

SHaCKLeS

created by
Angelo Shrine

PART THREE

Body Bags

1x09..... Noritcelfer

1x10..... Old Friend

1x11..... Duncan Truant Knows

TEASER

BLACK.

DUNCAN (O.S.)

Sssh.

MATILDA (O.S.)

What is it?

FADE IN:

INT. MATILDA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

MATILDA TRUANT is in bed, having bolted upright after hearing DUNCAN TRUANT at her side. She continues to BREATHE roughly, as she studies her son's eyes.

DUNCAN

It's Clarissa.

MATILDA

What? What about her?

Duncan very much does not enjoy saying what he says next.

DUNCAN

She's Poisoned.

Matilda gives a look of pure fright. Duncan quickly pulls the covers off of her body, then grabs her arm.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Come here. Follow me.

MATILDA

Duncan, what --

DUNCAN

If you trust me, then follow me.

Matilda looks him up and down, then quickly obeys. Wearing only a maroon-colored nightgown, she stands out of bed.

CUT TO:

INT. MATILDA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Duncan and Matilda step into the living room, where BRETT TRUANT is standing at the doorway.

MATILDA

Brett?

BRETT
It's okay, Grandma.

DUNCAN
(rudely to Brett)
I told you to stay in the car.

BRETT
Runtzer told me to get out.

Duncan takes a dramatic step toward Brett.

DUNCAN
You left Runtzer in the car with
two Poisoned?...

Brett SWALLOWS hard, knowing he made the wrong decision.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
Come on!

He quickly rushes past Brett on his way out the door. Matilda and Brett quickly follow, Matilda still confused.

CUT TO:

INT. LIMOUSINE - SAME

CLOSE ON: the inquisitive face of DETECTIVE EDGAR RUNTZER. He's sitting in the backseat, staring at the two Poisoned people opposite him.

One, we recognize from his scenes in #1x04 "Dreams or Dots." It's MAXWELL LHORA, the bald lawyer.

Next to him is an extremely old woman (90s), NORMA VALENS. Norma has puffy white hair, wrinkled skin, and icy blue eyes. Currently, she's holding up a large MIRROR with her shaky arms. She stares at her reflection in the mirror throughout the entire scene, always locking eyes with herself.

MAXWELL
...and as you can see, we've got it
all in control, Detective. All that
we ask is that you stick to your
end of the bargain.

RUNTZER
I ain't making any promises yet.
You hear me?

Maxwell frowns, then looks at Norma, who sits in silence.

MAXWELL

That's quite disheartening to hear.

RUNTZER

(leans forward)

I know what you're capable of. I know what you are. And if there's any human part about you, you'll understand my trepidation.

Norma suddenly speaks up. Though she still continues to lock eyes with her reflection.

NORMA

Quiet! Both of you!
(enunciates)
They have returned.

Runtzer looks outside, where Duncan rushes toward the limo.

RUNTZER

Neither of you move. Got that?

MAXWELL

(RE: Norma's age)

You think she's going to just jump out and run down the street?

Runtzer SNARLS, then quickly exits.

EXT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Runtzer SLAMS the limo's door, and faces Duncan. Matilda and Brett slowly approach from the house, Matilda needing help to walk across the lawn.

DUNCAN

Are you okay?

RUNTZER

Course I am.

DUNCAN

What the hell's wrong with you?
Huh?! They're Poisoned, or have you forgotten?

Runtzer isn't at all in the mood to take Duncan's threats.

RUNTZER

Of course I haven't forgotten. My God, you take me for an idiot?

DUNCAN

I don't know, Runtz. I'd just have to look at your history.

RUNTZER

You should be thanking me, anyways. I sent Brett away, to protect him. They could spring any moment, don't you forget that.

Runtzer pushes his fingers into Duncan's chest as he speaks, enunciating his point.

MATILDA

Everyone -- shut the hell up. Tell me what's going on. Tell me what this has to do with Clarissa.

(through gritted teeth)

Or I swear to God, I'll shoot you both where you stand.

Duncan and Runtzer are still too angry with each other to speak, so Brett steps up. He gestures to the limo.

BRETT

Their names are Maxwell Lhora and Norma Valens. He's number three, and she's fifty, in the Epoch Book.

Matilda squints through the tinted window. Norma still holds up the mirror, while Maxwell just looks bored.

MATILDA

And why, dammit, did you bring them to my home?

BRETT

Because Runtzer and I sort of made a deal with them.

Matilda shoots her attention to Runtzer. Duncan, standing next to him, quickly shoots his arms up in defense.

DUNCAN

Hey, I'm just along for the ride.

MATILDA

Detective? Now would be a good time to speak.

RUNTZER

We were just following your orders. You sent me and Brett on that wild Glendell goose chase. And what do you know, we followed a lead, and found out some information.

MATILDA

"Valens"?

BRETT

Norma here -- the one who likes to look at herself -- she was Glendell's mother.

RUNTZER

We met her at her house, and the bald idiot Maxwell was there too.

Matilda's demeanor changes, from angry to ruthless.

MATILDA

And why didn't you kill them where they stood...?

RUNTZER

We were about to.

BRETT

And then Maxwell informed us that he and Norma were "good." That they'd found ways to suppress the evil within them, and that they were out to prove that not all of The Poisoned are evil.

MATILDA

There are no good Poisoned.

RUNTZER

I couldn't agree more. And that's when I pulled out my gun. But before I could shoot, that son of a bitch Maxwell said he had some information for us. That he'd give it in exchange for their lives.

Duncan speaks up, though his voices sounds far away.

DUNCAN

Clarissa....

Matilda stands tall, raising her head high.

MATILDA

Lies.

BRETT

I think it's true, Grandma.

MATILDA

Lies!

(quick beat)

Blow up the car.

DUNCAN

It actually makes sense! I've been curious about her for a while now.

MATILDA

Shoot their damn heads off.

RUNTZER

They say that she's #64 in the Epoch Book.

MATILDA

(becoming unglued)

No! They're Poisoned! They'll do anything to survive!

DUNCAN

Mom!

Everyone turns to Duncan. Matilda has a tear welling in her eye that just won't fall.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

We'll look into it more. We will. But in the meantime, you need to accept the fact that the woman you love... isn't who you think she is.

Matilda's chin quivers slightly. She turns back to the limo. There's fire in her eyes as she stares at Maxwell and Norma, sitting so calmly in the backseat.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

GO TO MAIN TITLES.

STARRING

Michael Clarke Duncan

Noah Wyle

Macy Gray

Omar Gooding

Raven Symone

John Heard

Tracy Middendorf

Donnie Keshawarz

and

Nichelle Nichols

GUEST STARRING

Gloria Stuart NORMA VALENS

Joseph Gordon-Levitt JACQUE

Stephen Tobolowsky MAXWELL L'HORA

with Kelly Rowan CLARISSA CARUS

and Vanessa Redgrave GLENDELL VALENS

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Angelo Shrine

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

C.D. Howard

1x09

"Naitcelfer"

written by

Angelo Shrine

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. TRUANT MANSION - BACK YARD - DAY

THWACK! A softball slams into an old catcher's mitt.

PULL OUT to reveal that GILLIAN TRUANT is holding the mitt. She quickly takes her hand out of the glove and rubs it.

GILLIAN

Ow! D'ya have to throw it so hard?

PAN AROUND to the thrower, JACQUE, wearing a Dodgers baseball cap and smiling widely.

JACQUE

Suck it up. Don't be a baby.

