

THE WATCH

by

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"And the Lord departed from Saul; and an evil spirit began to take hold of him."

Samuel 1, 16:14

OVER BLACK:

Silence in the darkness. Then: SOUNDS OF CHANTING - an ancient HEBREW LITURGY, SOLEMN yet URGENT - VOICES pleading, cajoling, even SHOUTING AT GOD...

... Until all goes silent.

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Sparsely furnished. A small window in the corner provides the only light. A clock reads 9:47 A.M. Find ISAAC FLEISCHER, 19, lying in bed, sleeping over his blanket. He wears a ratty undershirt and boxer shorts.

A phone begins to ring in the apartment. Isaac doesn't answer.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

A bright summer's day, an old, beat-up white van is parked in front of a large Brooklynite apartment building.

INT. VAN - DAY

Sunlight streams in, the windows are rolled down because of the heat. Inside are REUBEN STEINER, 19, and his father, ASHER, 46. They are ultra-Orthodox Jews, and dress traditionally in black slacks, white shirts, and black yarmulkes. A large folder is open on Asher's lap, and he is busily shuffling papers, eyes on his work. With some impatience:

ASHER

Where is the boy?

REUBEN

He's home. Isaac's always home now.

Reuben calls Isaac again on his cell phone. No answer. Asher looks up from his papers out at the apartment complex.

ASHER

When was I last here?

REUBEN

Two months ago.

ASHER
 Terrible situation. Terrible.
 (beat)
 The boy's father, tell me again.

REUBEN
 He left the family a long time
 ago. People say he lost his mind.
 (beat, opens cell
 phone)
 I'll try again -

ASHER
 No. Stay here.

He exits the van, heads into the building.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Isaac continues to lie in the darkness, his eyes open. Loud knocking comes from the front door. Isaac slowly gets to his feet...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

... Crosses the living room and opens the door. It's Asher.

A beat as they take each other in. There is a history of some sort between them, strange and undefined. Then:

ASHER
 One of our people has just called
 in sick, the other is out of town.

ISAAC
 I don't know if I can today -

ASHER
 Yes, today. Get dressed, please,
 we are already late.

And he moves past Isaac...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

... Makes his way in.

ASHER
 Respectful clothing, no jeans.
 And bring a jacket - it gets cold.

Isaac takes him in, then turns, heads back to his room.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Isaac slides open his closet door, gets dressed. He puts on a polo shirt and slacks; we notice he has no sideburns.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Asher takes in the apartment. The window shades are drawn, and there are empty pizza boxes on the kitchen counter, dirty clothes on the floor. He begins straightening up.

INT. CLOSET - DAY

Isaac rummages around a walk-in closet. He finds a heavy jacket, pulls it off the hanger, exits.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - SAME TIME

He emerges into a second, larger bedroom, where an empty bed is neatly made; two unplugged humidifiers gather dust in the corner; and more than a dozen pill bottles sit on a nightstand.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Isaac enters, sees Asher putting some things in the garbage. Asher, hearing him, turns, looks him over. Beat.

ASHER

Let's go.

They head out, and as the door to the apartment closes behind them -

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The old van rattles down a crowded freeway. Manhattan's skyline fading in the distance.

INT. VAN - DAY

They ride in silence. Reuben drives, Asher is passenger-side, and Isaac is in the back, staring out the window.

Asher suddenly turns around and faces Isaac.

ASHER

You understand you will spend most of your time alone?

(Isaac nods)

And you will conduct yourself with respect? Perform your obligations?

ISAAC

Yes.

Asher continues to study him. Then, somewhat satisfied, Asher turns back around, faces the front.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

They turn off at an exit sign that reads Floral Park.

INT. VAN - DAY

Driving through a low income neighborhood. Isaac stares out the window, watching an endless stream of Spanish and Asian-only store-fronts pass by. Asher is on his cell phone.

ASHER (INTO CELL PHONE)

Ask Rabbi Zelman to meet us back
at the old building... No more
than an hour, I hope...

INT. VAN - DAY

They turn onto a side street, stop in front of a small house. On the porch out front, a FILIPINO MAN in a light blue nurse's shirt and jeans is smoking a cigarette.

Asher gets out, walks up to the house, nods at the Filipino man as he passes him by. He knocks on the door. Within a few moments it opens and he disappears inside.

ISAAC

Now what?

REUBEN

We wait.

INT. VAN - DAY (LATER)

Reuben and Isaac sit in silence, the engine off, the windows rolled down because of the heat. A clock on the van's dashboard reads 10:33 A.M. The Filipino man is no longer in front of the house.

They watch some Asian children playing by a fire hydrant across the street.

REUBEN

Interesting neighborhood for a Jew.
(beat)
I'm hungry.

More silence. Isaac, looking through his side view mirror, sees a car pull onto the road, park behind them.

A GIRL, 18, exits the car and hurries up the sidewalk towards the house. She wears a T-shirt and sweatpants - it looks like something she just threw on - and her hair is disheveled; though she quickly walks past Isaac, he can see she has been crying.

Reuben and Isaac watch her enter the house, then:

REUBEN
(continuing)
I saw Naomi a couple of days ago.

ISAAC
(noncommittal)
Yeah?

REUBEN
She was at the Park House.

ISAAC
(realizing)
On a date? With who?

REUBEN
I didn't recognize him. Someone from Lakewood maybe. You could call her and find out.

No response from Isaac.

REUBEN
(continuing)
You were asleep when I called, weren't you?

Isaac considers denying it, then confides:

ISAAC
All I do is sleep.

The door to the house opens, Asher emerges. He motions them to come inside. They get out of their seats, exit the van...

EXT. VAN - SAME TIME

... Circle around to the back, open the van doors - and pull out an old metal gurney.

Reuben unhooks two latches, the wheels come down. They push the gurney up the sidewalk, reach the front door. Reuben opens it. They head in.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

A small, poorly-lit entrance way. It takes a moment for Isaac's eyes to adjust to the dimness, and when he does he's taken aback -

- Because the place is a pig sty. A coffee table in the living room is littered with half-eaten plates of food; cockroaches scatter under the newspapers and trash on the floor; faded upholstery covers ragged furniture that looks to be at least three decades old. The filth is truly appalling.

Asher, at the other end of the hall, motions them to approach. They begin pushing the gurney down the hall. A carpet coughs up dust with every step.

They pass a kitchen on one side, a small bedroom on the other. Isaac sees the girl, still upset, inside the bedroom. She's talking on her cell phone.

GIRL (SOFTLY INTO CELL PHONE)

I just got here... I don't know... I don't know...

They continue down the hall. Isaac sees a number of photographs on the walls. They're old black and white portraits of long deceased parents and grandparents; vibrant color photos of children and grandchildren taken on luxurious family vacations; a plaque that reads: "Dr. Marvin J. Penner, Humanitarian of the Year." Next to the plaque is a picture of a heavy-set man in an elegant cardigan sweater, smiling broadly.

But now all the photographs are dusty, hanging crookedly from the walls. Neglected.

They reach the end of the hall, Asher ushers them into a room. ON ISAAC, wheeling the gurney, entering the room...

INT. BEDROOM - SAME TIME

... Where a BODY, completely covered in a white sheet, lies on top of a bed.

Sitting in a chair next to the bed is a woman in her 80s in an old nightgown: the WIDOW. Her face is wet with tears as she leans over the body, quietly murmurs words to it we can't hear. One of her hands is under the bed sheet, caressing the body's shoulder gently. The image is heartbreaking.

The Filipino man is there, as is a FILIPINO WOMAN (mid 50s), also in a light blue nurse's shirt. Both seem to be the couple's caretakers.

When the woman sees Isaac and Reuben enter she leans towards the widow, speaks quietly into her ear. But the widow doesn't look up, just continues whispering, caressing the body's shoulder.

The Filipino woman looks at Asher, shakes her head. Asher gestures for Reuben and Isaac to exit the room. As they pass by him:

ASHER
(quietly)
Stay close.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Reuben and Isaac enter, sit at a small kitchen table. There's a clock on the wall that reads 11:23 A.M.

REUBEN
My father doesn't like to rush people. That's his way.

They sit in silence. The girl enters, still on her phone.

GIRL (INTO CELL PHONE)
They haven't taken him yet. I don't know.

She opens the refrigerator, wrinkles her nose at the contents.

GIRL (INTO CELL PHONE)
(continuing)
There's nothing to drink here. And it's so dirty. They probably didn't care if anyone cleaned, that's why.

Asher enters the kitchen, the girl sees him.

GIRL (INTO CELL PHONE)
(continuing)
Let me find out and call you back. I know. I *know*. You too.
(after hanging up)
My parents want to know when the funeral is.

ASHER
According to Jewish law, burial must take place as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours.

He takes out a card from his wallet, hands it to her.

ASHER

(continuing)

The service will be tomorrow morning, at our chapel. Here is the address. Do you think your parents will attend?

GIRL

(shaking her head no)

They live in Arizona.

ASHER

What about relatives who live closer, anyone I should contact...

GIRL

No, no one. I'm not even supposed to be here. I was just visiting some friends at colleges in the city when... when I got the call...

She starts to tear up. Asher's voice softens, full of professional concern and sympathy.

ASHER

Let me tell you what will happen now, so you can pass the information on to your family. Soon we will take your grandfather to our facility. There he will be prepared for burial according to the strictest dictates of our faith.

(gestures to Isaac)

This is Isaac Fleischer. He will be your grandfather's *shomer*.

GIRL

(what's that)

His *shomer*?

ASHER

In Hebrew it means watchman, or guard. In accordance with Jewish law, Isaac will remain with your grandfather from the moment we leave here until he is laid to rest tomorrow morning. Isaac will keep diligent watch over the body, and pray for your grandfather's soul, so he may be ensured a place in the World to Come.

The girl just nods mutely, taking it in.

ASHER

(continuing)

I know how hard this is. But perhaps in some way it's fortunate you are here, so you can be with your grandmother, comfort her in her time of need -

GIRL

(suddenly)

That *bitch* is not my grandmother.

ASHER

(taken aback)

I'm sorry...

GIRL

And that man?

Her voice rises, shakes. She can barely get the words out.

GIRL

(continuing)

That *man*...

And just like that she storms out of the house. Asher moves to the kitchen window, watches her drive away. He sighs.

ASHER

Family.

INT. HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

Again, Reuben and Isaac push the gurney down the hall. Isaac gets a second look at the poorly-kept pictures on the wall, including one photo showing two men in their fifties standing on the back of a yacht named 'Eye See You.' One of the men is the aforementioned Dr. Penner, smiling contentedly. The pictures show a rich, and satisfying life - and contrast markedly with this rundown, dirty house.

They reach Asher at the end of the hall, he guides them into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Isaac and Reuben watch as Asher approaches the widow, leans towards her and begins whispering in her ear. The widow continues to caress the body, hands moving under the sheet, her eyes fixed ahead, as Asher continues whispering...

... Until she finally removes her hand.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

They're wheeling the body, covered in the sheet, down the hallway towards the front door. Isaac turns and sees the widow and her caregiver following them, the widow holding the caregiver's arm for support.

EXT. VAN - DAY

They load the body into the van.

INT. VAN - DAY

Reuben starts the engine up. Through the window, Isaac can see the widow standing alone on the porch, watching them as they pull away.

CUT TO:

INT. VAN - DAY

They're on the highway, heading back.

REUBEN

It's almost lunchtime, Father.
We should stop.

ASHER

There isn't time now, the Rabbi is
waiting for us.

REUBEN

But we're passing by Morrie's
place, we should at least get some
sandwiches to go. Isaac hasn't
even eaten breakfast yet.

INT. VAN - DAY

The van is parked on a busy street corner in a Jewish neighborhood. Isaac is alone with the body. He turns, looks at it a moment. All is silent -

- Until Isaac hears a knocking noise at his window. He turns, sees a little ORTHODOX JEWISH BOY holding up a lollipop, waving it at Isaac. Isaac smiles.

ISAAC

(through the window)
That looks good!

The boy continues waving it at Isaac proudly - until his mother suddenly appears, pulls him away. Clearly she knows what this van is for and wants the boy far away from it.

INT. VAN - DAY

They are back on the road. In the seat next to Isaac is a brown shopping bag with sandwiches inside. Asher looks in his mirror, sees Isaac eyeing the food.

ASHER

It is forbidden to eat in the presence of the deceased. Neither should the *shomer* listen to music, study *Torah*, engage in idle chatter -

And Isaac interrupts him, begins to recite:

ISAAC

"The *shomer's* chief obligation must be the *niftar's* soul. He should not partake in the pleasurable activities of this world, but should instead focus on guiding the soul to the spiritual delights of the next."

ASHER

You remember the laws? Good.

He studies Isaac, pleased.

INT. VAN - DAY

They drive in silence, continue down the street. Soon Isaac sees it:

THE BUILDING

Tucked between a fast food restaurant and an abandoned parking lot, it's a one story building that looks to be at least fifty years old. Patched roof, faded paint on the walls, bars on the windows... only an old sign in one window indicates what happens here. It reads: *Bait Shalom Mortuary And Chapel*.

They circle the building, turn into an alley behind it. Parked there is a station wagon with two men inside: RABBI ZELMAN, late 50s, a very serious-looking man with a long beard and black hat; and his assistant, NAFTALI, early 30s, clean-shaven but with the same demeanor.

