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# In Too Deep

By

Jacob M. Heaps-Downing

A thesis submitted in fulfillment  
of the requirements of the  
University Honors Program  
University of South Florida, St. Petersburg

May 4th, 2016

Thesis Director: Amy Sauers, Ph.D.  
Adjunct Marketing Professor, Kate Tiedemann College of Business

University Honors Program  
University of South Florida  
St. Petersburg, Florida

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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Honors Thesis

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This is to certify that the Honors Thesis of

Jacob M. Heaps-Downing

has been approved by the Examining Committee  
on May 4th, 2016  
as satisfying the thesis requirement  
of the University Honors Program

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## **ABSTRACT**

In the reflection, it gives an account of my life and habits before the beginning of the thesis courses. Then, I review my decision to choose a creative project and write the screenplay. Next, I speak about the process used and the struggles that I encountered during the first semester of writing the screenplay.

I subsequently address how the addition of Jay Boda to my writing team and a few experiences I underwent really bolstered my confidence during the second semester. A summary of how this confidence helped me, not only with the story, but with everything in my life during this second semester is shared next. The final ideas of the reflection forecast how I will continue forward in my creative works in the future. This is followed by the thesis itself, my screenplay.

Stories are a way someone can experience something completely different through fairly simple means, by sitting and watching or reading at their convenience. Movies and novels have inspired people of all ages and broadened countless minds. The screenplay that I created is one of fear and psychological struggle.

We all face struggles in our lives, and this thriller dramatizes a time of psychological stress in a young man's life as he struggles to gather what he wants from life and how to deal with how his life has gone so far. This story was created in hope that it can help others experience a new point of view and that it may inspire other creative minds to share their stories as well.

The screenplay is a story of Jon, an English professor in his mid-twenties. Jon struggles with commitment to his fiancé Daisy and his temptations for his past love, Alex. The screenplay is a journey through his experiences and mental state during this stressful time in his life.

## **REFLECTION**

These past two semesters have been a time of personal growth for me. Making the decision to write a screenplay was a difficult one for me. For the majority of my life I have gone with the sure route in life, the road that is expected, the decision that is safe. I have made my way successfully through school so far this way, having a high grade point average that seems to catch the attention and admiration of many. I also take time for recreation, but nothing that is very productive. I would do my assignments to the best of my ability and then I would work and play the rest of my time. Spending time with friends and my girlfriend was the summation of play for me. There was not much else done in my life that I would call productive. I did what was expected by others. I joined the Phi Kappa Phi honors society, but I would generally avoid other responsibilities, as to not take on more than I could handle, saying to myself, "I don't have the time."

This mode meant that I would not take risks or attempt to chase a dream. I've always had a passionate interest for film, but have always said it would be something that I would pursue later, after school. I would say that the means were not available to me right now. At the beginning of this thesis course I had another option in front of me. Should I write about my field of business, researching a topic that was expected, or should I take a chance and write with my interest in mind. Business is priceless knowledge to have to excel in any aspect of life. It can be the backbone from which a living can be made. However, I found that the rewards and personal fulfillment that I could achieve from a thesis centered around this business theme would be inferior to that of a creative project.

What I truly wanted to do was find a passion that would have me doing something every day that is fulfilling. So, I took the chance. After much deliberation, I chose the creative writing project. I chose the option that I hoped would tell me something about myself, that would test my abilities in a new way, and that would put me outside of my comfort zone. Little did I know just what I was getting myself into, or how this project would deliver on those goals in spades. I did not write a masterpiece, I do not have a movie deal, and I suspect that I will most likely not have this thesis read by more than a handful of people. However, the process has rewarded me with more than enough benefits to warrant my decision to go down this path and write my screenplay.

During the first semester of this project, my time was spent with little of substance to show for it. I spent this period seeking inspiration. I had a very rough idea of what I wanted my story to be, but it changed drastically before reaching the end result that I came up with. As I am told, it will need to take much more time after this thesis course is over to reach a polished final product that I am satisfied with. In these early months of the process, I had little guidance. I had ideas for vibrant scenes, mostly, that would be very engaging, and intriguing. I had only a few scenes, somewhere in the middle or beginning of the story. The scenes got a good review from some creative friends of mine. However, the story lacked a conclusion, and a cohesive outline. I would sit to write and have nothing to add. This made me scared, because I was not expecting to experience writer's block so quickly. I was which terrified me. I tried to fight this problem by reading books that I have never read, watching films that I have never seen, as well as reviewing some that I have enjoyed in the past. I would listen to music to put me in the mood of a potential scene that I had hoped to write. I would listen to movie soundtracks to get a feel for their tones.

Music is a big part of film in general, but especially so for me. The films *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *A Knight's Tale*, and most of Quentin Tarantino's films, use music to a uniquely intense effect. The music in these films brings emotion to their scenes. A film's soundtrack can make elevate the entire film for me. Often music inspires an entire creative scene in my mind. A music video of sorts can play in my mind, stemming from a song that I really enjoyed.

These various coping techniques that I had acquired were a great way to get ideas and they worked fairly well; however, I found myself mixing tones. I tried narration in the

film, as I was inspired by the great films such as *Fight Club* and *Sin City*. Then I would get stuck as to how everything would tie together. Often, after hitting a block, I would go out and try to experience the world. I would look to spend time on the beach, out with friends, or anything to experience life and potentially give me something to write about. Sitting inside, at a laptop, would often leave me frustrated by the end of my time spent writing and I would have only a little more than a paragraph to show for it. Then, I would often be rethinking that scene only a few days later.

I soon turned to paper and pen to write. I found that it was easier and more effective for my personal creative process. Not only would it give me a chance to make an additional edit when I went to type, but it was a much more organic process for me. Plus, I could write anywhere I pleased, and not just places with WiFi. My director, Dr. Sauers, was a great help to me with how to go about getting comfortable in a writing space so that I could be most productive. Some of the suggestions did help, like removing distraction and keeping a snack close by. I watched interviews online of directors, screenwriters, and actors talking about their creative projects. I was even able to attend a live interview with YouTube and Hulu director, Freddie Wong. He talked about the importance of finding your niche and catering to your audience. I used this advice and looked into the audience of the thriller genre. I was surprised to find that a large number of females love thrillers. This allowed me to make a creative decision to try to create strong female characters in my story. The interview was held at Bluewater Productions in Clearwater, and it allowed me to see a cool production space and its layout.

After this time of creative research, I was still struggling to create a coherent outline for the final product. It wasn't until after Winter break and the beginning of the second semester that I began to form my story in a way that I felt good about. I realized that after much trial and error, and a little bit of panic that I would never get the story done, that I finally had a story that made relative sense from start to finish. It was now that I was introduced, shortly after writing the first few pages of my now reformed story, with Jay Boda, who became my second reader. He was a screen writer with obvious experience. He told me to stop writing, and go through several exercises that would help me come up with the overall story and make it fully formed. The practices were extremely beneficial. Using a beat sheet was a very valuable step to take before starting to write your story. Jay's expertise was a big help. His critiques were accurate and helpful, and he was supportive, which bolstered my confidence moving forward.

During my time during the second semester, my newfound determination led me to pursue opportunities in a way that I never had before. During this semester there was a competition for students to take part in presented by an organization called Campus Movie Fest. The challenge was to take loaned out video equipment and, in a week's time, come up with a short film. The film could potentially be shown at the film festival and be entered into a larger competition later in the year for cash prizes. Any previous semester, I would say "that sounds fun, but I'm too busy." However, this time I had the drive to say "no matter what, I am taking this opportunity, and I will not miss out on this." So, for a week before the competition, I formed a team and wrote a short script. I spoke with another director and screenwriter, Samuel Ragland, about the project. He

Comment [DW1]: ... introduced ... to

helped me find ways to go about creating a movie monster. I frantically shot the film in a day and took one more day to edit during a busy week. This essentially put my writing on hold, but it was such a rewarding experience that I would not give up for anything. As small as the project was, I worked hard on it. My video was not a winner, it did not even show, but my friends loved it, I was proud of it, and it was such a fulfilling experience for everyone involved to create something together. The video is up on the Campus Movie Fest website, and will stay there for me to be proud of for years to come. Not winning did not diminish the value that the project had brought to me. It kindled my passion for creative projects and film.