GILLIAN

A baby? I'll show you "baby"!

Gillian THROWS it as hard as she can in his direction! Jacque ducks his head, and the ball sails right past him.

JACQUE

Geez, woman! Trying to kill me?

The softball rolls across the well-kept yard, then eventually is picked up by a feminine hand with painted nails. TILT UP to reveal that it's CLARISSA CARUS.

Gillian and Jacque stare at the woman oddly, as she's dressed all in black -- a stark contrast to the colorful backyard.

JACQUE (CONT'D)

Can I... help you?

Clarissa smiles at him, her eyes blinking quickly. Gillian walks up beside her boyfriend.

GILLIAN

Hi, Clarissa. This is Jacque.

CLARISSA

Jacque... Nice to finally meet you.

JACQUE

(oddly)

Yeah. You too.

CLARISSA
I was inside and I saw you two
playing. Looks fun. Mind if I join?

Gillian and Jacque quickly exchange a strange look.

GILLIAN
Uh, sure. I don't have another mitt
though.

CLARISSA
I'll just catch it with my hands.

JACQUE
Sure thing.

Jacque and Gillian back away, creating a triangle shape
between the three of them. Clarissa stares down at the ball
in her hand, fixating on it -- the dirt smudges, the slightly-
pulled red thread, the dents.

CLARISSA
It's been years since I've played.
Probably a decade.

JACQUE
Come on, let's see what you got.

Jacque slaps his hand into his mitt, waiting for the ball.

Clarissa stands at attention, holds back her arm, and tosses
the softball across the lawn.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. EPOCH HOME - DAY - FLASHBACK

A much younger-looking Clarissa smiles and tosses a bright
white baseball over to MILGATE EPOCH (appearing in his 40s).

MARCH 22, 1992

Epoch watches as the ball lands perfectly in his mitt.

EPOCH
Nice! That was a good one. You sure
you haven't done this before?

CLARISSA
Are you kidding? My father was
never at home. And my mother, well,
let's not even get into that.

EPOCH

Step back. Here's a pop fly!

Epoch throws the ball high up into the air, then watches as Clarissa squints up.

CLARISSA

The sun's too bright --

From her POV, we see the bright yellow sun. Then, out of nowhere, the dark shadow of the ball comes down and SMACKS her on the head!

CLARISSA (CONT'D)

Ow! Dammit!

EPOCH

You all right?

Clarissa winces in pain, then pulls her hand away from her forehead. There's a small amount of blood on her fingers.

CLARISSA

Why'd you have to throw it so high?

EPOCH

Sorry. I didn't mean to --

CLARISSA

-- God, it really hurts.

EPOCH

Here. Lean back. Let me look at it.

Epoch pushes her head back into the air to get a look at the tiny cut above her eyebrow.

Clarissa suddenly freaks out, screaming at him!

CLARISSA

No, no, no! It's fine! I'm fine.

EPOCH

Clarissa?

CLARISSA

I said I'm fine!

(beat)

It'll heal on its own.

He quickly understands why she freaked out.

EPOCH
I wasn't going to --

CLARISSA
-- I know.

EPOCH
I promised you I wouldn't....

Epoch EXHALES loudly.

CLARISSA
Anyway, we should get going. It's
almost noon.

EPOCH
Is she expecting us?

CLARISSA
Oh, yes. She's been waiting for you
for a long, long time....

Epoch nods, and picks up the ball. Then, putting his arm
around his wife, they slowly walk back to the house.

FADE TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - CONFERENCE ROOM - PRESENT DAY

Sitting around the conference room, it's strangely business
as usual. Matilda stands at attention, with the screen behind
her showing photos of Norma Valens and Maxwell Lhora.

Also present: Duncan, Runtzer, Brett, the ARABIAN, and
Clarissa. Duncan cautiously eyes Clarissa throughout the
scene, but she never seems to notice.

MATILDA
Norma Valens and Maxwell Lhora.
Captured last night -- though
"captured" might be the wrong
choice of word. They've presented
an interesting challenge to us, and
that challenge is this:

Brett, Runtzer, and Duncan sit confidently.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
They claim to be "good" Poisoned.
That they're out to show that not
everyone who was healed by Milgate
Epoch has since turned evil.

ARABIAN

And we're supposed to believe them?

MATILDA

I spoke with them for several hours this morning. And I'd be remiss if I didn't say that part of me wanted to believe them.

ARABIAN

(rudely)

Which part?

Clarissa quickly turns to him.

CLARISSA

Look. We all understand your somewhat narrow-minded view of The Poisoned, but Matilda is in charge. Best not to question her motives.

Clarissa smiles up at Matilda, who forces a fake smile in return. Duncan and Brett share an odd glance.

DUNCAN

Go on. What else is there?

She motions to the Arabian. He CLICKS the slide, to a black-and-white photo of Norma, dressed in a nurse's uniform.

MATILDA

Norma worked as a nurse at St. Fjord Hospital for decades. And that hospital just so happens to be a hot spot for many of Epoch's heals. Including these six:

The Arabian CLICKS the slide, and the images of the six Renegades all show up: Noah & Caitlin, Teshler, Emmanuel Carte, Anthony Block, and David Elroy.

RUNTZER

The Renegades....

MATILDA

We found records for all six at St. Fjord. The first, Elroy, in '84, and the other five all within a one-month window in 1996.

DUNCAN

So you believe that someone in the hospital was bringing these people to Epoch's attention?

RUNTZER

A partner in crime.

CLARISSA

(quick to correct)

A partner in healing.

MATILDA

Norma Valens denied all knowledge on any of this. But then, she informed me that her daughter also worked at St. Fjord.

The Arabian CLICKS the slide again, and an image of Glendell appears. Clarissa's eye twitches slightly, and Matilda slyly takes note of it before continuing.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Glendell Valens. Not much is known about her life, or her death.

ARABIAN

What's the point of any of this? If we really have two of them downstairs, we need to send them off to our analyst. Get them tested. Because if we don't, they're going to lie to us. They're going to make us like them. And then they'll pounce. Mark my words.

He stands quickly, looking Matilda up and down.

ARABIAN (CONT'D)

(with disdain)

Looks like they've already begun.

The Arabian quickly storms out of the room. Duncan reaches out to grab him, but Matilda speaks up.

MATILDA

Let him go.

DUNCAN

What's wrong with him?

CLARISSA

He has issues.

Brett speaks up, breaking the silence.

BRETT

What's our assignment?

MATILDA

Norma says she and Maxwell are willing to share information with us, to help prove that they're telling the truth: The missing two pages in the Epoch Book.

Everyone GASPS, except for Clarissa, who sits in silence.

DUNCAN

They removed the pages?

MATILDA

No. But they claim they came into contact with the Book before Duncan found it on the rooftop. They'll tell us who's depicted on pages 64 and 87, if we do them a favor.

CLARISSA

(hesitantly)

What kind of favor...?

MATILDA

Norma wants her daughter's locket back. As a remembrance.

RUNTZER

Do I even need to ask where it is?

MATILDA

Around Glendell's neck. Six feet into the earth.

Runtzer leans back in his chair, irritated.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Brett, Runtzer, I'm sending you.

RUNTZER

Sorry, we can't. We have to go to the review board this afternoon.

BRETT

They're not too happy about the missing company car at the bottom of the Pacific.

MATILDA
All right then. Duncan.

DUNCAN
Can't. I know you hate it when I
choose family first, but Pumpkin
and I are having a family dinner.
With Gillian and her boyfriend.

