

SHaCKLeS

created by
Angelo Shrine

PART THREE

Body Bags

1x09..... Nortcelfer

1x10..... Old Friend

1x11..... Duncan Truant Knows

TEASER

BLACK.

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

RUNTZER (O.S.)

Aaaahhhhh!

FADE IN:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - WINE CELLAR - NIGHT

DETECTIVE EDGAR RUNTZER goes crazy, itching all over his body, as every inch of visible 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

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

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

Runtzer's fingers twitch one last time. Slowly PAN OVER to the dirty golden wedding ring sitting so peacefully on the cement floor. There's an inscription in the ring, which we can't read, due to the all the dents and blood.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. WINE VINEYARD - FLASHBACK

A WEDDING CEREMONY is in progress. And the groom? None other than a much-younger looking Edgar Runtzer (42), dressed appropriately in a rugged tuxedo. Off in the distance, the OCEAN sparkles beautifully.

Runtzer smiles widely, as his bride-to-be holds up the very same ring -- only now, it's shiny and brand new. Just before the ring goes around his ring finger, we see the inscription:

"Sorry it took so long! --Imogen"

His wife, IMOGEN, looks absolutely radiant. Her sparkling green eyes match her emerald-colored ring around her finger.

IMOGEN
Does it fit? Oh, I hope it fits!

But Runtzer is smiling too much to care. He quickly turns to the standard-looking PRIEST next to them.

RUNTZER
Can I kiss her now? Please, tell me
I can kiss her now!

The entire crowd CHUCKLES. A row of police officers in uniform CHEER loudly. We don't recognize any of them.

As we PAN OVER to Imogen's side of the audience, we notice a tiny man in his early 20s, who watches the ceremony with a proud smile on his youthful face. It's MILGATE EPOCH.

NOVEMBER 20, 1984

Back on stage, the Priest CHUCKLES softly.

PRIEST
Yes, Detective. It is now time for
you to --

He can't even finish his sentence -- Runtzer grabs his bride and leans her backward, kissing her happily.

The audience stands and CHEERS at the happy sight. Epoch claps proudly, alone in his pew.

CUT TO:

EXT. WINE VINEYARD - LATER

The ocean still in the background, Runtzer and Imogen walk through the crowd, on the way to their car. From all sides, the guests are throwing rice onto the newlyweds.

Before they reach the car, Runtzer hugs the FAT LIEUTENANT and tosses his hair around. Imogen uses the distraction to quickly pull Epoch aside and whisper into his ear.

IMOGEN
Thank you so much.

EPOCH
I wouldn't have missed it for
anything, Imogen.

IMOGEN

Without you, there wouldn't have even been an "it."

She gives him a quick hug, then is pulled back away by a still-excited Runtzer.

RUNTZER

C'mon, Immy! We've got ourselves a honeymoon to get to!

As the Fat Lieutenant and his buddies slap Runtzer on the butt, the newlyweds jump into their car.

The car drives away, pulling behind it a dozen shiny police HANDCUFFS, which scrape along the concrete.

MAN (O.S.)

Handcuff shackles instead of soda cans. You gotta love cops, huh?

Epoch turns around to the bald man behind him, who's sweating profusely. It's a younger MAXWELL LHORA -- with hair!

EPOCH

I'm here for the bride, actually. What about you? Friend or family?

MAXWELL

Neither.

Epoch gives a curious look, as Maxwell COUGHS into his hand.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Maxwell Lhora, divorce attorney. I was hired by Imogen's parents.

EPOCH

What? What are you talking about?

MAXWELL

If you'll notice, her parents didn't show up today. They don't, shall we say, approve much of her choice in a husband.

EPOCH

So I've heard.

MAXWELL

So here I am, serving as Lionel's proxy, to let him know how it went.
(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
 Meanwhile, he offered me quite a
 lot of money to break it up.

EPOCH
 Really? So why didn't you?

MAXWELL
 (watching the car)
 I'm newly-married myself. And we're
 trying for a child....

Maxwell COUGHS again into his hand.

EPOCH
 Sir, are you all right?

MAXWELL
 It's fine. I've had it for a while
 now. Just a cold.

He COUGHS again, only this time, BLOOD appears in his palm.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
 Oh my God....

EPOCH
 Just a cold?

Maxwell wipes off the blood, then quickly escapes into the crowd. Epoch watches the sweaty man rush away, while all around him, people are LAUGHING excitedly.

FADE TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES - PRESENT NIGHT

Poisoned Maxwell Lhora runs away from the Truant mansion, eyes black, skin drained of color.

MAXWELL
 Norma.... Damn them!... Jacque....

Out of breath, Maxwell rushes through the bushes. He HOPS the fence, then exits into a thick wooded area.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tension fills the hall, as the ARABIAN and JACQUE LHORA fill the others in on what they had just witnessed. The closed door to the wine cellar sits ominously only feet away.

