section circled.

Burrows sighs and checks his watch.

BURROWS

Ku San's on fourteenth is still open for another hour. Whatd'ya say we pull out the 'ol "SUICIDE" rubber stamp and get some lunch. Rancid chow mein and watered beer for under three bucks.

THOMAS

(looking at floor)

There's glass in the carpet.

BURROWS

That usually happens when you break a window.

THOMAS

It's on the inside.

Amongst the glass fragments at Thomas' feet is a pair of dark sunglasses. He picks them up, taps them in his palm, and looks out the window down to the man with no eyes, pinched between brick and chrome.

THOMAS

Where's Chimney Rock?

BURROWS

Arizona desert, I think. Which is exactly where I'm going to be in two years, three months.

THOMAS

And give up all this?

BURROWS

You're breaking my heart.

DISSOLVE SLOWLY TO:

The sun sinking beneath the horizon of a vast and undulating expanse of desert.

Travel through the landscape as the sky purples and darkens and silhouettes tall, finger-like spires of volcanic rock. Hear the coyotes, the wind making its constant, probing search. Before the night swallows it all whole,

Come upon The Town.

It used to be something. But that's long gone. Now, wrapped in the sucking blackness of a wilderness night, it's a shell of a place.

Lights still burn in some of the windows but fool no one. The ghosts are the majority here. Biding their time. Waiting for The Town to surrender and slip beneath the waves of the desert.

The wind slinks over the hills, creeps down past boarded-up storefronts, skeletal ocitillo, and the rusting hulks of abandoned mining equipment. The corpse of a summer's kite twists slowly on a power line.

ON THE EDGE OF TOWN

From the inky oblivion of the road, comes a crunch of gravel.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN

Stands a large, nineteenth century-brick schoolhouse. An icon from a more prosperous past, its dark massiveness was meant for scores of ruddy-faced miner's kids. Now it seems to be imploding, eating itself with creeping decay. On this night it is silent and dark but for a small glow in one corner and the faint sound of children's voices in song.

It is a hymn. An ancient, Latin one. The meloncholy beauty of voices rising and falling in choir.

INSIDE THE BUILDING

Is a school auditorium. On the stage, dwarfed by it, are twenty five students from first grade to high school, singing together as a choir. A young woman, KATHERINE, directs their acapella voices as the small group of parents, lonely in the huge room, look on.

OUTSIDE

The voices drift on the night, down the road, and lap against the peeling facade of a storefront. A mortuary.

INSIDE

The rooms are dark but for one. There, bathed in the flickering light of a tall candle, lies the body of the old general we saw at the opening.

THE FRONT DOOR

Of the mortuary has a locked handle that jiggles from outside. A small panes of glass beside it is BROKEN by a hand.

IN THE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

Young voices struggle with the complicated hymn and its pain of centuries. Faces white, Mexican, Navaho. Katherine guides them with soft hands. She smiles in pride. They smile back. Proud. Of her. Of themselves and the beauty coming from their mouths.

One small, beautiful navaho girl, MARY, maybe eight, gets a special smile of special friendship from Katherine.

THE MORTUARY'S

Front door now stands ajar in the darkness. Small shards of glass glisten in the carpet.

INSIDE

Is the dead General. Even in the bleached ravages of age and death, his face still holds a shadow of vigor and pride.

It takes a moment in the weak flicker of the candle to realize someone is there with him. Simon in his oversized surplus jacket. His arms are folded tightly across his middle, as if in deep cold. But his gaunt face is moist with sweat and his breath is shallow and uneven. He stares at the old man behind sunglasses and takes slow, cautious steps forward into the amber glow.

Holding out two blood-stained fingers, Simon touches the General's forehead. A new strain crosses his perspiring face. Concentration.

Placing his right palm on the General's chin and the left on his forehead, Simon CRACKS OPEN the dead man's mouth.

IN THE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

The hymn is reaching its aching climax of mideval longing.

IN THE MORTUARY

Simon leans down to the open mouth, and in a voice soft and deeply weary,

SIMON

Qui ex Patre Flioque procedit...

Then, with the school choir distant and faint in the night, the living man places his mouth over that of the dead man...

IN THE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

It's coffee and cake now as parents proudly hug their children and congratulate their young teacher. Even in this gloomy, crumbling building it's a warm, small town moment.

OUTSIDE

Simon has left the mortuary and now limps with difficulty through the silent streets, leaning against shop walls for support.

AT THE SCHOOL BUILDING

Through the doors out steps the eight year old Navaho girl, Mary. Alone, she stands on the stone stairs and looks out into the night with sensitive eyes. She concentrates. Knows.

Katherine follows her out.

KATHERINE

Hey bright eyes, what's the deal being out here all alone without a coat?

The girl's eyes seem too serious for a child's. Too perceptive.

MARY

Someone's here.

Katherine looks out into the night.

KATHERINE

Where?

Mary stares a moment longer, then becomes a child again, smiling and popping Katherine one on the arm.

MARY

Pig out on all the cake?

KATHERINE

Oh, there might be one, tiny, skinny piece left, but you're gonna have to race me for it.

Mary suddenly points past Katherine's shoulder.

MARY

What's that?

When Katherine turns Mary dashes back into the building.

MARY

Ha!

KATHERINE

You little sneak!

Katherine chases after her.

AT THAT MOMENT

Simon comes limping up from the road. His breathing's bad now as he moves stiffly along the school's brick walls, coming to an old, rusty back door he creaks open and slides through.

INSIDE

He climbs a littered and disused staircase, past broken beer bottles and condom wrappers to a dark and creaky second floor.

It's part of the school building long abandoned. Doors to classrooms lie half off their hinges, windows are broken, rats squeak between ancient desks stacked like funeral pyres.

Simon, his breath echoing in the cold darkness, shuffles along the broken linolium till he comes to a rectangle cut in the wall where a row of lockers used to be. He crawls into the space and there, surrounded by rot, curls up on himself and sucks his thumb.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT

Thomas Dagget's eyes opening slowly. He sits up in his bed, runs a hand through his hair, and looks out with only medium enthusiasm at the morning.

INT. CHURCH

Thomas lights an offering candle and kneels for a brief, silent prayer. He crosses himself, stands, and walks for the door. Before leaving he glances back at the altar. A questioning moment between two akward, estranged friends.

INT. POLICE CENTER

Thomas sits at his desk half-heartily trying to make sense of the

three dozen files piled there. Lt. Paul, his boss, leans against a wall nearby.

LT.

How's it going?

THOMAS

I was just looking for my "SUICIDE" rubber stamp.

LT.

Sorry about leaving you without a partner. Everything's up in the air till the commission settles their manpower budget.

THOMAS

I'm okay.

(his phone rings)

Dagget...It's done already?

(smiles)

Must have rained over the golf course this morning. I'll be right over.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE

A set of golf clubs rest forelornly in the corner. An irritable looking coroner fumes behind his desk as Thomas enters.

THOMAS

Hey, Willie, sorry to hear about the weather.

The coroner just stares at him.

THOMAS

Should I bother sitting?

CORONER

Sit.

Thomas obeys as the coroner spreads out a stack of white sheets.

CORONER

Where would you like me to start?

THOMAS

I think we can skip the cause of death.

CORONER

All right. To begin with, your man has no eyes.

THOMAS

Weren't stuck in the radiator grill?

CORONER

No, he never had any eyes. We checked the sockets. There's no optic nerve, muscle pores, loose viscus, nothing.

THOMAS

Huh.

CORONER

We also did a toxicology on his blood: High sodium, elevated selenium, no floating cholestrol platelets, trace amonia.

THOMAS

Something wrong with that?

CORONER

No, it's actually pretty common --for an aborted fetus.

THOMAS

(rubs eyes)

I should have listened to Burrows...

CORONER

We also did a bone section. Wasn't that much trouble since most of them were sticking out of his chest anyway.

THOMAS

And?

CORONER

When babies grow up their bones get larger by adding calcium layers over the interior haversham canals. Child growth isn't uniform though, comes in spurts that always leave growth rings in the bone. Everybody has them --except your man. That would, to a hasty observer, seem to indicate he had never been a child.

THOMAS

I assume you, a cautious and learned observer, of course have an explanation.

CORONER

Not even remotely. Want to hear the last one?

THOMAS

Not even remotely.

CORONER

He's a hermaphrodite.

(Thomas stares at him)

-Has both male and female sex organs.

THOMAS

Think of the possibilities.

CORONER

Yeah, you can be impotent and frigid all at the same time --they don't normally work.

Thomas sighs and climbs to his feet.

THOMAS

Well, I'd love to say thank you, but--

CORONER

Oh, I also have a bonus prize for you.

The coroner opens his desk and pulls out a small, ancient looking leather bound book.

CORONER

Found this sealed in his coat lining.

Thomas turns it over in his hand.

THOMAS

It's a bible.

CORONER

A pretty old one, I think.

Thomas runs his finger across the gold-leaf cover.

CORONER

We checked it out inside. Thought there might be a name or fingerprint somewhere. All we found was a curled page marking the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Revelations.

THOMAS

There is no fourteenth chapter to Revelations.

CORONER

Maybe this is the teacher's edition.

Thomas opens the bible and there it is, in Latin, the fourteenth chapter.

THOMAS

Can I keep this awhile?

CORONER

Sure.

THOMAS

(beat)

Can you sit on all this a few days, Willie?
Not circulate the file? I need some time
before all the questions start.

CORONER

Oooh, are we breaking the rules again?

THOMAS

So what else is new?

INT. POLICE OFFICE

Thomas at his desk, working under a lone gooseneck lamp. He's translating the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Revelations from Latin onto a slip of paper. Finished, he sets the ancient bible down, turns off the gooseneck, and leans back in his chair, alone in the dark.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERT - EARLY MORNING

Here, outside The Town, horizons are distant, faraway things. The sky overhead is streaked red and blue with barely morning as the screen door of a simple stucco house swings open. It's Katherine, the teacher. Wearing levis and boots, she carries a saddle swung over one denim shoulder out to a corral behind the house where a horse shuffles and winnies impatiently.

KATHERINE

In a minute, in a minute...

Katherine throws the saddle over the horse and cinches it down as the sun, still tucked behind pink and grey cliffs, begins to heat up the sky.

EXT. SANDSTONE CANYON - MORNING

Deep and narrow, an idyllic canyon of compressed sandstone walls smoothed, rounded and etched by centuries of wind. A tiny creek flows past weak banks of scrub pine and pocked sycamore. A silent place a long way and a long time from anything but the approach of galloping hooves.

Katherine and her horse run full-out through the canyon, the clack and splash of hooves echoing off steep, shadowed walls. Horse and rider drive each other harder and harder, their hot breath brief clouds in the arch, thin desert air.

Boulders shattered by winter cold and summer heat, deep wind-cut caves hiding scorpions, sidewinders, or a wary mountain lion all pass as in a blur; arrogant hawks and patient buzzards, ruins of thousand year old Anasazi villages high on the cliffs, their weather-beaten skulls, seen and unseen, staring out; everything is one smear of color and smell as Katherine gallops past them and up the cliff trail, out of the canyon, and onto the main plateau.

ON THE PLATEAU

Katherine strokes her horse and feeds it a bag of carrots. She pulls a thermos from the pack, sits down against some old man rocks, and with the coffee steaming in her hand, greets the sun now cresting the Chuska Mountains.

There's a rutted, silty dirt road nearby. An ancient, battered school bus rattles its way past and stops. The bus driver, a Navaho, JOHN, climbs down and rubbing the side of his head painfully walks up to Katherine.

JOHN

You could save my life with some coffee.

He holds out an empty cup Katherine fills. Sipping painfully, he lays down beside her and pulls the brim of his baseball cap over his eyes.

KATHERINE

Tough night?

JOHN

You don't want to hear about it.
(peeks out hopefully)
Or maybe you do.

KATHERINE

No thanks.

JOHN

Just checking.

The bus is full of young school kids.

KATHERINE

Shouldn't they be getting to school?

JOHN

Impromptu field trip. I'm broadening their minds. And sparing them the sight of their beloved chauffeur barfing his guts out.

Katherine's horse snorts.

JOHN

I hate horses. How was the canyon? Honey-suckle out yet?

KATHERINE

Didn't see any.

JOHN

I hate that canyon. I hate this this whole plateau. Too many goddamn ghosts. Leave it to them I say. San Diego, that's where I'm going. Or Oxnard. I like the sound of that. Ox-nard.

KATHERINE

I'm happy here.

JOHN

Oh lord protect us, another romantic pale face in love with the desert.

KATHERINE

Just got to give it a chance.

JOHN

Try growing up here.
(tries word out on tongue)
Ox-nard.

(sticks out coffee cup)

Uno mas, see-boo-play.

(she pours)

Speaking of romantic pale faces, the rumor mill is in high gear again.

KATHERINE-

Who this time?

JOHN

That funny looking guy from Window Rock. The BIA lawyer.

KATHERINE

(non-committal)

Huh.

JOHN

No! Say it isn't so!

KATHERINE

It isn't so.

JOHN

Thank you.

He finishes the coffee and climbs painfully to his feet.

JOHN
Thanks for the joe.

KATHERINE
No prob.

JOHN
You're a credit to the community.

He shuffles back to the bus.

JOHN
All right children, looks sharp! This
is a school day! And no talking loud!

The bus coughs alive and crawls forward. Katherine waves to the faces behind glass, then settles back for a last moment of peace as silence lays again over the land.

EXT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Showered and changed into her teaching clothes, Katherine climbs into a rattling pickup.

EXT. THE TOWN

Katherine drives to work, passing on the outskirts the closed copper mine, vast and abandoned. Down beyond the fading main street lies the great crumbling brick pile that is the school. Katherine parks her truck, grabs her leather bag, and walks in.

DISSOLVE TO:

Katherine's lecturing her students. All twenty-five of them. There's high school age sons of white ranchers, Navaho girls on the edge of puberty, tiny Mexican children. All being taught together in one room.

It's dinosaur day. Katherine has a large fossilized bone on her lap.

KATHERINE
This is "Camposaurus". Camposaurus was a herbavore, which meant he only ate plants. Camposaur stayed mostly to himself and never bothered anyone.

The little girls smile. They like Camposaurus. Katherine holds up another bone fragment.

KATHERINE
This is a leg fragment that belongs to the killer of the plateau, Alosaurus. Alosaurus was a vicious carnivore, which
(cont'd)

KATHERINE (cont'd)
 meant he'd eat anything that moved,
 espicially nice, juicy Camosaurs.

The little boys grin. They like Alosaurus.

KATHERINE
 Both these guys lived together right here
 on the White Rock plateau eighty million
 years ago, when this area used to be on the
 banks of a huge, shallow sea. Remember how
 we talked about how sedimentation fossilizes
 bones? That's also what made the hills out
 behind our town and put the copper in the
 ground.

HIGH SCHOOL KID
 Lot of good that did us.

Katherine lifts off the desk an ancient 1950s gieger counter and
 switches it on. It ticks softly when she points it at the dino bone.

BOY
 It's radioactive! Like Godzilla!

KATHERINE
 Just a tiny bit, Alex. Do you know why?
 Uranium, that's the rock they use in
 nuclear power plants--

BOY
 And bombs!

KATHERINE
 And bombs Alex, yes, is all through these
 hills naturally. Millions of years ago
 the dinosaurs here ate plants and drank
 water which had uranium in it that became
 concentrated in their bones, which is exactly
 how, with Mr. Geiger counter here, we're
 going to find some.

The class CHEERS.

EXT. HILL- DAY

With the brick schoolhouse tiny in the backround, Katherine's
 class trudges its way up the barren, rocky hillside behind the
 town. The teenage rancher's kids try to make time with the
 Mexican girls One of the little boys has gotten into a shoving
 match with a little girl.