Matilda GRIMACES.

MATILDA
Clarissa, you and --

CLARISSA
-- Sorry. I'm on a flight out to
Phoenix at 2 to visit my mother. I
thought I told you.

MATILDA
No....
(beat)
Detectives, could you do it
tomorrow morning?

RUNTZER
Absolutely.

MATILDA
All right. It's settled then. Get
out of here, all of you.

Duncan walks over to Brett and Runtzer. They whisper quietly.
Clarissa approaches Matilda.

CLARISSA
I won't be gone long.

MATILDA
I hope not. We need you here.

CLARISSA
I'll tell my mother hi for you.

Clarissa gives her a quick peck on the cheek, then exits.

When she's gone, the three men turn to Matilda. The look
between the four of them reflects quiet confidence, and the
beginnings of a plan.

DUNCAN
You think she took the bait?

MATILDA
 (quietly)
 I pray to God she didn't....

With that, Matilda gathers her belongings, then slowly makes her way around the table and exits.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - FOYER - DAY

Clarissa walks rather quickly toward the front door. She smiles as she sees PUMPKIN TRUANT slowly descending the staircase into the grand foyer.

CLARISSA
 Pumpkin. How are you today?

Pumpkin rubs her head, willing away a headache.

PUMPKIN
 Uh, I think I'm fine, thanks.

CLARISSA
 Really? You look like you were just hit by a ton of bricks.

Pumpkin stares at Clarissa's smiling face for several seconds, almost as if she's trying to remember something.

CLOSE ON: Pumpkin's eyes, as we get several brief FLASHES OF DARKNESS.

Then, Pumpkin shakes her head, and she gives a fake smile.

PUMPKIN
 I'm fine. Just a headache.

CLARISSA
 Are you sure...?

PUMPKIN
 I'm sure.

Clarissa looks her up and down, testing her, then she smiles again and opens the door. She motions for Pumpkin to exit.

PUMPKIN (CONT'D)
 Thank you, Clarissa.

CLARISSA
 And where are you off to?

PUMPKIN

To see my mother, actually. I've been meaning to go for a while. She's not doing well.

CLARISSA

Oh, that's sad to hear. All my best to you and yours, okay?

Clarissa jogs down the staircase and moves to her car. Pumpkin stands at the top of the porch, as she shakes her head quickly, willing away another headache.

PUMPKIN

Gotta get some sleep tonight.

Pumpkin locks the door behind her, then walks down the marble staircase.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUANT MANSION - SIDE OF THE HOUSE - SAME

From a far-away P.O.V., we watch as Clarissa's car pulls away from the driveway. Then, Pumpkin gets into her car and drives away as well.

QUICK PAN AROUND to Brett and Runtzer. They're watching the driveway from their position at the side of the house.

RUNTZER

As of right now, we'll be watching anything and everything Clarissa Carus does. If she's really Poisoned, we'll find out.

BRETT

For Grandma's sake, she better not be....

Brett frowns up at the older man. They run quickly toward their squad car parked near the water fountain, as a LIGHT RAIN begins to fall.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - WINE CELLAR - DAY

Norma Valens and Maxwell Lhora sit in side-by-side cells, completely silent. The DRIP, DRIP, DRIP sounds loudly in the background, the only noise in the scene.

Maxwell sweats profusely, obviously uncomfortable. He turns to Norma, and sees that she's sitting calmly as ever, still staring at herself in her hand mirror.

NORMA

Relax, will you? And in the meantime, wipe the sweat off your forehead. I can smell it from here.

MAXWELL

This isn't good. I shouldn't be sweating like this.

Maxwell quickly wipes his bald head.

NORMA

You must have faith....

MAXWELL

Easy for you to say! What if I just grabbed that mirror from you? Huh? Then we'd be in the same position.

NORMA

Just relax. Breathe. And calm down.

Maxwell unbuttons the top button of his shirt.

MAXWELL

I've been in this house before. I know a woman. I can use that.

NORMA

They won't let you go free. They think we're the devil.

A tear quickly forms in Maxwell's eye.

MAXWELL

If they don't bring my son to me in the next few hours, I'm afraid they're going to see just how right they actually are....

CLOSE ON: Norma's reflection. She quickly turns her attention to Maxwell, seeing his pain. And in that brief instance, we see in the reflection that her eyes turn instantly BLACK.

She quickly returns her glance to her reflection, and her eyes go back to normal.

FADE TO:

INT. NORMA'S HOME - SUNROOM - FLASHBACK

There's a large mirror on the ceiling, which looks down at the king-size bed. A younger-looking Norma Valens lies on the bed on top of the covers, staring up at her reflection.

Her skin is yellow and her eyes puffy and red. Various tubes stick out of her arms. Obviously, Norma is quite ill.

There's a light TAPPING at the door, and, for the first time this episode, Norma completely averts her eyes from her reflection. She stares at the door, and CLEARS HER THROAT.

NORMA

Let them in.

The door opens and Clarissa and Epoch enter. They step into the room timidly. Norma smiles happily.

NORMA (CONT'D)

Oh, Clarissa! How are you? How's the baby doing?

CLARISSA

Well, he's not so much a baby anymore! Norma? This is Milgate, who you'll remember.

NORMA

It's an honor.

Norma kisses Epoch's hand, and he kindly smiles at the greeting. He clearly remembers her.

EPOCH

My God. It's you. Clarissa, why didn't you tell me we were visiting the nurse who birthed Jonathan?

Clarissa smiles -- obviously she wanted it to be a surprise.

NORMA

It's me, in the flesh. Though my flesh isn't as healthy as it was when you saw me last.

EPOCH

How are you feeling?

NORMA

I'm a stubborn woman. Always have been. And when I first found out about the cancer, I didn't do anything about it. I was convinced that God had made a mistake, and that He would take it away from me.
(sad beat)
He didn't....

EPOCH

What kind of cancer?

CLARISSA

Ovarian.

NORMA

The doctors are saying now that I was lucky to have children in the first place. My three daughters. Miracles babies.

EPOCH

You believe in miracles, then.

NORMA

Absolutely. And if Clarissa's right about you, then at the end of the day, we'll all be believers....

Norma smiles widely up at Epoch, still not letting go of his hand. Epoch slowly turns to Clarissa, who looks absolutely giddy at the thought of what she's about to witness.

CLARISSA

Go on. Do it....

And in that moment, Epoch changes his mind.

EPOCH

No. I'm sorry, I -- I can't.

Norma's entire face changes, from elation, to shock.

NORMA

What? What are you saying?

EPOCH

Clarissa is lying. I have no power.
I'm sorry. I can't help you.

Epoch pulls his hand away from Norma's grasp, then he quickly storms out of the sunroom.

Left alone, Clarissa tries to give Norma a comforting look, though her expression is also one of surprise.

FADE TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - WINE CELLAR - PRESENT DAY

Duncan slowly steps down into the dankness of the cellar. He approaches Norma and Maxwell, still in their cells.

NORMA

Any news?

MAXWELL

Yeah, come on! I have to get out of here. And soon....

Maxwell's head and neck are covered in sweat, which he furiously tries to wipe away.

DUNCAN

You'll forgive us for not taking your accusation about Clarissa Carus at face value.

NORMA

Of course. You have to figure out the truth for yourself. The only problem, Mr. Truant, is that time is not on our side today....