Reuben gives them a quick nod as he drives past them, then pulls out a small garage clicker from his pocket. A chain link fence surrounding the back of the building opens. Both cars pull in. The fence closes behind them.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

They pull the body out of the van, begin wheeling it on the gurney towards the back door. Asher pushes buttons on the numerical keypad to deactivate an alarm, then unlocks the back door with a key.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME TIME

They wheel the gurney through a dark, narrow corridor. Asher, up ahead, opens a second door and flicks on a light switch. Fluorescent lights flicker on in the approaching room, revealing:

INT. "TAHARAH" ROOM - SAME TIME

A small, spare, and windowless room. At the room's center is a long white table fixed to the floor; cabinets with various medical supplies line the walls; there is a small sink in one corner of the room, and on the other is an enormous metal basin - the size of a long but very shallow bathtub.

This is the *Taharah* room, from the Hebrew word that means "purification". It looks like a room where medical procedures are performed, and in many ways that is exactly what happens here: a physical and spiritual ritual on the dead.

They transfer the body to the table, then fold up the gurney and place it against the wall. As Isaac watches, each of the men now moves quickly and purposefully:

- Asher opens a drawer, pulls out a candle, lights it and places it at the head of the table. He then opens a second door and disappears somewhere inside the building.
- Reuben pulls out two black smocks, plastic gloves, and booties from a closet and places them on an adjacent chair; opens up a nearby drawer and places scissors, a comb, cotton cloths and a prayer book on the table; then he, too, follows his father out the door, closing it behind him.
- Rabbi Zelman and Naftali wash each other's hands in the sink with a large copper cup, then put on the smocks, gloves, and booties. They then approach the body -
- And immediately Rabbi Zelman's hands move under the sheet. When they emerge he is holding a wedding ring and necklace. He hands them to Naftali, who puts them in an envelope and places the envelope on the counter.

The men exchange nods; they're ready. Rabbi Zelman opens up the prayer book, hands it to Isaac, along with a black *yarmulke*.

Isaac hesitates, but takes it, as Rabbi Zelman points at a verse. Isaac, a bit uncomfortable, recites a blessing in Hebrew. Naftali and Rabbi Zelman both say "amen". Then Rabbi Zelman begins the first part of the ritual:

THE CLEANSING

Rabbi Zelman pulls the body's right arm out from under the sheet. He then cleans the arm thoroughly with cotton pads while Naftali trims the fingernails with scissors. When they are finished they gently place the arm back under the sheet.

The men begin to move down the body to clean its right side. When Rabbi Zelman needs help reaching an area Naftali stands behind him, lifts the body up at an angle so Rabbi Zelman can get to it, then lowers the body back to the table and respectfully covers it when Rabbi Zelman is finished.

Next the men move to the body's head. First Rabbi Zelman partially removes the sheet; Isaac watches as he and Naftali patiently comb the hair and clean the ears, hairline, and jawbone. Then Rabbi Zelman continues moving the sheet down to the body's face -

- and Isaac only briefly glimpses at it before he looks away. It remains a face that he (and the audience) has yet to see.

FADE TO:

THE PURIFICATION

CLOSE ON a large metal hook sliding across the ceiling. REVEAL: Naftali operating an electric lift from a control panel in the wall. He guides the hook to the center of the room, then stops it directly over the body, which has been covered in a sheet and bound with black straps.

Naftali pushes a button on the panel, lowers the hook to the table. Rabbi Zelman then places the hook through each of the straps, Naftali pushes another button -

- HOISTING the BODY straight in the air. Isaac watches as the body hangs limply from the ceiling for just a moment before Naftali guides it over to the large metal basin, which is now full of water.

Naftali lowers the body down into the water. Rabbi Zelman, standing next to the basin, unstraps the hook, removes the sheet, and completely immerses the body in the water as he utters the words:

RABBI ZELMAN

Tahor hu.

Which means, "He is purified." Isaac watches as some of the water splashes out of the basin, disappears down a drain on the floor. Rabbi Zelman then lifts the body out of the water and submerges it a second time, his voice rising:

RABBI ZELMAN
(continuing)
Tahor hu.

He lifts the body out of the water, begins to prepare to submerge it again.. and suddenly we:

SMASH CUT TO:

A CAMERA ANGLE showing Rabbi Zelman's face inches away.

RABBI ZELMAN
Tahor hu.

The camera is plunged into water.

FADE TO:

THE DRESSING

A pile of used towels have been tossed in a bin in the corner. The clock on the wall reads 1:14 P.M. Rabbi Zelman and Naftali are in their regular clothes, standing over the body, which is back on the table.

They are dressing the body in *tachrichim*: traditional burial shrouds hand-woven from white linen. There is a veil covering the face; shirt and trousers; a loose-fitting robe; mitten-like hand coverings; booties; and a long belt that is tied in ceremonial knots and wrapped around the body's midsection.

They step back from the table, examine their work. The entire body has been covered from head to toe in this strange, all white uniform.

The men share a satisfied nod, then cover the body with a large white sheet and transfer it back to the gurney. Naftali begins to push it straight towards Isaac, who remains seated in the back of the room.

NAFTALI
Excuse me.

Isaac, confused, moves aside, Naftali opens a previously unnoticed curtain behind him...

... Revealing the glass door of a walk-in refrigerator. Naftali wheels the gurney into the corner of the room.

Rabbi Zelman enters behind him, carrying the candle and a chair. He places them on the floor, the chair facing the body.

The men back out of the walk-in together, close the door behind them. Rabbi Zelman then turns to Isaac, curtly shakes his hand -

- And without uttering another word leaves with Naftali through the back door. In moments Isaac hears their car pull out of the parking lot.

Alone, not entirely sure what to do, Isaac approaches the glass door of the walk-in, peers through. The door behind Isaac soon opens, Asher and Reuben approach. Asher picks up the envelope, stands behind Isaac a moment, then:

ASHER

You are to pray twenty continuous minutes for every hour of your watch.

Reuben takes off his wristwatch, hands it to Isaac.

REUBEN

I've set this to go off every hour to remind you. And this is what we use to tell the *shomer* when twenty minutes have passed.

He hands Isaac a sand timer. As Isaac places it in his pocket Asher pulls a prayer book out from a drawer.

ASHER

While praying you must remain in the *niftar's* presence, facing the body. All the prayers are from the Book of Psalms; start here, on page 11, then continue with...

INT. WALK-IN - SAME TIME

We are inside the walk-in, watching Asher and Isaac through the glass door, the hum of the refrigerator making Asher's voice barely audible.

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - SAME TIME

ASHER

... If you finish just start again from the beginning. Understood?
(his phone rings)
Excuse me.

He leaves through the back door to take the call.

REUBEN
 (to Isaac)
 Come on.

Isaac follows Reuben across the Taharah room, out through the main door...

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

... And finds himself in the building's chapel, which is nothing more than a musty room with faded blue carpet. Chairs and wooden benches are stacked against the wall.

REUBEN
 My father asks every *shomer* to vacuum the carpet sometime before the service. Also to wipe the benches down and put them in rows. It's no big deal - when you're not praying you'll actually like having something to do.
 (points to a closet)
 The vacuum is in here, next to the bathroom.

They move past, head through a door in the back of the room.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

A small office. A half-eaten sandwich lies on the desk, next to an old radio playing an A.M. news station. An AC wall unit hums loudly.

REUBEN
 My office. You can relax here between shifts.

They move through a second door -

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

- And enter a more spacious office, with a larger desk, leather armchair and filing cabinets.

REUBEN
 This is my father's office. And his books.

Reuben gestures proudly to an entire wall of religious books.

REUBEN
 (continuing)
 He got most of these in Jerusalem
 when he was studying to be a rabbi.

He opens up another door, gestures for Isaac to look inside.
 Over a dozen plain pine coffins are stacked in rows.

REUBEN
 (continuing)
 Our caskets. Sometime before the
 morning's service one of us will
 help you finish the ceremony and
 place the body inside.

He closes the door, leaves the room. Isaac follows.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Reuben approaches his desk, slides his chair away, points
 underneath.

REUBEN
 Finally, our security cameras.

Isaac approaches, looks at a small black and white monitor
 under the desk. It has been split into two screens; one
 shows the front door of the building, the other faces the
 parking lot.

REUBEN
 (continuing)
 We put them in after some
 teenagers broke in and stole a
 client's jewelry. My father says
 the neighborhood's really gone
 downhill lately, which is why...

He slides open a drawer, pulls out a small case, opens it and
 takes out a gun. Isaac recoils.

ISAAC
 It's loaded?

REUBEN
 Have you ever fired a gun before?

ISAAC
 No.

ASHER (O.S.)
 Give it to me, please.

Still holding the envelope, Asher takes the gun, walks past them. He enters his office for a moment before returning empty handed.

ASHER
(to Reuben)
You brought in the boy's jacket?

REUBEN
It's over there.

ASHER
Good. Let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Isaac walks Asher and Reuben out to the van.

ASHER
We have a funeral later, then errands to run.

REUBEN
I'll check in when I can. Or call my cell if there's a problem, the phone is in my father's office.

They climb into the van, start the engine up. Reuben rolls his window down.

REUBEN
(continuing)
Your sandwich is also in that office, in the refrigerator. The sodas are for you, too.

He starts to pull the van away, but Asher stops him.

ASHER
Isaac Ben Shimon, will you honor the *niftar* with a diligent watch? Fulfill all your obligations in accordance with our sacred laws and traditions?

ISAAC
Yes.

Asher holds a look on him.

ASHER
Twenty minutes every hour.

They drive away. Isaac watches the van pull out of the alley and disappear from view. Alone in the parking lot, Isaac takes a moment to look up at the sky, the sun bearing down. Then he heads inside, closing the door behind him.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac enters, finds a small refrigerator in the corner of the room. He pulls out a sandwich and a can of soda.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac at Reuben's desk, devouring the sandwich. Clearly he was starving. In moments it's gone.

He takes a sip of soda. Puts his feet up on the desk, then lowers them. Burps.

His eyes fall on the window across from his desk. He opens the blinds, peers out at the street in front of the building. Cars whiz past. There is a mini-mart across the street; also a dry cleaners with a steady stream of customers pulling in and out.

He leans back in his chair. His eyes roam around the room, for a moment he seems bored...

... Until a look suddenly crosses his face, as if he knows there is something he could do.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

A toilet flushes, Isaac emerges from a stall, washes his hands in the sink.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Isaac circles through the empty chapel. He approaches a large oak table at the front of the room; next to it is a lectern. Clearly this is the place where the casket is brought out for the ceremony, and the eulogy given.

He crosses back through the chapel, moves to the closet Asher had pointed out earlier. Inside is a vacuum cleaner and a bag full of cleaning supplies. He turns around and glances at the benches and chairs, as if considering whether to begin cleaning them...

... When his watch beeps. It's time.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac grabs his jacket.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Isaac crosses back through the chapel, opens the door that leads to the Taharah room.

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - DAY

He approaches the glass door of the walk-in, stops and peers through: at the body on the gurney, covered with a white sheet; the candle flickering on the floor; and the empty chair alongside it, facing the body.

Isaac takes the prayer book and *yarmulke* off the counter, opens the door of the walk-in, heads in.

INT. WALK-IN - DAY

Immediately Isaac gets hit by a blast of cold air. He shivers, puts on his jacket, takes his seat. Then he pulls the sand timer out of his pocket, flips it over and places it on the floor next to the candle.

He opens up the prayerbook, begins. His lips move as he softly says his recitations. Apart from this soft murmuring, and the steady hum of the refrigeration unit, there are no other sounds in the room.

Isaac turns a page. But as he does so his eyes fall away from the book a moment. A few seconds go by and he looks back at the book, continues his recitations...

... Only to once again look away. His eyes drift around the room, finally fall on the wall. Isaac stares straight at it... CAMERA begins pulling closer to it... until finally CAMERA pulls back and REVEAL:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT (BEGIN FLASHBACK)

Isaac is in the living room with his mother, DEBORAH FLEISCHER, 39, watching her recite the blessing over candles to welcome in the Shabbat. Isaac is wearing traditional Hasidic clothing and has sideburns - the garb of the ultra-Orthodox.

DEBORAH

*Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech
ha'olam asher kidishanu b-
mitzvotav v'tzeevanu li'hadleek
nayr shel shabbat.*

Deborah removes her hands from her face and smiles warmly at Isaac.

DEBORAH
 (continuing; softly)
 Shabbat Shalom, my son.
 (then:)
 So what's for dinner?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The candles have been moved to the table. Deborah, Isaac, and NAOMI WASSER, 19, are eating. Naomi, outgoing, modestly dressed, is in the middle of a story as Isaac listens attentively and Deborah takes pleasure in watching two young people in love.

NAOMI
 Then during circle time she tells the children they have to sit with their legs crossed, and gets angry when they move. I don't know a five-year-old who can sit still for more than three seconds.

ISAAC
 Why don't you talk to her?

NAOMI
 She doesn't listen to me. I'm just the teacher-in-training.

ISAAC
 Not for long.
 (to Deborah)
 They're giving Naomi her own class next year, mom. She'll be the youngest teacher in the school.

DEBORAH
 That's terrific, Naomi.

NAOMI
 Thanks, Mrs. Fleisher.

DEBORAH
 I have news, too. My company announced they're starting a program for children of employees. They're going to help pay for your first year of city college.