KATHERINE
 (coming between them)
 -Hey. Come on. What's the deal, Brian?

The girl folds her arms defiantly. The boy is pissed, embarrassed.

BRIAN

She...

KATHERINE

Yes?

BRIAN

...She, she called me a "Dick Head".

KATHERINE

Sandra?

SANDRA

Well, he is.

KATHERINE

All right, Brian. You get one free insult.
Make it good.

Brian concentrates.

PAUL

You...You're a...Cow Demon!

KATHERINE

(beat)

Uh...Okay. Everybody satisfied?
(looks at Brian)

Cow Demon?

UP ON THE HILL

Katherine's given the geiger counter to the little Navaho girl, Mary. Focusing grimly on the rock in front of her, Mary guides the detector over the stones till suddenly it begins clicking softly.

MARY

I got one! I got one!

The high school kids come up and help dig.

KATHERINE

Easy...Easy...Don't break it.

Almost immediately, an eye socket appears in the dust.

As the students carefully brush away the dust, Katherine looks back across the crumbly path. A coyote has crept up onto a near ledge. It just stands there. Watching her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BIG CITY CHURCH

It's mostly empty at this time of day and the young man sitting in the pew, staring at the altar, is alone. His name is GABRIEL and he wears jeans, a faded leather jacket, and dark sunglasses, even inside. His thin hair is slicked back and there's an almost feminine quality about him.

He sits there a moment longer, staring, then gets up and leaves.

EXT. DOWNTOWN ALLEY

The alley from the beginning. Gabriel pulls his old, convertible rambler to a stop and walks into the flophouse.

INT. FLOPHOUSE

He comes upstairs to the landing, where the door to the room is covered with a strip of yellow tape: POLICE INVESTIGATION. DO NOT ENTER.

Gabriel pulls the tape aside and KICKS the door open.

INSIDE

It's still the disaster we remember. Gabriel walks slowly through the room. He scratches up some blood, tastes it.

There's spray-painted outlines where the police have removed certain items. Gabriel takes note of this, tastes the blood again, and leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KATHERINE'S CLASSROOM BUILDING - DAY

It's lunch break. Most of the students sit in loose cliques around the front of the building; eating, skipping rope, picking fights.

INSIDE

The recently unearthed skull sits on Katherine's desk. Feet up beside it, she leans back in her chair looking through a dinosaur book. One of her students, a twelve year old boy, finishes cleaning up the floor and stands beside her.

BOY

I'm all done with the cleaning, Miss Henley.

KATHERINE

Thank you, Jason. I appreciate it.

BOY

(looking at book over her shoulder)
Find out what it is, yet?

KATHERINE

Well, it's either a 44 million year old
Strychtosaurus or that cow Mr. Sorenson
lost last winter.

The boy, still standing beside her, begins to look nervous. Slowly, he lets his weight rest against Katherine's shoulder. She smiles good naturedly up at him.

KATHERINE

Go eat your lunch, Jason.

The boy immediately stiffens and begins backing up, almost relieved.

BOY

Sure, Miss Henley. Thanks. See ya.

Katherine watches him leave, smiles again, and goes back to the book.

AROUND THE BACK OF THE BUILDING

On the abandoned back stairs, a couple of Mexican boys sit smoking cigarettes. They whistle and kid with the four young girls that pass them going up the steps.

UPSTAIRS

Is the abandoned, decayed part of the building. The four girls know they're not supposed to be here and that's probably half the fun. They run through the crumbling halls, giggling and hiding from one another. Their cries, the smack of their shoes, echo off off the peeling halls.

One of them is Mary, running down a hall, banging a stick with another girl. At a corner Mary peels off from her friend, runs down a new hall, turns a corner,

And comes on Simon. He's still curled where we last saw him, in the wall niche where some lockers used to be. The two stare at one another. Finally,

MARY

Hi.

SIMON

Hi.

MARY

What's your name?

SIMON

Simon.

MARY

You don't look so good, Simon.

SIMON

No, I don't.

MARY

I'm Mary.

SIMON

Hello Mary.

MARY

Does Miss Henley know you're here?

SIMON

No one does, Mary. Can we keep it just our secret. For a little while?

Mary thinks.

MARY

Okay.

You can hear her friends coming closer.

MARY

I have to go.

SIMON

It was nice meeting you, Mary.

Mary goes to leave, stops, turns back.

MARY

Are you hungry? I could bring something.

SIMON

That would be very nice.

MARY

Okay. Bye.

She smiles and runs down the hall.

Simon grits his teeth, turns to the wall, and prepares himself for a long, long day.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

An old fifties two-level, Polynesian lamps and glitter stucco, now faded and brownish with water stains. Gabriel, the young man with the sunglasses and leather jacket we last saw kicking down the door at the flophouse, walks up the apartment's stairs to the second level, knocks once, and opens the door.

THE APARTMENT INSIDE

Hasn't been very well looked after lately. Either has the occupant. Sitting slumped in a kitchen chair, staring at the floor, he peers through dully yellow eyes that barely seem to register his visitor.

GABRIEL

Gee Jerry, you look like shit.

The eyes lift to Gabriel, revealing a pale, bloodless face eaten with dried sores.

JERRY

Leave me alone, Gabriel.

GABRIEL

Soon, pal. Soon.

Gabriel drops into the chair across from Jerry and pushes aside with distaste the maggot-ridden plates of food piled on the table. He reaches his hand out to Jerry.

GABRIEL

Come here.

JERRY

Go away.

GABRIEL

(sing-song, like to a baby)
Come here...

Gabriel puts his hand under Jerry's chin and turns the face side to side, examining the cracked, decaying skin and filmy eyes.

GABRIEL

Hmmm. Still a little life left in you.
Barely.

JERRY

Fuck you.

Gabriel releases Jerry's chin and slouches down in the chair.

GABRIEL

There's something I want you to do for me.

JERRY

What a surprise.

GABRIEL

Don't be that way.

JERRY

I just want to...Why won't you let me...

GABRIEL

I will, I will. Promise.

A dark, intestinal looking amber fluid begins to pool out of Jerry's pant leg.

GABRIEL

You need some new clothes, son.

A tear wells in Jerry's decomposing face.

GABRIEL

Aw come on, don't start. You know how I hate that...

JERRY

I'm so tired. I'm so goddamn tired.

GABRIEL

Watch the profanity. --Just one more favor. Honest.

JERRY

(deep sigh)

What?

GABRIEL

I want you to get something for me. A few personal effects the cops ripped off from the lovely Allenwood Arms on Seventh Street. It'll be sitting in their property room down on San Julian.

JERRY

I'm supposed to just go in there? Like this?

GABRIEL

Give you a bath, put on some decent clothes, (beat)

Maybe a very large brim hat, you'll be fine. Just go in between five and five-ten, it's a shift change and nobody'll notice you.

JERRY

How do you know?

GABRIEL

(cocks an eye)

C'mon.

(tosses yellow ID card onto table)

This should be more or less up to date.

JERRY

Got a name this stuff is under?

GABRIEL

John Doe.

JERRY

Why doesn't that surprise me.

Gabriel gets up, pats Jerry on the head, and walks to the door.

GABRIEL

I'll see you tonight.

(flips him silver dollar)

Here's some bus fare.

CUT TO:

The SLAM of a raquetball against the scarred white wall of an indoor court. It ricochetes off the ceiling, hits the back glass partition, and is SLAMMED again. Four players, including Thomas, grunt and sweat across the hardwood floor. It's brutal. Shoulders and knees bang off one another.

One of the players falls back, yells to Thomas.

PLAYER

Cover me! Cover me!

Thomas dives into position to make the save, recovers, and yells to the player as he dashes to the next corner.

THOMAS

Pop it up!

The player SLAMS it brutally at Thomas, who misses miserably.

THOMAS

Thanks a lot.

Another player picks up the dead ball and puts his arm around Thomas.

PLAYER #2

You're missing the point of the game, Thomas. You must absolutely trust no one. Form alliances, but break them. Lure another to trust you, then betray him! You play with too much honor. Sink to the gutter. Use people. Lie and double-cross them.

Player #2 tosses the ball to Thomas, who serves, and the scuffling is back on. Shouts to one another. Promises of support.

PLAYER #2

Come on Thomas, let's take out Sam together!

Thomas and Player #2 team up on a third player, pressing him hard. Suddenly Thomas breaks back, intercepts the ball, and drives against Player #2. The about-face is too abrupt for him and Player #2 is eliminated in a double-cross. He smiles proudly at Thomas.

PLAYER #2

Magnificent decadence.

INT. GYM LOCKER ROOM

Thomas and the three players congratulate each other on the evil and treachery in each other's strategies as they shower down.

PLAYER #1

The important thing, Tom, is seeing the game for what it is.

PLAYER #2

A sickening, hopeless, giant sucking hole of depravity.

Laughs.

INT. LOCKER ROOM DRESSING AREA

As Thomas combs his hair and slips on his regimental detective's suit 'n tie, the other three put on their black pants, shirts, and stiff white Roman collars. They're priests.

Two of the priests hoist their gym bags and head for the door.

PRIEST #1

See ya guys next Tuesday, huh?

Thomas is left alone with Player (priest) #2, Bill.

BILL

So how's work?

THOMAS

Okay. Y'now.

BILL

Life on the dark side.

THOMAS

(beat)

Can I ask you about something?

BILL

Sure.

THOMAS

It has to stay between us. I need your word on it.

BILL

As a raquetball player or a priest?

THOMAS

I'll take the priest for the moment.

BILL

What's on your mind?

THOMAS

It's a case. We found this guy. He was... different. But he had on him an old bible.

He pulls the bible out of a cloth sack and hands it to Bill.

BILL

It's a Vichini.

THOMAS

Worth a little?

BILL

More than a little. They're the best. Sixth century. Hand illuminated. Vichini only did twenty, each pocket size for a king to carry into battle beside his heart. Some consider them the finest bibles ever made. I thought they'd all be in museums. What are you doing with it?

THOMAS

This one's a bit special.

BILL

How?

THOMAS

It's has a bonus chapter to St, John's Revelations.

BILL

Really? What does it say?

THOMAS

(reading from slip of paper)

"And as in the first war, the angels so fought over the nature of their God, and there was much vanity and destruction in heaven. For some angels called their Lord the son of God, and others called Him the begotten father of Jesus Christ." What do you think?

BILL

I've never heard that quote before. Theologically, The "first war" obviously refers to the war in heaven where Michael the archangel threw out Satan and his gang. Old time bible stuff. But this implies there was a second war. That's news to me.

THOMAS

And the rest of it?

BILL

Oh, it's a fairly common theological debate. Or was. The idea that if Christ is God's son, does that make him less than God or are they the same being in different forms. That very argument almost tore the early Christian church apart in the 4th Century. That was the good old days when people actually worried about theology. Anyway, it was settled when the bishops of the world got to together at the Council of Nicene in 325 and hashed out the various interpretations of scripture into a uniform dogma of belief. The result was the Nicene Creed, which basically said that Christ was in fact the same as God and was owed the same power and respect as the Father. That they were the same.

(smiles)

But it's not exactly the sort of thing angels would fight over.

THOMAS

Why?

BILL

Well, they could just ask God, right?

THOMAS

Do you think it's possible that John might have written that extra chapter?

BILL

Who knows? Vichini was the greatest biblical scholar of the age, some claimed he made his own translations from the original writings. Maybe he did find some unknown writings by John. It's possible I suppose. John always was a little negative about angels. All this actually has something to do with an LAPD murder?

THOMAS

I don't know yet. Maybe. Probably not.

BILL

I hate to break it you, but that particular family spat has been settled for 1,600 years. Nobody loses sleep over it anymore. Honest.

THOMAS

What did John have against angels?

BILL

Oh, he didn't trust them much. All that running around smiting and killing in the name of the Lord. God's wild bunch. He thought it made them fickle and vain. One click above ghosts. Satan didn't help the image much either.

THOMAS

Satan?

BILL

Well, he did start as an angel.

EXT. GYM

Thomas walks Bill out to his car.

BILL

So when are you going to get a real job?

THOMAS

You mean with the Church?

BILL

You almost did it once. I never saw a seminary student more called to the collar than you. Why didn't you ever become ordained?

THOMAS

It's a long story.

BILL

You'll have to tell it to me sometime.

THOMAS

Sometime.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

The building is squat and brick. A non-descrip warehouse that subs as a police evidence storage area.

The sun is hard today as it beats down on Jerry's large-brimmed felt hat. Daylight and Jerry don't get along very well. His sunken, filmy eyes squint at its glare. The decayed flesh cracking along his cheeks flames at its touch. He shuffles down the sidewalk, the brackish, amber fluid that gurgles down his leg filling his shoes and leaving behind shiny wet footprints like a snail.

There's nobody around the back door and its unlocked. Jerry's shrunken claws pull it open.

INSIDE

Is a crush of filing cabinets and erector-set shelves. All of it crammed with low grade stuff. The heroin busts and million dollar currency arrests don't end up here. Here it's all shoe boxes and dusty files. Fragments of small lives forgotten.

Jerry pulls the brim of his hat down even further as he works his way past rack after rack. The single uniform he meets looks only casually at Jerry's lapel ID badge. It's on the third shelf he finds it. John Doe #78. Jerry lifts the box and walks out.

INT. COUNTY BUILDING BASEMENT

Gabriel steps off the elevator and follows the signs for MEDICAL EXAMINER. Along the way he passes a checkpoint guard.

GUARD

Need a pass, friend.

GABRIEL

I'll just be a second.

GUARD

C'mon...

GABRIEL

Sorry.

Gabriel walks back to the guard, smiles, and KNOCKS him clean out of his chair with the back of his arm. The guard SMACKS against the wall and crumples out of view.

INT. MORGUE

Tiled floor and refrigerated corpses. Nobody's around when Gabriel enters. He walks over to a file cabinet and removes a thick folder. Then he walks to the big filing cabinets, the ones that hold a body in each drawer. He strolls along, tapping each label till he finds the one he's looking for, slides it open, and looks down at the naked body of the gargoyle.

He's been sewed back together. Kind of. Gabriel grabs the eyeless corpse under the armpits and drags him out onto the floor where he pushes the legs together and outstretches the arms, like a crucifix. From his coat Gabriel takes out a small vial of oil and rubs it onto the gargoyle's feet and hands. Anointing them. Then with the tip of his finger, he draws a faint sign of the cross on the forehead, stands, and walks for the door.

In the background, as Gabriel leaves, we see the body of the gargoyle BURST into flame.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KATHERINE'S SCHOOL

Katherine's students are shuffling back from lunch to their seats, making small talk and paper airplanes. Katherine does a head count, then stops a young boy coming through the door.

KATHERINE

Brian, have you seen Mary?

BRIAN

I think she's out back somewhere.

KATHERINE-
(to girl)

Allison?

ALLISON

We haven't seen her since lunch.

KATHERINE

We're you guys up in the...

The girls, Mary's friends, shrug innocently. Katherine sighs.

KATHERINE

Okay everybody, get started on today's reading. Quietly. I'll be right back.

Katherine closes the door behind her. The class immediately erupts into goofing off. The door opens again.

KATHERINE

I mean quiet.

IN THE ABANDONED PART OF THE BUILDING

Katherine walks through decayed and rusting halls.

KATHERINE
(calls out)

Mary...

It's spooky up here. A part of the building Katherine clearly dislikes.

KATHERINE
(to herself)

Mary...

Shit.

Katherine calls out Mary's name a few more times, turns a few more corners, and suddenly comes on her.

KATHERINE

Mary?

Mary's sitting beside Simon, the bleeding, ashen-faced man with sunglasses. She's giving Simon a piece of sandwich and a coke. Katherine is instantly wary.

KATHERINE

Mary, come here.

MARY

But Simon and I were--

KATHERINE-

Come here.

Mary reluctantly walks over to Katherine.