She motions to Maxwell. Duncan looks the Poisoned man up and down. Maxwell's eyes bulge out, and he's fidgeting, almost like he's having a mild seizure.

DUNCAN

What? You want a doctor?

MAXWELL

(weakly)
A doctor's... not going to help....

DUNCAN
I can't do anything for you. Nor do
I want to. Surely you underst--

MAXWELL
(interrupting)
-- Listen! Please!

Maxwell quickly stands. He puts his arms through the bars, and we see that his hands look suddenly thirty years older. His nails are long and yellow, his fingers are clenched tightly, and the skin is covered in wrinkles.

DUNCAN
What's happening to you?

MAXWELL
I'm losing it....

DUNCAN
Losing what?

MAXWELL
The power to control it!

Maxwell's face begins shaking back and forth furiously. Slightly disturbed, Duncan takes a step back.

DUNCAN
Well, that's not good for either of
us, is it?

Norma smiles, still staring at her reflection.

NORMA
There's something you can do.

DUNCAN
Yeah, I could get my Arabian
friend, and have him end this guy's
suffering once and for all.

NORMA
No. Maxwell and I, we're able to
dissipate the evil within,
something none of the others have
been able to accomplish.

DUNCAN
Right. You're "good" Poisoned.

Maxwell suddenly falls backward in the cell, and he begins to
COUGH loudly, over and over again.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
So what does he need?

Norma smiles again. She stands up from her seat and walks toward Maxwell, still writhing around on the ground. She doesn't look at him, though she speaks right to him.

NORMA
Maxwell. You're being spoken to.
Tell the man what you want.

Maxwell looks up, and we see for the first time that his eyes are flashing quickly, between normal and black. He's putting every ounce of strength into keeping the evil at bay.

MAXWELL
My son! Dammit, bring me my son!

Off Duncan's shocked expression --

CUT TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - GILLIAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

We hear the sounds of KISSING before we see the culprits doing the deed. Gillian and Jacque are lying down on Gillian's bed, making out softly, tenderly.

Their happiness is interrupted by Jacque's cell phone, which RINGS loudly in his pocket.

JACQUE
Oh, dammit. Hold on.

He reaches into his pocket, and pulls out the phone.

GILLIAN
(sitting up)
Who is it?

JACQUE
Unknown number. I'm not going to answer.

GILLIAN
No, go ahead. And put it on speaker.

JACQUE
You know, you have got to be the most curious person I've ever met.

She quickly kisses him, then gets up out of the bed. Jacque answers the phone and pushes the Speaker Phone button.

JACQUE (CONT'D)

Hello?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Who is this?

JACQUE

Who wants to know?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

I have a man here that claims he's your father.

JACQUE

Huh? Is this the police or something?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

No. My name is Duncan Truant. Are you Maxwell Lhora's son?

Jacque's eyes lower in curiosity. He turns to Gillian, primping her hair in the mirror, whose mouth opens in shock.

GILLIAN

What the hell? Dad?

DUNCAN (O.S.)

(beautiful beat)

...Gillian?

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A silent scene. Duncan paces back and forth in front of the projector screen. Obviously, deep in thought.

PAN AROUND to the others in the conference room. To our surprise, not a single one of them is a member of the Team. Sitting around the table, clearly uncomfortable, is Gillian, Jacque, and KYLEE WILLARD.

DUNCAN

I don't even know where to start.

KYLEE

How about at the beginning?

DUNCAN

Unfortunately Kylee, we don't have time for that.

Gillian suddenly SLAMS her hand down on the table. Everyone looks over at her, startled.

GILLIAN

Look, Dad. If it's about The Poisoned, I already know a lot more than you probably think I do.

DUNCAN

Is that so?

GILLIAN

Mom and I don't talk. You and I don't talk. But Brett and I? We talk. It only took three months for me to figure it out. Three months of him bringing odd little things to me -- blood samples, hair follicles, even rotten fingernails. But I eventually got curious. And he was more than willing to fill in the blanks.

Duncan nods, obviously pleased by her intelligence. Jacque, conversely, raises his hand in confusion.

JACQUE

Um... what's my father have to do with any of this?

DUNCAN

Your "father." I still can't believe it. He just gave me your number, he didn't give me a name.

JACQUE

Wait, you've seen him today?

DUNCAN

He's in the house.

JACQUE

(jumping up)

What?! Where?! What the hell's going on?

KYLEE

Jacque, just calm down for a second, all right?

JACQUE

Calm down?!

(beat)

Are you freaking kidding me?

KYLEE

According to Duncan, the man's name is Maxwell Lhora. Now, Maxwell and I have gone head-to-head several times in litigation. In fact, I'd even go so far as to call him a friend.

(sad beat)

However, three months ago, I witnessed Maxwell experience... something. Here in this very room. We were having a meeting, and just after midnight, he went crazy. His eyes -- I could clearly see -- they turned black.

Jacque looks around the room for help. Gillian and Duncan simply stare at him in silence.

KYLEE (CONT'D)

I thought nothing of it. But today, knowing what I know now, I'd bet money on it: He's one of the people that Duncan and the others have been after. He's Poisoned.

JACQUE

Great story, Kylee. Maybe next time I'll bring my falsetto and accompany you Garfunkel-style. But in the meantime, what the hell's going on?

DUNCAN

I'll tell you everything. I swear. But unfortunately, right now, we don't have a lot of time.

(beat)

Your father claims that if he doesn't see you, and now, that something very bad is going to happen.

Jacque nods. He's being brave on the surface, but underneath, the wetness in his eyes reveal otherwise.

JACQUE

Show me....

Gillian stands. She grabs Jacque's hands, and then they and Kylee quickly follow Duncan out of the room.

FADE TO:

EXT. NORMA'S HOME - FLASHBACK

Epoch rushes outside the large, fancy home he'd just exited. It's an expensive-looking home, though nowhere near as large as the Truant mansion.

CLARISSA (O.S.)

Hey! Milgate!

Epoch turns around, just as Clarissa exits the house and quickly storms across the driveway toward him.

CLARISSA (CONT'D)

What happened in there? Huh?

EPOCH

I don't want to talk about it.

CLARISSA

You don't want to talk about it? That woman is waiting to get her life back! She can taste it, and you just dangled it in front of her face like it was a piece of candy.

(MORE)

CLARISSA (CONT'D)

And correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't this why we're here in the first place? Why we got a babysitter and drove all the way out here?

(beat; realizes)

Unless, is something wrong? Are you not feeling okay?

Clarissa's demeanor changes, and she tenderly places her hands on Epoch's shoulders.

CLARISSA (CONT'D)

You can talk to me.... Everything we've been through? My God, please talk to me.

Epoch CLEARS HIS THROAT, then finally looks back at her.

EPOCH

I don't... know... if it works like this.

CLARISSA

Like what?

EPOCH

My father -- he would never let my mother, or any of us, go with him on his heels. Never. He thought that since he was given the gift, that it had to be him, and him only. No help. No partners.

CLARISSA

Or else what?

EPOCH

Exactly. Or else what? Clarissa, as much as I may think I know what this thing is inside of me, there's always that nagging feeling in the back of my mind, telling me that when it's all said and done, I really don't have a clue. Maybe it's spiritual. Maybe it's a gift from God. Maybe it's a mutation that was never supposed to happen. I mean, just look at what could happen if it dies inside of me.... "A human catastrophe."

(beat)

(MORE)

EPOCH (CONT'D)

And anything that could have such potential deadly effects on those who encounter it may not be quite the blessing it appears....