My enthusiasm for film was noticed by my co-worker as we avidly discussed the new Star Wars: The Force Awakens and she was excited to recommend that I seek out her son, Todd Smoyer, who worked in Hollywood. He was working for 20th Century Fox on the new film Independence Day Resurgence, and had previously worked on Jurassic World. Todd had moved up the ranks quickly after only a few short years in Hollywood. I was excited but nervous to call him. He was a very busy individual, with very little time for even sleep between shoots and various other duties. After finally speaking to him on the phone, I was relieved to find he was an extremely kind-hearted and charming guy. He told me if ever he could help me in some small way he'd love to do so. He left a monotonous, but stable, job in Florida to chase his dream by diving head-first into the business. Therefore, he was adamant about helping another Florida youth to do the same. To "work hard, network, show initiative, and never give up" was his advice when chasing my own dreams. Stereotypical advice, but inspirational nonetheless. He also mentioned that if I wanted a screenplay to be read by a director, to get it into the director's assistant. Todd was a knowledgeable contact that I had made and we discussed having coffee if I was ever in California.

And so, that Spring Break, I planned my trip to California. Again, normally I would have talked myself out of something such as this in the middle of the school semester. I do not normally take off for Spring Break parties or vacations. This time I seized the opportunity. I had just enough money for a plane ticket, a little spending money, and to split an AirBnB with my girlfriend. Los Angeles was the most beautiful place, with amazing weather, and countless things to do. I was able to meet Todd early one morning for coffee and we discussed many things. He said that if I were ever to be living in Los Angeles that he would help me acquire a production assistant position. We shook hands and parted ways, but have kept in touch since. A tour of the Warner Brother's Studios gave a very insightful look into the makings of a film. It still amazes me how so many movies have been created using the same small sets all the size of a few city blocks. The wealth of knowledge needed to go into a film project is exciting and unnerving all at the same time. The entire experience in California was an enriching one that I will never forget.

Coming back from California, it was time to buckle down and produce as much writing as possible to create a finished screenplay that would be short film length. I believe that if I had had Jay's guidance from the beginning of the first semester of the course, I may have been able to write enough for a draft of a feature length screenplay or

a more polished draft of a short film. But as I said before, this would not be the end of my writing process.

The main character's name is Jon, he is one that I created in my mind as a combination of various male figures in my life, and a lot of myself is reflected in him. All of the characters are the embodiment of one, or multiple, people that I have been exposed to in my life. I found that by taking each scene, and trying to come at it from each different character's perspective was the best way to make the scene feel natural. I had to understand everything about the character. For instance, what is their history, or their future goals. Then I would think about what mood are they in, and what are their thoughts in this moment of the story. The scenes were laid out on my beat sheet. This helped me keep the story organized. Before the beat sheet and logline, I tried writing, and everything would get mixed up quickly. With the logline I had a clear focus for the overall point of the film. Then with the beat sheet, I was able to keep it near when writing to know what needed to come next. If I had a new idea, it was a lot easier to find where it fit chronologically in the story. There are issues in the story, but I've seen growth, and I know that I can continue to improve.

In the most hectic semesters of my academic career, I have frantically written a work that is my own. This work has tested my skills, and my drive, in a multitude of ways. It has brought many opportunities to me that I would have missed out on if I had not chosen to write this screenplay. I have really found the motivation to create a reality and future for myself that I am confident will give me a sense of fulfillment in my life. Despite the chaos and the difficulties ahead, I can look back on these semesters and remember how I pushed myself and how it will all be worth it in the end, as it was when writing the thesis.

Coincidentally, I was recently informed that an acquaintance of mine is starting his own business. It would be a creative business centered around the video production field, and he is offering an internship to someone to teach them to edit, shoot, and organize videos, and how to do motion graphics. The official position title would be Jr. Editor and Art Director, and is a position that I am pursuing strongly. After graduation, I plan to pursue a career in making movies. By taking these steps towards my life that are not exactly the "safest," but certainly more meaningful for me, I go, as Shakespeare's King Henry exclaims, "Once more unto the breach, dear friends."



# THESIS

## In Too Deep

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EXT. BEACH. DAY.

Comment [JD2]:

The light wind BLOWS the cat tails on top of small sand dunes. Sand shifts with the breeze on the beach as a deep amber orange sun sets on the horizon. The sky transitions from orange to a deep blue with purple and pink clouds. The ocean is calm with small dark waves that push up on the sand.

Not a soul can be seen on the beach. From nearby comes a high pitched SCREAM of a girl. Feet run past the cat tails onto the sand. A young woman runs across the sand, with a boy of the same age in close pursuit.

The boy scoops her up in his arms and twirls her. He sets her down and they walk over towards a nearby wooden bench in the sand and sit at it. The **teenage boy (18 years old)** places his hands on the bench to either side of the girl and leans in for a kiss.

The girl reaches into a bag on the bench and takes out a camera. She turns the camera around and extends her arms, pointing the camera at the two of them. He kisses her on the cheek and, as she squints her face into a tickled smile, she snaps a photo. She shows him the picture on the digital display.

TEENAGE BOY That is  
a great picture.

TEENAGE GIRL  
No, delete it, my face is ugly.

TEENAGE BOY It's cute. I  
want this picture, when you get home  
you better send it to me.

TEENAGE GIRL  
Alright, alright. Should we be going  
soon? It's getting dark.

TEENAGE BOY Before we head  
back, why don't we watch the sunset  
from the water? Come on!

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN. DAY.

Both teenagers go into the water until it's at their chest. The boy grabs the girl again, holding her in his arms she wraps her arms and legs around him. They look out at the sunset together.

Gazing at the beauty of the sunset, they do not notice a distant rippling in the water.

TEENAGE BOY

It's, mesmerizing. I can't look away.

The boy's gaze was no longer on the sun, but instead on the girl's face.

TEENAGE BOY I

know what you mean. She looks at him with a smile.

TEENAGE BOY You're

beautiful. And, you're so amazing, these past few weeks have been the best of my life.... I think... that I love you.

She blushes and looks away from him. The girl goes to speak, but is cut off as she is yanked underwater. The boy gasps and yells after her, looking around himself.

A fin breaks the water and he shouts. The girl comes up gasping and reaches for him. She cries out and reaches out an arm. The two lock arms for a moment before the girl is pulled away violently and is carried underwater again.

The boy, frantic, begins to swim away. He runs up on the sand and turns around falling to his knees and looking out at the water. He places his head in his hands and cries.

EXT. BEACH. DAY.

**Jon (mid 20's)** looks out over the ocean at an island. Sitting on the beach his attention is grabbed by a young teenage boy chasing a beautiful young girl into the water, both laughing all the while.

JON

I used to swim out to that island, with an old friend, I always said it was too far, but they convinced me to do it. I'd get tired along the way, but we'd keep swimming, encouraging each other. Then, when

(MORE)

JON (cont'd) we reached the shore we'd... ha, we'd lay out on the sand, just looking up at the clouds to catch our breath for what felt like hours.

Jon's fiancé, **Daisy (mid 20's)**, stares at him with a concerned look on her face.

JON  
You are beautiful honey. Would you like to go get some ice cream?

Daisy's face relaxes into a delicate smile as she looks into Jon's eyes and sees him return the smile.

DAISY  
If you're okay with having a roly-poly for a fiancé, then I'd love some.

JON  
Of course, I love you.

DAISY  
Will you be going by the school later?

JON  
No, not tonight. I think I'll stay a bit later tomorrow to grade some papers is all. Spring breaks coming up, I want to be caught up.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY.

Jon rights the word "love" on the board and turns to face the class. Setting the book "Les Miserables" on the desk in front of the chalk board.

JON  
Love is a strong theme for Victor Hugo, here he says. "To love or have loved, that is enough. Ask nothing further. There is no other pearl to be found in the dark folds of life." Love and sex is chased by all in our culture now as it was then. With Match.com, Christian

Mingle, Tinder, Grinder, it's almost impossible to avoid the avenues for seeking love and intimacy. But how does this impact the perception of love today? Does it increase our culture's awareness and appreciation for it, or does it saturate it, make it a fleeting pleasure to be cast off and sought out at your convenience? Could this be another example of control in our culture, as a distraction of our minds. Dictatorships are all about control, they keep the population docile by controlling education, free expression, and culture. Victor Hugo also said, "When dictatorship is a fact, revolution is a right." If love today is another tool of a dictator, should we also revolt against love? Okay, so, elaborate on your thoughts in your next online discussions. Keep up your writing, send me drafts, and have a good day.