KATHERINE

Go back to class.

MARY

But--

KATHERINE

Go.

Mary frowns, waves once to Simon, and leaves. There's a heaviness to the air around Simon. A kind of buzzing. Katherine blinks her eyes a few times. Focuses.

SIMON

She wasn't doing any harm.

KATHERINE
It's not her I'm worried about.

SIMON
Of course.

KATHERINE
What are you doing here?

SIMON
Small job. Mostly done now. Just passing through.

KATHERINE
This is school property, you can't sleep here.

SIMON
It wasn't part of the plan. Honest.

KATHERINE
(notices blood stains)
Are you all right?

SIMON
No. Not really.

That buzz. Katherine rubs the side of her temple.

KATHERINE
I'll have to call the police.

SIMON
I wish you wouldn't, but I understand.

KATHERINE--
They'll help you.

SIMON
Oh, I rather doubt that.

Katherine turns and leaves, her footsteps fading.
Mary appears again.

MARY
Hi.

SIMON
Hello. I thought you'd left.

MARY
I hid. I'm very clever.

SIMON

I'm sure you are.

(beat)

You were nice to give me the food.

MARY

I know.

SIMON

I haven't much time, Mary. And since you've been so nice to me, there's something I'd very much like to give to you.

MARY

What?

SIMON

Just for a little while. Something very special. Can you keep it a secret? The biggest secret ever?

MARY

Yes. What is it?

SIMON

Come here, Mary.

She takes a couple of shy steps toward him.

SIMON

Closer...

As she does--

CUT TO:

Katherine, outside the building, rounding up some of the kids who decided to take an impromptu recess. Hustling the last one up the stairs, she pauses suddenly. She hears something. Faint coughing.

Katherine walks back around the side of the building and sees Mary bent over, vomiting. Katherine rushes up to her.

MARY

I don't feel good...

KATHERINE

What's the matter, pumpkin? Did you eat something?

(concerned beat)

Did he give you something?

Mary coughs up the last of her lunch.

MARY

Can I go home now?

Katherine wipes off Mary's mouth with a hanky.

KATHERINE

Sure, hon. Let's go.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Katherine drives Mary home, a dusty, tired mobil home slumped among the sauguro and tumbleweed on the edge of town.

INT. MOBIL HOME

Mary and Katherine pull open the door and enter. Mary's elderly grandmother is sitting watching "All My Children". She smiles at Katherine and looks at Mary with concern as the little girl rubs her stomach and explains something in Navaho.

IN THE BEDROOM

Katherine helps tuck Mary in bed as her grandmother brings a glass of water.

KATHERINE

I'll have the school send over a doctor.

The grandmother sits beside Mary, whispers gently in Navaho, and softly stokes her brow.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

KATHERINE

(on the phone)

...He's was just laying up there. I thought, with the kids and everything...

VOICE

Most of my boys are up the highway on a tanker spill at the moment. They may be a while. These people are rarely any problem. I'll have a deputy come by tonight or tomorrow and shoo him out.

KATHERINE

He looked hurt.

VOICE

They all do, ma'am. Inside or out, they're all damaged goods.

IN THE BEDROOM

Alone and tucked into bed, Mary stares off at something very,

very far away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THOMAS'S APARTMENT

The sun orange and fading outside his window, Thomas drifts off into a nap on his couch. The phone rings.

THOMAS

Yeah.

VOICE

It's your friendly coroner.

THOMAS

Why is my friendly coroner, after a long day at work, calling me at home?

VOICE

I have something you'll want to see.

THOMAS

I doubt it.

VOICE

No, you'll definitely want to see this.

INT. MORGUE

On the floor is the smoldering, blackened outline of a body. A thick, slimy goo gurgles and pops. The whole room is afoul with acrid smoke.

CORONER —

They also took the autopsy file.

THOMAS

"They"?

CORONER

He, she, it. They took it. They also lifted all the physical evidence from the San Julian impound.

THOMAS

Where was everyone?

CORONER

The cop at the desk is in the hospital as we speak with a broken collarbone. Everyone else was down the hall watching the basketball playoffs.

Who won? THOMAS

Temple. CORONER

Lucky. THOMAS

Yeah. Foul on the buzzer. CORONER

Thomas jams his hands in his pockets and leans against an autopsy table. Watches the smoke curl slowly up from the impossibly melted goo in front of him.

THOMAS
Looks like the snow angels we used to make as kids. Lie down in a clean bank. Move your arms up and down...

CORONER
You know what this means. Our friend's cleaned out all the evidence on this guy. Everything.

THOMAS
Did the cop get a look at who nailed him?

CORONER
Tall. Smiled a lot.

THOMAS
Anything else?

CORONER —
He wore sunglasses.

Thomas pulls out out his notebook.

CORONER
You gonna figure this one out, Tom?

THOMAS
I'm going to try.

CORONER
When you do, give me a call. Tell me I'm not crazy.

INT. JERRY'S APARTMENT

Gabriel crouches on the linolium and pours everything out of the evidence box onto the floor. He sifts through it, a smile appearing when comes across the Chimney Rock Republican and its

circled obituary.

GABRIEL

You like the desert, Jerry?

Jerry is looking worse by the day. A rotting, oozing fissure has opened on his forehead. His right eye doesn't move anymore. He sits on a kitchen chair glumly.

JERRY

You promised. You promised that--

GABRIEL

--Soon. Honest. Don't be a pest about it.

JERRY

(sighs)

Never trust a fucking angel.

GABRIEL

Excellent advice.

INT. POLICE STATION

Thomas sits hunched over his notes from the first day of the investigation. Written in it is the Chimney Rock Republican and the obituary name of General Arnold Hawthorn. Lt. Paul sits down in the chair opposite.

LT. PAUL

Do you ever have one of those afternoons where you feel no one's giving you a straight answer about anything?

THOMAS

Oh, maybe five or six times a week.

LT. PAUL

(reading sheet)

It says here somebody got into the property warehouse and cleaned everything out of your evidence box. No, he did leave one thing. A footprint. 11-D.

THOMAS

Mud on his shoes?

LT. PAUL

Spinal fluid.

Thomas slowly closes his notebook.

LT. PAUL

I'm not going to get a straight answer out of you either, am I?

THOMAS

Not yet.

The Lt. rubs his eyes tiredly.

THOMAS

I need to go to Arizona.

LT. PAUL

For your health?

THOMAS

So I can give you a straight answer.

LT. PAUL

Sure, why not? Take the kids. See the Grand Canyon. Send me a fucking postcard.

THOMAS

Sorry.

LT. PAUL

I've got a headache, Tom, and I hate my life. If you have to go, go.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

On an utterly lonely blacktop, Gabriel shoots by in his top-down rambler, insignificant in the night's vastness. Jerry's in the back, feet up on the seat.

JERRY

Why do you need me? I can hardly walk now.

GABRIEL

Some things are human work, son. Live or dead, human work. Besides, I like you.

JERRY

Lucky moi.

Gabriel suddenly stands on the brakes, SCREECHING the rambler to a dusty stop. He kills the engine and everything is instantly whispering night and coyote howls. Gabriel climbs out and walks to the edge of a cliff. Far below, nestled among the finger-like spires of volcanic cones, lies The Town. Twinkling lights in a cold, dark embrace.

Gabriel pushes his sunglasses up his nose and smiles.

GABRIEL

I can always smell a graveyard.

Two coyotes begin fighting and snarling with each other in the dust nearby.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

On a low hill at the edge of town. Cracked, sinking headstones. The rambler's parked next to a new one, Slim Pickens on the AM, as Jerry digs up the fresh grave marked General Arnold Hawthorne. Gabriel sits perched on the headstone over the grave like a winged creature.

JERRY

I hope you're enjoying this.

GABRIEL

I always enjoy watching you work, Jerry.

JERRY

How did I ever get you in my life?

GABRIEL

Come on, you didn't really want to kill yourself.

JERRY

But I did it, didn't I? I did kill myself.

GABRIEL

Well, yes. Technically.

JERRY

And you're just keeping me alive.

GABRIEL

Letting you die slower.

JERRY

I'm so in your debt.

GABRIEL

Thank you, Jerry. I'm touched. Really.

Jerry's shovel CLANKS onto something hard. He scrapes away the dirt, revealing a coffin lid. With a socket wrench Jerry removes the fastening bolts, then with the edge of his shovel, pries open the lid.

It's the ancient, wasted general we saw at the beginning. His medals flash in the moonlight.

JERRY

Not much to look at.

GABRIEL

Ah, but it's not what's on the outside that matters--

Gabriel leaps off his perch down into the grave.

GABRIEL

-It's what's on the inside.

Gabriel reaches down, places one hand on the General's forehead, one on his chin, and BREAKS the mouth open. He gazes down into it. Then suddenly stiffens and straightens up.

GABRIEL

(upset)

It's not here.

Gabriel frantically look in the ears. Up the nose.

GABRIEL

It's not here!

JERRY

Oooh, bad news for the war effort.

GABRIEL

(spins wildly on him)

Shut up!!

Gabriel BANGS the coffin lid in frustration. Tries to think.

GABRIEL

Now, if you were a soul, where would you hide?

JERRY

The hell away from you.

INT. THOMAS'S APARTMENT

The numbers on the clock radio roll over five AM and the news comes on. Thomas stirs in bed, rubs his eyes, and looks out at a sky untouched by any sign of dawn.

CUT TO:

In coat and tie, Thomas sits in his spartan kitchen stirring a coffee when the phone rings.

FEMALE VOICE

Hey little brother.

THOMAS

(smiles)

Hey. How's the world?

VOICE

The world's the usual. Except for a guppy.
the world's minus one guppy this morning.

THOMAS

And Jamie and Mac?

VOICE

They keep asking for Uncle Tommy. The only
man that can make stuffed bears talk.

THOMAS

My one true calling. What's up?

VOICE

What do you mean?

THOMAS

It's five-thirty in the morning.

VOICE

(beat)

I just thought I should call.

THOMAS

You always were telepathic.

VOICE

Don't go.

Thomas looks up at his overnight bag, sitting half-packed on the
dresser.

THOMAS

It's my job, Jan. I go places sometimes.

VOICE —

I just had this terrible feeling about it.
What's happening, Tom?

THOMAS

I don't know.

VOICE

I miss you. Even when you're here. I miss
you. I miss my brother. It's been four years,
Tom, since...

THOMAS

I know.

VOICE

We're the only blood family we have left,
you and me. I worry about you.

THOMAS

I'll be okay.

VOICE

Sorry about the dawn-attack call. I love you.

THOMAS

I love you too, Jan.

He cradles the phone, stares at it, then picks up his overnight bag.

EXT. THE TOWN - NIGHT

Silent and dead at this hour. Gabriel's boots creak on the floorboards of the 19th century plank sidewalks. He taps his finger aimlessly along plate glass shop windows.

GABRIEL

Boy, what a dump, huh?

Jerry, limping on a foot that's caving in on itself, wiping the spinal fluid out of his dead eye, shuffles along behind.

Gabriel pops off the elevated sidewalk, grabs a parking meter and swings himself playfully around.

GABRIEL

Why can't this shit ever go down in Miami?
Or Bora Bora? I feel like I've spent my whole damn stay in gin swills like this.

JERRY

Life's a bitch.

Gabriel suddenly freezes. He sticks his nose up, sniffs like a coyote, then abruptly drops to the ground in a push-up and smells the dirt. Tastes it with his tongue. Smiles.

GABRIEL

Well well...

INT. THE SCHOOL BUILDING - NIGHT

A fracture of broken moon tumbles through shattered windows and falls dully across shapes old, shapes forgotten, and one shape trying hopelessly to drag itself across the floor. It's Simon; breath a rasp, blood-soaked pants leaving a long smear behind him like a hemorrhaging snail. He coughs, drags an arm across the lenses of his sunglasses,

And looks up at a pair of black, lizard-skin boots.

GABRIEL

Hi, Simon.

Simon rolls on his back and sighs.

SIMON

Gabriel.

Simon looks up at puss-faced Jerry, leaning quietly in a dark corner.

JERRY

Don't mind me. Just along for the ride.

Gabriel sits down against the wall.

GABRIEL

So, what shall we talk about? Theology?

SIMON

I'm a little talked out on theology.

GABRIEL

Fair enough...

Gabriel turns his boot to the moon, watches the pale light glint back off the lizard scales.

GABRIEL

You know why I'm here.

SIMON

Oh yes.

GABRIEL

Don't happen to have it on you by chance?

SIMON

No.

GABRIEL

That would have been too easy.

Simon suddenly JUMPS to his feet. Tries to escape. Jerry trips him, SPRAWLING Simon back to the floor.

GABRIEL

Please, Simon. Get serious.

Gabriel walks over to him. Puts his face close.

GABRIEL
 Now. Where's the soul?
 (beat)
 You know. So high. Used to reside in the
 recently departed General Hawthorne.

Simon doesn't answer. Gabriel shrugs.

GABRIEL
 Have it your way, big guy.

SIMON
 I do have one question.

GABRIEL
 Shoot.

SIMON
 Do you even remember what this war's
 about?

Gabriel pauses, almost thoughtfully. Then he smiles.

GABRIEL
 That's hardly the point, is it?

SIMON
 I guess I never did get the point.

GABRIEL
 Happens.

SIMON
 How do you do it, Gabriel? How do you
 go on and on in this place?

GABRIEL —
 I like it here, Simon. I always have.

SIMON
 I'm so tired...

Gabriel grasps Simon's hand.

GABRIEL
 Then join us, Simon. Reject the Nicene
 Council. We were here first.

SIMON
 I can't do it, Gabriel. I don't even know
 why anymore, but I can't.

GABRIEL
 You know the routine.

SIMON
(swallows hard)

Yes.

Gabriel's hand is suddenly on Simon's face, fingers spread, claw-like. They press into the flesh. Hard. And harder. Until Simon starts to bleed.

Then to burn.

INT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Katherine startles abruptly in her bed at the faraway sound of Simon's screams. Screams carried either on the wind or her dreams.

INT. MARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Asleep, sweaty, shivering, Mary suddenly opens her eyes.

INT. THE SCHOOL BUILDING - NIGHT

Gabriel releases his grip on Simon, letting him fall back against the wall, afire. His clothes twist and blacken. His skin creeps and pops. His sunglasses melt and fall away; revealing two hollow pits beneath. Gabriel lifts Simon's entire body up off the floor by just the disintegrating face, and stares into the hollow pits.

GABRIEL

Not yet.

And the fires go out.
Gabriel drops the crackling, acrid body onto the floor. Impossibly, through the sizzling mucus and molton hair, it breathes. It gasps in pain. It won't die.

GABRIEL

I can do this for five months, Simon...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE TOWN

The skies above lighten and smear blue and red.

KATHERINE

Finishes dressing for school, picks up her teaching bag, and crunches out across the gravel to her pick-up.

INT. THE SCHOOL BUILDING

Gabriel's lizard boots pace back and forth past Simon's writhing, burning body. Gabriel's more jittery now. Losing his patience. He bends down and pulls Simon's face up to his.

GABRIEL

This is getting boring, Simon.

JERRY

Amen.

GABRIEL

Where is it? Where did you put it?

The seared skin around Simon's mouth comes off in Gabriel's hand. But Simon is still, even now, silent.

GABRIEL

Where is it!

He flings Simon with a horrible crunch against the wall.

GABRIEL

I'm just about out of tricks here.
You're a tough one, friend. Old school.

He walks over and places a hand with something like friendship on Simon's charred shoulder.

GABRIEL

God loves you, Simon.

And with the other hand Gabriel JAMS his fist into Simon's chest, PULLING OUT a lumpy, burned heart. Simon's mouth springs open and hisses emptily. Gabriel slips the heart into his pocket and lets go of Simon's shoulder. The body instantly disintegrates and crashes to the floor.