Clarissa takes her arms off his shoulders. She walks in a tight circle, then looks him in the eyes.

CLARISSA

So what are you saying? You want me to walk? You want this to be your thing, and me, I do my thing, and we call ourselves a happy married couple, all the live-long day?

EPOCH

(emotionally)

Not at all. Oh God, not at all. Come here....

He walks over and gives Clarissa a long hug, holding her close, squeezing the back of her neck tenderly.

EPOCH (CONT'D)

The thing I'm hesitant about isn't what my father was hesitant about. It's not you. It's her.

Epoch points to the house.

EPOCH (CONT'D)

That woman, Norma. She wants to be healed more than anyone else I've ever seen in my previous 49 heals. As you said, she can taste it.

CLARISSA

And that worries you?

EPOCH

It does. Most of the time, I just happen to be on the scene. A freak accident. Occasionally, a person comes to me, on the off chance the rumors they'd heard were true.

(beat)

But I can see it in her eyes. She wants this. And I don't know what kind of effect that will have, if any.

CLARISSA
 You're telling me that in 49 heals,
 no one's even come close to
 matching Norma's desperation?

EPOCH
 (deep in thought)
 There was one man. A long time ago.

CLARISSA
 And how did that work out?

EPOCH
 Fine, I guess. But I need to be
 careful with this. I don't want to
 just use it whenever I can, and to
 whomever I want.

Clarissa grabs his hand.

CLARISSA
 If you want to go, we can go.

Epoch looks back at the house. He smiles softly.

EPOCH
 No. Let's do it. Let's save an old
 woman's life.

Hand in hand, they slowly walk back to the large home.

FADE TO:

INT. CLARISSA'S CAR - PRESENT DAY

The windshield wipers are on at full blast, as Clarissa squints through her windshield to see the road through all the freshly-falling rain.

CLARISSA
 (mumbling)
 Damn you, Norma.... Give me up...?
 Everything I did for you...?

She presses down on the gas pedal, and the cars speeds ahead even faster.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The rain continues to fall. Clarissa's car speeds past a sign reading "All Saints Cemetery - 70 miles."

PAN OVER. Several cars drive by camera, including Runtzer's fancy sedan. They're following Clarissa, but keeping back far enough to not be noticed.

THUNDER CLAPS in the distance, as the rain falls even harder.

INT. RUNTZER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Runtzer's driving, with Brett in the passenger seat, looking out at the nasty weather.

BRETT

It's really coming down out there.

RUNTZER

(deep in thought)

Know what I was just thinkin'...?

Brett looks over at this partner. Runtzer's unconsciously twisting his wedding band on his ring finger.

RUNTZER (CONT'D)

That Norma woman. She's old. Real old....

BRETT

Yeah?

RUNTZER

These Poisoned.... Who's to say that that little part of life Epoch gave to them doesn't stick with them forever? That they'd never die out if it weren't for us putting a stop to 'em...?

Brett's silent as he takes in Runtzer's words.

RUNTZER (CONT'D)

Never mind. Just thinkin' aloud.

BRETT

I guess it's one of those big questions we just don't know....

RUNTZER

(looking over)

Speaking of questions, I got another one.

Brett eyes him, waiting for Runtzer to ask.

RUNTZER (CONT'D)

Has it happened before? A Healer
dying with the gift inside him?

(soft beat)

Or is this truly the first time the
world's experienced an outbreak of
The Poisoned...?

BRETT

Well, it has to be, doesn't it? I
mean, there weren't a bunch of
human monsters running around out
there already, right?

Runtzer just shrugs, as he still looks through the windshield
into the rain, deep in thought.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - WINE CELLAR - DAY

CLOSE ON: the rusty water wipes, as they DRIP softly.

WIDER. Maxwell still lies on the ground, writhing in pain.
Norma sits calmly in her cell, staring at her reflection.

Standing outside the cells, staring at the prisoners, are
Duncan, Gillian, and of course Jacque.

JACQUE

Dad...?

Jacque cautiously approaches his father's cell. He puts his
hands through the bar, reaching for him -- but Duncan
snatches him back!

DUNCAN

Weren't you listening? That isn't
your Dad!

JACQUE

Get your hands off me!

Norma smiles, though she never greets them with her eyes.

NORMA

Get up, your son's here.

Maxwell slowly raises his head. It's now entirely covered in
wrinkles and thick sweat. His eyes are PURE BLACK, indicating
that the Poison has taken over. He SCREECHES loudly!

JACQUE

Oh! Dad!

Jacque backs up, and begins flailing his arms crazily.

NORMA

Somebody grab that boy.

Duncan quickly obeys. He grabs onto Jacque's shoulders.

DUNCAN

Calm down, all right? This isn't helping --

JACQUE

-- Dad! No!

GILLIAN

Jacque, listen to him!
(retracting)
I think.

Duncan, still holding Jacque, yells to Norma.

DUNCAN

I thought you said this was supposed to work! Dammit!

NORMA

Are they staring at each other?

DUNCAN

What? Of course they are.

NORMA

(enunciates)

In the eyes. They need to stare at each other in the eyes. Bring him closer to his father.

GILLIAN

No. No way. Don't do it.

DUNCAN

I'll protect him, Gillian. I will.

JACQUE

Dad....

Duncan pushes Jacque forward several steps, so he's pressed up against the iron bars.

DUNCAN

Maxwell. Hey. I brought your son here just like you asked. Aren't you even going to look at him?

Maxwell HISSES from his position on the ground.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

I know what it's like. The love of a child. I know exactly how you're feeling. Now show your son the respect he deserves. Look at him!

Maxwell suddenly ATTACKS! He jumps up off the ground SNARLING, and reaches through the bars with his deformed hand! He swipes at Duncan's head, but Duncan ducks, never letting go of Jacque's body.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Look at him! Now! Do it!

Jacque cries out -- in fear, in pain! Then, finally, he and Maxwell make eye contact. Their eyes lock.

Almost instantly, Maxwell's eyes become normal. His monstrous features dissipate. His wrinkled skin becomes taut again.

MAXWELL

(confused)
Jacque...?

JACQUE

(timidly)
Dad?

MAXWELL

Oh, Jacque....

Maxwell quickly turns to Duncan.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Thank you. Thank you so much.
(beat)
Now, please, get him out of here.

JACQUE

What? No. Dad, I have to see you. I have to talk to you.

Maxwell reaches out and touches Jacque's hand lovingly.

MAXWELL

We'll talk later. I swear. But
you're not safe here. Please....

GILLIAN

I don't get it. I thought you had
to see him?

MAXWELL

I just needed one glance. To
remember what I'm fighting for.
(to Duncan)
Now take him away. Do it!

Duncan nods. He escorts Jacque away.

JACQUE

No! Dad! Wait!

DUNCAN

Come on, Gillian.

Gillian follows. She SLAMS the door behind them.

Maxwell quickly falls to the ground, in a rush of emotion.

NORMA

How did -- How did it feel?

MAXWELL

Horrible. Like I was burning, from
the inside out. I could hear
everything, but I couldn't react.

NORMA

Many like us possess powers. And
the power you're holding back is
one of the most destructive.

MAXWELL

My God. They have to let us go....

Maxwell lowers his head and PRAYS silently. Norma smiles
again, never taking her eyes off of her soft reflection.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - STUDY - DAY

Matilda sits on the couch, sipping wine. A tattered Bible
rests peacefully on the end table. It's Pumpkin's Bible.