Students gather their things as the teacher goes and erases the whiteboard and gather his bag.

FADE TO:

INT. OFFICE. NIGHT.

Jon sits at his desk reading papers and marking down notes and corrections. He turns his attention to the "Les Miserable" book at his desk. He opens it and FLIPS to one of his numerous marked pages.

Jon sets the book down and proceeds to go onto the internet. He goes on Facebook and looks at a close up picture of his wife and himself smiling at the camera at a dinner party with caption Happy New Year 2016. He scrolls through Facebook and then a CHIME of a notification. A message arrived from a friend, Brian, it's several pictures from their high school days "look what I found in an old SIMs card."

Jon looks through the pictures and sees one of him, Brian, and a beautiful young woman. He stares for a minute with a longing expression. He logs out of his Facebook and signs in under another email account. There he looks at old pictures of him and

the young woman, dated 2010 on her page. He scrolls down her recent posts. Jon's phone RINGS, it's a call from Daisy. He answers.

JON

Hey, yeah I'll be home soon. No, I still have quite a few to go, I'll have to stay late again tomorrow night. It's okay. Sure, I'll pick up Chinese on the way. I know I won't forget the extra rangoons. See you soon.

He looks at the computer screen once more. Closes it down and gathers his things. He stops and looks out at nothing in particular, and then pulls out his phone. He sends a text addressed to Brian. "Tomorrow night."

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE. NIGHT

Jon walks up to his friend **Brian (late 20's)** waiting outside the warehouse. Brian takes a DRAG from his cigarette then flicks it on the ground, extinguishing it with his boot heel.

Jon and Brian are dressed in SUITS, Jon's is grey and is much nicer than what Jon had worn to school the previous day. Jon's hair is done neater also. Jon pats Brian on the shoulder and with a nod they walk inside the door.

FADE TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE. NIGHT

Jon walks up to a man at the end of a hall and reveals a key card. Jon is patted down by the man, followed by Brian and then the key card is taken from Jon's hand. It is swiped past a card reader beside the door and the door CLICKS open. The black suited man opens it for them and they step inside. The men descend a spiral staircase leading down to a smoky, and dimly lit club with MUSIC playing.

BRIAN

How were classes today Jon?

JON

Same old lecture, same old dead stares looking back at me. And don't worry, I

told Daisy I had to meet a colleague  
and then finish up grading papers.

BRIAN

I need to come sit in on one of these  
lectures of yours, Jon. I've seen the  
kind of protégés you teach; I think I  
could have a lesson or two to teach  
them as well.

They reach the base of the winding stairwell and walk into the  
club. There are groups of men crowded around a central stage  
with several others dispersed in various corners of the room,  
seated in lounging chairs or at booths with young women wearing  
very little. The walls are lined with various aquariums offering  
more dim blue light to the room.

JON

You stay away from my school, as soon as  
I see you I'm calling security.

BRIAN

You always know how to ruin my fun. You  
still owe me you know, from back then.

JON

You're still hung up on Rebekah? I told  
you, that wasn't my fault. You  
shouldn't have been with her anyway.  
You were with her best friend earlier  
that day. You couldn't wait twenty-four  
hours before trying to bang her BFF?

Jon and Brian take a seat close to the stage in two lounge  
chairs with a small table in between. A man in the corner of the  
room wears a white suit, he has a curled mustache and dark  
slicked back hair, he puffs on a cigar. The tilt of his head  
created a shadow from his brow that covers his eyes. He catches  
Jon's attention for a moment and then his attention is brought  
back to Brian once again.

BRIAN

She knew what she was doing, and there  
she was with her panties off and you come  
knocking on the door, how is that not  
your fault?

JON

I called, twice, I told you I was coming by, its- Just forget it man, I don't owe you shit. If anything you owe me. Going to parties, I

(MORE)

JON (cont'd) never got an invite. You never even thought to throw me a bone.

Brian shrugs, gets out a cigarette and lights it.

JON (CONT.) But hey, I wanted to ask you. Have you seen Alex, you know, since last year?

BRIAN

No man, I haven't, last I heard she was back in town at her old place, but I haven't actually seen her around. Why?

JON No

reason.

BRAIN Good, you got a bad habit of digging up old skeletons. Hey, first rounds on me okay.

Brian gestures to a young topless woman carrying a serving tray. Jon looks intently forward at the nude woman on stage. Another woman ROBED in silk walks up on stage. The robed woman is carrying a SLEDGEHAMMER in one hand letting it dangle as she walks in high heels across the stage.

Two other women bring a large object covered in a cloth on stage and set it on the floor of the stage. Jon leans in observing intently and clasping his hands in front of his mouth. The cloth covering the object is removed to reveal an aquarium. Inside is its dark water is a light, shining in the dark.

The light dimly lights the face of an angler fish. Its sharp toothed grin and bulging eyes peer forward.

The woman removes her robe showing she is wearing nothing but a PEARL necklace, she grasps the hammer in both hands, readies her swing and swings it towards the glass.



CUT TO:

EXT. PARK. DAY

Jon is JOGGING out around the lake, he runs up the street and into a shopping district.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET. DAY.

His HEADPHONES blasting O.P.P. by naughty by Nature, Jon passes a clothing shop, he looks inside, there is a short, dark haired girl. It's the young woman from the photographs. **Alex (early 20's)**, is inside handing a bunch of clothes to the woman behind the counter. The girl catches Jon's eye he stops and looks into the store as he runs by. He looks stunned and runs past the shop. He ducks around the corner to the side street of the building, he leans and peeks back through the store window. He takes a minute closing his eyes and gathering his thoughts. He takes two rapid BREATHS. He runs back around the corner and through the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. CLOTHING STORE. DAY.

Alex is gone, the woman is there sifting through the clothes. Jon approaches her taking out his earbuds.

JON

Excuse me, the young woman that was just in here. Where did she go?

STORE EMPLOYEE

Just out back, you just missed her.

JON

Thanks. Excuse me.

Jon runs to the back of the shop, dodging an older woman trying on hats, he goes through the back door and sees Alex driving away. Jon stops stares on as the car drives away.

CUT OUT:

INT. JON'S APARTMENT. DAY.

Jon comes in the front door PANTING.

JON

Yeah mom, I'm back home now, I'll come visit you soon. Okay. Bye-bye.

Jon takes out his headphones and sits at the bench besides the door, removing his shoes. He walks to the kitchen and sets his phone and headphones on the counter. Jon walks to the fridge and takes out a container of ice cream. He takes a bite with a spoon from an adjacent drawer. The phone RINGS and he leans over and answers it.

JON Hello?

There is no answer at first, just a long pause

UNKNOWN Jon?

JON

Yes, this is Jon. Who is...

The phone CLICKS and the call is ended. Jon looks at the phone oddly and then hangs it up. He looks up and sees Daisy standing she is in a towel. She looks at him with a concerned face.

DAISY Who was that?

JON

It was, I don't know who it was, some man.

DAISY

Are you seeing her again?

JON

Did you not hear me? I said it was a man. I'm not having this conversation right now; I have to get ready for work.

Jon storms off past a disgruntled Daisy.

FADE OUT:

INT. JON'S OFFICE. DAY.

Jon rubs his temple between thumb and index finger with his eyes closed. He puts down Les Miserable, he ROUGHLY rubs his cheek and takes a drink of water from a glass bottle on his desk, he

chugs the whole thing and shakes the bottle till every drop falls and looks through the empty bottle.

He takes a minute of thought and leans over to the bottom drawer of his desk. he opens it and pulls out a small safe. He enters the combination on the lock, 0-8-1-9 and opens up, inside are a few fossils, old coins, letters and papers, he removes the top tray.

At the bottom of the safe, he pulls out a photo of himself smiling, someone's arm is around his neck but half of the photo is TORN off where the person's head would have been. He puts the photo down and picks up a key chain. He looks at it and takes it out, Jon puts it into his messenger bag and closes it up.

CUT TO:

INT. JON'S CAR. DAY.

Jon GRIPS the steering wheel tight and looks out at the horizon. He waits a long moment and then turns the key in the tumbler, starting the vehicle. The car pulls out of the lot and drives down rain drenched road.

CUTS TO:

INT. JON'S CAR. DAY.

Jon STARES out of his car at a beach house a few buildings down the block in which he is parked. As his wipers SWIPE across his windshield. After a moment's hesitation, he turns the car off and steps out of his vehicle, tightening the collar of his jacket around him.