EXT. THE TOWN - MORNING

Katherine squints at the morning glare as she drives through town. Pulling into the school's drive she sees, parked at the building's back door, a sheriff's patrol car.

INT. SCHOOL BUILDING

Katherine comes up the stairs of the building's abandoned floor, passing the stacks of rotting desks toward where she last saw Simon. There's a bad smell in the air.

At a turn stands a deputy that looks up as Katherine approaches.

DEPUTY

You may want to skip this, ma'am.

Katherine looks past him to where a second deputy crouches down beside...beside something. It's human shaped, but like a shadow. A shadow twisted in agony and slicked with a tarry, smoldering ooze. The smell is overpowering. The crouched deputy has a handkerchief over his mouth.

CROUCHED DEPUTY

God damn...

DEPUTY

(to Katherine)

Were any of your students up here?

KATHERINE

Mary...

EXT. MARY'S FAMILY TRAILER - DAY

Katherine pulls-up and parks.

INSIDE

Mary is still in bed, droopy-eyed and sweating. Her grandmother is there, and so is an elderly Navaho. He stands beside Mary's side, holding above her body a clenched pouch that he passes slowly back and forth.

KATHERINE

(to grandmother)

How is she?

GRANDMOTHER

Same.

KATHERINE

Did the doctor come by?

GRANDMOTHER

He found nothing. But something is in her. I know. Something the Belagaana doctor can't see. The night people have been around two days now. It is a warning.

(nods to Navaho man)

So we have called the hand trembler. To find if she must have an Enemy Ghost Way.

The old man mumbles a soft chant as he moves the pouch back and forth across Mary's body.

EXT. MARY'S FAMILY TRAILER - DAY

Katherine walks back out toward her pickup. She stops. Thirty yards away, almost invisible in the sage say for the glare of its evil, intelligent eyes, is a coyote. As she feels it's gaze a shadow suddenly crosses her shoulder. Katherine turns quickly but only barely catches, out of the corner of her eye, a glimpse of something very large.

And winged.

CUT TO:

A huge semi ROARING deafeningly past on an empty desert highway, KICKING UP a dusty cyclone that drifts over a one-horse gas station and Thomas, sitting there in his car checking a map.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTY BUILDING - DAY

Small townish; old adobe and stucco walls, cannon on the front lawn, every door loudly declaring itself a department: SOCIAL SERVICES, COURTS, and, SHERIFF.

INSIDE

The Sheriff's personal office is turn of the century regal, with high beam ceilings and rotating fans. Nothing seems newer than 1940, including the coffee pot the Sheriff pours a mugful from. Trim with glasses, bolo tie and boots, he looks like Barry Goldwater.

SHERIFF

And to what do I owe the thrill of a visit from a So Cal homicide cop?

He hands the coffee to Thomas, sitting in a chair beside his solid oak desk.

THOMAS

Run of of the mill psycho killer body dismemberment on our end. The usual.

SHERIFF

Lovely place, Los Angeles.

THOMAS

Got a lead I wanted to run down Chimney Rock way. Thought I'd do the courtesy of telling you first.

SHERIFF

Big of you.

THOMAS

You're welcome to put a babysitter on me if you like.

The Sheriff smiles.

SHERIFF

Son, this is the third biggest county in the country, not even counting the 25,000 square mile Indian reservation right next door, and
(cont'd)

SHERIFF (cont'd)

I've got fewer men than just one of your little palm tree precincts to cover all of it. 'Fraid the only help you're gonna get from me, short of another shoot out at the OK Corral, is that cup of coffee in your hand.

A middle-aged secretary enters with a stack of paper.

SECRETARY

Here's the last week's watch reports.

She hands them to the Sheriff, who passes them on to Thomas. He flips through the stack, comes up with nothing. The secretary hands another, single sheet to the Sheriff.

SECRETARY

Bobby just called this in from Chimney Rock.

Thomas perks at The Town's name.

SHERIFF

(to Thomas)

Sent a car up there this morning. Teacher complained some vagrant was sleeping in her schoolhouse.

The Sheriff's brow crinkles in consternation as he reads further.

SHERIFF

(to secretary)

Damn it, get Bobby on the phone, Clarice. What the hell is this suppose to be?

THOMAS

(re report)-

May I?

The Sheriff hands it to him. Glancing at it we pick up words like BURNED, BLACK SLICK, BODY OUTLINE. Thomas copies the name of the school down, gulps his coffee, and shakes the Sheriff's hand.

THOMAS

Thanks for the coffee.

SHERIFF

(as Thomas turns to leave)

Small piece of advice, Lt. Dagget, that I give free of charge to all visiting big city policemen: It's wild country up there. Always has been, always will be. You come across anything that snarls, you call me first, hear?

THOMAS

I never turn down advice, Sheriff. Especially when it's free.

DISSOLVE TO:

Thomas's sedan passing through the vast, empty land.

FAR ON THE HORIZON

A small clump of buildings emerge clinging hopelessly to the earth. The Town.

EXT. TOWN HOTEL- DAY

A former miner's hotel, stone walls and sagging wrought iron.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Thomas tosses his bag onto the bed, opens the balcony door, and looks out on the crumbly shale hills, the abandoned prospecting shacks, and the Chuska Mountains, clouds brewing darkly across its shattered back.

CUT TO:

A close-up of the circled newspaper obituary for General Hawthorne. The paper lowers and reveals behind it the general's grave. The dirt around the tomb is loose, recently filled. The grave keeper, a young, gangly, drifter type stands nearby with his shovel.

THOMAS

How long ago was he buried?

GRAVE KEEPER

Which time?

THOMAS

What do you mean?

GRAVE KEEPER

Somebody dug him up last night. I just finished putting him back.

THOMAS

Did they take anything?

GRAVE KEEPER

Nothin' on the outside.

INT. THE SCHOOLHOUSE

Thomas's breath escapes in warm clouds here in the unheated, abandoned part of the building. Rats scurry away from feeding on

the dark, human-like stain on the floor as Thomas crouches down beside it. He probes the dried, black, crusty flotsam with his ball-point pen. Just like the burned body back at the morgue.

Far away you can hear the sounds of children. Of a teacher's voice.

DOWNSTAIRS

It's only past the final door, into the smallest corner of the building, that the walls become clean and brightly painted by eager third graders. The creepy silence transforms itself into the giggles of children as they bang open the classroom door and whoop themselves outside for recess.

The last one out is Katherine. She's surprised to see Thomas.

THOMAS

Hello.

KATHERINE

(suspicious)

Can I help you with something?

THOMAS

Tom Dagget. I'm with the police.

KATHERINE

About the guy upstairs?

THOMAS

I'd like to ask you a few questions.

KATHERINE

I've kinda got my hands full right now.

THOMAS

I'll just tag along.

Katherine unlocks a hall cabinet and pulls out a stack of volleyballs. She tosses two to Thomas.

KATHERINE

Here, make yourself useful.

Arms full, she pushes the building door open with her shoulder and backs out into the sunshine. She tosses the balls out to the kids.

KATHERINE

Okay, everybody stays on the courts today.

(kids groan)

-I mean it.

She sits down beside Thomas on the building's stone steps.

THOMAS
What grade is this?

KATHERINE
All of 'em.

THOMAS
Town doesn't look that small.

KATHERINE
Nearly all ghosts now. When the copper mine closed it took most of the town with it. We just teach out of this one corner of the schoolhouse now. Rest of it's been abandoned for years.

THOMAS
You're the only teacher.

KATHERINE
Yup. Just me.
(to kid threatening another)
--Randy...

RANDY
But he--

KATHERINE
Do it again and I'll put your head in the door and slam it.
(to Thomas)
Love and understanding are important tools in education.

THOMAS
Clearly.

The children skitter back and forth playing.

THOMAS
The man upstairs, did you talk to him?

KATHERINE
I wanted to know what the hell he was doing there.

THOMAS
What did he say?

KATHERINE
That it wasn't part of the plan. He looked hurt. Bloody. Like someone had cut him. That happens here.

(beat)
Was that...stuff...on the floor really him?

THOMAS

Did any of the children talk to him?

KATHERINE

Yes.

THOMAS

Who?

KATHERINE
(protective)

She's home sick from school today.

THOMAS

Can I speak with her parents?

KATHERINE

They're dead. She lives with her grandmother.
I'll have to ask her.

THOMAS

All right.

(stands, hands her slip of paper)
This is my number at the hotel.

Thomas starts away. Pauses.

THOMAS

Did you know Arnold Hawthorne?

KATHERINE

The General? Saw him here and there. It's
a small town.

THOMAS

Military man?

KATHERINE

About a million years ago. His interests
lately were more like gardening and herbal
tea.

THOMAS

Did you go to the funeral?

KATHERINE

Everyone did. He lived here.

THOMAS

No dark hidden secrets?

KATHERINE

There are no secrets in small towns, Mr.
Dagget, dark or otherwise.

ACROSS THE STREET

Up the crumbly embankment, sitting perched on the roof of an abandoned house, is Gabriel. He watches Thomas walk to his car. He watches the children playing, lifting his nose to snort the air, like a coyote.

INT. THE TOWN LIBRARY

Thomas sifts through some clippings on General Hawthorne. Tactical genius. The man who saved Korea. Brutal. Almost court marshalled a dozen times for his inspired savagery. A truly ruthless man --who spent the last twenty years quietly tending his garden in a dying town.

INT. THE TOWN CHURCH

Small, simple, and woodplanked. The church we saw at the beginning. Thomas sits there, staring at the candles, the altar, the crucifix.

He's alone there. But for a creeping buzz. A feeling in the air.

GABRIEL'S VOICE

It's unusual to see someone of your age in church on a weekday.

Thomas turns in surprise. Gabriel is kneeling in the row behind, inches from his ear.

GABRIEL

Don't get me wrong. I think it's an excellent sign of character.

There's something cold and creepy about Gabriel. Out of place in here. There's another sound. Teeth chattering far in the back. Thomas turns and sees Jerry, deep in the shadows of the choir box. Jerry waves.

GABRIEL

Never mind him. He shouldn't even be in here. Least not standing.

Those sunglasses. Impenetrably dark. Like at the skid row flophouse.

GABRIEL

You're not from here.

THOMAS

Either are you.

GABRIEL

I'm looking for something.

THOMAS
Have you found it?

GABRIEL
I will. Have you found what you're
looking for?

THOMAS
I will.

GABRIEL
(appraising him)
I don't doubt it.
(stands)
You'll let me know? When you find it?

THOMAS
Where are you staying?

GABRIEL
I'm around.

And he walks out, leaving Thomas alone in a place gone suddenly cold.

INT. THOMAS'S HOTEL

There's a note waiting for him at the front desk: "Her name is Mary Tsosie. You can talk to her at noon tomorrow. I'll be at the VFW hall tonight --Katherine."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VFW HALL - NIGHT

Thomas sticks his head in through the door.

MICROPHONE VOICE
...B-26...B-26...

It's an Indian bingo game. Thomas' eyes drift down the table packed with elderly faces and find Katherine and John the Navaho bus driver. Katherine waves him over. Both her and John are totally obsessed with the game, keeping track of several cards.

THOMAS
I got your note.

KATHERINE
Have a seat. You need a card. Here,
play one of mine.

THOMAS
No, it's okay. Really--

JOHN

You must learn to shed your high-strung ways, pale face. You must learn the spirit joy in patience, peace, and making fifty or sixty bucks.

MICROPHONE VOICE

...G-19...G-19...

KATHERINE

John, this is Mr. Dagget. Says he's with the police, though judging by his coat and basic command of the english language, I don't think it's from anywhere around here.

THOMAS

(shakes John's hand)

Tom. From Los Angeles.

JOHN

That near Oxnard?

THOMAS

Sort of.

KATHERINE

Long way from home, Tom-from-Los-Angeles.

MICROPHONE VOICE

D-9...D-9...

Thomas lazily glances at his card, his eyes opening suddenly wide.

THOMAS

-Hey, wait. I won. I won!

KATHERINE-

-What? No way--

JOHN

Recount! Recount!

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

A Navaho social in full swing --square dancing. The Indian band on stage plays deeply traditional, inspiring, --Hank Williams. John easily whirls Katherine around; a steely-eyed, master square dancer. Thomas leans against the wall tugging on a beer. When John releases her for another partner she points at Thomas.

KATHERINE

Your turn.

THOMAS

Oh, no thanks.

KATHERINE

C'mon, don't be a drip.

She leads him out onto the floor.

THOMAS

I'm not very good at this...

KATHERINE

(as they dance)

No, you're not, are you?

She smiles. Gets a smile out of him.

KATHERINE

Let me lead.

EXT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Couples drift off the building's porch and into the street to cool off, smoke, and take a few hits off paper bags. John leans against the brick wall, tugs liberally from his paper bag, and exchanges war hoops with some friends across the street. He passes the bag to Katherine and Thomas.

JOHN

So how's our star pupil feeling today?

KATHERINE

Mary? The school doctor came by. Declared it "Non-specific gastrointestinal disorder".

JOHN

Latin for "I don't have the slightest fucking idea".

THOMAS

Will she be able to talk with me?

KATHERINE

That's up to her.

(to John)

Mary's grandmother called a hand trembler.

JOHN

Uh oh. Hocus pocus time.

THOMAS

Is that serious?

JOHN

Depends what the hand trembler says. People call them in when they think a witch or a Yei is trying to spinkle corpse sickness in their hogan, or if the Night People have been hanging around too much. Night people screw around a lot, but they're good at warning of evil ghosts.

THOMAS

Who are the Night People?

JOHN

They come as coyotes.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Thomas sits in the truck's bed as they Katherine drives through town. John, on the near side of royally toasted, has his boot stuck out the passenger window. Thomas looks up at the night sky. At its blaze of stars.

THOMAS

Beautiful stars out here.

John drinks again from his bottle, rests his head on the open window and looks out.

JOHN

Too much fucking sky in the desert. It pushes on you.

(sighs)

Sometimes I wonder if anyone in heaven even knows this place is here...

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Early American bachelor. John collapses onto the couch as Katherine heads for the kitchen.

KATHERINE

Where do you keep the coffee in this joint?

JOHN

Above the stove.

She messes with the grounds and filter. Thomas paces the room, looks over the pictures and a few weavings.

THOMAS

What happens if the hand trembler says a ghost has been...

JOHN

-Messing with Mary? If you're smart you say thank you very much and forget about it. But if you're heavy traditional, and Mary's people are serious traditional, you have an Enemy Ghost Way.

THOMAS

What's that?

JOHN

Goddamn expensive. It's a Sing to purify and drive off the corpse sickness. Two days of dancing and ceremony and feeding the whole damn village. Not even to mention hiring the yataallii, if you can even find one these days. And you can bet they don't come cheap. But every clan does it a bit different. Especially Mary's.

THOMAS

You know them?

JOHN

The Bitter Sky Clan. Hard core reservation. No lights, no running water, no HBO. Their village is out on the edge of Old Woman Butte. Million miles from anything. Witch country. Settled right there in the Dead People Land where no one else would, right on top of the old Anasazi village. They're a dying clan. Just the old ones now. All alone out there in the middle of nothing.

(drinks)

They can keep it.

THOMAS

Do people really still believe in it all? Ghosts, Sings, corpse sickness?

JOHN

Depends, I guess. Sometimes you go along because it's a village thing, or you don't want to disappoint grandma. But sometimes, when you're alone out there, far from town, and the wind kicks up and sneaks into your hogan...I don't know.

John closes his eyes and drifts off. Thomas wanders into the kitchen.

THOMAS

I think John's out for the evening.

KATHERINE
Saturday night in Chimney Rock.

She hands him a mug of coffee.

THOMAS
So how does a person like you end up
teaching here?