NAOMI
(excited)
Isaac.

ISAAC
How much will they help us?

DEBORAH
I don't know yet. But God will
provide. You can do anything you
want, Isaac. Anything.
(beat)
Well, maybe there's one thing you
can't do.

ISAAC
What?

DEBORAH
(very grave)
Cook fish.

She holds a serious look on her face - then starts laughing.

ISAAC
It's not good? Naomi?

NAOMI
(being polite)
Well...

ISAAC
What's wrong, is it too salty?

DEBORAH
Like you caught it in the Dead Sea.

She starts laughing harder. Isaac flushes.

ISAAC
I tried to follow the recipe.

DEBORAH
It's okay, we'll just drink a lot
of water -

NAOMI
- All weekend.

Isaac frowns, now watching them both laugh. Suddenly he
turns around and calls out in a mock-loud voice -

ISAAC
 Waiter, more water! Bring us the
 big pitcher!
 (they're all laughing)
 And fire that chef. Hurry!

They continue laughing, even harder, until Isaac and Naomi finally stop.

But Deborah keeps laughing.

ISAAC
 (continuing)
 Mom?

Deborah falls off her chair and begins having a seizure on the floor.

ISAAC
 (continuing)
 Mom.

Isaac rushes over, tries to hold her shoulders but it does no good, she continues flailing about, body spasming wildly.

ISAAC
 (continuing)
 Call 911, Naomi! Mom. Mom.

Naomi races to the phone as Isaac holds Deborah... The CAMERA moves off Deborah and onto the flickering candle... getting closer... until we END FLASHBACK and PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

INT. WALK-IN - DAY

Isaac stares blankly at the wall, then finally shakes off the daydream. Shivering from the cold, he looks down at the sand timer on the floor. It's empty. He stands, places the prayerbook and *yarmulke* on the chair, starts to leave the room -

- When he hears a slight RUSTLING NOISE behind him.

Isaac turns, looks at the body a moment. Odd. And most likely just a trick of his imagination. He leaves.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac back at Reuben's desk.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac sees the radio on Reuben's desk, turns it on and begins to fiddle with the dial.

The reception is poor, full of static, but finally Isaac settles on a news station.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 ... Late breaking local, national,
 and international news, give us 22
 minutes and we'll give you the
 world...

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Still listening.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 ... The city council today
 approved a measure...

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac continues to listen, staring out the window.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 ... Temperatures approaching
 triple digit levels throughout the
 day...

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Still listening.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 ... Give us 22 minutes and we'll
 give you the world...

Isaac turns off the radio. Then he leans back in his chair, peers out the window -

- And sees a short, squat MAN across the street, staring straight at the building. Isaac sits up, moves closer to the window and peers out. The man looks Filipino.

A bus slows down at the stop, blocking Isaac's view as it picks up passengers. But when the bus drives away the Filipino man is still there.

Finally the man turns from the building, walks away. Isaac looks puzzled, wondering what that was about. He shrugs it off. His wristwatch beeps.

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - DAY

Isaac grabs his jacket off the counter and opens the door of the walk-in.

INT. WALK-IN - DAY

He enters, sits. Then he flips over the sand timer, opens the prayerbook from where he had left off, puts on his *yarmulke* and begins to read.

A few moments go by. Soon Isaac's eyes begin to drift off the book, glance around the room. He stops praying as he begins to lose himself to his thoughts -

- And then suddenly snaps out of it. Annoyed at himself, he straightens up in his chair, tries to re-focus. He succeeds for a moment, starts praying again...

... Until his eyes start to droop. He tries fighting it, but soon they close completely. His chin drops to his chest.

He falls asleep.

INT. WALK-IN - LATE

CLOSE ON Isaac, head down, eyes closed, prayerbook in his lap.

A RUSTLING NOISE is heard from somewhere in the room. Then another.

Then silence.

INT. WALK-IN - LATER

HOLD ON Isaac, still sleeping, his breath visible in the cold air.

SUDDENLY he JOLTS up from the chair with a gasp, sending the prayer book flying out of his lap onto the floor. Shivering, he picks up the book, looks down at the sand timer, which is now empty. He looks over at the body...

... And is stunned to see a HAND hanging off the side of the gurney. The linen mitten that had been covering the hand is now on the floor.

Isaac approaches the body, stares at the mitten, the uncovered hand, wondering how it got there.

Soon he kneels down, picks the mitten up, stands over the body a moment. He knows he should put the glove back on but hesitates - he clearly doesn't want to touch the exposed hand. Finally he leans forward, takes a breath, moves close to the hand, is just about to slide the mitten on...

... WHEN TWO OF THE FINGERS MOVE. Isaac jumps back in terror, drops the mitten -

- As a LOUD BELL begins clanging in the Taharah room. Isaac turns, races out of the room...

INT. TAHARA ROOM - DAY

... Hurries past a bell on a wall that rings repeatedly...

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - DAY

... Heads into Asher's office and finds an old rotary phone on his desk, which rings loudly.

ISAAC

Hello?

REUBEN (THROUGH PHONE)

How's it going -

ISAAC

- The body can move, can't it?

CUT TO:

EXT. SINAI CEMETERY - DAY

Reuben is on his cell phone, watching his father supervise some DIGGERS preparing a gravesite. INTERCUT.

REUBEN

What?

ISAAC

After it's dead the body can move, it can shift around, right?

REUBEN

Yeah, it can take thirty-six hours for the nervous system to stop firing but it doesn't happen much -

ISAAC

It just did.

REUBEN

No.

ISAAC

Yeah, the glove fell off the hand and the fingers moved.

REUBEN

Wow, I'm sorry. I've only seen it twice in my life, but the first time was the worst. I was in the middle of a Taharah and the body sat straight up. I made my father go home and get me a fresh pair of underwear.

ISAAC

(laughing)

I came close to that, believe me.

(beat)

So what should I do about the hand, it's just kind of... lying there.

REUBEN

Put the glove back on and fold the hand under the sheet.

Isaac frowns, doesn't like the answer.

REUBEN

(continuing)

So how's the rest of it going, you doing okay?

ISAAC

It's pretty cold in that walk-in, you know.

REUBEN

It has to be. If you want, prop open the door while you're in there. Just don't tell my father or he'll yell at you about the electricity bill.

(sees Asher motioning for him)

I'll talk to you later.

He hangs up.

INT. WALK-IN - DAY

Isaac enters, approaches the gurney. He picks the mitten up off the floor, brings it close to the exposed hand. Clearly he doesn't want to touch it...

... And finally with a quick burst of movement he grabs the hand, jams the mitten on, places it back under the sheet. He leaves.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Isaac washes his hands.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac grabs another soda from the refrigerator, opens it, sits at Asher's desk and drinks.

His eyes fall on the phone.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Naomi - dressed as traditionally Hasidic as she appeared in the earlier scene - works on a laptop computer in her family's living room. Her cell phone rings, she answers.

NAOMI

Hello?

ISAAC (O.S.)

Hey.

INTERCUT between her and Isaac. It's silent a moment, then:

ISAAC

What are you doing?

NAOMI

I have to fill out these state forms to start teaching next month. You?

ISAAC

At *Bait Shalom*. Reuben and his father asked me to be the *shomer*.

NAOMI

(concerned)

Are you sure that's a good idea -

ISAAC

(interrupting,
sharply)

So how was the Park House?

Naomi goes silent.

ISAAC

(continuing)

I understand. Your mother's pushing you into new *shidduchim* -

NAOMI

It wasn't her idea, Isaac, it was mine.

(beat)

For months, I sat there with you,
I prayed with you, and when it was
over -

ISAAC

(softly)

- I know.

Silence. Isaac's wristwatch beeps.

NAOMI

(gently)

Isaac, what happened that night?
Why won't you tell me -

ISAAC

I've gotta go.

He hangs up.

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - DAY

Isaac stands outside the walk-in, looking through the glass door. Finally he enters...

INT. WALK-IN - MOMENTS LATER

... Wheeling in a small stool behind him. He uses the stool to prop open the door, letting the cold air out. Then he sits, flips over the sand timer, puts on the *yarmulke*, opens the prayer book, tries to recite the words -

- But then just sits there, agitated.

CUT TO:

EXT. SINAI CEMETARY - DAY

Reuben's phone rings again. It's Isaac.

REUBEN

Isaac?

ISAAC (THROUGH PHONE)

I can't pray.

REUBEN

What?

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Isaac paces. INTERCUT.

ISAAC

I can't pray, Reuben. I'm trying
but it's no use -

REUBEN

- Isaac -

ISAAC

- No, I'm not keeping my promise
to you, your father, to the
niftar -

ASHER

(approaching Reuben)
Is there a problem?

REUBEN

(to Asher)
He says he can't pray.

ASHER

Give me the phone, please.

ISAAC

(overhearing)
Reuben, don't, I don't want to
talk to him -

But Asher is quickly on the phone.

ASHER

Do you remember the story of the
giving of the Torah?

Beat, Isaac too surprised by the question to respond.

ASHER

(continuing)
Moshe returns from Mount Sinai
with the first Torah ever written
and says to the children of
Israel, "This is God's word". And
our ancestors do not even know
what is written in the book and
what do they say? Surely you
remember -

ISAAC

Na'aseh v'nishmah.

ASHER

Na'aseh v'nishmah, exactly. First we will obey God, then we will seek to understand, and through our actions we will become close to Him.

(beat)

Young man, find a way to say the words of the prayers, and do not concern yourself with how you feel when you say them. Sit, pace, stand on your head if that is helpful, but stay in that room twenty minutes every hour saying the prayers and honoring your oath. That is all that is required.

Asher hangs up the phone.

INT. TAHARA ROOM - DAY

Isaac stands outside the walk-in. He hears a dripping noise, looks over at the metal basin, sees the faucet is leaking. He closes it. Then he returns to the door of the walk-in, props the stool in the doorway...

INT. WALK-IN - DAY

... Enters, sits. He flips over the sand timer and begins his recitations.

Sure enough, in moments his eyes wander off the page, he begins staring blankly at the wall -

- Until he catches himself, speaks aloud.

ISAAC

No. Just say the words.

He begins again.

INT. WALK-IN - LATER

Isaac sits upright, diligently says his prayers.

INT. WALK-IN - LATER

Isaac paces back and forth, his eyes glued to the prayer book.

INT. WALK-IN - LATER

Isaac turns a page, glances down at the sand timer -

- And sees that it's empty. He did it. Pleased, he pulls away the stool, leaves the room, and as the door of the walk-in closes behind him:

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) Isaac in Asher's office, drinking the soda.
- 2) Isaac flips through some of Asher's books, bored.
- 3) Back in the walk-in, the door propped wide open to let the cold air out. Isaac prays.
- 4) Isaac at Reuben's desk, listening to the radio. There's some static but he fiddles with the dial until the reception is clear.
- 5) Isaac paces back and forth in front of the body, diligently saying the prayers. He hears a slight rustling noise coming from under the sheet but remains unconcerned - obviously it's just another random movement from the body.
- 6) Late afternoon sun comes through the window. Isaac is in Reuben's office, feet up, leaning back in his chair.

END SERIES OF SHOTS and GO TO:

INT. WALK-IN - DAY

Isaac prays, eyes in his book. There is some slight movement under the sheet, which Isaac ignores.

The BODY begins to sit up. Isaac doesn't see it, he's too engrossed in his prayers... the BODY, still wrapped in burial shrouds, climbs off the gurney... approaches Isaac... *Suddenly wraps its fingers around Isaac's neck and begins choking him -*

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac lurches up from the chair with a start, gasping. Nightmare.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac listens to the radio, trying to shake the bad dream.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
... Entering tonight's ballgame as
winners of eight of the last
nine...

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Isaac opens the closet door, takes out the vacuum cleaner.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Isaac vacuums the carpet. The roar of the vacuum echoes loudly around the room...

... and Isaac suddenly stops working, just stares at the vacuum, losing himself to his thoughts. CAMERA begins to move CLOSER to the vacuum until we PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

After-hours at a hospital, a JANITOR maneuvers a floor cleaner down a hallway. Isaac, holding a large manila envelope in his lap, sits with Naomi. He is back in his traditional Hasidic clothing.

A door at the other end of the hall opens, a MAN comes out wearing a white doctor's coat. This is DR. JAMES CALVIN. Isaac stands up as Dr. Calvin passes him.

ISAAC

You're Dr. Calvin, right?

Dr. Calvin sees the manila envelope, frowns.

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

They've moved down the hallway and now stand under a bright fluorescent light. Isaac and Naomi watch as Dr. Calvin holds the x-rays up to the light a moment, then quickly slides them back in the envelope.

DR. CALVIN

I can prescribe anti-seizure medications, and steroids to keep the swelling down. There are also some strong narcotics to relieve the pain -

ISAAC

And they'll help her?

Dr. Calvin - tired, arrogant, and blunt to the point of cruelty - takes in Isaac. Then:

DR. CALVIN

Your mother has a point nine glioblastomal tumor that has metastasized from the left parietal lobe of her brain.

ISAAC

I know your secretary said you
wouldn't take our insurance -

DR. CALVIN

- Young man, listen to me.
Whatever your insurance, there is
nothing to be done. I'm sorry.

He walks away. Off Isaac, END FLASHBACK and:

FADE TO:

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Isaac pulls himself out of the daydream, turns off the
vacuum, returns it to the closet.