He walks towards the beach house, but he stops mid-stride, in the middle of the street, studying his surroundings. He picks up pace again and approaching the hedges of the front yard, he sees a figure crouched at the front door of the home. The figure is hooded and seems to be fiddling with the handle of the door.

JON

Hey! What're you doing?

The person looks back at Jon, then quickly darts away around the corner of the house. Jon runs after them, but after coming around the corner sees nothing there. Jon returns to the front porch to seek shelter from the rain.

There he finds an object on the ground, apparently left behind by the suspicious character. It is a LOCK PICK. Jon looks at it for a second, places it in his pocket, then diverts his attention towards the door.

He takes a shy step towards the door, arm extended, and KNOCKS three strong, deliberate beats. He waits, turns to look around towards the window, then back at the door. There is no answer. He turns to walk away and places his hands in his coat pockets. He stops QUICKLY, looks down beside him at the garden gnome sitting on a rock.

Jon picks up the gnome, looks at it, and sets it down beside the rock. He kneels over, turning the rock over and revealing a false bottom. He takes a key from inside of it and slowly walks to the door and stops his hand, holding it only an inch from the keyhole.

He freezes there for a moment longer, when SUDDENLY the door opens, revealing Alex, who JUMPS with surprise. Jon quickly puts the key into his pocket. It is not difficult to see that Alex is an attractive girl, but she is a bit worn out looking at the moment.

ALEX

Jon? What are you doing here?

JON I.. uh, sorry I came by unannounced, I just saw you out around town the other day and thought I'd stop by and see if you were home... I knocked, but...

ALEX

Oh, \*CHUCKLES\* sorry, you just scared me, I was just getting ready to head out, I probably didn't hear you over the TV or something. I'm glad you came Jon. I was actually going to just get out of the house, would you like to join me for a drink?

JON

Yeah, yeah, that'd be great. I'm just parked up the block a little, forgot which one was yours for a minute.

ALEX

That's okay, we can take my car.

JON

I can follow you, it's okay.

ALEX

No, I'm right here, just hop in.

Alex walks to the street parking and gets into the driver's side of her Range Rover, followed by Jon getting into the passenger side.

CUT OUT:

INT. BAR. NIGHT.

Jon and Alex seated at the bar, Alex takes a drink of the beer in her glass.

JON

I was nervous coming to your place again, I wasn't sure how you'd react.

ALEX

You shouldn't have been, it's good to see you again. I was actually thinking of you just the other day. Reading the letters, you sent me. They're nice to remember sometimes.

JON

No? You didn't keep those?

ALEX

I did, and I have the bracelet you made me. I always hated the nickname you gave me, mighty mouse, but I kind of like it now. Gives me courage, like I can handle myself, even though I'm short enough to shop in the kids' section.

JON

It was never meant to be demeaning, I always knew you were tough. You're independent, it's one of the qualities I liked most about you.

Takes a drink.

ALEX

Yeah, well you may have been the first.

JON

Oh, I nearly forgot, I don't want to worry you, but I saw someone

(MORE)

JON (cont'd) snooping around your front porch when I got to your place. After seeing you I forgot all about it, but do you have a boyfriend that was trying to leave you a love note or something?

ALEX

(Pauses, then speaks softly) No, no boyfriend. Jon, I... was glad to see you. Lately, I just don't stay at home. Every little noise makes me jump. That's why I leave the TV on loud. Whoever you saw, I think he's been there before.

JON What?!

ALEX I don't know what they want, I thought maybe it was someone who followed me home from the club. Or maybe they know my parents have money. There's never any trace of them though, no clue as to who they are, just the constant feeling that there's someone there.

JON

I saw them, they seemed skittish, but we should still do something about this.

ALEX We.

JON

Yeah, don't worry, if you need some help. I'm here for you.

ALEX

Thanks Jon, if you're sure. It would mean so much to me if I had someone I knew. Do you still have that key I gave you to the house?

JON I think I still have it somewhere, yeah.

ALEX  
That key's no good anymore, I'll show you where my dad kept the spare, I had him change the locks. It's hidden in the front.

JON  
I think I remember. Where are your parents by the way?

ALEX  
Overseas, as always. Do you want a smoke?

JON  
No thanks, I quit. I thought you said you'd stop too.

Alex lights a cigarette.

ALEX  
I tried, it's hard to kick old habits. So, how about you? Do you have anyone in your life right now.

JON  
Yeah, my girlfriend, we've been together nearly two years.

ALEX  
Sounds serious. And she's okay? That you came to visit me?

JON  
We trust each other, besides, I'm just helping out an old friend. I don't think she'd mind.

CUT TO:

INT. JON'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Daisy fills a vase of flowers with water. Jon comes up and kisses her on the cheek and then he walks away towards the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. SHOWER. NIGHT.

Jon's in the shower. The water rushes down his head. A woman's figure is seen on the other side of the fogged glass. She removes a robe and gets in the shower with Jon. She reaches around Jon and runs her hands down his chest. With his eyes closed he turns to face her. He takes her in his arms and opens his eyes. It's Daisy. He looks at her for a moment, then smiles. He kisses her for a moment.

JON

I'm sorry honey, it's been a long day.  
I'm really exhausted.

DAISY

I'm sorry, didn't know those papers would  
take so much out of you. Tomorrow then,  
you owe me.

INT. JON'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Jon is sleeping. Eyes closed he wakes to a WHIMPER. He rolls over and finds Daisy sitting up in bed, still wearing her nightgown. She is CRYING.

JON

Daisy, what's the matter? What is it?

DAISY I...I..

JON

Look, whatever it is tell me, I'm here.  
Just tell me.

DAISY

I... know Jon. Is there something you  
want to tell me?

JON

What are you talking about?



DAISY

So, you don't want to tell me?

JON

Do you mean Alex? She's just an old friend, there's nothing to worry about.

DAISY

Why do you hide it from me? Does it mean nothing to you, the past two years?

JON

Of course it does, Daisy, I just didn't want to upset you, but I swear she just needs some help right now.

DAISY

I don't want to hear it; you did it again. You promised before. This girl, I don't want you to see her.

JON

Baby, listen, she was an important part of my life, I just want to give her the help I know she would give me. But I promise, there is nothing to worry about.

DAISY

It's hard to believe you? I'm not ignoring it this time. If you're going to see her, I want you out of here.

JON

Baby, just let's go back to sleep, we'll talk about it in the morning.

DAISY

No, no, I can't sleep. I need you to leave.

Daisy walks to the master bath and forcefully SLAMS the door.

CUT TO: EXT. BRIAN'S HOUSE. DAY.

Jon stands at Brian's front door still dressed in his pajama pants and old white t-shirt with holes near the collar. He's

carrying a suitcase, a dark gray suit slung over his shoulder,  
and a pair of shoes in his hands.

BRIAN

So, should we discuss your half of the  
rent?

CONTINUED:

JON

Shut up man, I need to get dressed  
for work already. Let me in.

BRIAN

My bad, come on in. How'd it go?

Jon walks inside and SLAMS his things on the couch. He  
UNZIPS the suitcase and takes out his toothbrush and  
deodorant.

JON

It's nothing to worry about,  
nothing worse than before.

BRIAN

Look man, I've been in your spot,

JON

I don't think you have.

BRIAN

I'm telling you, there's no harm  
in just working some things out of  
your system, you can pop over  
tonight, be home tomorrow and  
apologize to Daisy, she's never  
the wiser.

JON

Brian, you don't know what you're  
talking about. That's not going to  
help.

BRIAN

Don't act like I don't know what's  
going on.

JON

What? Look man, I've got it under  
control. I'll be out of your hair  
before you know it.

BRIAN

Mhm, and Alex?

CONTINUED:

JON  
She needs me.

BRIAN  
Is that right?

JON  
Alright. Tell me to drop it then.

BRIAN  
Okay, drop it, but you're not the  
type to listen.

JON  
You're right, I'm not...

BRIAN  
I already know buddy. Don't be too  
late getting home tonight. I'm  
making fajitas and watching  
Breaking Bad.

JON  
I wouldn't wait up. I didn't come  
to Netflix and chill. Oh, hey, do  
you still chug those energy  
drinks, I'm gonna need one.

BRIAN  
Three a day, minimum, there's some  
in the fridge. But you don't know  
what you're missing, I'm a great  
cuddle buddy.