Cautiously, almost as if she doesn't want to, Matilda reaches over and grabs the good book. She begins flipping through it, when she hears the sounds of high heels CLICKING behind her.

Kylee enters, and Matilda throws the book down on the couch.

KYLEE

Matilda. How are you today?

MATILDA

Not good.

Matilda turns her attention back to the fire. Obviously, she's thinking about Clarissa.

KYLEE

Anything I can do for you?

MATILDA

(quietly)

Make it so I never met her....

KYLEE

Listen, you and I haven't talked much, but you need to know that I know everything about The Poisoned. And if you ever need my help, I'm here.

MATILDA

I'll never need your help.

KYLEE

(irritated)

Really? Maybe if you'd come clean earlier, and shown me the Epoch Book, I could have informed your Team that I knew Maxwell Lhora.

MATILDA

The fact that you happen to have had personal contact with one of The Poisoned, Kylee, does not make you equipped to helping in their apprehension. In fact, it only makes me wonder that perhaps you're Poisoned as well.

Kylee's mouth shoots open in shock.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

By holding back certain truths, I'm keeping you safe.

(MORE)

MATILDA (CONT'D)

(quietly)

I promised someone as much....

KYLEE

"Safe"? This is my home too. And you're bringing these Poisoned right to my doorstep. I'm not safe here. Neither are the kids.

MATILDA

Kids?

KYLEE

Gillian and Jacque. They're down there with him right now.

Matilda's ears perk up. She looks Kylee up and down.

MATILDA

What? Why?

KYLEE

He's Maxwell's son. What, you didn't know that?

Matilda's face fills with dread. She quickly grabs onto Kylee's arm, and pulls herself up, without Kylee's help.

KYLEE (CONT'D)

What the hell? What are you doing?

MATILDA

You need to stop Jacque. Now.

KYLEE

Jacque? Why?

MATILDA

Because he's probably Poisoned too!

Off Kylee's look of shock, and Matilda's determination --

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - HALLWAYS - DAY

Gillian rushes down the hallway, putting her coat on as she turns the various corners. Suddenly, she JUMPS in shock as the Arabian pops out in front of her.

GILLIAN

Oh! My God. You scared me.

ARABIAN

Where is Jacques?

Gillian looks him up and down, a bit intimidated by the strange man, but doing her best not to show it.

GILLIAN

He's in my room. Crying. Want to go make fun of him?

With that, he walks right past her. She watches him go, her eyebrows lowered in curiosity.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Gillian stands outside the bathroom, hearing the toilet FLUSH. The door opens, and Duncan steps out.

DUNCAN

Oh. Didn't realize you were waiting.

GILLIAN

Do me a favor?

DUNCAN

Anything.

GILLIAN

That Arabian guy creeps me out. He was asking about Jacques, and I have no idea why, and I don't have the time to find out.

DUNCAN

(noticing her coat)
Where are you off to?

GILLIAN

Mom says that Grandma Getty's not doing very well. As much as I should stay with Jacque....

DUNCAN

(understanding)

Go ahead. I'll check on him.

GILLIAN

Thanks, Duncan.

At first, it appears as though Gillian's going to hug him. Then she turns around and rushes down the hallway instead. Duncan watches her go, a slight smile on his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION - DUSK

As the sun sets in the background, and the rain continues, TILT DOWN to see a gas station with a pay phone out front.

Clarissa exits the phone booth, then quickly runs to her car. She hits the gas and drives away from the gas station.

Suddenly, two pairs of feet rush over to the pay phone. It's Runtzer and Brett, drenched from the rain.

Runtzer squeezes into the phone booth, and Brett sticks his head in, trying to keep dry. Runtzer grabs the old phone and dials a number. We listen to the RING.

BRETT

Good God, I thought she'd never hang up.

RUNTZER

Think she was calling for directions to All Saints?

BRETT

I seriously doubt that.

OFFICER (O.S.)

(answering)

Detective's office.

RUNTZER

This is Detective Runtzer, ID 62199077.

(MORE)

RUNTZER (CONT'D)
I'm tracking a suspect, and I need to know the last number she dialed from this pay phone. And hurry.

OFFICER (O.S.)
Checking with the phone company.
Please hold....

RUNTZER
I said hurry!

OFFICER (O.S.)
... There was a call placed 13 minutes ago from that location.

RUNTZER
To where?

OFFICER (O.S.)
310-646-5252.

RUNTZER
What is that?!

OFFICER (O.S.)
Checking database.... Aha. It's the main number at LAX.

Runtzer hangs up the phone, then turns to Brett.

RUNTZER
LAX? Why's she calling the airport?

Brett looks down the road, where Clarissa's car drove away.

BRETT
Making sure she has a getaway....

CUT TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - GILLIAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Duncan stands outside the bedroom, with the door slightly cracked open. He TAPS lightly on the door.

DUNCAN
Jacque? It's Duncan. Can I get you anything?
(beat)
Jacque?

Duncan TAPS the door again, and it CREAKS open. And to Duncan's surprise, the room's empty.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
 What the --

CUT TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - FOYER - SAME

Pumpkin steps into the house. She tucks away her umbrella and locks the door behind her. The sounds of SCREAMING instantly turns her attention to the staircase.

JACQUE (O.S.)
 Hey! Let me go!

QUICK PAN AROUND to the staircase. The Arabian is holding Jacque tightly in his arms, pushing him down the stairs, one at a time, as the younger man tries to fight him off.

PUMPKIN
 Hey! Let him go, dammit!

ARABIAN
 This is none of your concern.

PUMPKIN
 The hell it isn't! Jacque, are you okay?

Pumpkin begins racing toward the staircase, but she stops when a voice sounds loudly from the study.

MATILDA (O.S.)
 Let them be.

Pumpkin turns to Matilda, and stares icily at her.

PUMPKIN
 What the hell are you doing to that boy? In my house?

MATILDA
 You think that's Jacque Lhora? I think he's Poisoned.

PUMPKIN
 What?

JACQUE
What?!

MATILDA
 And until we uncover the truth, you know where he'll be.
 (MORE)

MATILDA (CONT'D)
 (to Arabian)
 Take him down!

The Arabian nods, still holding Jacque. Jacque fights back, but the Arabian ultimately is stronger. They exit around the corner, on the way to the wine cellar.

PUMPKIN
 There's no way....

MATILDA
 Are you sure about that? Are you
absolutely sure?

Matilda reads Pumpkin's eyes, as Pumpkin considers her words.

CUT TO:

INT. WINE CELLAR - LATER

CLICK -- the Arabian closes the jail cell door, locking Jacque inside.

JACQUE
 No! I'm me! I swear!

ARABIAN
 (icily)
 I don't care.

The Arabian turns around, to Maxwell and Norma behind him.

MAXWELL
 What are you doing to my son? Is
 this some way to punish me?

ARABIAN
 How old is Jacque?

MAXWELL
 Excuse me?

NORMA
 You heard him.

MAXWELL
 He's -- He's nineteen. Why?

JACQUE
 What the hell is wrong with you
 people?! Is this even legal?

The Arabian takes several steps toward Maxwell.

ARABIAN

When did he heal you? How long ago?
When did you become number three in
his Book?

MAXWELL

It was -- It was... about twenty
years ago now. Can't you just tell
me what's going on?

Norma chimes in, smiling to her reflection.