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - DAY

Isaac enters - and hears a dripping noise. He turns to the
metal basin, sees the faucet is leaking again. He closes it.

INT. WALK-IN - DAY

Isaac prays.

INT. WALK-IN - LATER

Isaac, still praying, turns the page - and sees the candle on
the floor flickering wildly.

Isaac tries ignoring it but can't. The flame darts around in
the air, seemingly at random.

He gets up from his chair, puts his hand up to the cooling
unit to check if there's a breeze. But there is none.

Then he takes his prayer book, holds it close to the candle
at different angles to check if there's another breeze
blowing. But the candle continues to flicker wildly. Isaac
stares at it, completely confounded...

... Until the candle suddenly stops flickering. A LOUD,
INSISTENT KNOCK comes from the front door.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac enters, peers at the security monitors. It's the short
Filipino man Isaac had seen watching the building before. He
continues knocking on the door loudly.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Isaac stands by the chapel's front door, calls through it.

ISAAC

Yes?

A voice behind the door responds in a foreign language (Tagalog). Isaac hesitates, then swings the door open.

ISAAC

(continuing)

I'm sorry, I don't understand what you're saying.

The man repeats himself. He has decayed teeth. Isaac can make out the word Penner.

ISAAC

(continuing)

Are you here for Dr. Penner's funeral? - Because it's tomorrow, eight in the morning.

The Filipino man speaks again, another burst of Tagalog.

ISAAC

(continuing)

Come back tomorrow, eight o'clock, okay? We'll see you then. Goodbye.

Isaac closes the door.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac returns to the desk, watches the security monitor. The man remains a moment, just standing there, looking at the building. Then he walks away.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac at Reuben's desk, listening to the radio.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac shuts the radio off, leans back in his chair, closes his eyes. He shifts around in his chair, tries to get comfortable.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac continues shifting around in his seat, trying to sleep. Nothing but the sounds of passing cars outside.

A slight crackle of static comes from the speakers, then stops. Isaac stirs, opens his eyes, then closes them.

More silence.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac shifts around in his chair, eyes still closed. His wristwatch beeps. He opens his eyes, stands.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Isaac crosses through the Chapel.

INT. TAHARA ROOM - DAY

Isaac enters, approaches the walk-in - and freezes.

His POV: The candle has fallen over, and the sheet that was covering the body is now in a pile in the corner. As if it had been thrown off.

Isaac opens the door of the walk-in...

INT. WALK-IN - DAY

... Approaches the candle, which is still lit. He picks it up, places it upright, then moves to the corner of the room and retrieves the sheet.

He walks back to the body, stands over it a moment. It's still covered in the burial shroud - head and face concealed, booties on - like some grotesque life-size doll.

Isaac begins covering the body with the sheet - then stops. He peers closely at the burial shroud.

There's a mark on the chest.

SMASH CUT TO:

A CAMERA ANGLE through the burial shroud showing Isaac's face inches away, looking down at the chest.

CUT TO:

Isaac leans over the body, studies the mark. It looks like some kind of scar, three jagged scratches running diagonally across the skin...

And suddenly the ENTIRE BODY SHIFTS... A low moan seems to come from its throat. Isaac steps back, stunned... Accidently knocks the candle over, extinguishing the flame...

... AS THE LIGHTS OF THE ENTIRE FACILITY GO OUT.

A beat of total silence; then, SOUNDS IN THE DARKNESS: heavy, panicked breathing - a crashing noise - feet scrambling across the floor - then a door swings open, LIGHT pours in -

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

- And Isaac bursts out the back door. He exhales, happy to be in daylight, turns around ...

... And sees the back door of the facility start to close. He lunges for the door but too late, it swings shut. He's locked himself out.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Isaac on a pay phone outside, a sheepish look on his face.

ISAAC (INTO PHONE)
Yes, collect please...

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

The van pulls in, Asher and Reuben emerge. Isaac greets them, the same sheepish look on his face.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

They are on the side of the building. Asher is looking over the electrical panel.

ASHER
The fuse has blown. Too much power was being used.
(turns to Isaac)
What were you doing?

ISAAC
(a bad liar)
Nothing.

Asher studies him a moment, then turns to Reuben.

ASHER
I don't know where we will be able to find an electrician so late in the day. Or at what cost.

REUBEN
Maybe we can fix it ourselves, Father. The toolbox is in the van.

Asher considers this, then hands Isaac his keys.

ASHER
 Go back inside, please.
 (pointedly)
 And try not to lose these.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac is alone inside. The setting sun through the window is the only light in the room. Finally the lights in the room flicker back on, Reuben enters moments later.

REUBEN
 I knew we could take care of it.

Isaac just looks at him; Reuben misinterprets his expression.

REUBEN
 (continuing)
 It's no big deal, Isaac, we were heading home anyway.

ISAAC
 Can I show you something?

INT. WALK-IN - DAY

Isaac and Reuben stand over the body. Reuben sees the extinguished candle on the floor.

REUBEN
 What happened in here?

ISAAC
 Just look.

He shows Reuben the marks on the body's chest. Reuben studies them.

REUBEN
 Did Rabbi Zelman see these when he did the taharah?

ISAAC
 He didn't say anything.

REUBEN
 Then he must have decided they were no big deal. Maybe something happened when we moved the body, or it got scratched in the van -

ISAAC

- The power didn't just go out,
Reuben.

(beat)

I was in here - and right before
it happened the body moved and I
heard something, a voice -

REUBEN

- It's the death rattle, excess
air gets trapped in the lungs and
causes the body to shift -

ISAAC

No. That's not what it was.

Silence, Reuben taking in Isaac's words, studying him. They
hear an impatient honk from outside. Reuben moves outside
the walk-in a moment, grabs a matchbook, returns and lights
the candle.

REUBEN

Walk me out, will you?

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

They cross through the chapel.

REUBEN

I'll come by tonight, bring you
dinner.

They move out the building doors...

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

... Head towards the van where Asher is waiting.

REUBEN

Listen, Isaac... I've been meaning
to talk to you about your mother.

Isaac turns to him.

REUBEN

(continuing)

I feel like... I should have been
there for you after she fell ill.
But things got so busy with our
business, and I know it's no
excuse... Isaac, can you forgive -

Isaac suddenly grabs Reuben's arm.

ISAAC

The widow.

And suddenly CAMERA goes close on Isaac and -

WHITE FLASH TO:

FLASHBACK: back in the house of the deceased - Isaac in the bedroom, watching the widow's hands caress the body under the sheet over and over again.

BACK TO SCENE

ISAAC

She made those marks. She had her hands under the sheet the whole time, remember?

REUBEN

Isaac -

ISAAC

It was her, Reuben. It was her.

Beat, Reuben just looks at him. Asher calls out impatiently-

ASHER (O.S.)

Reuben, let's go.

INT. VAN - DAY

Reuben and Asher pull out of the parking lot. Asher sees a concerned Reuben watching Isaac through the rearview mirror.

ASHER

Another problem?

REUBEN

No problem. He's fine.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Isaac watches the van drive out of the alley and disappear from view. He turns and faces the building a moment. Then heads inside.

FADE TO:

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Evening twilight. Traffic has begun to thin out in front of the building. The streetlights come on.

We hear a wristwatch beep.

INT. TAHARA ROOM - NIGHT

Isaac peers at the body through the door of the walk-in. All is as before. He props the door wide open with the stool, enters...

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

... Then, remembering the power failure, he pushes the stool out from the doorway a bit, leaving it only partially open.

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

Isaac prays. Periodically he sneaks peeks at the body and the candle. Nothing out of the ordinary.

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - NIGHT

Isaac exits the walk-in - and hears a dripping noise. He looks over at the metal basin, sees the faucet is leaking again. He closes it, turning the knob as tightly as he can.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac enters, starts to sit at Reuben's desk -

- When there's a loud knock on the door. Isaac looks at the monitors. It's the Filipino man.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac swings the door open, annoyed.

ISAAC

Yes?

Again, the man speaks in Tagalog. Again, all Isaac can make out is the word "Penner".

ISAAC

(continuing)

I told you the funeral is tomorrow.

More Tagalog from the man. His tone seems more urgent.

ISAAC

(continuing)

The funeral is tomorrow, eight A.M. Come back then.

The man starts walking towards Isaac.

ISAAC
(continuing)
Come back tomorrow!

He SLAMS the door.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac watches the monitor. Again, the Filipino man stands there a moment, staring at the building, before walking away.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac opens the closet, takes out the cleaning supplies.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac dusts the benches and chairs.

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

Isaac prays.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac arranges the benches and chairs into rows, preparing the room for tomorrow's service.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac enters, takes another soda from the refrigerator.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac leans back in his chair, drinking.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac finishes the soda, throws the empty can towards the garbage. Misses. He picks it up, tosses it in -

- When a burst of static comes from the radio. The noise quickly stops. Isaac flicks the on/off switch, fiddles with the dial. Nothing happens. Odd...

... And then the noise starts up again. Isaac leans forward, fiddles with the dial, as the static noise gets louder...

... Then slowly transforms into an eerie growl, like the sound of an animal gnawing on bones... the noise gets louder...

... Until all goes silent.

A LOUD THUMP thunders from somewhere in the building.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac crosses through.

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - NIGHT

Isaac enters - and sees water pouring out of the faucet above the metal basin. He walks to the basin, shuts the faucet off.

A flickering light through the glass door of the walk-in catches Isaac's attention. He approaches, peers in.

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

REVERSE POV: Isaac's face through the glass, watching the candle flickering wildly.

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - SAME TIME

A second dripping noise sounds to Isaac's left. For the first time, he turns to the second sink. It's full of water. He stands over it, looks at the drain. There's no stopper.

He hears a dripping noise, looks at the pipes under the sink, sees one of them is leaking. He crouches down, reaches for a loose nut on the pipe -

- But he can't reach it. So he gets on the floor, slides his hand further under the sink. It's just out of his grasp... He pushes himself closer in, stretching as far as he can.

INT. WALK-IN - SAME TIME

HOLD ON the body, not moving...

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - SAME TIME

... As the faucet above Isaac turns on - Isaac gets sprayed with water through the leaky pipe - JOLTS UP and accidentally WHACKS the top of his head against the underside of the sink.

He pushes himself out from under the sink, staggers to his feet - sees both faucets now gushing water - the candle in the walk-in flickering wildly - he just watches it, stunned -

- Until everything stops as quickly as it started -

- and there is a loud KNOCK at the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

The loud knocking continues. Isaac - wet, rubbing his head in pain - hurries towards the door, swings it open angrily.

ISAAC

How many times do I have to tell
you the funeral is tomorrow! -

But standing there is the GIRL from the house of the deceased - the granddaughter - ALLISON PENNER, 18.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Allison sits on the sofa, Isaac at his desk. Allison clutches her purse tightly in her lap, takes small, uncertain sips from a soda.

ALLISON

I don't even know why I'm here.
I was on my way to the airport and
I just... found myself pulling off
the highway.

Silence, Isaac waiting, can tell she wants to talk.

ALLISON

(continuing)

He was an eye doctor. A surgeon.
He was famous, too. He and his
best friend came up with this
surgical technique doctors all
over the world use. When he was
fifty he sold the patent to this
healthcare company and retired.
I used to spend every summer with
him at his cabin in Colorado.

(beat)

He had been retired for five years
when this aid organization called.
Saddam Hussein had gassed this
village in northern Iraq and
killed like, 5,000 people. Plus
there were another 10,000 injured,
some with eye damage from the gas.
They needed doctors right away.
My grandfather, his friend, and
their wives decided to go. They
were nurses, they wanted to help
too. So they went to Turkey and
chartered a plane to cross the
border.

(more)

ALLISON (cont'd)

(beat)

It took the organization four days to realize the plane never landed, then another three to convince the Iraqis to let people search for it. Finally they found the plane. It had slammed into a mountain. Everybody was dead except for my grandfather. He said he was scared in the beginning, but by the end all he did was think about water.

Isaac's eyes rise at the word. Suddenly:

ALLISON

(continuing)

Can I see him?

ISAAC

I'm not supposed to let anyone back there.

ALLISON

I just... want to see him again. One last time. Please?

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

Isaac unrolls the sheet, looks away. Hold on Allison's face:

ALLISON

Thank you.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

They're back in Reuben's office. She finishes her soda.

ALLISON

My mother said he was different after the accident. We were never allowed to talk about my grandmother, even though he kept her ring. And he remarried, this horrible woman everybody hated.

(beat)

Then he started practicing medicine again. But it was like, he wasn't the same person. He got into trouble in another country. People accused him of doing these terrible things, of torturing his patients.

(more)

ALLISON (cont'd)

He lost his medical license. The last time I saw him we were at the cabin together. I was twelve. I asked him if what people were saying about him was true and he just... laughed.

Beat. She looks at her watch.

ALLISON
(continuing)

I guess I missed my plane.

More silence. Then Isaac sits up in his chair.

ISAAC

I saw a ring. I'll bet it was your grandmother's.

He pops up from his seat, goes into Asher's office.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Isaac searches quickly around Asher's office. Finally he finds the envelope on a shelf behind Asher's desk, near the gun case. He grabs the envelope, empties it on the desk. There is a necklace he barely glances at, along with a ring, which rolls out of the envelope and onto the floor. He kneels down, picks it up, calls out towards the other room -

ISAAC

Got it!