Brian exits into his bedroom.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAY, UNIVERSITY GROUNDS

Jon, carrying his briefcase, walks out of a lecture hall  
building, he goes to a park bench and sits down, he calls a  
contact on his phone. It RINGS several times and then a  
voicemail picks up.

DAISY

CONTINUED:

(voicemail recording)  
Hello, I'm sorry I missed your  
call, leave your name and I'll  
be sure to get back to you.  
\*BEEP\*

JON  
Daisy, I know we can talk about  
this. I just feel like this is all  
a little drastic. I'm at Brian's,  
just, call me back. Please. I love  
you.

Jon hangs up his phone and SIGHS. He looks at the  
background picture of himself and Daisy smiling on his  
phone. To the side he notices on the street a white SUV  
with tinted windows, the driver's window is cracked  
slightly and tobacco smoke is drifting out of it. Jon looks  
at it for a few moments. Not long after, a cigarette is  
thrown out the window and the car pulls away.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY.

Jon stands at the front of the class giving a lecture with  
book in hand.

JON  
"Before him he saw two roads, both  
equally straight; but he did see  
two; and that terrified him--he  
who had never in his life known  
anything but one straight line.  
And, bitter anguish, these two  
roads were contradictory." I want  
you all to think about the  
Inspector's state of mind here.  
Are his thoughts aligned with  
yours for this character at this  
point in the story, or do you see  
it differently? And remember, I  
want your essays the week after  
the break, so don't stop working.

CONTINUED:

I know it's no fun, but try. Be  
safe out there everyone.

Jon gathers his things and walks out of the classroom  
before the first student can leave the aisles of seats.

FADE TO:

INT. NIGHT, OFFICE BUILDING

Large glass windows show a quiet city street illuminated by  
street lamps. Alex sits behind a desk, she sketches a  
design on a drawing pad. She turns the lamp on her desk to  
give her more light. A woman walks by and says goodnight as  
she goes. **Mohammed (late 20's male)** leans on Alex's desk.

MUHAMMAD

Alex, sweetheart, go home darling,  
it's late.

ALEX

Yeah, I know... I will, I'm going,  
I'll just finish this.

MUHAMMAD

Alright, you better be safe, call  
that new guy you're talking to,  
Jon, I'm sure he'd make sure you  
get home alright.

ALEX

It's not like that, he...

MUHAMMAD

Oh crap, I forgot... I have to go,  
Jerry is waiting, we are supposed  
to have dinner with his boss, I  
made reservations. I.... I'll see  
you tomorrow Alex. Tell Jon he can  
come by next week; I want to meet  
him.

ALEX

Bye Moe, good luck.

CONTINUED:

Muhammad exits.

Alex begins to gather her papers and pencils. She pushes her hair behind her ear and glances up to the window, then, looks around her, appearing to be experiencing some unease. Alex, puts her things into a bag that she slings over her shoulder. Then looking up she sees a figure on the other side of the glass. It's moving around the corner towards the back of the building.

Alex hunches down, lowering herself to the height of the cubical space walls, hiding her figure. She turns off her desk lamp and moves quietly towards the front door that's across the room.

Alex stops after a CLANK comes from the back of the building. She gets down even lower and huddles under a desk. RUSTLING can be heard from inside the room. Alex covers her mouth to quiet her breathing and waited, her eyes darting around. They focus on a foot that steps a cubical away, the legs of a person can be seen walking through the rows.

The man stopped at Alex's desk and tries to open a drawer. At that moment there is a hard THUMP and Alex turns to look as the janitor comes in through an office door and it closes loudly behind him. He wheels out a floor buffing machine and whistles a tune. Alex looks back at her desk and sees the figure is gone. She gets out from her hiding place and waves to the janitor, **Ned (late 50's male)**.

ALEX

Ned, Ned!

NED

Alex, dear, are you alright. I just locked up behind Moe, I thought he was the last one-

ALEX

Ned, there was someone in here, I don't know who, but I saw them.

NED

CONTINUED:

I don't see anyone now. Let's get you home, I'm closing up anyway, I'll just finish up this room in the morning. Let me walk you to your car.

ALEX

Thanks Ned, I really appreciate it. CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT, PARKING LOT

Alex sits in her car and waves goodbye to Ned as he walks away back towards the office building. Alex gets out her phone and holds it for a moment staring hesitantly.

She takes a BREATH and then opens contacts and calls Jon. She hangs up on the second RING. She sits there with the phone in her hand. She turns the IGNITION on in the car and fastens her seat belt. Shortly after, her phone RINGS, she answers.

ALEX

Hello

JON

(through phone)

You called? How is everything?

ALEX

Hey, yeah, I don't want to disturb you, but, I thought maybe.

JON

(through phone)

It's okay, I'm definitely not doing anything important. What's up?

ALEX

Oh, well, I was wondering if you wanted to stop by tonight. I just need some company.

JON

(through phone)

Yeah, no problem, I'll be there.



CONTINUED:

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT, ALEX'S HOUSE

ALEX

So you moved in with Brian.

JON

No, I'm just staying a few nights, it's a sleepover, you know those used to be so fun as a kid. But really, it's not a big deal he's just letting me crash for a bit.

ALEX

Well you can stay on the couch here tonight since I dragged you out so late. Jon.

JON

Yeah?

ALEX

I appreciate this. I really do. I saw him again; I was at work.

JON

I'm glad you called me. (pause)  
I'll tell you what, I'll stay here, just for tonight and tomorrow I'll look into this for you.

ALEX

We should go swimming; the water always helps me clear my head.

JON

Really? Swimming?

ALEX

We had some good times in that pool. We would turn out the lights and swim in the dark, when my parents were home.

CONTINUED:

JON I don't remember  
a lot of swimming. I'll sit  
this one out.

Alex enters her bedroom to change. Jon grabs a blanket and spare pillow from a hall closet. He stops at a photo of himself, Alex, and Brian. At that moment, a SPLASH comes from somewhere close outside.

Out behind the house, Jon can see the pool through the sliding glass door, illuminated by moonlight, the water ripples from some unknown agitation. Jon slides the door open and steps out on the porch. Jon tries the light switch for the pool light with no luck. Jon walks over to the pool's edge and tries to look inside. Then he sees Alex pop her head up from under the water.

JON  
Hey, the light won't work.

ALEX  
Oh well, it'll be like before, in  
the dark, so no one can see.

JON  
I'll be staying out of the water  
this time.

Jon checks his phone, sees his phone background picture of himself and Daisy smiling. Alex swims to the edge of the pool and holds on to the side, close to Jon standing on the edge. Jon puts his phone away.

JON  
I remember the boyfriend you had  
for a while, the one your dad  
liked.

ALEX  
Yeah, he knew about us though, they  
both did, I don't think they just  
hoped it'd stop on its own.

JON  
And it did.

CONTINUED:

There's a rippling on the water that catches Jon's eye, and in the darkness he can make out a shadow moving in the pool. Looking closer he sees that it is a small black snake and it is slithering across the top of the water towards Alex.

Jon quickly reacts, snatching the snake out of the water, gripping it tightly and slinging it into the bushes all in a second's time. The bushes RUSTLE.

ALEX  
What was that?!

JON  
It was nothing. I think we should go inside.

Jon grabs a towel and hands it to Alex after she climbs out of the water.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT, ALEX'S APARTMENT, ON THE COUCH.

Jon sits on the couch while Alex comes back from her room, changed and with her hair tied up to dry.

JON  
Do you still watch Friends?

ALEX  
Are you kidding me? I've watched every episode at least three times.

JON  
Wow, that's dedication. Looks like I need to catch up.

ALEX  
Yeah, let's do it.

JON  
You got popcorn?

ALEX  
It's in the cupboard.

CONTINUED:

Jon and Alex sit on the couch together with a large bowl of popcorn, laughing together at the show on the television.

Laughing and smiling, they throw popcorn at each other's mouths like a basketball into a hoop. Alex lays down on Jon's chest and falls asleep. An episode ends, Netflix ends an episode and a notification appears on the screen. "Are you still watching?" Jon moves the hair from Alex's face. He gets up slowly and picks Alex up in his arms.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Jon carries Alex to her bed and lays her down, covers her with a blanket and lingers for a moment before returning to the couch.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Jon lays out the blanket and pillow he had before and lays down. At that moment there's another SPLASH from outside. Jon gets up quickly and goes to the sliding door.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALEX'S BACKYARD. NIGHT.