NORMA

Isn't it obvious, Maxwell? They're
worried that since Jacque was
conceived and born after you were
healed, you could have passed some
of Epoch's gift on to him. And now,
he could have the same evil within
him that we do.

The Arabian stares Norma up and down, a strange look on his
face, as though he's suddenly very aware of her.

JACQUE

What...?

MAXWELL

No. That's not true. He's just a
boy! He's just my son!

ARABIAN

(sternly)

That's something we will find out
for ourselves....

The Arabian exits after giving Norma one last glance. Maxwell
walks up to the bars and sticks his hands through.

MAXWELL

It'll be okay. It'll be fine.

JACQUE

I'm me, Dad. I'm me....

MAXWELL

I know. We'll figure this out.

Maxwell turns to Norma, looking for some kind of help.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Won't we?

Norma doesn't say anything. She quickly looks away, to gaze at Jacque, and her features turn instantly monstrous! Her eyes FLASH BLACK, her teeth SNARL, and she HISSES loudly.

Then, she returns to the mirror again. And all is calm.

FADE TO:

INT. NORMA'S HOME - HALLWAY - FLASHBACK

Epoch and Clarissa sit outside the sunroom in the hallway, drinking lemonade. The colors are rich and vibrant here, very starkly contrasted from the dankness of the cellar.

Clarissa rubs her husband's leg as they wait. Norma's HOME NURSE walks by, smiling widely.

CLARISSA
How much longer?

HOME NURSE
Not too long. She's just saying a final goodbye to her daughter.

The nurse exits. Clarissa and Epoch exchange an odd glance.

CLARISSA
"A final goodbye?"

EPOCH
My thoughts exactly.

Clarissa stands, curious, and peeks through the window. In the sunroom, Norma is crying, and holding the hand of her daughter, none other than a younger-looking GLENDELL VALENS.

Norma and Glendell cry together, and then Glendell picks up her purse, and exits the sunroom. She speaks to Clarissa and Epoch, but looks down, not really noticing them.

GLENDELL
Do what you have to do. Oh, Mom!

Glendell completely loses her composure. She WAILS loudly, then rushes down the hall.

CLARISSA
Poor woman.

Clarissa watches Glendell go, as Epoch steps into the room.

INT. SUNROOM - CONTINUOUS

Norma stares up at her huge reflection in the ceiling mirror. She's smiling widely, even as tears stream down her face. Clarissa and Epoch slowly approach.

CLARISSA

Forgive me for asking, Norma, but is your daughter still under the impression that you're dying?

NORMA

Indeed she is.

EPOCH

Didn't the nurse give you the message? That I'd changed my mind? That we were coming back?

Norma finally looks down from the mirror. She smiles at them.

NORMA

She did. And I thank you. But I ask that you do not judge me, or my decisions. My family has finally come to accept the fact that I'm dying. I even told her that you two out in the hall were doctors, and you were here on my request to euthanize me.

EPOCH

(shocked)
What? No....

NORMA

She's made her peace. They all have. Now, it's time for them to move on, and forget about their old ailing mother.

Epoch and Clarissa exchange a glance, and he nods his okay.

NORMA (CONT'D)

Now. I'm ready. So if you're really prepared to do this... then do it.

Norma relaxes. She stares up at her reflection in the mirror, and waits....

CUT TO:

CLARISSA (CONT'D)
Hello again, you stupid slut. Told
you I'd haunt you forever....

Clarissa SPITS rudely on the body's rotting face.

CLARISSA (CONT'D)
Where's the locket?

Clarissa moves aside Glendell's shirt, searching for a locket around her neck. She continues searching all over on the interior of the casket, but can't find anything.

CLARISSA (CONT'D)
What? No. No, no, no.
(stark revelation)
They... lied to me....

QUICK PAN AROUND to a tree. Kneeling on the ground behind it, soaking wet, are Runtzer and Brett. They're staring at the scene before them in pure fright.

BRETT
Holy God....

RUNTZER
We have to go back, kid. And now.

AERIAL VIEW: Clarissa looks up to the dark sky, as her entire body is covered in rainwater.

CLARISSA
Nnnnnnoooo!

Clarissa WAILS loudly -- in anger, in defeat, in betrayal. We've never seen her look so monstrous before....

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - STUDY - NIGHT

Runtzer and Brett are sitting around the study, wearing blankets to cover their wet bodies. Pumpkin brings them mugs of hot cocoa, which they drink quickly.

Matilda stands across from them, next to Duncan.

MATILDA

Well?! Tell me, dammit!

Brett and Runtzer exchange a quiet glance.

BRETT

I'll do it....

Brett hands off the cocoa to Pumpkin, then puts his arm around Matilda's shoulder.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Come with me, Grandma. You'll want to hear this in private.

Brett and Matilda exit, as Brett quietly WHISPERS to her.

Duncan turns to Runtzer, already knowing the answer.

DUNCAN

Clarissa escaped, didn't she?

RUNTZER

We let her escape. We weren't equipped to deal with that.

PUMPKIN

With what? I don't get it.

DUNCAN

Remember our talk? How I didn't trust Clarissa?

Pumpkin racks her brain.

PUMPKIN

Um... no, I don't....

Duncan eyes her suspiciously, as Pumpkin slowly exits.

RUNTZER

(sipping cocoa)

We caught her making a call before the cemetery. She was booking a flight. It's our only lead as to where she might be right now.

DUNCAN

We'll look into it. Glad you're okay, Runtz.

RUNTZER

Me too. For my wife's sake.

Duncan sits next to Runtzer on the couch. He notices his wedding ring.

DUNCAN

Your ring finger. It's all puffy.

RUNTZER

Ahh, dammit. It's the weather. Here, hold this.

He hands Duncan the mug, then he goes to work trying to pull off his wedding ring. Finally -- POP! -- it comes off. He KISSES it and puts it in his shirt pocket.

RUNTZER (CONT'D)

Don't let me forget that. Immy will think I've been cheating again.

DUNCAN

(sadenned)

Ahh, you cheated on your wife?

RUNTZER

It was a long time ago.... And it wasn't cheatin'. There was a secretary at the office, and she liked to buy me drinks after work.

(beat)

I never kissed her once. But Immy still thought I was being unfaithful, because I never told her about it. And she was right.

(beat)

But ultimately, it just brought the two of us closer. Found out how much we actually loved each other.

Duncan CHUCKLES, then playfully hits his shoulder. Runtzer smiles at the old memory, then slowly stands.

DUNCAN
Where are you going?

RUNTZER
I feel pretty pathetic just sitting here. I'm gonna visit our prisoners. Maybe they know where Clarissa's off to.

As Runtzer exits, we PAN RIGHT, to the kitchen.

We see the shadows on the hardwood floor of Matilda and Brett. Matilda suddenly SCREAMS in blood-curdling agony! Then, she falls into Brett's arms.

Runtzer shakes his head, feeling the woman's loss.

CUT TO:

INT. WINE CELLAR - NIGHT

Runtzer is walking through the cellar, seeing Norma, Maxwell, and Jacque -- the latter two sleeping, with Norma still holding the mirror. He does a double-take on Jacque.

RUNTZER
Now this will have to be explained to me.

Just then, the door BURSTS OPEN, and the Arabian enters. He has a GUN in his hand.

RUNTZER (CONT'D)
Hey there -- Whoa! What's up with the gun?

ARABIAN
You remember what I said. That these two will try to trick us. Make us believe them. Make us like them. Before they kill us all.

RUNTZER
I remember that. I also remember no one else agreeing with you.