KATHERINE
When I was younger I used to believe that
no matter how much you mucked around in
your life, one day, if you listened hard
enough, a voice would tell you what you
were really cut out to do. And when it
didn't show up on schedule I decided to
go look for it. And I looked in a lot of
places, believe me. I drove that road out
there so far that the end became the beginning
again. And it was when I got here that I
realized there never was going to be a voice.
So I stopped looking and took the first job
they offered me. That make any sense to you?

THOMAS
Oh, I know all about voices. Problem is
not all of them are very nice.

KATHERINE
How did you end up a cop?

THOMAS
It was the evil of two lessers.

KATHERINE
Are you always this cryptic?

THOMAS
No. When you get to know me I can be down
right evasive.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Katherine pulls up to drop Thomas off.

THOMAS
Thanks for the lift. Tomorrow at noon?
At the little girl's house?

KATHERINE
First trailer on the highway past town.

Thomas climbs out.

KATHERINE

I must say, Mr. Dagget, that you don't seem very like a police officer to me.

THOMAS

That's what my bosses keep saying.

KATHERINE

I meant it as a compliment.

THOMAS

So taken. Goodnight, Miss Henley.

KATHERINE

Goodnight, Tom-from-Los-Angeles.

DISSOLVE TO:

Thomas lying in his hotel bed, flinching through a dream-filled sleep.

There's glimpses of shattered images: War. Death. And a small, dark-haired girl. Thomas's eyes open and fix on the ceiling.

Out his window, perched on the railing of his balcony, is something dark and winged.

DISSOLVE TO:

The honey warmth of dawn heats the bluish, quiet streets of The Town. Across shale hills and abandoned 19th century miner's shacks, there echoes the faint, clear notes of a trumpet. The bluesy notes drift over narrow dead-end streets, junked cars, and the abandoned copper mine out past the end of town.

INT. MINE

Deep in the tunneled rock, past the rusting conveyor belts, Gabriel sits in a small cave blowing Miles Davis on his trumpet. There's just the blanket he sits on and a single candle. Jerry comes around the corner.

GABRIEL

Get any sleep?

(Jerry only stares)

-Just kidding.

EXT. THE SCHOOLHOUSE - MORNING

As Katherine climbs out of her pick-up she sees several of her students standing in a circle. Crouched in the center, talking to them, is a man. Gabriel. Jerry stands nearby.

Gabriel is showing a boy his trumpet. Demonstrating where to put his fingers.

GABRIEL

...There, and there. Now pucker your lips...
aim it that way, and just blow a little bit,
this is a special trumpet.

The boy puffs lightly. The trumpet emits a piercing, clear note that SHATTERS a window high up in the abandoned part of the building. The youngsters whoop and applaud.

GABRIEL

Very good, Timmy. Very good. Here, have
a Junior Mint on me. Open up.

As Timmy opens his mouth we clearly see Gabriel looking down into it. Looking for something...

GABRIEL

Who's next?

Katherine approaches the scene warily. The children all beg for their turn. Gabriel selects Sandra, one of Mary's second grade friends, and puts her on his knee.

GABRIEL

And who are you?

SANDRA

Sandra.

She can barely get her fingers around the trumpet.

GABRIEL

And did you see the man upstairs, Sandra?

SANDRA

A little.

GABRIEL

Did you talk to him?

SANDRA

No.

GABRIEL

And who did, Sandra. Who talked to the man?

SANDRA

Mary.

GABRIEL

And where is Mary, Sandra?

SANDRA

She isn't here. She's sick.

GABRIEL

You've got very pretty teeth, Sandra. Here, let me see...

He gently pushes down her chin with his thumb, opens her mouth, and gazes in.

Katherine enters the circle.

KATHERINE

What the hell do you think you're doing?

Gabriel looks up, unperturbed, and smiles.

GABRIEL

Just talking to the kids, Ma'am.

KATHERINE

Get off his knee, Sandra. Everyone else, go inside. Now.

The kids reluctantly shuffle off.

BRIAN

'Bye, Gabriel.

GABRIEL

See ya, kids. Be sure to study your math.

He has the same sunglasses as Simon. The same cold, creepy air about him.

KATHERINE

Who are you?

GABRIEL

It's a long story.

Jerry suddenly snorts loudly, trying to retrieve a sticky red glop that starts running out of his nose.

GABRIEL

Ignore him.

JERRY

Everyone else does.

KATHERINE

I don't know what the hell is going on, but you both better get out of here. Right now.

GABRIEL

You're right...

He climbs to his feet and stands close to her.

GABRIEL

...You have no idea what's going on.

He stands there a beat. That terrible coldness that swirls about him. The shriek of ghosts under his breath. Then he climbs into the rambler with Jerry and pulls away. Katherine watches the car drive off, then yells over to the school janitor.

KATHERINE

All! Keep an eye on the children for me.
I'll be right back. And call the sheriff.

JANITOR

Sheriff? What the hell do I tell him?

KATHERINE

Just call.

Katherine gets into her pickup and starts the engine.

EXT. THE TOWN - DAY

Katherine drives through the main drag and out past the fringe of town. As she passes the old copper mine she sees, parked near the mine's tunnel entrance, Gabriel's rambler.

EXT MARY'S GRANDMOTHER'S TRAILER - DAY

As Katherine pulls up, she's surprised to see Thomas climbing out of his own car.

KATHERINE

You weren't suppose to be here till noon.

THOMAS

You're a little early yourself.

KATHERINE

I wanted to check on her.

THOMAS

That makes two of us.

CUT TO:

On the sandy lot that extends back from the trailer is a wizened cottonwood tree. Katherine, Thomas, and Mary are seated beneath its shade. Katherine is protective of the little girl, running a hand maternally through her hair.

KATHERINE

How are you feeling, pumpkin?

MARY

Better.

KATHERINE

This is Mr. Dagget, Mary. He'd like to ask you some questions. You don't have to answer if you don't want to.

MARY

It's okay.

There's a dreamy, far-away look in Mary's eyes. It worries Katherine.

THOMAS

Mary, when you talked to man up in the building--

MARY

--Simon.

THOMAS

Yes, Simon. What did Simon say?

MARY

(smiles)

That's funny. "Simon says".

THOMAS

Right. Like the game.

MARY

I'm good at it. I'm very clever.

THOMAS

We'll have to play together sometime.

MARY

Simon even said so. He also asked if I could keep a secret.

THOMAS

And what was that?

MARY

Something he gave me.

KATHERINE

What, pumpkin?

MARY

Then it wouldn't be a secret.

THOMAS

You're a good friend not to tell, Mary. But I'm a friend of Simon's too. So if you ever want to tell, you can to me. Okay?

MARY
It's a secret...

Mary lowers her head and shuts her eyes.

MARY
...But sometimes it hurts.

Thomas and Katherine exchange looks. Mary's pretty eyes rise again as she calmly asks, in that cute little eight year old voice:

MARY
Have you ever killed a chinaman?

THOMAS
No Mary, I haven't.

MARY
They don't bleed. Not the way you and I do. Or maybe it was just the cold...

Thomas looks to Katherine for an explanation, but she's as confused as him.

MARY
I've killed them, you know. Lots. You could always tell when they were coming. There'd be the trumpets first. Every note flat. Then those songs...After that they'd charge. Right down through the snow. The guns would freeze and it would be just knives...It was so cold and there were so many of them. But I was smarter than they were. Even at Chosin, I was smarter...

Mary's been explaining this in a girlish, show-'n-tell kind of way. Suddenly her face cracks as her voice chokes with a sob.

MARY
It scares me, Miss Henley. I hate it.
Please, make it stop!

She buries herself into Katherine's arms, sobbing.

MARY
Make it stop!

KATHERINE
(rocking her)
It's okay...It's okay...

Mary suddenly pushes away and runs back toward the trailer, into the arms of her grandmother.

KATHERINE
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to--

GRANDMOTHER
It's all right, Miss Henley. We know you love Mary...

KATHERINE
What are we going to do?

GRANDMOTHER
She's going to have the Enemy Ghost Way. We leave this afternoon.

The grandmother turns and walks back to the trailer.

THOMAS
Where will they do the ceremony?

KATHERINE
In the home village. The Hand Trembler must have found corpse sickness...

THOMAS
They're taking her away? Shouldn't she see a doctor?

KATHERINE
She's already seen a doctor.
(then, under her breath)
That son of a bitch...

THOMAS
Who?

KATHERINE
Gabriel the children called him. The little shit was hanging around my kids this morning asking about Mary. He and his buddy make a real pair.

THOMAS
Maybe it's time I checked out Mr. Gabriel.

Katherine turns from trailer and looks at him.

KATHERINE
I know where he parks his car.

INT. THOMAS'S CAR - DAY

Katherine and Thomas drive back down the road leading to town.

KATHERINE

Chinamen? Chosin? I've never heard her talk like that before.

THOMAS

Chosin Reservoir was a Korean war battle the Marines had against the Chinese, supposedly the bloodiest hand-to-hand fighting of the century. Someone been teaching that to your class?

KATHERINE

Sure, right next to Jack 'N Jill.

THOMAS

Where would she have heard it?

KATHERINE

Nobody I can think of.

(beat)

Maybe one.

THOMAS

Who?

KATHERINE

General Hawthorne.

THOMAS

Did she know him?

KATHERINE

He didn't like children.

THOMAS

You couldn't and tell a story like that to one.

He pulls over to the side near the copper mine entrance. No sign of the rambler.

KATHERINE

It was there earlier.

Thomas drives up the dirt path to the mine's tunnel entrance. They climb out and stand near its mouth. In the dust is the rambler's tracks and several footprints leading into the mine.

Thomas steps up to the edge of the tunnel. It's a black, yawning thing that swallows the sunlight whole for breakfast.

THOMAS

If I was smart I'd call the Sheriff or somebody in town who knows this place. Then again, there is one thing worse than getting killed.

KATHERINE
What?

THOMAS
Looking like an idiot if it's nothing.

He pops his trunk and takes out a flashlight.

KATHERINE
I'll come along.

THOMAS
No, if someone has to fall a hundred feet
down a black pit, he should at least be on
official duty.

Thomas switches on the light and takes a tentative step inside.

THOMAS
Then again, it is kind of spooky in there.
Here, you can hold the flashlight.

INT. THE MINE

The sun very quickly becomes a memory. And after the first bend it isn't even that anymore. There's only the glow of the flashlight; glancing off the abrupt edges of tunneled rock. Here and there are the flotsam of a bankrupt industry; dented ore carts lying on their side, rusted drill bits, piles of support timbers. And all around them the sucking blackness of the earth.

KATHERINE
It's cold...

They walk further down into the mine. The atmosphere becomes close and creepy. Thomas has been following tracks left in the dusty floor that abruptly disappear. He stops and sighs.

THOMAS
Shit.

--A BAT suddenly SHRIEKS out of the darkness, glancing off Thomas's shoulder and TANGLING in Katherine's hair. She screams and spins around, losing her footing and half falling into a yawning ore chute she hadn't seen beside her. Thomas rushes over and pulls her out. She climbs shakily to her feet.

THOMAS
You okay?

KATHERINE
Yeah...Sorry.

Thomas takes a last pass at the mine shaft with his flashlight.

THOMAS
Well, I've seen enough.

As he turns to leave the flashlight burns out.

THOMAS
Wonderful.

He bangs it once against his thigh before he notices for the first time a dim, amber light coming from a space between the rocks.

KATHERINE
What is that?

THOMAS
I don't know. Maybe a bum or something.

But his gun's out at his side. Just in case. They follow the light to the gap in the rock, gingerly stepping into

A CAVERN

-That could easily belong to a bum. It's Gabriel and Jerry's digs. Just the moldy blanket, single oil lamp, piles of twinkie wrappers,

And something else.

From outside the cave it's the same whine, the same blurriness that drips off Gabriel like sweat. But once they step into the room, into the lair, it suddenly jumps in volume. This is where Gabriel sleeps, and it's thicker here, like honey on the walls. Thomas has difficulty focusing his eyes.

KATHERINE
Do you feel it?

THOMAS
...Yes.

KATHERINE
What is it?

But Thomas can't hear Katherine anymore, her voice has disappeared beneath the whine. As it becomes too much he leans his weight against the rock wall and shuts his eyes.

It's then they come. Flashes of images: Of screams and fire. Of impossible vistas of emptiness and death. And shrieking overhead, shrieking everywhere; grotesque, winged creatures with no eyes. Some with faces we know; Gabriel, Simon, and the gargoyle. All these images are being jammed into both their minds by the cave.

Thomas forces his eyes open but the scenes playing all around him won't go away. Tears are running down Katherine's face as she stands there locked in the same images. Thomas stumbles about the room as if drunk, the visions, incomprehensibly black visions of war and destruction on an alien plateau, eat his brain. He sinks to his knees and begins to cry.

THOMAS

Oh no...Oh God no...

Katherine's curled up on the floor like a child, weeping. The images are driving them mad. Thomas, fighting the insanity pounding at him, crawls pathetically across the floor to the oil lamp. His fingers grasp it spasmodically as he rises to his knees and leans back.

THOMAS

No!

He HEAVES the lamp against the cave wall, where it EXPLODES, the oil erupting into a swirling blaze that CONSUMES the corner.

The images break a second in the heat and light and sucking wind. Just long enough for Thomas to grab Katherine's arm and pull her out of the room.

EXT. MINE - DAY

Katherine and Thomas lie in the dust outside the mine's tunnel entrance. Catching their breath. Trying to organize and repair the short circuits in their brains. Thomas rolls on his side, squints at the sun. Katherine's voice is faint and raspy.

KATHERINE

What...What was that? Hell?

THOMAS

...No. The voices. They were screaming and fighting over...theology. They don't sweat much about that in hell. But they do in ...heaven.

He squeezes a handful of dirt in his hands.

THOMAS

The son of a bitch. He carries it around with him like a photo album. A big, greasy cloud wherever he goes. They all do.

KATHERINE

How can that be heaven? Jesus Christ. How? I don't even believe in heaven.

The tears start rolling down her face. She looks up and shouts at the endless sky above them.

KATHERINE

You dumb fucking assholes! How could you have done that!

THOMAS

That extra chapter by St. John was right. It's a war...Just like the first one. Just like when the angel Michael beat Lucifer and cast him out. Only now they've turned on each other...Turned on each other in a civil war over theology.

He laughs hopelessly at the insanity of it all.

THOMAS

Oh sweet God, theology.
(sighs)

"God's wild bunch".

(shouts)

God's morons!

KATHERINE

How do you know know so much about that?

THOMAS

I just know.

(shakes his head)

Yes folks, the good news is that there's life after death in heaven. The bad news is that it's as screwed up as here.

KATHERINE

They were like us.

THOMAS

They are us. Aborted children. And they need us. They need our corrupt, dark souls for their fight. They need...

KATHERINE

...Mary.

Katherine climbs abruptly to her feet and walks for the car.

THOMAS

What are you doing?

KATHERINE

I don't know what this is. I don't know what I believe. I don't know if my sanity is lying back in that cave flopping around waiting for me. But I know one thing. Those... Those things aren't taking her!

INT. THOMAS'S CAR

Katherine and Thomas drive along in silence. Finally,

KATHERINE

In those...visions...did you ever see...God?

THOMAS

No.

KATHERINE

Me either.

INT. MARY'S GRANDMOTHER'S TRAILER

Katherine and Thomas open the trailer door and enter cautiously.

KATHERINE

Mary?

Thomas looks out the window and notices for the first time, parked behind the trailer, Gabriel's rambler. He immediately pulls out his pistol, runs for the closed door at the end of the hall and KICKS it in. The door FLIES open, revealing Gabriel sitting on the bed beside Mary.

THOMAS

Get away from her.

His gun's leveled at Gabriel's head. The angel sits there impassively, then smiles.