The water ripples violently. Jon rushes outside. There he sees a large shadow swimming under the water. Jon tries the light switch to no avail. The shadow breaches the surface, swims to the edge, and begins climbing out of the pool.

The moonlight gleams off of the seemingly turquoise skin of the figure. It leans over and grabs a hooded jacket from the edge of the pool and puts it on. Jon rushes towards the figure as it begins to run.

Jon grabs it around the torso, the figure cuts a gash in Jon's arm while pushing away and sending Jon flying backwards into the pool. From under the water, the figure's shadow can be seen looking into the pool and then turning and walking away.

CONTINUED:

Jon swims to the edge, gets out of the pool, and looks at his arm, it's bleeding from a long cut on his forearm. He looks around, the figure is gone. He grabs another towel to dry off and to stop the bleeding. Walking to the sliding door he sees the snake lying dead with its belly up on the back step.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALEX'S BACKYARD. DAY.

Jon scratches at bandages on his forearm where he was cut. He studies the edge of the pool. He sees a small clump of seaweed. He studies the porch, there's a pack of smokes and a cigarette that's been extinguished in the ashtray.

Jon studies the window ledge to Alex's room. There's more seaweed and a slimy residue left on the ledge.

Enter Alex.

ALEX

How did it happen?

JON

He must have had a knife, I don't know, maybe in the jacket. He had his back turned to me, I couldn't see. Hey, did you smoke last night?

ALEX

No, I think I'll have one know though, my nerves are shot... is there anything we can do?

JON

Well the best we can do is tell the cops. It's not like they'll post surveillance, but it'll be a start.

Alex walks over to the couch holding two cups of coffee, she hands one to Jon.

JON (CONT.)

You just gotta lock the doors and windows at all times, don't share

CONTINUED:

details about yourself with anyone,  
and we just have to figure out who  
this is. And what they want.

ALEX

I'll call the police. Do you think  
you can stay here a few nights?

JON

I think it is best if I stay at  
Brian's. I tell you what. I'll  
take you to work. And I can pick  
you up after, it's on the way back  
from the university. I just.

ALEX

It's okay, I'm good here. I get  
it. We should do dinner later this  
week.

JON

Sounds good to me.

Alex takes a drink from her coffee.

FADE TO:

INT. JON'S CAR. DAY

Jon sets his coffee thermos in the car cup holder. He turns  
a corner and pulls up to the curb, straightening out the  
wheel and putting it in park.

He looks out at his apartment building.

CUT TO:

EXT. JON'S APARTMENT. DAY

Walking up to the front door, Jon stops. He turns around  
and walks to the side of the house. There he begins looking  
around, studying the area around the apartment.

He goes to the back and looks out at the large pond. Jon  
sees a thin scarf left out on the back patio furniture, he

CONTINUED:

picks it up for a moment and lets it slide down the palm of his hand.

Jon goes back around the side of the apartment, but stops when he sees a footprint on the ground. Jon kneels looking at the footprint. He looks to the window seal not far away. He studies it and finds a slimy residue, similar to what was on Alex's ledge.

DAISY

Finding what you're looking for?

JON

Whoa! Hey, uh, yeah, I... how are you?

DAISY

You here cause you're ready to come home?

JON

Soon. I promise.

DAISY

There was a strange man hanging around my sister's house yesterday, we were at the park across the street, I saw him parked nearby, he had a camera. He acted like he was photographing the trees or something, but he was being really weird, I swear he was aiming the camera right at me a couple of times.

JON

Did you get a good look at him?

DAISY

Well he was wearing big sunglasses, and a hoodie.

JON

CONTINUED:

That's what I wanted to warn you about. Just be careful, keep the doors locked. Call me if anything else happens. I gotta go check up on something.

INT. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. DAY

Jon sits at a library table and sifts through a tower of books he has built. He takes a book on folklore. He looks at a picture under the title Germanic Mythology of a Neck. He looks at another book of Japanese lore at a picture of a Kappa.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. DAY.

Jon just outside of the library, he puts a few books into his satchel bag. He looks out across the campus and its sparse groups of students walking in groups across the grounds, sitting around the fountain and a few professors golf carting across campus.

He spots a man walking around the corner of the neighboring building, the man has sunglasses on, a hoodie and a camera. As he rounds the corner, Jon jogs after him.

Around the corner Jon can see on the street the same SUV from before and the cameraman getting in the back of the car. It drives away quickly. Jon looks on puzzled and confused. Jon gets a call from Alex.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S HOUSE. DAY

Jon stares out at the canals behind the house, Alex's family boat sits up on a lift at the end of the short dock jetting out into the canal. His attention is redirected when a shark fin breaks the surface of the water.

ALEX

Thanks for waiting I just couldn't find my hair ties.



CONTINUED:

JON

It's okay. You look great.

ALEX

Thanks, this is the dress I never got to wear for your birthday party.

JON

Well, Shall we? I'd hate to miss the reservation to this place, they'd probably never let me back in again.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Jon and Alex enter the restaurant; it is dimly lit for the evening. Alex removes her coat and hands it to the host, showing off her yellow dress, which is the brightest thing in the dimly lit restaurant. All besides the fish tank that comes out from the wall to the left of the entrance. it holds colorful saltwater fish of blue, red, and yellow swimming about inside.

There is a bar in the back of the main dining room, lit by red lights. There are a few men seated at the bar and tables of elegantly dressed men and women.

Jon and Anna are greeted by the hostess. In the corner of his eye, Jon sees a shadow pass through the large aquarium. Jon looks behind him and sees nothing, then back at the fish tank. There is nothing there. He continues into the restaurant; Alex looks at him with a warm smile.

The hostess shows them to a seat around the other side of the fish tank. Seated at a booth close to the tank is a man in a grey suit with slicked back hair. His dark mustached lips PUFF at a cigar. He is sitting with a young woman, apparently much younger than himself. She sits tense and upright. She is beautiful, wearing a dark blue dress and pearls around her neck, with wavy brown hair let down her shoulder.

CONTINUED:

Jon watches the couple for a moment as the man leans closer to the woman and places his hand on her lap. She flinches slightly then looks at him. He stands and offers a hand, she places her hand in his and they walk away from the booth together. As the man passes Jon, he sees his dark eyes, the man flashes a grin at Jon. As the man leaves, Jon notices the shadow on the tank again.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT

Jon and Anna are seated. The waiter comes with a tray of drinks.

WAITER

Do you know what you'd like to order?

JON

I'll take the fresh oysters with wild mushroom ragout.

WAITER

Certainly, sir.

ALEX

And I'll have the Salmon, with the broccoli. Thank you.

The waiter takes their menus and walks away from the table.

ALEX (CONT.) Our first date, you ordered the same thing.

JON

How do you remember that?

ALEX

I remember everything from that night. All it takes is a taste, then it'll all come back to you too. How'd Daisy doing?

CONTINUED:

Jon finish his glass of whiskey in one GULP. He rubs the side of his cheek and adjusts his jaw.

ALEX (CONT.)

I guess we should have ordered the bottle.

JON

Ha, hm, Well, she never answers my calls. I have to just show up and hope she's there.

ALEX

When did you see her last?

JON

Yesterday. But it wasn't for long.

ALEX

So much for the "she'll get over it" theory.

JON

I didn't say she would get over it, I said she should.

ALEX

So what's next?

JON

I don't know.

ALEX

Do you regret it? Coming to my door?

JON

No. I wouldn't want to give up our friendship.

ALEX

Jon, I'm glad you're here now, I've not forgotten the way things were. The way I left them. And I think you being here shows. Just.

CONTINUED:

I really don't see why you  
don't...

Jon looks over Alex's shoulder and sees the hooded man from the school. He is slipping from a bar stool and making his way to the door. Jon quickly stands up from his chair

JON  
Wait here.

ALEX  
Where are you going.

JON  
Just, wait here!

Jon chases behind the man, heading out the door.

CUT TO: EXT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

After BURSTING through the door, he turns left and right. He sees the man at the corner of the building, cutting down the alley. Jon follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY. NIGHT

Rounding the corner and nearly running into an older woman in a wheelchair accompanied by another woman walking. Both are dressed in dirty ragged clothes.

JON  
Excuse me.

The women barely look at Jon.

HOMELESS WOMAN  
but I want it!

WHEELCHAIR WOMAN No  
dear, that doesn't belong to  
you, you can't just take  
other's things.

HOMELESS WOMAN  
Oh, hell's-bells, cracker shells!