(heads back to
Reuben's office)

This is it, right? -

But he immediately stops talking as he enters...

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

... Because no one is there.

INT. CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

Isaac enters the Chapel. It's empty.

ISAAC

Allison?

He hears a noise coming from the Taharah room.

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - SAME TIME

Isaac enters, approaches the walk-in, looks through the glass door...

... And sees Allison, her back to him, standing over the body. The sheet is off.

ISAAC

Allison?

He sees her slowly raise her arms together in the air. She's holding a large knife.

ISAAC

(continuing)

Hey!

INT. WALK-IN - SAME TIME

We see Allison's face: weeping, contorted with rage, the knife trembling in her hands.

ALLISON

You bastard.

She brings the knife down - but Isaac races in, grabs her arm.

ALLISON

(continuing)

No!

She shrieks, tries to push Isaac away - there's a struggle -

ISAAC

Stop!

- Until he forces her to drop the knife, then kicks it to the corner of the room. Allison crumples to the floor, sobbing.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

They're standing by the door.

ALLISON

If you knew what he did to me...

If you knew...

ISAAC

Get out of here. Just get out!

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Isaac, tense, watches Allison through the monitor. She leans against the side of the building, head buried in her hands. Finally she composes herself. She climbs into her car and drives away.

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

Isaac picks the knife up.

INT. TAHARA ROOM - NIGHT

Isaac places the knife on the counter.

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

Isaac re-enters, lays the sheet back over the body.

Hold on him standing there, staring at it. A thought obviously in his head.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac dials a number, waits.

ISAAC (INTO PHONE)

It's me.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Naomi lies in bed, her computer in her lap. INTERCUT as Naomi reads aloud to Isaac from the search engine results page.

NAOMI

"Call Marvin Penner for all your Portland real estate needs"...

"Are you Marvin Penner? It's time for your class reunion"....

"Boston Marathon results 2008, Marvin Penner" -

ISAAC

Try Dr. Marvin Penner, eye surgeon.

Naomi types, then reads:

NAOMI

"A new approach to refractive optic neurotomy, by Harold Goldstein, M.D., and Marvin Penner, M.D." -

ISAAC

- That's it, that's him -

NAOMI

- It's from something called the Journal of American Ophthalmology.

ISAAC

Don't click on it, just tell me the other links.

NAOMI

"Secondary studies confirm success of revolutionary surgical technique"... "List of patent recipients 1980"... "Penner and Goldstein receive Humanitarian of the Year Honors for ten million dollar donation."

(beat)

This one's weird. "Airplane on Emergency Aid Mission to Kurdish City Disappears" -

Isaac's wristwatch beeps.

ISAAC

Can I call you back, Naomi?

NAOMI

When are you going to tell me what this is about?

ISAAC

I'll call you back in twenty minutes, I promise.

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

Isaac enters, begins to pray.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Naomi gets ready for bed. Then she returns to her computer, curious. She scrolls down the webpage, reading excerpts from news articles: *Airplane Wreckage Discovered in Dahuk Pass... Relief Mission Ends in Disaster... American Physician Sole Survivor of Horrifying Eight-Day Ordeal in Mountain Range...*

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

Isaac, praying, sneaks a peek at the sand-timer, but it's a long way from being empty.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Naomi continues searching the Internet, stops at a link, surprised. It reads: *IMA Investigates Renowned Physician*. She clicks on it. A banner at the top of the screen reads *BT4TV*, and there are several keywords at the bottom of the screen: *Marvin Penner, ophthalmology, humanitarian, torture*.

Naomi clicks on a video link. ON SCREEN: a BRITISH JOURNALIST stands in front of an abandoned storefront on an unpaved road.

JOURNALIST (ON SCREEN)

Here in this remote island province of the Philipines, 200 kilometers from the nearest hospital, locals are still trying to make sense of a man who appeared as if from nowhere promising to help them. A man they now name *Na Dilim Karimlan* - the hand of darkness.

INT. BUILDING/STAIRWELL - DAY (ON SCREEN)

The journalist moves up a dimly-lit staircase and enters what looks to be an abandoned medical office.

JOURNALIST

Dr. Marvin Penner was a physician from the United States with a history of providing humanitarian aid who arrived to this village with little fanfare carrying suitcases full of eyeglasses and boxes of medical equipment. Soon word spread that anyone could come and take the eyeglasses at no cost. And if those couldn't improve their sight...

Camera pans to a surgical table.

JOURNALIST

(continuing)

... He had other methods.

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

Isaac peeks again at the sand timer. Still not empty.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Naomi continues watching. On screen: a FILIPINO WOMAN is seated in shadows.

JOURNALIST

This is Sampaguita, who worked as an assistant to the man and is afraid to give us her real name.

Nina speaks as an INTERPRETER talks over her voice.

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

They would come from villages all over and wait, sometimes for days. Most were elderly but others came too, adults, children... But what he did to them... What I helped him do...

JOURNALIST

Please be warned that the images you are about to see are graphic.

ONSCREEN: Images of the villagers: mutilated faces, eyelids sewn shut; a boy with blood soaking through facial bandages; a woman with bleeding eyes; a man with empty sockets staring straight at the screen...

OFF-SCREEN: Naomi stares at the computer screen in absolute horror.

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

Isaac prays - and that thunderous bell sounds again from the Taharah Room.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac hurries inside, picks up the ringing phone. Naomi's hysterical voice comes through the receiver...

ISAAC

Naomi, calm down... What happened, what did you see?

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Reuben places dishes in the sink. His phone rings. It's Isaac.

REUBEN
Hey Isaac, what's going -

ISAAC (THROUGH PHONE)
He was a surgeon.

REUBEN
Who?

ISAAC
Penner, the *niftar* - he was
respected and successful...

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac on the phone, extremely agitated.

ISAAC
... And then there was a terrible
plane crash and he became evil,
Reuben, I mean *really* evil -

REUBEN
How do you know this?

ISAAC
His granddaughter told me. She
was here, and then -

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Reuben stops walking, taken aback.

REUBEN
She came there, why?

ISAAC
She told me it was just to see the
body but she really wanted -

REUBEN
- You didn't show it to her, right?
(Isaac doesn't answer)
Don't tell me you showed her the
body, that's completely forbidden -

ASHER (O.S.)
Reuben, with whom are you speaking?

REUBEN
(to Asher)
I'll be right there!
(back to phone)
I've gotta go.

ISAAC
 Wait, Reuben, something's wrong,
 don't hang up...

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ISAAC
 ... Reuben. *Reuben.*

But the line is dead.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

The streets are deserted. All quiet.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac paces furiously.

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - NIGHT

Isaac stands by the door of the walk-in, looking in at the body. He doesn't want to go in.

Finally, his wristwatch beeps. He enters...

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

... Wheeling the stool in behind him, which he uses to partially prop open the door.

INT. WALK-IN - LATER

Isaac prays, trying to concentrate on the words on the page.

The stool in the doorway slides out, the door of the walk-in closes. Isaac stands, props the stool back in the door, returns to his seat, continues praying.

The stool slides out again. Again Isaac stands, props the stool back in the door, jamming it in a bit further to make sure the door stays open. He returns to his seat and opens his prayer book...

... When the shadows against the wall grab his attention. He looks down at the candle, sees it flickering wildly...

... Then hears a rattling noise traveling through the ceiling pipes. It seems to hover over the door...

- And suddenly the stool in the door POPS away as if pushed - the door SLAMS shut - and a second chair from the Taharah room mysteriously slides across the floor and blocks the door, trapping Isaac inside.

Isaac rushes to the door, tries to push it open. It's no use - the chair is wedged in perfectly.

ISAAC

Hey!

He hears a noise behind him, turns - *the body is stirring under the sheets* - he looks back out at the Taharah room, both sinks are gushing water - he pounds on the door -

ISAAC

(continuing)

Let me out!

(pounding harder)

Let me out! - Let me out! - LET ME
OUT! -

The chair blocking the door suddenly falls away - Isaac pushes through...

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - NIGHT

... Falls to the floor... He scrambles quickly to his feet, bolts out of the room...

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

... Rushes past Reuben's desk, where he can hear the sounds of growling through the radio... He hurries into Asher's office...

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

... Slams the door closed behind him, huddles in the chair, panicking, not knowing where to go or what to do -

- When he sees the necklace chain peeking out of the envelope on the desk. He pulls the chain out, studies it. It looks like an amulet of some sort, in the shape of a hexagon, covered with an acrostic of ancient Hebrew letters.

Isaac turns the amulet over... and sees three jagged lines.

CUT TO:

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac by Asher's bookshelves, frantically looking at book titles.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac skims through the pages of a book. He finds something.

ISAAC
 (to himself)
Sefer Raziel, book seven.

He closes the book, begins looking again at Asher's bookshelves, scanning the book titles with his finger.

ISAAC
 (continuing)
 Book seven, book seven...

He finds book one to six and eight to ten - but there is no book seven.

He looks at the other bookshelves, then begins searching frantically around the room. Finally he finds it on the shelf behind Asher's desk, next to the gun case. And as he opens it and begins reading -

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Reuben drives, this time a small old car. His phone rings, he sees from caller ID that it's Isaac. He answers, and before he can even say hello -

ISAAC (THROUGH PHONE)
 - Penner has a necklace - it's
 some kind of amulet - it matches
 the scar on his chest! -

REUBEN
 - Isaac, slow down -

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac with the book open, looking at picture after picture of strange looking medallions, necklaces, and amulets covered in ancient Hebrew lettering. INTERCUT.

ISAAC
 - A book of your father's says
 people used to make amulets to
 signify their allegiance to the
 demons and spirits mentioned in
 the ancient texts -

REUBEN
 - Isaac -

ISAAC

- But I can't find a picture of Penner's amulet anywhere. That's why I want you to show it to Eliyahu.

REUBEN

Show what to Eliyahu?

ISAAC

The amulet. I'll describe it to you, you draw it and take it to the *kollel*.

Beat.

REUBEN

First of all, even if Eliyahu was there -

ISAAC

- He's always there, he *lives* there -

REUBEN

- Isaac, listen to me! I can't go. My father just sent me to pick up some supplies from our warehouse. I'm on my way to New Jersey.

Silence from Isaac.

REUBEN

(continuing)

I can't help you, Isaac. I'm sorry.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac hangs up the phone, feeling very alone.

A beat, and then he picks it up again.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Naomi lies in bed, unable to sleep. Her phone rings, she quickly picks up.

NAOMI

Isaac?

ISAAC

I need your help, Naomi. Please.

NAOMI
 (beat)
 Anything.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Naomi pulls up to a small building with a sign out front that reads: *Beis Avraham Kollel*.

INT. KOLLEL - NIGHT

A *kollel* is a Jewish house of learning, a place where the devout gather to study the sacred books of the faith. Naomi enters, stands in the back of this windowless place filled with books. MEN sit in study, some in discussion groups, others alone, in silent contemplation. Most of them look as ancient as the texts they read.

Naomi catches one of the LEARNERS attention, speaks quietly to him. A few of the other men look up at her, very surprised to see a woman in their midst.

The learner points to a surprisingly YOUNG MAN in the corner. Naomi approaches him. He's ELIYAHU GINSBERG, 18, and he is engaged in a heated debate with two others. Even at so young an age, Eliyahu has the sloped posture and pale complexion of a scholar - and eyes that gleam with the pleasure and excitement of studying God's word.

Eliyahu stops, sees Naomi there. He approaches her.

NAOMI
 Isaac Fleisher was wondering if
 you've ever seen something like
 this.

She shows Eliyahu a crude drawing of the amulet on a piece of notebook paper. A long beat as Eliyahu studies it, then turns to his two study partners.

ELIYAHU
 Mordechai, Tzali, five minutes.

CUT TO:

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac continues looking through the book at drawings of amulets.

He hears a noise coming from Reuben's office.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac enters, approaches Reuben's desk. The radio speakers crackle with static... The static quickly turns into that low growl... getting LOUDER...

... And suddenly A MAN'S VOICE rings out loudly over the growling.

MAN (THROUGH SPEAKERS)
I'm so thirsty... No, get away...
please stop... Go away, get away,
go away!...

And just like that speakers go silent. Off Isaac, thunderstruck:

CUT TO:

INT. KOLLEL - NIGHT

Back with Naomi and Eliyahu. Eliyahu walks quickly through the *kollel* as Naomi tries to keep up.

They reach a bookshelf, Eliyahu grabs a book and flips through it until:

ELIYAHU
Samuel One, Chapter 16: "And the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit began to torment him." David is brought to soothe King Saul's spirit by playing the harp but the king's relief is only temporary - the spirit continues to plague Saul until his death at Givatayim.

(scans down the page)
Here it is, from the *Midrash*:
"Said Rabbi Tarfon the son of Menashe, only one demon had the power to overcome a man as great as King Saul. That cursed spirit was Ashmodai, husband of Lilith. The prince of demons."

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac stands there, still stunned by what he heard through the speakers. He leaves the office.

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - NIGHT

Isaac cautiously enters, takes in the room - the chair on the floor, the faucets dripping - the wheels in his mind beginning to turn as we hear:

ELIYAHU (V.O.)

The Kabbalah picks up the story of Ashmodai when the demon dresses in disguise and enters King Solomon's court.