GABRIEL

You know. Son of a bitch, the priest wanna-be actually figured it out. That's a rare club, son. At least down here.

THOMAS

Back away from the kid, man. Now.

GABRIEL

She won't feel anything, honest. I'll have to tear her apart of course --just the way it goes-- but it'll be all right in the end. A good catholic boy like you, Mr. Dagget, you should be on my side.

THOMAS

Goddamn it--

GABRIEL

You're gonna have to watch that profanity.

Jerry suddenly LEAPS out from behind the door and TACKLES Thomas to the carpet. The gun skitters to one side as Jerry SINKS his

rotting teeth into Thomas's shoulder. Thomas cries out and SLAMS his fist against Jerry's head, knocking off an ear.

Gabriel turns back to Mary's frightened face and smiles as he runs a hand through her hair.

GABRIEL

It'll only be a moment...

Katherine suddenly HAMMERS Gabriel across the side of the head with a chair, KNOCKING him to the floor. As he gets up she HITS him again.

Thomas manages to bring his leg up and KICKS Jerry hard against the chest, forcing him off.

Gabriel GRABS both of Katherine's legs and PULLS, CRASHING her flat on her back.

Thomas scrambles for his gun, grabs it, and as Jerry comes at him again spins and FIRES twice. The slugs RIP into Jerry's chest and knock him to his knees. As the putrid, curdled juices pump lumpily out of him, Jerry looks up at Thomas and smiles.

JERRY

Thanks man, I appreciate it. You're a sport.

Thomas FIRES a slug into his forehead. Jerry's brain winks out as he collapses to the floor, dead.

Thomas's gun is abruptly WRENCHED from his hand onto the bed as Gabriel NAILS him with a thrown lamp, vaults the bed between them, and grabs him by the collar, SLAMMING Thomas up against the wall. He looks down at Jerry's finally lifeless corpse, incensed at Thomas's handiwork.

GABRIEL

You little pest, do you have any idea how hard it is to get one of those?

He THROWS Thomas down onto a table, SPLINTERING it. Katherine climbs shakily to her knees.

KATHERINE

You son of a bitch, why? Why do this?

GABRIEL

Because I'm an angel, you miserable wretch!
I kill first borns while their mothers watch!
I turn whole cities into salt! I even, when I
feel like it, rip the souls from little girls!
And from now until eternity, the only thing
you'll be able to count on in your pathetic
little existance is never knowing why!

(cont'd)

GABRIEL (cont'd)

(deep breath)

I'm wasting my time here.

(turns to Mary)

C'mon petunia, let's get on with it...

Gabriel walks over to the bed. The moment he gets close, Mary lifts Thomas's pistol up from the sheets and SHOTS him twice, the impact KNOCKING him on his ass.

Katherine rushes to Mary, scoops her up and runs for the door. She pauses beside Thomas, still lying in the wreckage of the table.

THOMAS

Go. Go!

Katherine disappears through the bedroom doorway. Gabriel spins around and stands. Thomas leaps from a ragged crouch, HITTING Gabriel low with a body-block. It's like butting concrete.

Gabriel picks up Thomas by the scruff of the neck and HEAVES him THROUGH the flimsy room paneling. Thomas CRASHES with a mass of splinters into the kitchen. He stumbles backward hopelessly as Gabriel pursues him through the trailer. He desperately throws pots, glasses, anything at Gabriel. Finally trapped, he scrambles up onto the dinner table, SCATTERING salt and sugar bowls, and DIVES through the leveled window.

OUTSIDE

Thomas, in a hail of shattered glass, smacks the red earth, pulls himself up to his knees and tries to stumble and crawl away as Gabriel BANGS open the trailer door and stomps down the stairs toward Katherine, her arms around Mary.

KATHERINE

...You...

He eases his gait, measuring the distance to her.

KATHERINE

...Can't...

There's just those sunglasses coming. Those endless pits of black.

KATHERINE

...Have Her!!

Katherine lifts Thomas's pistol and FIRES. Again. Again. The slugs BANG off the corrugated metal, SMASH a window, KICK up some dust,
And PUNCTURE the propane tank beneath the trailer.
-WUMPP-BAM!
The entire trailer EXPLODES in a fiery cloud of TWISTING METAL.

Katherine huddles Mary close to the ground as flaming chunks WHACK everywhere.

Gabriel is HAMMERED to the earth and disappears in the rolling fire cloud. Thomas, further away, is KNOCKED head-over-heels in the ruddy dust.

The fire cloud dissapates quickly into the sky, leaving behind scorched brush, and little else, crackling softly. Gabriel's body looks blackened and still. Katherine rushes to Thomas, who's pulled himself up to his knees, a ragged slice above his eye bleeding badly. She helps him to his feet and over to the pickup, where he sits down against the tire as Katherine pulls out her first aid kit. Mary's there, standing with her shaken grandmother.

THOMAS
(re grandmother)

Where...

KATHERINE
She was coming up the street.

MARY
Is Gabriel dead?

Mary's knelt down beside Thomas.

MARY
They're not like you and me. You've got to cut their hearts out. The only thing God gave them.

A sherrif car ROARS up, the two deputies exiting warily.

DEPUTY
What the hell happened here?

Katherine's wiping the blood out of Thomas's eye. Gasping from the shearing pain, he tosses an ID at the foot of the deputy.

THOMAS
LAPD.

DEPUTY
(looks at it, hands it to partner)
That's a start. How about the rest of it?

From somewhere back in town there's the growl of a volunteer fire engine.

THOMAS
That man over there. He's wanted. Murder.
I'm taking him in.
(grimaces)

-Shit...

The pain's unbearable. Katherine dabs his cut with disinfectant.

DEPUTY

I think you're going to the hospital first.

THOMAS

-No, I have to--

Again, the pain.
The second deputy has walked over to Gabriel.

DEPUTY

Is he alive?

DEPUTY #2

He's alive.

DEPUTY

Cuff him. We'll take him to the hospital in our car.

THOMAS

-No, you don't understand. You have to let me have him--

The volunteer fire engine growls up through the weeds, drowning out Thomas's words. Two firemen kneel down beside him with medical kits.

The deputy has walked over to his partner and the two are dragging back between them a cuffed, comatose Gabriel.

THOMAS

(hoarse, faint)

You'll never hold him.--

Thomas tries to get up, but the pain and a hand from the firemen keep him down. As the deputies pass, he manages to desperately grab the one's pant cuff.

THOMAS

Take off his sunglasses...Jesus Christ, just take off his sunglasses...

Gabriel's head lies low between the shoulders. The deputy looks with concern at the firemen.

FIREMAN

(re Thomas)

He'll be all right. Just a bad hit.

The deputy nods. As they carry on to the car with Gabriel, the angel turns his head slightly and smiles a smile only for Thomas.

FIREMAN
(to partner)
Let's get a splint.

The patrol car pulls away. As the firemen walk back to their engine, Thomas looks frantically at Katherine.

THOMAS
We have to get out of here.

KATHERINE
But your head...

THOMAS
If you want Mary to stay alive past sundown we have to leave, and we have to do it now.

They lock eyes. Then Katherine without a word helps Thomas up into the passenger side of the pickup. Mary gathers her grandmother into the pickup's bed and climbs up beside her as Katherine starts the engine. The firemen turn in confusion as the truck peels out of the lot and up onto the road.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Katherine's truck shoots by. Just before town, near the copper mine, it slows down at a junction.

And there, lying on its side down the embankment, is the sheriff's patrol car. A single, bent tire turns aimlessly.

Katherine hits the gas and takes the junction that leads away from town, out onto the endless expanse of the plateau.

INT. TRUCK

The bandage on Thomas's forehead covers most of one eye. He closes the other tightly, riding a spasm of pain, before letting his forehead rest against the door glass and gazing out at the empty tracks of land.

THOMAS
Where are we going?

KATHERINE
Mary's village.

Katherine looks over her shoulder to Mary's grandmother sitting in the truck bed. She nods in understanding.

DISSOLVE TO:

Katherine's pickup passing alone through the wrinkled desert.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

A trading post with a few pumps, growing orange in the weakening afternoon light. A scruffy dog barks constantly as the teenage Indian sticks the nozzle in Katherine's pickup. Still glassy-eyed with throbbing pain, Thomas takes another handful of aspirin and climbs out of the cab.

There's a tiny, weatherbeaten church across the weedy lot from the trading post with a pay phone bolted to it. Thomas crunches across the lot, picks up the receiver, and punches in some numbers.

TELEPHONE VOICE

County Coroner's office, Assistant Coroner
Rapahel speaking.

THOMAS

Willie?

VOICE

Tom?

THOMAS

You weren't crazy, man.

And Thomas hangs up. He backs away from the phone and for the first time notices the church it's attached to.

INT. CHURCH

Thomas steps inside. It's empty and there's some doubt whether it's been used in a generation. The pews are dusty and scraped, some broken down completely. Thomas sits in one and looks across the space and dust and years to the crucifix hanging behind the altar.

THOMAS

So what's the deal, huh?

The pew creaks and groans as he shifts his weight.

THOMAS

I mean, do you have any kind of plan here?
Cause I'm just about of ideas, friend.

Jesus' pressed-metal eyes gaze only upward.

THOMAS

Do you even listen? Do you still come to places like this? Old Man, you have been calling me most of my goddamn life, but every time I get close, you just keep moving that far away. What's it to be? You want me to kill your henchmen? Can't you even control your own killers anymore?

Thomas holds his face in his hands a silent moment. When it raises we see the raw hurt in the eyes as he shouts,

THOMAS

What do you want from me!

The only reply is dust dancing in the light and the rumble of semis on the highway.

Standing in the back, watching Thomas with tears welling in her eyes, is Katherine.

DISSOLVE TO:

The road's turned to dirt and the plateau into a maze of ragged cliffs and brutally hacked canyons. The light is shadowy and golden now as Katherine's pickup turns off the small dirt road onto an even smaller one that winds impossibly up the side of a volcanic butte.

Higher and higher the truck climbs on the rutted and treacherous path, till at last it crests the ridge and comes upon

THE VILLAGE

Perched frighteningly on the leading edge of Old Woman Butte, this is the home of the Bitter Sky Clan. The village is a small grouping of ancient adobe walled hogans first built a thousand years ago by the Anasazi. There's no electricity here, no TV antennas or frozen yogurt. Just the slow curl of cooking fires drifting up through smoke holes and the stern, deeply lined face of an old Navaho man approaching the pickup as Katherine stops.

The old man wears jeans, a bright maroon silk shirt, and a black felt reservation hat with a turkey-feather. He holds in his right hand a small leather case.

OLD MAN

I am Bartholomew Grey Horse, born to the Deer Spring Clan, born for the Slow Talking People. Today I am the yataalii for Mary Tsosie of the Bitter Sky Clan.

The old man, Bartholomew Grey Horse, walks up to Mary and her grandmother sitting in the bed.

GREY HORSE

Ya-tah.

GRANDMOTHER

Ya-tah-hey.

Several villagers approach and greet Mary and her grandmother, some nodding politely to Thomas and Katherine as they climb out of the cab. Nearly all of them are elderly.

Thomas, one eye still half-shut by a bandage, walks over to the village's edge where a short stone wall, and little else, separates the adobe homes from the long, 2000 foot drop to the desert floor. He leans against it and gazes out on a view that must encompass half the world. In all directions, for tens upon tens of miles, there are only volcanic spires and crumbling buttes, all reduced from up here to short, ominous playthings. A village truly alone in the world.

MARY

This is a good place.

She's appeared beside him. Thomas crouches down to her level and smiles.

THOMAS

Yes?

Mary's sight is on the view, eyeing it critically.

MARY

Separate water source. Stocked grain. Only one possible approach. A man could, with the proper defenses, hold off an entire battalion for weeks. Months.

Thomas's voice sighs sadly as he runs a hand softly through her hair.

THOMAS

Which one of you is that talking, Mary?
Or do you even know anymore?

Mary's eyes fill with tears as her grandmother appears and leads her back to the adobe hogans.
Grey Horse, the yataalii, is there now.

GREY HORSE

We will start the Sing soon to remove the Yei spirit and stop the ghost sickness.

THOMAS

This might not be the work of a Navaho ghost.

GREY HORSE

It's all the same.

DISSOLVE TO:

Night creeps over the Chuska Mountains, across the crusty caliche flats and over the village, pushing back the dying day to a thin, fading blue line etched across the horizon. As the darkness settles on the hogans we see a glimmer of light from within and the rising, guttural chants of the yataalii.

INT. KIVA - NIGHT

Under the village, beneath the surface of the butte, is the large communal kiva room. Accesible by a single ladder through a single smoke hole, it is down here that the village performs its Enemy Ghost Way for Mary.

The little girl is there, attended by her grandmother, sitting stoically still on a blanket as Grey Horse, grasping his painted prayer sticks, by the glow of a fire chants the Enemy Ghost Way cure. Katherine's eyes sting in the smokey air as she watches Grey Horse take from his case small handfulls of colored sand that he pours in fine patterns onto the floor.

The whole Bitter Sky Clan surrounds them. Old, lined faces. A small, dying people here to support its last granddaughter.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Katherine stands there in the chilly darkness outside the kiva. Mary's grandmother, passing with some other women, pauses and squeezes Katherine's arm.

GRANDMOTHER

Now we sleep, Katherine. Tomorrow, after dark, we begin again.

INSIDE THE KIVA

The fire has died to embers, casting its weak glow on a now empty room.

OUTSIDE

Katherine wanders along the edge of the village, turning up her collar under a blinding mass of stars. There's nothing beyond the village. Not a light, not a sound. Say the wind. It is the icy brush of wind on her body that now whispers.

VOICE

Hello, Katherine.

Like the wind, it is low and thin and hoarse. Like the wind it seems to come from everywhere. And, like the wind, it is utterly without pity or remorse.

Katherine turns.

Perched on the wall behind her in a low crouch is a figure clad entirely in layers of black. Its head and hands are hairless and waxy white. There are eyes in this winged head, but blood chilling ones of putrid yellow. There are endless scars and shapes and wrinkles, but mostly, only, there are the eyes.

Katherine gulps down, with only partial success, the hysteria rising in her throat.

KATHERINE

Oh Lord, I can't do this. I can't do this anymore...

FIGURE

We must talk, Katherine.

It's takes all her strength to look upon him.

KATHERINE

You're....You're....
(tries to form the word)
...God?

FIGURE

God is love, Katherine.

The eyes narrow. Rippling pools of unfathomable evil.

FIGURE

-I don't love you.

There's a crouched silhouette beside the figure. Dimmer. Skinny. A wheezing sycophant. An afterthought. Katherine backs away from both of them.

KATHERINE

I can't. I can't do this tonight. Go away.

FIGURE

I can kill you, Katherine. I can lay you out and fill your mouth with your mother's feces. Or I can talk with you.

Katherine stops. Faces him.

FIGURE

I am here, before you, in a form to put you at ease.

KATHERINE

Good job.

The sycophant shivers and ruffles something feathery under its cloak.

FIGURE

I rarely do this in person. I am, perhaps, somewhat out of touch.

KATHERINE

Are you one of them?

FIGURE

No.

KATHERINE

You're not an angel?

FIGURE

Oh, I am an angel. A very special one. The first. The oldest. The naive eagle scout, he once loved me above all others, and I him. It was the only true love for either of us, but like all true love, it couldn't possibly last.

The figure cranes his neck around to the horizon beyond them. The movement makes a liquid, snapping sound.

FIGURE

The winged party boys will come, Katherine. They'll come to feed on the guts of your little Mary.

KATHERINE

What do you care?

FIGURE

I have my interests...

He turns back to her.