CONTINUED:

WHEELCHAIR WOMAN

What?

HOMELESS WOMAN I

said, "hell's-bells, cracker shells!"

Jon continues down the long alley, it's lit by one light on the side of one of the buildings. Graffiti lines the walls from top to bottom. Under the light is a disposed of china cupboard, and sitting on the cupboard is a man, late-20's in a wife-beater with a shaven head and mustache. Another shady looking man stands next to him. They're talking low, almost in a whisper.

Jon slows his pace and walks past the two. Keeping his eyes forward. The men glance at him only for a moment and continue their conversation. Behind the restaurant a stream of steam rises from over a fence coming from the kitchen. Jon is startled when a man can be heard singing loudly.

COOK

La cucaracha, la cucaracha, ya no puede caminar! Hahaha!

Jon sees at the end of the street; the hooded man is standing. The white SUV from the university sits in the alley. A shadow of another figure can be seen. A PUFF of smoke is illuminated in the red tail-lights of the SUV. The hooded man is handed an envelope by the other man. The hooded man nods and turns towards Jon. Jon quickly ducks

behind a corner in the shadows. As the man passes, Jon quickly steps out from the shadows and grabs the hooded man. He pins him to the wall. Placing his face inches from the hooded man's.

JON

Who are you! And why are you following me!

HOODED MAN

Get the fuck off me!

JON

CONTINUED:

What do you want!

JASON

Let him go, Jon.

The previously shadowed figure has stepped a few feet behind Jon. He is tall, long and muscular beneath his suit and a long dark jacket.

JON

And who the fuck are - should I know you?

JASON

I believe you should.

The man steps forward so that his face may be illuminated by the light.

JASON (CONT.) As every man should know his father.

JON

Excuse me?

JASON

I know this must come as a surprise, son. My name, is Jason.

JON

Son? No. What?!

The hooded man wiggles from Jon's grasp and runs away down the alley?

JON

Hey! Get back here!

JASON

Let him go. We don't need him anymore.

JON

How am I supposed to know you're what you say you are?!

CONTINUED:

Jason removes a photo album from inside his jacket pocket.

JASON

You should already know. You have my face. Here.

Jason hands Jon the album. On the cover of the album is his mother, 20 years old, holding a baby in her arms. She is laying in a hospital bed. She wears a meek smile. Beside her, leaning into frame, is Jason, dark haired and wearing a wide toothy grin. Jon flips open a few pages of the book. A picture of Jason holding an infant Jon. More recent pictures show Jon wearing a wet suit pulled down around his waist so his torso is exposed.

JON

I don't even know you. What makes you think you deserve to call me son?

JASON

As I said, you are my blood. I am your father.

JON

That doesn't mean shit!

JASON

You don't need to fight me, Jon. You'll see, there's so much you do not know.

JON

I know all I need to know about you! I owe you nothing! How'd you even find me? You had me followed by some goon?

JASON

I had to find you. Your mother has kept you from me all this time.

JON

CONTINUED:

Did you ever consider just giving up! I don't want to see you, I never have.

JASON

You can't hide from the truth; we are so much alike. I've seen it!

JON

I'll never be like you. Leave me alone, I never want to see you again. Stay away from me! My family! my friends! I have a life! And you're not welcome!

Jon storms off, walking furiously back to the restaurant. Jason's eyes are hidden as he tips his head and shadows cover his face.

JASON

Just know, Jon. I'll be waiting, with open arms.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Jon walks into the restaurant. The sound of a PIANO playing lounge music and a woman SINGING fills the dimly lit room. Jon walks past the bar and towards the bathrooms.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

The bathroom is empty. Jon walks up to the mirror, turns on the sink and splashes water on his face repeatedly. He stops and looks at his reflection. He feels his cheek, rubs it, and lets out a SHOUT of pain.

He reaches into the back of his mouth and lets out another SHOUT as he cuts his finger on a tooth. He looks at the BLOOD trickling down his finger. His vision blurs. He looks in the mirror. His eyes look pitch black. His skin as pale as the tiles on the floor. He panics and rushes from the bathroom. Rubbing his eyes, they return to normal.



CONTINUED:

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Jon rushes into the dining area. He doesn't see Alex, so he rushes to the bar and asks something frantically. The bartender points to the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Jon BURSTS from the front door of the restaurant. By the alley, Alex stands with a cigarette. Jon stops and SIGHS with relief. Suddenly, his attention shifts to a shadow moving from the alley. Not far behind Alex is a figure, hunched and creeping forwards.

Jon shouts and runs. Grabbing Alex by the arm, he pulls her along down the street. They duck down the next side street way.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE STREET. NIGHT

They run down the street frantically and stop before the corner of the block. Jon hugs the corner of the building and peaks around it slowly. Nothing is there. He looks back down the street they came. Nothing there either. Only Alex PANTING and looking worried.

He waves Alex to follow him around the building. His face lightens and both look relieved. Together they walk towards Jon's car and get in.

CUT TO:

INT. JON'S CAR. NIGHT.

ALEX

What happened now?

JON

I ran into someone behind the restaurant just now, it's my father.

CONTINUED:

ALEX

What? What does he want?

JON

I'm not sure. He hired someone to track me down.

ALEX

So we were running from him?

JON

I don't know. I'm just a little rattled right now.

Alex touches Jon's arm. Jon looks at Alex with a worried and surprised face. Alex stares back with a concerned look on her face.

ALEX

It'll be okay.

The car winds through the streets as it begins to rain. They pull up to Alex's house.

ALEX (CONT.)

Come inside, I'll get you a drink.

JON

No, there's something I have to do. Just call me if anything happens.

Jon stares at Alex and she takes her hand from Jon's arm. She places her hands in her lap and looks down at them. Alex opens the car door and steps out of the car, putting her coat over her head. She closes the door and waves with a meek smile as Jon drives away. She lingers for a moment watching the car drive out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Alex takes off her coat and proceeds to go about the house, locking every window and door. She puts on the porch light.

CUT TO:

CONTINUED:

INT. JON'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Daisy sits, she raises a glass of whisky to her lips finishing its contents. She is watching T.V.. She sets the glass down, and after only a moment more of watching, flicks the T.V. off with the remote. She turns and looks at the pictures on the coffee table of Jon and her.

Daisy picks up the photo and runs her fingers across Jon's face. She reaches for her phone and swipes it open. There are no messages. She puts the phone down and goes to the kitchen, taking her glass with her.

She reaches for the bottle of whiskey and goes to open it, but stops. She sees the keys on the counter. She sets the bottle down, grabs up the keys and leaves the house.

CUT TO:

INT. JON'S MOTHER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Plants and flowers line a window sill. Jon sits at a table next to the window. He is cupping his face in his hands. A woman walks up, her grey hair tied back into a bun. She waters a plant in the window sill, then sits and faces Jon. He sits up and looks at her.

JON

Mom, what do I do?

MOM

Your father is controlling, and stubborn, the same as he was before you were born, he's just repeating his pattern. You don't have to fall into it. But he is your father. I refused to see him, but that's your own choice to make.

JON

I don't want anything to do with him.

MOM

CONTINUED:

He's been following us around for years, you never wanted to see him, and I told him. But he couldn't understand that. He thought I was lying to him. He thought I was just hiding you to be selfish.

JON

He called me son.

MOM

You don't owe him anything. Don't dwell on things. All of it, it's your choice. Just follow your heart.

JON

I love you, mom.

Jon kisses his mother on the cheek and walks away.

MOM

Goodbye, sweetheart.

Jon picks up his phone and calls daisy.

CUT TO:

INT. JON'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Daisy's phone RINGS on the coffee table in an otherwise empty house.

CUT TO: EXT. ALEX'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Daisy parks in front of Alex's house. She looks at the front porch, where the porch light is off and the house is dark. She gets out of the car and walks up to the door, noticing that it appears to be cracked ajar already.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Daisy pushes the door open slowly. The house is dark. A few wet footprints can be seen on the floor. Daisy enters the

CONTINUED:

house without a word. She walks in through the living room, and toward the hallway leading to the bedroom door. A low gravelly moan can be heard just on the other side of the door. The door is ajar and Daisy slowly leans close, peering in. Her face turns to one of dread and she lets out a faint scream before turning and running back towards the front door. A figure chases behind her. She runs out the front door and quickly gets in her car. She slams the car door and the car turns on and SKIDS away.

CUT TO:

INT. JON'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Daisy BURSTS in the front door, crying, the phone sits on the coffee table showing several missed calls from Jon.