INT. KOLLEL - NIGHT

Eliyahu and Naomi are by a different bookshelf, Eliyahu leafs through a large book with yellowed pages.

ELIYAHU

But Solomon recognizes the demon and chases him out of Jerusalem; one of the king's guards even manages to lay a blow on Ashmodai's left breast, scarring him forever.

Eliyahu shows Naomi a picture of a grotesque, horned demon standing outside the gates of Jerusalem, bleeding from his chest.

ELIYAHU

(continuing)

Ashmodai vows revenge - and promises never to be recognized again. Said he, "I will inhabit man to conquer man..."

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Eliyahu's voice as Isaac flips through another book.

ELIYAHU (V.O.)

"... And while feasting on his soul turn one against the other."

Isaac sees images of possessions: contorted bodies, demons hovering over a child's bed, faces frozen in silent screams...

INT. KOLLEL - NIGHT

Back to Eliyahu, turning more pages.

ELIYAHU

Kabbalah then speaks of how
Ashmodai made good on his promise
for the next twenty-five hundred
years. Terrified victims
testified to his power.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Back on Isaac, still reading. He sees an image of a
religious figure praying over a tormented old man tied to a
bed. As Isaac ponders the figure:

ELIYAHU (V.O.)

"He brought Babylonia to ruin...
He sharpened the knives of the
Crusaders... He created the blood
libel... He moved like a fly
through the air and I could not
catch him..."

INT. KOLLEL - NIGHT

ELIYAHU

Only Rabbi Mordechai son of the
great Sadiq of Izmir claims to
have discovered a way to destroy
it. Said he, "Ashmodai's defeat
can only come when the sun meets
the stars and the demon meets the
hand of unshakeable faith."

NAOMI

What does that mean?

ELIYAHU

I don't know. It's always hard to
make sense of Kabbalah. Some of
it is clearly divinely inspired.
Other parts seem, well... made up.
(closes book)

Is there anything else I can do
for you?

NAOMI

(beat)

No.

ELIYAHU

Then I must go back to my
learning.

He leaves her. Hold on Naomi, troubled...

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

... As Isaac continues reading. Finally he stands...

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

... Crosses back through the chapel...

INT. TAHARA ROOM - NIGHT

... And enters. Ignoring the water dripping from the faucets he walks straight into the walk-in...

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

... And stands over the body.

ISAAC

Dr. Penner.

Silence; just the refrigerator humming. Isaac speaks louder.

ISAAC

(continuing)

Dr. Penner, it's Isaac, your
shomer. I think you're in there,
and I'm going to save you.

SMASH CUT TO:

A CAMERA ANGLE showing Isaac's face inches away, his voice MUFFLED but audible.

ISAAC

I'm going to save you.

CUT TO:

The candle begins to flicker, water begins running from the faucets in the Taharah room, and Isaac's voice continues to rise.

ISAAC

I'm going to save you! -

And suddenly the candle flickers out - the building's power dies, plunging Isaac in darkness -

- And all goes silent.

SMASH TO BLACK:

SILENCE in the darkness. Then: SOUNDS of CHANTING - an ancient Hebrew liturgy, solemn yet urgent - VOICES that sound as if they were begging, pleading, even SHOUTING AT GOD.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

We are back in Isaac's apartment, which is now crowded with the men of Isaac's religious community, all of whom are facing his mother's bedroom, chanting fervently. (This is the chanting that opened the movie.)

Find Isaac standing in the corner, dressed in Hasidic clothing, prayer book in his hand. He stares at it blankly. Naomi watches him, concerned.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The service is over, people are heading home, nodding silently at Isaac in the doorway. Naomi is the last to leave.

NAOMI

I have to go now, but I can be back later...

ISAAC

No, it's okay.

NAOMI

Are you sure?

ISAAC

Yeah, we'll talk tomorrow.

Isaac closes the door. He hears his mother calling weakly from her bedroom.

DEBORAH (O.S.)

Isaac...

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Isaac prepares a new medication; it's concentrated liquid morphine. He opens the bottle, winces a bit at the smell, then pours two drops into a small glass, mixes it with water.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Isaac enters, the glass in his hand. The room is dimly lit, pill bottles are on a nightstand, and Deborah lies in bed, her back to him.

ISAAC
 (gently)
 Here you go, Mom -

She turns, and her appearance is shocking - thinned hair, emaciated body, and a bandage over her eye. Isaac helps her sit up, gives her the medicine, then:

DEBORAH
 Everything hurts.

ISAAC
 I know, Mom, I'm sorry.

DEBORAH
 It hurts... so much...

ISAAC
 Should I call the doctor?

DEBORAH
 No. Just... make it stop.

She holds a look on him. He's confused.

DEBORAH
 (continuing)
 I can't... do it anymore... Isaac,
 help me... Make it stop.

Now Isaac stares at his mother, stunned, almost physically shrinking at her words. He knows exactly what she's asking of him.

DEBORAH
 (continuing)
 Make it stop...

END FLASHBACK AND FADE TO:

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Asher drives, alone. The clock on the van's dashboard reads 11:38 PM. He looks at the seat next to him, where a large plate of food has been carefully wrapped in foil.

The Filipino man suddenly appears in the crosswalk.

Asher SLAMS on his brakes, instinctively reaches his hand out to stop the food from sliding off the front seat -

- *And doesn't see the Filipino man's "Ashmodai amulet" glittering against the van's headlights.*

The Filipino races across the street without stopping, doesn't even acknowledge the near miss. Asher, annoyed, continues driving, turns into the alley, heads into the mortuary's parking lot -

- Where he sees Isaac sitting outside the doorway of the completely dark building.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Asher and Isaac stand alongside the building. Asher examines the fuse box with a flashlight.

ASHER

It must have short-circuited somehow.

(studying the fuse box, talking to himself)

Still, there might be a way...

He sees Isaac there, and remembers -

ASHER

(continuing)

Your dinner.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Isaac sits outside the doorway, picking at the food Asher has brought him. Asher returns from the side of the building.

ASHER

I've tried everything. I may have some additional tools at home that are useful, but for now there is nothing to be done.

(noticing:)

You did not eat.

ISAAC

I'm not hungry.

ASHER

The food is very good, I prepared it myself. It will give you strength for the rest of the night.

Isaac shrugs. Asher studies him a moment, then:

ASHER

(continuing)

Then let us finish the ceremony.

He enters the building, flashlight on. Isaac frowns, unhappy, but follows.

INT. CASKET ROOM - NIGHT

They open the door to the "casket room" Isaac had seen earlier; over a dozen plain pine boxes are stacked together in rows.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

They carry the casket through the chapel.

INT. TAHARA ROOM - NIGHT

They lay it on the main table, then Asher lifts open the lid, leans it against the wall. He takes out a pillow, two plastic bags, and a small box with something rattling around inside.

Isaac lights candles in various places around the room as Asher preps the casket. First Asher opens one of the bags - it's full of straw - and spreads it evenly around inside. Then he places the pillow at the casket's head. Finally he opens the second bag, labeled "Earth from Jerusalem", and sprinkles a bit of the dirt at each of the casket's four corners.

ASHER

We are ready.

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

Asher enters the walk-in, which is now completely silent. Isaac warily follows. They pull the gurney out...

INT. TAHARA ROOM - SAME TIME

... Wheel it alongside the casket.

ASHER

One. Two. Three.

They lift the body up, lower it in. Asher lays the head on the pillow, then sprinkles the remaining dirt over the body.

Next he opens up the small box; there are four pieces of clay pottery inside. He lays two of the pieces over the body's eyes, one over the mouth, and one over the stomach (this is done over the burial shrouds). He steps back, makes sure all is in order. Then, in a loud and clear voice:

ASHER
(continuing)

"For any disrespect that has occurred while I have handled your body, accidental or otherwise, I ask for forgiveness."

He motions for Isaac to repeat his words.

ISAAC
"For any disrespect that has occurred while I have handled your body, accidental or otherwise, I ask for forgiveness."

They place the lid back on the casket, slide the casket to the gurney, and begin wheeling it out of the room.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

They push the gurney through, bring it to the large oak table at the front of the chapel.

ASHER
One. Two. Three.

They lay the casket on the table. Asher hands Isaac a prayer book, points at a passage. Isaac recites a prayer as Asher watches him. Isaac finishes, and Asher says "amen", pleased.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Isaac watches Asher begin pulling out of the parking lot. Asher stops, rolls down his window.

ASHER
You've done well.

He drives away. Another car enters the alley moments later. It's Naomi.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Naomi enters the building, immediately sees the casket in the front of the chapel, walks towards it.

NAOMI
What happened to the power?

Isaac enters behind her, closes the door of the building, approaches her anxiously.

ISAAC

Was Eliyahu at the *kollel*?

(Naomi nods)

So what did he say when you showed him the picture?

NAOMI

That it was a sign for some demon named Ashmodai.

(Off Isaac's reaction)

But he also said it could be nonsense, Isaac. Made up stories found in Kabbalah.

ISAAC

And what did he say when you told him what's been happening to me?

NAOMI

I didn't.

ISAAC

Why not? -

NAOMI

- Isaac -

ISAAC

You saw that video -

NAOMI

- That video doesn't prove anything except that this man was evil -

ISAAC

- But you also know what's been happening to me here, why didn't you tell him? Naomi?

She looks away, and Isaac realizes:

ISAAC

(continuing)

Because you don't believe me.

(wounded)

You don't believe me?

NAOMI

(softly)

Isaac, what happened to your mother would be too much for anybody... And you won't let me help you...

ISAAC

I want you to go home.

NAOMI

... Don't you know that I walk by your apartment every night, Isaac, every *night*, worrying about you, wanting to help you, and you won't let me, why won't you let me -

ISAAC

(exploding)

GET OUT OF HERE!!

Silence. Finally Naomi starts heading out, reaches the door... then stops. Isaac, irritated, thinks she wants to talk more.

ISAAC

(continuing)

Naomi -

NAOMI

What is that?

(beat)

That... that *noise*.

She moves towards Reuben's office. Isaac strains to listen, but can't hear anything. Naomi continues walking towards his office...

... And now the faint noise begins to grow louder - it's coming from the radio - SOUNDS of growling, like an animal gnawing on bones...

Isaac sees the casket SHUDDER on the table.

ISAAC

Naomi.

She doesn't hear it, stands by the doorway of Reuben's office, listen to the radio, growing LOUDER... The casket SHAKES again, harder... Isaac sees the lid lift slightly open...

ISAAC

(continuing)

Naomi.

Now the body begins to move with more and more force, RATTLING the entire table... Naomi turns, sees the lid beginning to slide off - her eyes go wide - the casket now THUMPING on the table -

NAOMI
Close the casket, Isaac.

But Isaac just stands there, transfixed. The thumping turns to POUNDING... a HAND emerges...

NAOMI
(continuing)
Close the casket.
(louder)
Close the casket close the casket
CLOSE THE CASKET!

And finally Isaac snaps to action, RUSHES to the casket, places the lid back on... Thunderous rattling comes from inside...

ISAAC
Help me!

Naomi hurries over, leans with Isaac over the lid... They barely are able to hold it closed...

... Until suddenly the speakers die down, the rattling from the casket stops. Off the two of them:

CUT TO:

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER)

PAN OVER the casket where two heavy benches are now balanced on its lid, keeping it closed. Silence as they ponder it, Naomi very shaken up.

NAOMI
What do we do now?

ISAAC
When a demon possesses a body
there's only one thing to do. Get
it out.

NAOMI
Get it out... how?

ISAAC
An exorcism. Rabbis used to do
them all the time. Some still do
them -

NAOMI
- On a corpse?

Isaac shakes his head no. Silence.

But when Isaac next speaks the determination in his voice is clear.

ISAAC

We drive Ashmodai from the body, Naomi. We free Marvin Penner's soul so he can reach the World to Come. It's the only way.

(beat, showing her)

Look, there's an exorcism ritual in one of Reuben's father's old books. Turns out we've also got a lot of things here we can use. Candles, soil from the Holy Land, even one of Penner's old possessions. What we don't have is rope.

NAOMI

There's rope at my school. A construction crew left it when they remodeled our building. What do we need it for?

ISAAC

To hold the body down.

FADE TO:

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Isaac stands in the doorway, watches Naomi's car pull away.

INT. WALK-IN - NIGHT

Isaac enters, alone. He pulls the chair out from inside, leaving the walk-in empty.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac sets the chair down in front of the casket, then places two candles on either side of him. He begins lighting them, and as the light of the match bounces off his face -

FLASH TO:

INT. ISAAC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

It's the middle of the night. Isaac hears his mother moaning from the other room, turns on his bedroom light and hurries out.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Isaac moves quickly to his mother's bedside, sees her in agony.

DEBORAH

Isaac...

FLASH TO:

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT: Isaac sits facing the casket, reading one of Asher's books. He realizes his *yarmulke* is off, puts it on.

FLASH TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Isaac places two morphine drops into the glass of water, slightly wincing again at the smell. He hesitates a moment, then places many more drops inside.

FLASH TO:

INT. CASKET ROOM - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT: Isaac takes out bags of "Earth from Jerusalem" from two of the empty caskets.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Isaac grabs paper and a pen off Reuben's desk.

INT. TAHARA ROOM - NIGHT

Isaac searches through the cabinet, finds a large metal bowl. Then he grabs even more candles, and as he heads back to the Chapel -

FLASH TO:

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Isaac carries the medicine down the hallway, approaches the door of his mother's bedroom...