FIGURE

The naive eagle scout, he has his interests too. He even has a place for them, as I do for mine. Big, shiny place. You'd like it. Only it's been empty for a long time. Can't open till after the resurrection. The problem's with the hired help. Always had problems with the hired help. They're arrogant, boastful little pricks. Not like me. What I did I did for love. But they, the winged party boys, even before the park could open for its first customer, they started fighting over the popcorn stand.

The figure shifts his perch on the wall.

FIGURE

You see, Katherine, heaven can't start accepting guests till this fight is settled. And without people, there is no heaven. All those good and true souls left mouldering in the ground clutching their H-tickets and waiting and waiting and waiting...Some, lying down there with the worms century after century, they start to get doubts about the whole program. That's when, out

(cont'd)

FIGURE (cont'd)
 of sheer boredom, some of them come to me. Because I'm always open for business. 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Even on Christmas.

The figure's face darkens.

FIGURE
 Some of the angels cheat. They sneak a few souls in to help with the fight. The really dark ones. And now one of them has found a special soul so wonderfully sick that it might just win it for them. And if one side wins, even the wrong one, then there's no fight. And if there's no fight, there can be a heaven.

KATHERINE
 And if there's a heaven?

FIGURE
 I'd be very unhappy.
 (beat)
 I am here to help you and the little bitch not because I love you, not because I care about you, but because I want this war to go on and on and on.

The figure straightens up, stretching its spine.

FIGURE
 I bring you the chance to save your Mary, Katherine. And along the way, stop the resurrection.

KATHERINE
 How?

FIGURE
 Listen when I speak. Now go to bed, Katherine. Tomorrow, I promise you, is a big day.

INT. HOGAN

Thomas's sitting on the hard-packed floor, leaning against the adobe wall, maybe trying to sleep. Mostly trying to ignore the thumping pain in his head. The oil lamp's flame shudders in the gust of Katherine opening the door.

THOMAS
 Is it over?

KATHERINE
 For now. They start again tomorrow.

THOMAS
And at the end of it?

KATHERINE
The Enemy Way chant removes the invading
yei ghost.

THOMAS
Will it work on a general's soul?

KATHERINE
We'll see.
(beat)
How's the head?

THOMAS
Still attached. Barely.
She sits down on the floor beside him.

KATHERINE
Here, I'll change the bandage.
She carefully unwraps the blood-soaked gauze.

KATHERINE
Does that hurt?

THOMAS
No.

KATHERINE
Then I must be doing it wrong.
She peels back the compress and dabs the wound.

KATHERINE
I saw the devil tonight.

THOMAS
How nice. Which one?

KATHERINE
The main one. Satan. Lucifer. The
dark angel. You know.

THOMAS
What did he have to say?

KATHERINE
That he did it all for love. That and I have
a choice. Mary's life or a billion souls
waiting in the pipeline for heavenland to open.

THOMAS
You're not kidding, are you?

KATHERINE
No sir.

THOMAS
Satan? You're sure?

KATHERINE
You had to be there.

Thomas suddenly slams his fist against the wall in anger.

THOMAS
Why wasn't I!

KATHERINE
We can double date next time if it's
that important to you.

THOMAS
You don't understand, I've spent my whole
life...

(looks upward)
I don't suppose it would occur to anyone in
authority to fill me in on what's going
on every once in awhile, huh? Shit!

The ache in his head's flared up. He leans it back against the
wall to ease the pain.

THOMAS
Did he say anything about the Nicene
Council? About the rank of Jesus Christ
in the holy Trinity?

KATHERINE
It didn't seem important to him.

Katherine finishes taping the new bandage.

KATHERINE
Are you a priest?

THOMAS
A near miss.

KATHERINE
Why?

THOMAS
It's a long story.

KATHERINE

This may be your last chance to tell it.

A wind outside rustles through the hogans.

THOMAS

The other night, you were talking about waiting for a voice to call you to something. Well, let me tell you, the worst thing that can happen to you is to be called to something. Since I can remember a voice from somewhere deep in the Church called me. So loud and so often that by thirteen I knew I was going to be a priest. You know what that's like? My parents, friends, all of them thought I was crazy. But see, I had this voice. The voice that kept coaxing me along, telling me there was a reason. So I entered the seminary and was half way to my starched white collar when my mother, father, and my little brother were wiped out in a car crash.

He pauses, the old emotions creeping back up on him.

THOMAS

I had never asked anything of the voice. Not when the neighborhood kids made fun of me, not when my father looked down at me like some knock-kneed faggot. I never questioned a damn thing. But on the morning I spent looking down at three parallel graves, I asked it one question. Why. Why were these people taken from me? And the voice, that same voice that would wrench me out of my sleep some nights with its jabbering, it was suddenly stone silent. It was the only question I ever asked of it and it just left me hanging in the fucking wind...

He blinks back the tears welling in his eye.

THOMAS

So after that I traded in priest school for homicide school. Because if God wouldn't talk to me the devil sure as hell would, and his whys were a lot easier to understand.

KATHERINE

We've never seen God, have we? Not in any of this.

THOMAS

Yeah, He's certainly a shy son of a bitch, I'll give Him that.

KATHERINE

Maybe we're not supposed to. Maybe that's faith.

THOMAS

Do you still have faith in anything, Katherine?

KATHERINE

I have faith in Mary. And that I'm going to save that little girl from those creeping things out there. From all of them.

THOMAS

Maybe you were called to something after all.

KATHERINE

Maybe we both were.

The oil lamp wanes and fades. Katherine lays her head on Thomas's shoulder, and as darkness swallows them he holds her. They hold each other.

DISSOLVE TO:

John the bus driver lying fully dressed on his bed asleep. The night breeze through the window, and maybe something else, tickles his nose. His eyes open, blink, turn left, right, then up,

--And see Gabriel perched on the headboard, staring down at him.

GABRIEL

Heavy sleeper, John.

John's eyes open wide in shock. Gabriel's skin is blackened and blistered in parts. Whole shards of his shirt are missing. John tries to sit up but Gabriel forces his head back down with his palm. With the ease of a spider he slides down and beside John.

JOHN

Don't--Don't hurt me, man. My wallet's in the dresser.

GABRIEL

Don't be such a materialist, John.
(sees empty bourbon bottle on dresser, sighs)
No end to your bad habits.

JOHN

What do you want?

GABRIEL

A moment of your time.

JOHN

You ought to have that nose looked at, man.

Gabriel leans said nose in very close and whispers,

GABRIEL

Where are they, John? Katherine and Mary?
Where would they go?

JOHN

What? Mary? I don't know.

GABRIEL

Sure you do. Think hard.

JOHN

No, really. I don't know. The school maybe.

GABRIEL

Now you're not even trying, John. You're
Katherine's best friend. She tells you
everything.

JOHN

I'm just the driver, y'know?

Gabriel extends a blistered, open palm over John's face.

GABRIEL

I can help you remember, John...

FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM

We see Gabriel leaning over John as a sickly yellow glow begins to rise and reflect off the walls. Beneath it comes John's worst and deepest screams...

CUT TO:

Gabriel SPLASHING the soot off his face and arms in a small, institutional bathroom. He looks at himself in the mirror, runs a hand through his hair, and walks out the door into

A HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

At the end of it is the intensive care unit, that institutional purgatory where a small handful of patients, wired and tubed and oxygenated, lay inconclusively between life and death. There's a nurse's station there, all health status video screens and a single nurse that looks up from her work at Gabriel.

NURSE

Can I help you?

GABRIEL

Someone's going to die here soon. I'll just be a minute.

NURSE

There's no visitors allowed in ICU.

GABRIEL

The timing's important. I can smell these things, you know.

The nurse reaches for the telephone. Gabriel takes it away from her with one hand and with the other grasps her face open-palmed and whispers,

GABRIEL

Go to sleep.

The nurse slides out of her chair and collapses to the floor. Gabriel pulls out the metal clipboards holding each patient's chart and flips through them, tossing one after another aside as unsuitable.

GABRIEL

Recovering...Recovering...Stable...
(finally settles on one)
Deteriorating critical.

Satisfied, he steps over to one of the beds, pulls back the curtain and sits down beside an unconscious, middle-aged woman. He watches patiently, listening the beeping scrawl of the EKG above her.

It was weak to begin with but now it's faltering badly, becoming the unsynched etchings of a child. A beeping alarm has begun to ring and her breathing is slowing to nothing. At the last possible moment Gabriel places his fingers across her face, whispering to her, coaxing her.

GABRIEL

Whoa, not just yet. Come on back. That's it...

The EKG's still flat but the woman is breathing. She begins to choke, to cough, then suddenly sits up and opens her eyes. She looks in disbelief around her, finally settling on Gabriel's grin.

GABRIEL

Hi.

A look of utter desolation and sadness sweeps over her as she begins to cry.

WOMAN

No, no...

KATHERINE

When he comes.

THOMAS

There's no phone here? Radio?
 (she just looks at him)
 Stupid question.

(beat)

If we were smart we'd leave. Get to a town. A sheriff station.

KATHERINE

Mary's ceremony isn't over yet. The Enemy Ghost Way. The alien spirit hasn't been driven out.

THOMAS

Do you really believe in the ceremony?

KATHERINE

Would you have believed in any of this three days ago?

THOMAS

(nods)

So we stay and dump the General's soul.

KATHERINE

You have the gun?

THOMAS

With one shot left. The spares--
 (sniffs his shirt)

--And a change of clothing, are all still at the hotel.

(sighs)

We're going to have to come up with something.

KATHERINE

We could always ask him.

Thomas looks up. She referring to Lucifer, who's appeared perched on the edge of the low, eye-level hogan roof. The sycophant is also nearby, chattering its teeth and staring at Katherine with jealous, rabid eyes.

Lucifer shivers, a claw turning up the collar of his cloak.

LUCIFER

I always forget how cold it gets in the desert.

The swimming, bottomless eyes fall on Thomas.

LUCIFER

Mr. Dagget, I presume. How's the faith?

Thomas can't bring himself to say anything. To form the words.

LUCIFER

Come come, must you be so wishy-washy about everything? With the absent-minded eagle scout, I can see that. But you're looking at the devil man, say something.

THOMAS

Fuck you.

LUCIFER

Much better. Can I have some coffee?

Thomas gingerly hands him the cup. The angel Lucifer lifts it, and with something unimaginably awful darting out of his mouth, drinks. He offers the mug back to Thomas for a sip.

THOMAS

Keep it.

He finishes it. Cranes his neck.

LUCIFER

I have come to remind you that the winged party boys are just that: spoiled boys. You are armed, however pathetically, with the one thing they never really understood: theology. It's not much, but that's life.

THOMAS

Is this supposed to be our "win one for The Ripper" speech?

LUCIFER

Don't press your luck, Mr. Dagget.

And you know instantly, in the bottom of your stomach, that those eyes mean it.

LUCIFER

Go and get ready, Thomas.

Thomas hesitates, holds the gaze, then turns and leaves. In an instant Lucifer sweeps down from the hogan roof to Katherine's side. Face and eyes and maggot breath uncomfortably close, he smiles.

LUCIFER

Have you ever considered Katherine, that the great absentee landlord, the soft-eyed
(cont'd)

LUCIFER (cont'd)
 eagle scout your childhood prayers are for,
 is just using you? That you're only the
 exterminator to get rid of his pests?

Lucifer places a cloaked arm around her shoulder and leads her to the walled edge to look out across the endless plateau. His mouth presses against her ear and whispers,

LUCIFER
 God's junkies are coming, Katherine. And
 when they do, all hell is going to break
 loose...

CUT TO:

A tiny speck on the empty horizon. It grows, takes shape, and finally becomes a red convertible rambler as it WOOSHES past on a desolate throat of forgotten highway.

Gabriel's at the wheel. Beside him, grey-blond hair streaming out behind her, is Rachael, recently lifted from the file-and-forget section of the hospital ICU. She tilts her head up. Lets the sun warm her pallor. Just a sociopathic angel and his somewhat deceased babe out for a top-down cruise across a sixty million year old desert.

It could happen.

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - DAY

A reality bruised waitress, Madge, sets down a coffee and milkshake before Gabriel. He downs the shake in one belt.

GABRIEL
 Say, Ma'am, any idea where I can find Old
 Woman Butte?

MADGE
 It's on the reservation.

GABRIEL
 I don't suppose you could be just a tad
 more specific. Madge.

The waitress' eyes move from the guy with sunglasses and burn marks on his shirt to the woman sitting alone outside in the rambler.

MADGE
 Isn't your friend hungry?

GABRIEL
 Not for a while, I'm afraid. Funniest thing.

Madge has a lot of things she misses in her life, but one of them she decides isn't Gabriel.

MADGE

Take 522 to the Sonsela Wash cut-off. First dirt road go left. Twenty, twenty-five miles you'll see it. Big, black and all alone.

Gabriel downs the coffee, stands, and tosses a bill on the counter.

GABRIEL

I doubt we'll meet again.

MADGE

Suits me.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Thomas drags a heavy chain from Katherine's truck and begins fastening it to a post. Lucifer watches perched on a nearby rooftop.

THOMAS

You could always lend a hand.

Lucifer just smiles or sneers or whatever he does with that hideous mouth.

INSIDE THE KIVA

Grey Horse begins laying out his prayer instruments as Mary is prepared with paint and oils.

OUTSIDE

Katherine leans against the doorway, nervously watching the horizon.

DISSOLVE TO:

The sky thinning into uneasy pastels as the sun falls unceremoniously toward the mountains. A few lanterns have been lit, and from inside the kiva can be heard the chants of the Navaho Enemy Ghost Way.

Katherine's eyes are still on a horizon dropping off into shadow. She stiffens. There, at the end of the earth, appears a silent plume of dust. It could be anybody's car, but it can only be one car. Thomas steps up beside her.

KATHERINE

He's coming.

Thomas sticks his head into the kiva, speaks softly to one of the elderly villagers attending the ceremony.

THOMAS

Is there any way to speed this up?

VILLAGER

No.

A fire has been built on the kiva's floor. Through the choking smoke can be seen Mary lying on a mat as Grey Horse chants to the yei spirits and adds fine colored earth to the growing sand painting beside her. His voice rises and falls in guttural syntax. He's coaxing. Coaxing the alien spirit out of the child.

THOMAS

Lock the door.

He pulls his head out and hands Katherine the pistol.

THOMAS

Stay inside. It's only one round, so make it count.

There's a pause and for a moment their eyes lock. She touches his arm, almost says something, then disappears into the kiva. Thomas closes the door behind her. He turns and looks out at the distant plume of dust. Growing closer.

EXT. GABRIEL'S RAMBLER - DAY

Radio turned up, sophmoric grin glued on his face, Gabriel roars past and begins the snaking climb up the side of the butte. The sun has almost completely slipped away now, leaving the land a deathly bluish grey.

The road flattens out at the top of the butte and Gabriel can see the village glowing at the far end. He punches the rambler, winding it up for the last stretch, and pats the blonde on the knee.

GABRIEL

You'll like this, Rachael.

Maybe not.

There's a sudden glint of metal in the headlights as Thomas at the last moment PULLS UP the heavy chain and HOOKS it over the far post. Gabriel does something pointless with the brakes and SLAMS forward into it. The whole rear of the car STANDS UP on impact, PITCHING Gabriel through the windshield into the dust.

Thomas steps out from behind the post armed with an iron bar. The rambler hisses and belches a death rattle as he cautiously walks toward the spot of gloom where Gabriel lies.

GABRIEL
(breathless)

Nice move.

Thomas's feet crunch softly closer.

GABRIEL
You ought to come work for us. Upstairs.
We sneak the odd civilian in now and then,
you know. You'd like it. Nobody tells you
when to go to bed, can eat all the ice cream
you want. And you get to kill. All day and
all night. Just like an angel.

Thomas doesn't answer. Gabriel's body looks ravaged as he
carefully steps closer and closer.

GABRIEL
Save yourself, friend. Why go to the wall
with the bitch and her rug rat? It'll all
turn out the same anyway. Here or in heaven,
we're still gonna tear the kid apart.