ARABIAN
I agreed with myself. And when I was down here last, this woman here did exactly as I predicted.

Norma frowns. She stands up and walks to the edge of the cell, though she doesn't look away from the mirror.

NORMA

Sir, please believe me. I wasn't trying to trick you. I'm being honest. We both are.

ARABIAN

Too bad for you, I don't care.

(explains)

The love of my life. Nawar. She was Poisoned, just like you. Number eighty-one, it turns out.

(creepily)

She asked for death when she knew what she'd become. And that... is the only true "good" Poisoned.

Runtzer eyes the gun, his chin quivering. He knows what's about to happen. Suddenly, Norma's not so brave.

NORMA

Maxwell? Maxwell, help me.

Maxwell rouses himself awake. He sees the gun and jumps up.

MAXWELL

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Put it down. Let's talk about this, huh?

ARABIAN

(in Arabic; subtitled)

I love you, Nawar.

BANG! The Arabian fires!

With her free hand, Norma grabs her stomach, where a pool of blood quickly appears.

RUNTZER

No, no, no!

MAXWELL

Norma! Norma!!

Norma's mouth opens slightly, as the life slowly leaves her. As she slumps over to the ground, she finally drops hold of the hand mirror.

SLOW MOTION: the mirror falls, then CRASHES into hundreds of tiny pieces as it makes contact with the cement floor.

FADE TO:

INT. NORMA'S HOUSE - SUNROOM - FLASHBACK

Norma stares up at her reflection on the ceiling, a big smile on her face. Epoch hovers over her body.

EPOCH

I do have one question though,
before we do this.

NORMA

Of course.

EPOCH

What's with the mirror? Why are you
always staring at your reflection?

NORMA

(smiling widely)

When I look at myself, when I see
my reflection, I believe deep down
that I'm keeping the cancer at bay.
That it won't get any worse as long
as I fight it back. That I'm
looking into a world, perhaps,
where there is no cancer. No pain.
No evil at all.

EPOCH

That's beautiful, Norma.

NORMA

Please. It's time.

EPOCH

Lean back. And relax....

Clarissa watches with excitement, looking up at the reflection to get a better view, and through the reflection on the ceiling, she sees the mysterious yellow glow come from Epoch's throat, then go into Norma's mouth.

Still looking through the reflection, Epoch pulls away. Then, Norma's frail body slowly becomes more and more healthy-looking. Her skin loses its yellow tinge, her pure-white hair turns a touch of gray instead.

CLARISSA

How do you feel...?

NORMA

Beautiful.

CLARISSA

(awed)

Amazing.... So, what are you going to do now?

NORMA

Everyone thinks I'm dead, and I just got a second chance at life.

(honest beat)

I have no idea....

Norma quickly sits up, averting her eyes from the mirror. With a happy bounce, she jumps off the bed.

FADE TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - WINE CELLAR - PRESENT NIGHT

CLOSE ON: the broken pieces of Norma's mirror, next to her bloody, dead body.

In the next cell over, Maxwell is jumping up and down furiously! He's SCREAMING, and he begins to shake, almost like he's having a seizure.

MAXWELL

No! No, no, no! You killed her!

The Arabian calmly pockets the gun.

ARABIAN

If your son wasn't standing five feet away, I'd kill you too.

MAXWELL

No. What you just destroyed was hope. Hope of there ever being peace between you and us....

Maxwell begins breathing deeply. He closes his eyes. His arms shoot out at his sides, as he takes in the air around him.

RUNTZER

Uh-oh. This doesn't look so good.

Maxwell finally opens his eyes, and they're BLACK!

MAXWELL

(deeper voice)

And now, you'll pay....

Before Runtzer and the Arabian can do anything, Maxwell reaches out and grabs the bars. His hand becomes wrinkled and old, just like earlier, and suddenly the bars turn to RUST!

RUNTZER
Get out of here! Go!

Runtzer pushes the Arabian away, toward the staircase, just as Maxwell finally pushes his way through the iron bars! He steps out of his cell, a free man!

ARABIAN
(in Arabic; subtitled)
The Devil himself.
(to Runtzer)
Come on!

The Arabian quickly exits, frightened for his life. But Runtzer stays put. Too scared to move? Or is it bravery?

Maxwell swipes his arm at Runtzer, who jumps back in time to avoid getting clawed! From his cell, Jacque shouts out.

JACQUE
Dad, stop! It's me! Remember? Just look at me! Please!

Maxwell keeps his gaze fixated on Detective Runtzer.

MAXWELL
Release my son....

RUNTZER
All right, just -- just hold on!

Shakily, Runtzer pulls out his keys, then unlocks Jacque's cell. Jacque steps out timidly.

JACQUE
Dad...?

MAXWELL
Get upstairs!

JACQUE
Why?

MAXWELL
Now! The air won't be safe!

Jacque grabs Runtzer's arm, on his way to the staircase.

JACQUE

Come on!

MAXWELL

No! He stays! One of mine is dead -- and so will one of their's be. They want to prove that there's no good Poisoned? Well, then. Time for me to help them prove it....

(snarling at Jacque)

Go, boy!

Jacque quickly exits, closing the door behind him. Runtzer slowly steps back. He swallows loudly, his voice shaking.

RUNTZER

Please. I have a wife. You don't want to do this....

MAXWELL

I know you and your wife. I was at your wedding, you dolt!

Runtzer stares at the man in a new light, with his eyebrows lowered in shocked curiosity.

RUNTZER

What?

MAXWELL

No time to reflect.

Maxwell takes in a deep breath, then focuses on his HAND, which suddenly grows withered and old again.

With the deformed hand, he swipes at Runtzer! This time, Runtzer's not quick enough. Maxwell makes contact with Runtzer's skin -- grabbing on to his arm tightly!

When Maxwell retracts his hand, Runtzer MOANS in pain -- then quickly falls to the floor!

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Necrotizing fasciitis for you....

Maxwell LAUGHS maniacally, then rushes to the garage door and PUNCHES through it -- causing it to turn to RUST!

On the floor, Runtzer looks at his arm, where Maxwell had grabbed him. To his own horror, the skin on his arm slowly begins ROTTING AWAY before his very eyes....

RUNTZER

Oh my God....

Still laughing, Maxwell Lhora jumps through the door, then runs off into the rain, eventually escaping from view.

Runtzer tries to stand, but he falls right back down!

The skin on his arm turns a disturbing yellowish color, then, he watches in horror as the rot goes up his arm, devouring any sign of flesh, and turning it to a boiling pus!

RUNTZER (CONT'D)

Aaaaaahhhh!

Runtzer goes crazy, itching all over his body, as every inch of skin begins pulsating and spurting blood!

He writhes around on the floor, and all the movement causes his WEDDING RING to pop out of his shirt pocket and slowly roll across the bloody, pus-covered floor.

The ring topples over and eventually comes to a stop.

With a bloody, disgusting hand, Runtzer reaches for the ring, but can't reach it. As his neck and face finally become infected, his entire body now rotten and diseased, Detective Edgar Runtzer is able to spout out one last thing:

RUNTZER (CONT'D)

Immy.... Imogen... I love....

He closes his eyes, just as the infection reaches his eyelids and eats them away as well!

From nowhere important, the sounds of the wine cellar beckon this episode's end.

DRIP, DRIP, DRIP, DRIP, DRIP, DRIP, DRIP, DRIP, DRIP....

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW

CUT AWAY TO:

SHaCKLeS