... removes his yarmulke and leaves it in the hall...

... then pushes the door open.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

He moves to her bedside, puts the medicine on her nightstand, helps her sit up. They lock eyes.

He picks up the medicine. His hands begin to shake.

DEBORAH
Please, Isaac...

He gives it to her.

FLASH TO:

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT: *Hold on Isaac, sitting by the casket, praying.*

FLASH TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hold on Isaac, sitting by his mother's bed, waiting.

Isaac watches as his mother's breath begins to go shallow, the color drain from her face... All is silent...

... SUDDENLY SHE JOLTS UPRIGHT WITH A SCREAM AND GRABS HER NECK... Begins fighting violently for breath, writhing around, gasping... Isaac recoils, stunned... She lurches, vomits... hands flailing, knocking bottles off her nightstand onto the floor...

... Until she collapses on the bed, chokes on one last desperate breath. Her eyes go wide and lifeless.

FLASH TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Isaac opens the door to his apartment - and there is Asher, standing alone in the hallway. With a gurney. (This is the moment Isaac was remembering when the two men faced each other at the beginning of the story.)

And as Asher wordlessly pushes the gurney into the apartment...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT: *Isaac continues praying, facing the casket.*

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac finishes, closes the prayer book.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Isaac, using a candle for light, washes his hands in the sink, dries them.

He takes the candle, exits -

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

- And a FIGURE suddenly appears directly in front of him.

It's Asher, carrying his toolbox. He's furious.

ASHER

What is going on here?

He gestures to the front of the Chapel: at the metal bowl, the lit candles, the benches atop the casket.

ASHER

(continuing)

What is the meaning of this?
Explain yourself. *Explain*
yourself -

ISAAC

- There's something wrong with the
niftar!

(Asher goes silent)

A demon inside him - He's got a
mark on his chest! - And we have
to get it out, we have to get the
demon out!

Silence, Asher takes Isaac's words in. Finally:

ASHER

Show me.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

They stand over the casket. Isaac hesitates.

ASHER

Open it.

Isaac moves the benches away, then slides off the lid. He steps back, can't bear to look as Asher lifts the shrouds to get a better view of the chest. A long silence, until:

ASHER (O.S.)

I see nothing out of the ordinary.

Isaac looks. The mark is gone. He steps back, reeling.

ISAAC

That can't be! - I saw it, Reuben
and I *both* saw it! - I don't
understand -

ASHER

(softly)

I know how your mother died, Isaac.

Isaac, stunned, goes silent.

ASHER

(continuing)

When I entered her bedroom to
retrieve her body, I was
immediately suspicious. You did
not clean up around her bed, or
open a window to remove the smell
of the narcotic in the air. I
thought, 'One phone call to the
authorities...' But then I lifted
her body to the gurney. I saw
what the disease had done to her.
What it is obviously still doing
to you.

(beat)

In one form or another, I see such
tragedies every day, Isaac, for I
have made death my life's work,
and know the pain it can bring.
Yet I also know that God has a
plan. For all of us.

He moves close to Isaac, places his hand on his shoulder,
locks eyes with him.

ASHER

(continuing)

If I could find anyone else to
perform this task, I would. But
I can't. And so I want you to
remain here. Honor the sacred
oath you took when you promised to
be a *shomer* to this body. Swear
to me you will do this. Swear it.

ISAAC

I swear.

Beat, Asher holds his eyes on his.

ASHER
I believe you.

He leaves.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac is alone with the body. He hears a car pull up. Naomi enters moments later, carrying rope.

NAOMI
(shows Isaac the rope)
Do you think this is enough?

Wordlessly Isaac takes the rope from her, crosses to the front of the chapel. Naomi sees that the benches are off the casket, and a distant look is on Isaac's face.

NAOMI
(continuing)
What's wrong? Did the body move
while I was gone?

ISAAC
No.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

The casket cover is off, and the entire casket has been wrapped in rope, the body now visible inside. Isaac cuts the last piece of rope, ties it firmly into a knot, places the knife on the table.

NAOMI
Will it hold?

ISAAC
Yeah.
(beat)
Wait. Reuben's father left some
tools by the side of the building,
can you grab them for me?

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Naomi walks to the side of the building, looks around, but there are no tools. She walks back across the parking lot to the door of the facility - and finds it locked. She knocks.

NAOMI
 Isaac?
 (knocks louder)
 Isaac?

Naomi's cell phone rings, she sees it's Isaac, answers.

 NAOMI
 (continuing; into
 phone)
 Where are you? - I'm locked out.

 ISAAC (THROUGH PHONE)
 I know.

 NAOMI
 What do you mean you know -

 ISAAC
 I'm not letting you back in, Naomi.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Isaac on the phone. INTERCUT.

 ISAAC
 Neither one of us knows what's
 going to happen. I'm the *shomer*.
 This is my responsibility.

 NAOMI
 What do you expect me to do out
 here?

 ISAAC
 I don't want you here at all. Go
 home.

 NAOMI
 No.

 ISAAC
 You can't help me anymore -

 NAOMI
 - I'm not going home. I'm going
 to be right here this whole time,
 understand? I'm not leaving you.

OFF Isaac -

CUT TO:

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - NIGHT

Isaac washes his hands ritually, closes his eyes as he says a blessing, then opens them. He's ready.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac begins the ritual. First he takes six candles and places them around the casket in the shape of two overlapping triangles - the sign of the Star of David. Then he lights the candles, moving left to right. The room fills with light.

Isaac recites a prayer, then begins walking in a slow circle around the body. When he completes the circle he stops, repeats the prayer and reverses direction.

Finally, he approaches the body, stands over it, and recites in Hebrew in a loud, clear voice:

ISAAC
*Shmi Isaac Ben Shimon v'ani
 mitzaveh l'cha: Tzei, Ashmodai,
 tzei...*

[Which means: "I am Isaac the son of Simon and I order you to get out, Ashmodai, get out."]

He begins to circle the body.

ISAAC
 (continuing)
Tzei, Ashmodai, tzei... Tzei!...

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Naomi outside the building, pacing.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac takes a blank page of paper, tears it into strips. Then he writes the name "Ashmodai" in Hebrew on each of the paper strips, sets them aside.

He takes three of the unlit candles, places them on their side in the metal bowl, then ties their wicks together and lights them, creating one flame. He begins crumpling up each strip of paper and throwing it in the flame.

INT. CHAPEL - LATER

Isaac sprinkles Jerusalem Earth on the body.

ISAAC
Tzei, Ashmodai, tzei...

INT. CHAPEL - LATER

Isaac circles the casket, chanting, then reverses direction again.

INT. CHAPEL - LATER

Isaac throws more strips of paper into the flame.

ISAAC
Tzei, Ashmodai, tzei...

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac continues chanting, but there's no response from the body.

FADE TO:

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Naomi leans against the building. Her phone rings.

ISAAC (THROUGH PHONE)
Hey.

NAOMI
What's going on?

ISAAC
Nothing.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

NAOMI (THROUGH PHONE)
What's supposed to happen?

ISAAC
The demon is supposed to announce its presence. That's when I drive it out. The problem is from what I read an exorcism could take days, even weeks.

Naomi looks at her watch. It's 3:11 A.M.

NAOMI
You've got about four hours, Isaac.

ISAAC
(deadpan)
Perfect.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac approaches the body, pulls Penner's wedding ring out of his pocket. He hesitates for just a moment - then unwraps the body's hand and places the ring on the body's finger. He steps back, recites:

ISAAC
*Hineh taba'at meghanefesh
 sh'ganaftha...*

[Which means, "Here is the ring belonging to the soul you've invaded..."]

Isaac takes the amulet out of his other pocket, holds it up.

ISAAC
 (continuing)
*... V'hineh siman shelcha,
 Ashmodai. Taksheev!*

[Which means, "And here is your symbol, Ashmodai. Watch!"]

Isaac begins lowering the amulet into the flame of each of the six candles as he circles the room.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac sprinkles Jerusalem Earth on the body. His wristwatch beeps.

ISAAC
Tzei, Ashmodai, tzei...

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac writes Ashmodai's name on more strips of paper, casts them in the fire. He's beginning to look drawn, haggard.

ISAAC
Tzei, Ashmodai, tzei...

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac lowers the entire amulet into the metal bowl, watches as flames begin enveloping it.

ISAAC
Tzei, Ashmodai! Tzei! Tzei!...

FADE TO:

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Naomi nods off, leaning against the building. Everything quiet and still.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Isaac at the sink, washing his face, using a candle for light. He's clearly exhausted. He dries his hands with a paper towel, leaves the bathroom. Hold on the darkness...

... Until we hear a dripping noise coming from the faucet.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac crosses the room, stands over the casket, looks at his watch. It's 4:37 A.M. He sighs, grabs more paper to begin the ceremony again -

- when he stops. Sees something in shadows on the body. He takes a candle, holds it over the body. *The nails on the body's exposed hand have started growing.*

He moves the candle up towards the body's head, and sees hair beginning to protrude from under the head covering -

- And suddenly the body STIRS - its fingers twitch - a soft rasping noise emerges from under the face covering. Isaac excitedly begins the prayers.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac circles the body. The candles flicker wildly. We hear water running from the Taharah Room.

ISAAC
*Ani Mitzaveh l'cha! Tzei,
 Ashmodai, Tzei!...*

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Naomi has fallen asleep - but is awakened by the muffled sound of Isaac's voice through the door. Naomi puts her ear to it.

ISAAC (O.S.)
 ... *Tzei, Ashmodai!...*

INT. CHAPEL - LATER

Isaac throws more strips of paper in the flames. The body has begun writhing in the casket.

ISAAC
 ... *Tzei, Tzei!*...

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isaac, circles the body, chanting, focused. He sees the body's nails and hair continuing to grow...

... And BLOOD beginning to seep through the burial shroud right at the area of the scar. Isaac thinks a moment - then undoes the shroud. *The scar is oozing blood.* Isaac places dirt directly on the scar. The body squirms.

ISAAC
Tzei, Ashmodai, tzei!...

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Naomi listening, on edge, Isaac almost shouting now.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Tzei, Ashmodai, tzei!...

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

ISAAC
 ... *Tzei, tzei!*... Get out, get out...

Isaac leans over it, practically screams in its ear -

ISAAC
 (continuing)
 ... Goddamn it, get out of there!

And suddenly the body STOPS moving - the candles ease their flickering - and all goes silent. Beat.

NAOMI (THROUGH DOOR)
 Isaac?

EXT. BUILDING - SAME TIME

NAOMI
 Isaac, are you there?

INT. CHAPEL - SAME TIME

NAOMI (THROUGH DOOR)
Isaac.

Isaac approaches the door.

ISAAC
 (beat, defeated)
 I'm here.

And suddenly, with a ROAR, the body comes to life.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Naomi hears the roar through the door, reacts to the sound.

NAOMI
 What was that?!

ISAAC (THROUGH DOOR)
 It's here, Naomi...

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

The body THRASHES under the ropes.

ISAAC
 ... It's here!

NAOMI (THROUGH DOOR)
 Get the demon out, Isaac!

Isaac chants fervently as the table shakes with the force of the body's movements. One of the ropes snaps off.

Isaac continues chanting; another rope snaps. The table shakes again, the vibrations knocking the knife to the floor -

- as the body slowly sits upright. Isaac's eyes go wide. He stops praying, stunned.

NAOMI (THROUGH DOOR)
 (continuing)
 What's going on?

ISAAC
 It's sitting up!

NAOMI (THROUGH DOOR)
 Isaac, get out of there! Please!

ISAAC
 No!

He continues chanting... as the body slowly turns, faces him, and begins tearing the rest of its ropes away.

Isaac steps backwards - and trips over the chair, falls to the floor. The body, still wrapped in burial shrouds, climbs free of the casket and staggers towards Isaac.

ISAAC
 (continuing)
 It's coming at me!

Isaac scrambles for the knife, holds it up awkwardly as -

EXT. BUILDING - SAME TIME

- Naomi pounds on the door, screaming through it.

NAOMI
 Keep praying, Isaac!

INT. CHAPEL - SAME TIME

Isaac continues praying as he backs away from the body.

ISAAC
 It's not working!

NAOMI (THROUGH DOOR)
 Say it again!

Again Isaac continues with the prayer, but the body just moves closer.

... And now its face covering falls off, revealing grotesque eyes, long hair - the face of Penner, the soul of a MONSTER.

ISAAC
 Oh my God, oh my god...

NAOMI (THROUGH DOOR)
 Keep praying, Isaac, don't stop praying!...

EXT. BUILDING - SAME TIME

NAOMI
 ... Don't stop praying! -
 (an idea:)
 - Pray in English! -

INT. CHAPEL - SAME TIME

NAOMI
 - Say it in English, Isaac! - Say it from your heart, make your faith unshakeable!

ISAAC
 "A song from the heavens, from where will my help arrive?
 (more)

ISAAC (cont'd)
 - Help comes from God, Creator of
 Heaven and Earth!"

And for just a moment, the body flinches before moving closer.

NAOMI
 Keep praying, say it from your
 heart, say it in English!

ISAAC
 "The sun will not harm you by day,
 nor the moon by night... The Lord
 will keep you from all harm!"

The body hesitates again, then moves closer... Standing over
 Isaac now...