THOMAS
I'm not an angel, heaven or hell. I'm a
man you eyeless puke, which means I have
one thing you never will. A soul. And though
I may, somewhere inside, believe in a God, I
will never, never, believe in you.

GABRIEL
A little speechy today, aren't we?
(sighs)
Okay pal, have it your way.

Gabriel's legs suddenly SWING AROUND and SMACK Thomas, sprawling
him back into the dirt. The iron bar goes flying as Gabriel in a
flash is on top of him. Thomas thrashes but Gabriel easily pins
his shoulders and sits on his chest. Without hurry he uncurls the
fingers of his right hand.

GABRIEL
This is going to really, really hurt.

Thomas's eyes are wild with fear.

THOMAS
...You---your war...

Gabriel's spread fingers lower themselves toward his face.

GABRIEL
C'mon, son, out with it. Make this one count.

THOMAS
Your war's a lie!

GABRIEL
(pauses)
What?

THOMAS
Running around acting like this is really about whether Christ is just the son of God or if he is God. Bullshit! That's not what this is about at all, is it?

GABRIEL
You're wrong.

THOMAS
Then prove it to me, Gabriel. I studied three fucking years of theology before I picked up a gun. C'mon, you're chief goddamn angel, I'm just a little man. Prove to me Christ is just a son and less than God. Prove it!

Gabriel hesitates.

GABRIEL
I don't have to.

THOMAS
Because you can't! Because this war isn't about some obscure medieval hangup. You're just jealous.

GABRIEL
You're wrong!

THOMAS
Try me, Gabriel. Go on. Prove to me the temporal nature of the Trinity. Show me through logic how the Son of the Word can be separated from the Father. Fight me with philosophy, Gabriel!

GABRIEL
No!

THOMAS
Because you and your army are wrong! And you know it. You knew it sixteen centuries ago.

GABRIEL
We don't have to listen to him! He's just a son!

THOMAS

That's it. You're jealous. Jealous He could love something more than you...

GABRIEL
(hisses)

Shut up...

Gabriel's becoming unglued.

THOMAS

If you wanted to know so badly, Gabriel, why didn't you just ask Him? Why didn't you just ask God?

A shudder passes through Gabriel. He straightens up and looks down at Thomas as emotion racks his body.

GABRIEL

Because He doesn't talk to us anymore!

The two stare at one another. Then Gabriel, lost in himself, suddenly turns away from Thomas and walks into the darkness. For the village.

Thomas climbs quickly to his feet, spins around--
--And is HIT full-force by a rabid, SHRIEKING Rachael. Her legs lock around his body vise-like as her teeth and nails DIG into his skin. He cries out and stumbles to the ground. The two grapple furiously in the dust, Rachel's crazed face taking BITE after BITE out of his shoulder and neck.

Thomas manages a fistfull of her hair and YANKS the fangs off his shoulder. With his other arm he CUFFS her hard, BREAKING the grip and ROLLING her aside. He staggers to his knees and begins to run. Shrieking, a mad porcelin banshee out of the dusk, Rachael catches up and TACKLES him. On the way down his head strikes a small stone wall and the pain is white thunder. Gagging and weeping in blank shock, he crawls on his hands and knees as Rachael OPENS UP his arm from shoulder to elbow with her nails. As the blood tumbles like ribbons, Rachael JUMPS onto his back, DIGGING her claws into his scalp.

It's about all one human can take.

Mad with pain and anger and desperation, Thomas manages to climb to a shaky crouch, Rachael still shrieking on his back. Throwing all his weight backward, he JAMS her into the short stone wall. The impact SNAPS her hold and PROPELS her over the wall--

And two thousand feet down the side of the butte.

Thomas Dagget can only curl up into a ball, gulping shallow, shuddering breaths.

IN THE VILLAGE

Gabriel walks resolutely up to the first hogan and KICKS down the plank wood door. No one home. He walks to the second and KICKS its door down. Nothing.

IN THE KIVA

Mary's ceremony is nearing a crescendo. Grey Horse has donned the colorful mask of the yei god Monster Slayer as the relatives now join in the guttural chants of the Enemy Ghost Way. Through the thick, choking smoke of the ceremonial fire we see Katherine, nervously watching the door.

IN THE DARKNESS OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE

Thomas tries hopelessly to make his way back. Stumbling every few steps, he's beyond pain and into driven numbness. It's hopeless though. We know it.

IN THE VILLAGE

Gabriel KICKS down another door to another empty hogan. There's only one left. As he approaches, from within can be heard the muffled sound of chanting.

THOMAS

Takes a few more fumbling steps and falls again. He reaches out to something metal for support. It's Katherine's pickup.

GABRIEL

Steps up to the kiva door and KICKS it. The frame buckles but holds. He steps back a few feet, puts all his weight into a turn, and KICKS again. The door SHATTERS.

INSIDE

Wood splinters ROCKET through the smoke as Gabriel appears in the doorway. Grey Horse, everyone, freezes.

GABRIEL

Relax folks, it's just a soul.

From out of the smoke steps Katherine. She FIRES, one round, into Gabriel's side. The archangel is pitched against the kiva's wall, where he stays a moment before turning to Katherine.

GABRIEL

I'm getting real tired of you.

She stands her ground between him and the child.

KATHERINE

Go to hell.

GABRIEL

Heaven, darling. Heaven. At least get the zip code right.

KATHERINE

It's all the same, isn't it?

GABRIEL

No. In heaven we believe in love.

KATHERINE

And what do you love, Gabriel?

Once again, the shade of doubt holds him up. But it's quickly pushed aside for a corrupted grin. He's given up all pretense.

GABRIEL

--Cracking your skull.

He advances on her.

KATHERINE

That's all it is for you anymore, Gabriel, isn't it? Just the killing and the burning. You don't work for God anymore. You don't fight for love.

GABRIEL

Shut up!

And he's on her. With his left arm he brutally forces her to her knees as his right hand, palm out and fingers splayed, clamp themselves over her face. Katherine's mouth opens in a silent scream as the pain, immediate and beyond endurance, flows through her body.

From somewhere outside, there's a sound.

Katherine gulps chokes of agony as her very clothes begin to smolder around her.

We hear the sound once more, closer, before--

The entire kiva wall EXPLODES INWARD as Katherine's pickup CRASHES through it. The mangled grill and hood SLAM into Gabriel from the side and SMASH him to the ground like a broken puppet. Katherine falls backward to the floor, gets up, and runs to the truck's cab. Inside sits a near catatonic Thomas. Katherine takes only a second to share a look with him before reaching back and pulling out the pickup's tire iron.

Gabriel, a shattered, broken thing, pulls himself up to his

knees. The sunglasses are gone and two eyeless pits stare out at Mary, huddled in the corner. Bleeding from every pore, one arm bent back the wrong way, he crawls across the floor toward her, his voice the milky slur of a stroke victim.

GABRIEL

God loves you, Mary!

Katherine brings the tire iron down on his skull with all her might, DRIVING him to the floor. She turns to Grey Horse, her eyes wild.

KATHERINE

Finish it.

He, everyone, just stare. Stunned to stone.

KATHERINE

Finish it!

Grey Horse timidly picks up his prayer stick and with a voice faltering and cracked, in the insane glare of the wrecked pickup's headlights, resumes the Enemy Ghost Way chant.

Katherine turns back to Gabriel.

KATHERINE

Go home.

She HITS him again with the tire iron. Then lifts it high once more above her head. She's going to crush him, to implode his skull.

When a hand stops her.
Sort of a hand. A claw. Lucifer's. He's standing behind her, holding the raised bar still.

LUCIFER

No.

Katherine releases the bar and lets it clang to the floor. Lucifer turns to the villagers, gazing fearfully at him as they awkwardly try to finish the chant.

LUCIFER

Please. Go on.

Lucifer's gaze falls on a deeply fucked-up Gabriel who groans at the sight of him.

GABRIEL

Oh man, this just isn't my day.

Lucifer kneels down beside him. Katherine instinctively starts to reach for the tire iron but the sycophant hisses a liquid,

chattering warning at her.

LUCIFER

Long time.

GABRIEL

The world's young, man.

LUCIFER

And full of ambition.

GABRIEL

This isn't your war.

LUCIFER

But I remember the last one. Michael's war.

GABRIEL

You lost.

LUCIFER

But lots of angels were with me. every one followed their leader out of heaven.

GABRIEL

Yeah yeah, I was there, remember?

LUCIFER

Except one. Oh, he was with me all right. He hated the Eagle Scout. Envied the power He gave to His Son. But this angel never came out front during the war. And when it ended he thought maybe, maybe the Eagle Scout didn't notice. So he laid low and towed the company line till he could start his own war. It was all just jealousy.

GABRIEL

You're dreaming.

LUCIFER

But maybe He did notice. Maybe that's why I'm here.

GABRIEL

--Stay away from me.

LUCIFER

You've always been a part of me, Gabriel. And now it's time to come home.

GABRIEL

Fuck you!

Lucifer slams Gabriel's head against the floor and pins it. As

the angel thrashes furiously, Lucifer FORCES his arm into Gabriel's chest. Gabriel cries out as Lucifer PULLS his arm half out and FORCES it deeper. Again. And again. Soon Gabriel's screams become giggles, then a crazed, hysterical laughter.

The room goes insane. An impossible nightmare of chanting Navahos, glaring headlights, and Gabriel's echoing laughter as Lucifer pumps his chest. Laughter that rises to a kind of orgasmic cry then instantly stops as Lucifer pulls out the angel's heart,

And eats it.

At that instant Grey Horse places his hand on Mary's forehead, speaks a last line, and the chant is completed.

Sticky, smoky, awful silence. Gabriel is a non-thing. A battered, hollow shell.

Bartholomew Grey Horse, his voice cracked and finished, turns to Katherine.

GREY HORSE

The enemy spirit is gone.

THOMAS

(weak, faint)

Where?

From outside the kiva suddenly comes the sound of a wounded, savage GROWL. Katherine walks to the doorway. Just outside a lone coyote is twisting in the dirt with furious agony. Abruptly its thrashings cease. The animal stands and flashes for an instant at Katherine cold yellow eyes more than animal. Then it's gone into the blackness. Forever.

She turns and goes back to Thomas in the cab. Bleeding to death is a real possibility for him. She pulls an old shirt out of the back and tries to makeshift a wrap for his sliced arm.

THOMAS

More will come...To look for the soul...

KATHERINE

And they won't find it. Not in Mary.

A few of the village elders appear at the cab.

KATHERINE

Can you help him?

VILLAGER

We have some bandages.

Katherine walks over to where Mary, sweaty and shaken, sits

huddled in a corner attended by Grey Horse.

KATHERINE

Are you all right, pumpkin?

Mary's voice shakes as tears roll out her eyes.

MARY

I'm okay.

Katherine gathers her up into her arms and holds her.

KATHERINE

It's going to be okay...We're all going to be okay...

The chattering, hissing sycophant grabs Gabriel's body by the hair and shoulders and drags it out the door. Lucifer has remained behind, crouched on his haunches, his liquid, yellow eyes on Katherine.

KATHERINE

I can't quite bring myself to say thank you.

LUCIFER

I understand.

KATHERINE

Then this is done.

LUCIFER

Not necessarily. Maybe I like you. Maybe I want you to come with me.

He rises to his feet and steps slowly toward her.

LUCIFER

You owe me, Katherine. And you're going to ask me to take you home.

KATHERINE

(clutching Mary)

No.

LUCIFER

You will. You will because any other way is going to be more awful than you can imagine.

KATHERINE

Are you threatening me?

Just a grining, twisted stare.

KATHERINE

Then you've picked the wrong person this time. I've just about had it up to here with ghosts. So you can put away the horror movie sneer and the K-Mart halloween eyes, because we know you now. We know you all. And if you want to force the issue then go ahead because you're just another angel to me. Take a look at your buddy Gabriel. Then ask yourself, do you really, really want to fuck with us?

The smallest hint of a pause.

LUCIFER

Perhaps another time.

KATHERINE

I'm holding my breath.

LUCIFER

Goodbye, Katherine. For now.

And he's gone. Through the door and into the night.

MARY

Is he coming back?

KATHERINE

I don't think so, honey...I don't think so...

DISSOLVE TO:

The fullness of day over Old Woman Butte, hot and bright. Chasing the night and its fears away under the punishing glare of noon.

The village is full of police vehicles now. Green Broncos from the Navaho Tribal Police. Blue and white sheriff department sedans.

The Navaho cops are talking with Katherine and Mary. Thomas is sitting on the trunk of a patrol car getting his wounds properly bandaged as the Sheriff we met earlier leans beside him chewing on a wild oat stalk.

SHERIFF

(to deputy bandaging Thomas)
Is he going to live?

DEPUTY

With any luck.

SHERIFF
(to Thomas)
I thought I told you to give me a call
if anything snarled.

THOMAS
There wasn't a phone.

SHERIFF
Hmmm.

He chews some more on his stalk. Looks off at the village.

SHERIFF
This fella, Gabriel...

THOMAS
Yeah.

SHERIFF
Gabriel what?

THOMAS
Just Gabriel.

SHERIFF
Pretty violent guy, Gabriel. Even for
out here.

THOMAS
Yeah.

SHERIFF
Caught up with him at the village?

THOMAS
He caught up with me.

SHERIFF
What were you doing way up here?

THOMAS
Enemy Ghost Way for Mary Tsosie.

SHERIFF
Indian stuff.

THOMAS
Yeah. Indian stuff.

The Sheriff looks over at Katherine's pickup still jammed into
the side of the kiva.

SHERIFF
Did you kill this Gabriel?

THOMAS

Maybe. I think so.

SHERIFF

Don't have any idea where the body is I suppose.

THOMAS

No.

SHERIFF

Well, if he's alive he won't get far out there. Us or the coyotes, it'll be the same.

(beat)

I rang your office in LA. They don't have a warrant out for a Gabriel. Or anybody else in Arizona.

THOMAS

I hadn't gotten around to it.

SHERIFF

Sort of an out of pocket thing.

THOMAS

Yes.

The Sheriff takes his hat off. Runs his finger along the inside band.

SHERIFF

That woman lying at the bottom of the arroyo, the one still in her hospital gown, know anything about that?

THOMAS

No.

SHERIFF

Really.

THOMAS

Really.

SHERIFF

This Gabriel was sure one busy dude.

THOMAS

Yes, he was.

Beat.

SHERIFF

You'll be going back to Los Angeles now?

THOMAS

Yeah.

The Sheriff pushes off from the patrol car and tosses aside the oak stalk.

SHERIFF

Don't hurry back.

The deputy finishes his bandaging.

DEPUTY

Don't do much but breathe the next few days. And get to a hospital. You're going to need some serious stitches.

THOMAS

Thanks.

DEPUTY

Say hi to Hollywood for me.

He follows his boss. Katherine and Mary walk up.

MARY

You look bad.

THOMAS

Thank you. I feel worse.
(to Katherine re Navaho cops)
They lean on you much?

KATHERINE

Not really. I think they might have even understood. One of them's related to this clan. He'll give us a ride back if we want.

THOMAS

Good. I think I've about run out of hospitality with the sheriff's department.

The moment drifts into silence.

KATHERINE

Do you think it's really over?

THOMAS

Till we die.

Her eyes settle on his.

KATHERINE

When I die, I want you with me.

THOMAS

I want that too.

She touches his cheek, Mary cradled between them.

DISSOLVE TO:

Thomas sitting in the back of the tribal police bronco, looking out the window to the shimmering sands; red and yellow and black. To clouds brewing over faraway forgotten mountains. To the end of the earth.

As the bronco drifts away from us toward the empty, rocky horizon, as it slowly blends and is consumed by the land,

FADE SLOWLY TO BLACK