CUT TO:

EXT. JON'S APARTMENT. DAY

Jon KNOCKS at the door. After a moment, Daisy answers, but only opens the door a crack. She has wrapped a blanket tightly around herself.

JON

Hey. You never answered any of my calls last night. Is everything okay?

DAISY

I left my phone at home... got in late.

JON

Where were you? I had gone to my mother's. Last night was a crazy night; you won't believe...

DAISY I saw it. I saw what's been following Alex. You were right. You can't let that keep coming. You have to get rid of it, for good.

JON

CONTINUED:

Did it come here? I knew it. That's why I was calling you-

DAISY

No, I went there, to Alex's. It was in the house, in the bedroom. If I hadn't come when I did...

JON

Let's just forget it. It doesn't have to be our problem anymore.

DAISY It does, Jon. It won't just disappear. Not until you do something.

JON

I've tried. I can't.

DAISY

You can.

Daisy closes the door. Leaving Jon standing at the door with his mouth left open.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN'S HOUSE. DAY.

JON

I need to borrow a few things.

BRIAN

Like what exactly?

Jon puts his hands in his pockets and looks intently at Brian.

BRIAN (CONT.)

They're not toys, man.

JON

And I'm not playing.

BRIAN

CONTINUED:

You going alone.

JON

Me and Alex, we have to settle this  
on our own.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOAT. DAY.

A boat cuts through the water. Jon drives the boat with Alex sitting in the back. As the boat bounces in the waves, the island comes closer and closer across the waves. The boat approaches the shore.

CUT TO: EXT. ISLAND BEACH. DAY.

Jon and Alex walk up the beach. The sun is setting. Jon sits on the sand and Alex sits beside him. Jon sets a shotgun beside him and holds a handgun in his right hand. He looks at it for a moment, grabs it by the barrel and extends the grip of the gun towards Alex, offering her to take it.

ALEX

You know, I keep remembering those nights, we'd watch the sun set and then we'd lay out until four in the morning, watching the stars, among other things. It felt right. (pause) No matter what happens tonight. I wanted you to know, those nights were special to me. Just as special as right now.

JON

Why are you telling me this? Why now, Alex? I thought I was just a fling?

ALEX

Then, to me, it was. But, you've been there for me lately, and remembering back then-

CONTINUED:

JON

I was always there for you. But there's only so far I could chase you.

ALEX

I know how it must have felt, but I've changed.

JON

A lot has changed, Alex.

ALEX

Tell me then. Tell me that you don't still love me.

JON

It's more complicated than that.

ALEX

You love her more?

JON

It's not the same, but it's just as strong. Plus, she was there for me. It's hard, to not want- to not see you. But after tonight, it's how it has to be. I wanted to help you with this, this thing, it's haunting, and it'll follow us both, I've felt it, and I hope helping will bring some kind of closure.

ALEX

There's an even better way to do that. Give me one chance, Jon.

Alex slips on top of Jon's lap.

ALEX (CONT.)

One chance to change your mind.

It's dark now and the two of them come close to embracing for a kiss, when the figure lurks from the ocean. It



CONTINUED:

appears in the distance and closes in slowly. Jon and Alex's lips ever so slightly touch as their eyes close.

Jon turns his head. The figure is closer now, shuffling across the sand. Alex begins to kiss Jon's neck. Jon takes her arms and opens his eyes. His face is surprised as he sees the figure.

JON

Alex!

Alex looks up and gasps, she gets up quickly, reaching for the hand gun. Jon stand up, picking up the shotgun and aims it at the figure. He pulls the trigger, but nothing happens.

JON

Damn!

ALEX

What is it!

Jon checks the chamber to see there is no slug in it.

JON

Run! I can handle him.

Alex nods and flees into the trees. The creature continues to walk slowly

JON

Hey, bastard, follow me!

Jon sprints back to the boat to find the ammunition. Jon's at the boat, he checks over his shoulder to see the figure still walking towards him in the distance. Jon finds some slugs and loads the gun. He turns and aims, but the figure is gone.

Jon loads his pockets with more ammunition and then runs into the trees.

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND FOREST. NIGHT.

After running for a while, Jon hears GUNSHOTS.

CONTINUED:

JON

Alex! Where are you!

Jon keeps running until he reaches a clearing. There he discovers a cave. Jon makes his way inside of it, the light of the now rising moon is all he can use to see in the dark cave.

CUT TO:

INT. ISLAND CAVE. NIGHT.

He feels along the wall with his left hand as he keeps the shotgun raised with his right. He kicks something on the ground. He bends over to check what it is. It's a small wooden box.

Jon takes out his phone and turns the flashlight on. He opens the box to find sharks teeth, some hair ties, a key on the key chain from Jon's safe, lock picking tools, and a photo that's been ripped in half.

On the photo is Alex, beaming with a smile and her arm around someone who is torn out of the photo. Then Jon looks up as the figure shows itself in the mouth of the cave. Jon turns and runs down the cave.

Jon trips, dropping his phone. He reaches for it, but the figure shows a brief glimpse of long sharp claws that swipe at Jon. Jon keeps running and makes his way through a tight passage in the rocks. The figure grabs Jon's leg and Jon kicks it away. The figure retreats into the cave.

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND FOREST. NIGHT.

Alex exits the tree line and sees Jon on the ground. She helps Jon to his feet.

ALEX

Where'd it go?!

JON

CONTINUED:

Back in the cave there. Probably circling around. We don't have long, let's get moving.

ALEX  
You're bleeding.

Jon's leg is cut and bleeding.

JON  
It's nothing, let's go.

ALEX  
No, wait, here.

Alex takes off her shirt, RIPS it and wraps it tight around Jon's leg.

ALEX (CONT.)  
Okay, let's go.

They flee back to the beach; they can see the boat in the distance. They hear the CRACK of a twig nearby. They stop. In the shadow of a tree behind them, the figure stands waiting. It leaps from the shadows and knocks Jon over, making him drop his shotgun.

It then grabs Alex's hair and pulls. She fires off a SHOT into the air with her pistol. The figure knocks it from her hand and her to the ground. It begins dragging her into the shadows and the shrubbery. She cries for Jon.

Jon, gets up and runs after them. He follows a path onto the beach.

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND BEACH. NIGHT.

A line in the sand shows Alex was dragged to the water's edge. Jon runs and tackles the figure and wrestles with it on the sand.

JON  
Go Alex! Back to the boat!

CONTINUED:

Alex runs back into the trees. Jon pins the figure down. Now he sees its face. It is a sharp toothed, dark eyed, scale skinned, image of himself. In Jon's moment of shock, the creature gets the upper hand and throws him into the water.

The creature is on top of Jon, holding him underwater. He struggles and reaches for something. He grabs an algae covered rock and swings it at the creature's face, but it doesn't stop. Then, suddenly, Alex finishes the creature before it can drown Jon, by hitting it with a sledgehammer. Jon stands up and leans on Alex as they limp together back onto shore.

JON

Thanks.

ALEX

Was that as good for you?

JON

What?

ALEX

Nothing, bad joke. Thank you. We did it.

JON

Where'd you find that?

ALEX

In the back of the boat. Must be my dad's.

JON

Well, I'll guarantee, it's not getting up from that. You'll never see that thing again. Let's get you home.

Jon stops, looking back out across the water at the shore of the beach of the mainland. He takes the key chain from his pocket and HURLS it out to sea.

CUT TO: INT. JON'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

CONTINUED:

Daisy opens the front door and Jon stands on the other side, a little wet, but smiling.

JON

It's done.

Daisy smiles, she takes Jon by the arm and leads him in the apartment, closing the door once he's inside. She leads him to the couch and sets him down. She takes off his shoes and unzips his pants, she climbs on his lap, removing her shirt. She kisses him and they begin to have intercourse. Jon lets out a tear.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN. NIGHT

The body of the fish-man Jon is sinking lower and lower into the ocean.

EXT. BEACH. DAY.

Jon's looking out at the island. Jon walks to the shore of the beach. He has a slightly concerned expression and then he looks down. There at his feet the waves have washed up the key chain.

He picks it up and studies it with a face of disappointment and then he looks up and it falls to a look of acceptance. Daisy waves and beckons Jon to come out for a swim.

Jon hides the key chain behind his back and calls out that he will be there soon. The hand clasping the key chain is shown behind his back in a hand that is slightly scaly.

END