ISAAC
 (continuing)
 "The Lord will protect you from
 evil, he will watch over your
 life!"

As the demon opens its mouth, leans towards Isaac - its loose
 fitting shirt comes off - Isaac sees the scar now exposed on
 its chest...

ISAAC
 (continuing)
 "The Lord will protect you from
 evil, HE WILL WATCH OVER YOUR
 SOUL!"

And now Isaac takes the knife and PLUNGES it into the scar!
 The demon SHRIEKS - falls on Isaac - begins to spasm and
 growl - it's the same UNEARTHLY NOISE as was heard from the
 radio and now it grows louder and louder -

- Until the demon JERKS BACK with a HOWL, its mouth gapes
 open and a MASSIVE GRAY CLOUD pours out - GATHERS around
 Isaac, he closes his eyes as it SURROUNDS his face -

- Then suddenly BLASTS through the door -

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

- BURSTING it open, throwing Naomi aside, and scattering into
 the open air. Silence.

Naomi slowly gets to her feet, peers into the chapel, enters.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

NAOMI

Isaac?

No answer. Naomi's eyes adjust to the light - and she sees Isaac on the floor, Penner's lifeless body lying on top of him.

She hurries over, helps push Penner off. The power comes on. They lie there.

NAOMI

(continuing)

You did it. I think you did it.

FADE TO:

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

They carry Penner's body to the casket, lay it gently inside, cover it.

INT. TAHARA ROOM - NIGHT

Naomi places the candles and metal bowl back in the cupboard, Isaac washes the knife in the metal basin.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

They put the benches back in rows, finish straightening up the chapel.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT (DAWN)

Isaac walks Naomi to her car. She looks up, sees morning sunlight just beginning to break in the sky. Speaking softly, as if to herself:

NAOMI

"When the sun meets the stars..."

ISAAC

What?

NAOMI

Nothing.

They reach the car.

NAOMI

(continuing)

Isaac, you did it.

ISAAC

We did it.

He holds his gaze on hers. And before Naomi even understands what Isaac is doing he leans forward...

... and kisses her on the cheek. She flushes, embarrassed and pleased. It's the first time they've ever touched each other.

The most intimate and romantic moment of their lives.

INT. CAR - DAY

Naomi, flushing, smiling, waves goodbye to Isaac through her rearview mirror.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Isaac watches her go, then heads back inside.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Isaac enters, closes the door behind him. He approaches the casket, puts his hands on it. Closes his eyes.

ISAAC

"Blessed are You, the one true
Judge."

Clearly, he's saying goodbye to Penner - and to someone else as well.

FADE TO:

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Isaac sits by the casket, prays.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac opens the refrigerator, grabs a soda.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac at Reuben's desk, drinking the soda, looking out the window. His wristwatch beeps.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Again Isaac prays diligently over the casket.

He continues praying, turns a page - when he hears a car pull up to the building, and car doors open and close.

Isaac turns to the chapel door, continues praying, waiting for it to open, someone to come in. But nobody does. So he turns back to face the casket, continues praying...

... Until he hears a loud clanging noise coming from outside the building. The noise soon stops; all returns to silence.

Isaac prays another moment, but curiosity soon gets the better of him. He stands, crosses the chapel, reaches for the door, opens it -

- Except he can't. The door seems stuck.

ISAAC

Hello? Is someone out there?

EXT. BUILDING - SAME TIME

CLOSE ON the door, not moving.

ISAAC (O.S.)

Who's there? What's going on?

INT. BUILDING - SAME TIME

No answer. Isaac starts to shake the door, then pushes his shoulder against it even harder. But it doesn't move...

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

... Because a padlock has been placed on the door.

ISAAC (O.S.)

What's going on out there?...

INT. BUILDING - DAY

ISAAC

Who's there? Let me out!

(pounding harder)

Let me out! Let me out! LET ME -

The phone in Asher's office rings.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac enters, picks up the phone.

ISAAC

Hello?

Silence on the other end.

ISAAC
 (continuing)
 Who is this? What do you want?
 (no answer)
 Whoever this is, why won't you
 open the door? Answer me,
answer me -

ASHER (O.S.)
 Because we are afraid of what may
 come out, Isaac.

Isaac REACTS, stunned.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Asher in front of the building, on his cell phone; Rabbi Zelman stands next to him.

ASHER
 You have shown great courage,
 Isaac. But your job is not
 finished. For now you have been
 chosen for a task that is unique
 in the history of our people...

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - DAY

ASHER (THROUGH PHONE)
 ... A task spoken of in whispers
 since the time of Solomon... and
 one I know you have the strength
 to complete.

ISAAC
 I don't understand...

ASHER
 Open the casket.

Isaac puts down the phone, exits the office...

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

... Approaches the casket, slowly opens it -
 - And sees the body slowly COMING ALIVE - every muscle
 WRITHING, CONTORTING in an unearthly way - Isaac RECOILS,
 slams the casket shut -

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - DAY

- Races inside and picks up the phone.

ISAAC
You knew? -

ASHER
- Yes, Isaac -

ISAAC
- But, but the demon has been
driven out -

ASHER
- No -

ISAAC
- Yes, we defeated Ashmodai, we
forced its evil spirit from the
body!

ASHER
It wasn't Ashmodai's spirit you
removed, it was Dr. Penner's. One
of the demon's thousands of
victims throughout our history.
And now you alone can end
Ashmodai's reign...

As Isaac continues to listen, horrified -

CUT TO:

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Asher's voice over Isaac hurrying through the chapel towards
the back door.

ASHER (V.O.)
... You have found the strength
inside you that only the once
unfaithful possess...

INT. TAHARAH ROOM - DAY

Isaac races inside, tries desperately to open the back
door - but it, too, has been padlocked shut.

ASHER (V.O.)
... For only those who have turned
their back on God and then
returned to Him have a faith that
is truly unshakeable...

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Again Isaac races back through the chapel. He passes the casket, noises beginning to sound louder from inside.

ASHER (V.O.)

... A faith that will enable you
to make the ultimate sacrifice...
I know you can do this, Isaac...

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Passing through Reuben's office...

ASHER (V.O.)

... Because I have been watching
you. And I believe in you...

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Rabbi Zelman takes the phone from Asher's hand.

RABBI ZELMAN

Young man, there isn't much time,
listen carefully. You must take
the demon within you...

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Isaac listens, frenzied, hysterical.

RABBI ZELMAN (THROUGH PHONE)

... You will only have seconds
before Ashmodai completely
controls you, first your body and
then your mind...

Isaac, panicked, looks around the office. Sees the window.

RABBI ZELMAN (THROUGH PHONE)

(continuing)

... And in those second, you must
defeat its will with your own to
destroy it... A sacrifice with
your own hand that is the only way
to save us all... Do you
understand these instructions?

Isaac moves towards the window. There may be space for him to get out...

RABBI ZELMAN

Young man, are you there?

Isaac starts to open the window.

RABBI ZELMAN (THROUGH PHONE)
Are you there? Isaac Ben Shimon,
are you there?

And then Isaac stops, moves his hand away from the window.
Beat.

ISAAC
I'm here.

He turns behind him, to the shelf where the amulet and ancient books were discovered... and takes the gun out of the gun case.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Hold on Isaac, shakily holding the gun... He hears growling noises coming from the radio... getting louder... and just as the noises stop -

- Isaac hears a THUD come from the chapel. Slowly, he rises from his chair, leaves the office -

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

- Crosses the room and approaches the closed casket. Morning sunlight through the window the only light in the room.

Isaac hesitates, stands over the casket... holds the gun out as he SLOWLY swings it open... peers inside...

IT'S EMPTY.

A HAND reaches out and grabs Isaac's arm, knocking the gun away! Isaac wheels around, then staggers back in horror...

... Because the BODY is coming straight at him. And there is nothing demonic or unearthly about its appearance, it is literally a walking corpse, moving quickly towards him - It LURCHES for Isaac again -

- And Isaac barely escapes its grasp, shoves the BODY aside, runs for Reuben's office - the BODY gives chase -

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

A terrified Isaac races inside, dashes for Asher's office -

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - DAY

- SLAMS the door behind him, leans his weight against it.

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - DAY

The BODY walks towards Asher's door, lowers its shoulder and -

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - DAY

- BAM! - The door pushes against Isaac. His feet stay planted.

BAM! - the BODY tries again - and now the door opens just enough for the BODY to reach a hand in - Isaac pounds on the hand with his fist, over and over - finally the BODY pulls its hand away, Isaac gets the door closed -

INT. REUBEN'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

- As the BODY now takes several steps back, then begins to run for the door FACE FIRST, using its face as a battering ram and -

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - DAY

BAM! - Isaac has braced himself against the door, but it's no use - the BODY charges in - the force knocking the door's hinges loose, throwing Isaac against the wall -

- As the BODY enters the room, it's FACE now mangled, ripped open - it approaches Isaac - SHOVES HIM to the floor and PINS his shoulders - Isaac struggles furiously against the BODY'S grasp, but it's no use -

- As the BODY lowers its face inches from Isaac and exhales its breath into him -

- And INSTANTLY the BODY collapses on the floor, lifeless, like a puppet with its strings cut off.

Isaac staggers to his feet, coughing, clutching his throat. He knows exactly what's happening to him, can feel it begin to spread through his body... His legs give out from under him... His defeat eminent...

Suddenly Isaac reaches under the desk and pulls out the knife -

- And just as suddenly, Isaac's other hand knocks it away! A violent struggle begins between Isaac and the demon - He flails around the office, two forces at war within one body - Catapulting Isaac around the room -

- Finally Isaac SEIZES the knife - PLANTS it to the floor, blade tilted upward - and with a final burst of energy THROWS HIMSELF ON THE BLADE, chest first.

All falls silent.

ISAAC/ASHMODAI JUMPS to its feet, panicked... the knife impaled in its chest as it staggers madly, screaming...

... And then THE BODY BEGINS TO SHAKE... flips over like a dying beetle lying on its back... A loud, unearthly moan is heard... growing louder as the body's spasms increase... still LOUDER...

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Until PHOSPHERESCENT LIGHT fills the screen - a THUNDEROUS EXPLOSION SOUNDS - the force driving Asher to his knees as Rabbi Zelman manages to stand firmly, even defiantly, in place.

The light recedes; all falls silent. Rabbi Zelman begins moving towards the building, Asher follows him. He watches as Rabbi Zelman removes the padlock. They open the door.

INT. ASHER'S OFFICE - DAY

The men enter - and freeze. FOLLOW their gaze across the room...

Which is in absolute shambles: books, furniture scattered... BLOOD everywhere...

... And two bodies lying lifelessly on the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

A bright summer sun in a cloudless blue sky. PAN DOWN as we hear:

RABBI ZELMAN (O.S.)

I was home when I received the call. This is a terrible tragedy for our community, one can't imagine what would drive the boy to do such a thing...

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Squad cars, the coroner's unit on the scene; Rabbi Zelman speaks to TWO POLICE OFFICERS. Behind him, a shell-shocked Reuben leans against the building.

RABBI ZELMAN

... Clearly he was troubled - I know his mother had recently passed away - yet surely to explain it in these terms is too simple...

A car pulls up, Naomi, hysterical, rushes out, tries to get into the building. COPS restrain her as Reuben hurries over, tries to comfort her.

RABBI ZELMAN

(continuing)

The boy's girlfriend. What a tragedy, what a terrible tragedy for all of us...

Rabbi Zelman sees a car pull into the alley.

RABBI ZELMAN

(continuing)

Will you excuse me a moment, officers? These people must be here for the funeral, I have to tell them the horrible news.

Rabbi Zelman walks away from the officers, approaches the car. It slows to greet him...

... As we see that DRIVING THE CAR is the Filipino man from earlier, and next to him are the two Filipino caretakers from the house. Amulets dangle from their necks.

Sitting in the back seat is the WIDOW. HOLD on her face, glaring at Rabbi Zelman as she passes, her eyes burning with unspeakable fury. He meets her gaze firmly, in grim triumph.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

The CORONER emerges from the building, pushing out a covered body on a gurney. Asher walks alongside it. He stops by Rabbi Zelman; together, they watch the body being loaded into the coroner's van.

ASHER

The coroner wants to examine Isaac's body to confirm the cause of death. He says they will release... the boy to us later this afternoon.

Rabbi Zelman hears the note of regret and pain in Asher's voice.

RABBI ZELMAN

It was the only way, Asher.

Asher nods. Beat.

RABBI ZELMAN

(continuing)

Come, I will take you home to rest. And when the body is ready Reuben and I will pick him up in the van. We will tend to the boy, prepare his body properly for the funeral, find a *shomer* -

ASHER

No.

He turns to Rabbi Zelman, speaks in a choked voice, the emotions of this day finally getting the best of him.

ASHER

(continuing)

I will watch Isaac. It will be an honor.

HOLD ON THEM watching the van pull out of the alley, disappear from view.

INT. CORONER'S VAN - DAY

We are alone in the back of the van with Isaac's body, covered in a sheet. No sounds but the muffled hum of the van's engine, the road passing steadily underneath.

Then: a bump in the road causes Isaac's hand to slide off the gurney, leaving it exposed. It's the hand with the wristwatch on it.

CAMERA moves close to the hand... All becomes quiet, still...

... Until the watch BEEPS, one last time.

FADE OUT:

THE END