The others are DUNCAN TRUANT, PUMPKIN TRUANT, and MATILDA TRUANT. Matilda's face is flush, and her makeup has run. Clearly, she's not having the best night ever.

JACQUE

And then he -- And then he --

ARABIAN

Calm yourself, boy.

The Arabian SLAPS Jacque's cheek to try to rouse him.

DUNCAN

So you're telling me Runtzer's still down there, and that Poisoned man has gotten free?!

ARABIAN

That's what I'm saying, dammit.

JACQUE

My Dad....

MATILDA

He is not your dad anymore.

Pumpkin starts pulling at her hair.

PUMPKIN

What are you all doing just standing here? If these Poisoned people are as bad as you say, then we need to get out of here!

(to Duncan)

Now, Duncan!

MATILDA

(dictator-like)

Duncan stays. But you, Pumpkin, you go. And take the boy.

Jacque shakes his head softly.

JACQUE

No. I don't think I should go.

DUNCAN

Do what she says, Jacque. It's for your own safety. We'll deal with your father.

JACQUE

It's not him I'm worried about.
What if they're right? What if
I'm... one of them... and I don't
even know it?

Pumpkin grabs Jacque's shoulders and looks deep in his eyes.

PUMPKIN

Because I trust you. Do you trust
me?

Jacque stares at her, then finally nods his head yes.

PUMPKIN (CONT'D)

Then we go. Come on!

Pumpkin grabs his hand, and pulls the nineteen-year-old away
from the scene. She quickly turns back to her husband.

PUMPKIN (CONT'D)

Duncan, you be right behind us now,
okay?

DUNCAN

I love you.

PUMPKIN

Dammit, don't say that! Say you'll
be okay!

DUNCAN

(bravely)
I'll be okay....

Pumpkin and Jacque turn a corner and exit.

Matilda, the Arabian, and Duncan stare ominously at the door.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Well? What are we going to do?

ARABIAN

Stay here. I'm getting guns.

MATILDA

Hurry.

He quickly exits. Matilda turns to Duncan.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

I don't....

DUNCAN

Don't what?

MATILDA

I don't trust that Jacque boy for one moment. And if, at the end of tonight, we find your wife dead, well then I'm going to feel very bad about my decision to let him go with her.

Off Matilda's ominous speech, Duncan's mouth opens slightly, and he looks down the hallway. Then, he looks back to the closed wine cellar door. Which way to go?

CUT TO:

INT. WINE CELLAR - LATER

DRIP, DRIP, DRIP. The door OPENS loudly, then three pairs of feet step loudly on the wet concrete.

The Arabian, Matilda, and a hesitant Duncan cautiously step into the cellar, all with guns in their hands.

DUNCAN

Damn. Looks like he plowed right through the door.

Duncan's focused entirely on the now-rusty garage door, with the hole in the center where Maxwell had escaped.

Matilda and the Arabian, however, exchange a quiet look. They're staring at the ground. At the bloody mess of rotting human flesh that was once Detective Edgar Runtzer.

ARABIAN

My God.... He saved me.

DUNCAN

What? What are you --

Duncan finally sees the floor.

He DROPS his gun at his side, and it CLANGS loudly against the wet concrete.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Ohhhh....

He bends down to the fallen Runtzer, his eyes wide. Duncan goes to touch the man's head, then pulls back his hand in disgust. Bloody ooze covers Runtzer's entire body.

ARABIAN

Don't touch it. It's likely some kind of an infection. Maxwell told his son to leave, because the air wouldn't be safe.

Duncan isn't even listening. He's staring down at Runtzer, still shocked by what he sees. No tears form in his eyes. Just pain.

DUNCAN

Oh, Runtz.... I forgive you....

Duncan stands slowly, then removes his coat. He drapes it over the man's body, hiding much of the disgust.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

My old friend....

Duncan turns to the garage door and glares out at the dark night. His hands clench at his sides.

Matilda takes a confident step forward, then turns to the Arabian at her side.

MATILDA

Get a mop.

AERIAL VIEW: The dark wine cellar. The bloody mess on the floor. Runtzer's dead body. Matilda standing next to the Arabian. Duncan glaring daggers at the broken door.

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

Stephen Tobolowsky **MAXWELL Lhora**

Joseph Gordon-Levitt **JACQUE Lhora**

Nick Tate **WARDEN CROSS**

B.D. Wong **DETECTIVE LI SHENG**

Jacqui Maxwell **PAULINE CROSS**

Brian Markinson **SENATOR DEDECUS**

with Yeardeley Smith **IMOGEN RUNTZER**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Angelo Shrine

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

C.D. Howard

1x10

"Old Friend"

written by

Angelo Shrine

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. WHITE CEMETERY - DAY

BACKGROUND SONG: "Adagio for Strings" by Samuel Barber -- the only sound at all from this emotional FUNERAL MONTAGE.

CRANE SHOT: thirty or so mourners stand over Runtzer's casket, giving their last respects. An enormous American flag has been draped over the casket.

Tissues and teardrops are everywhere, and on every face. Among those we recognize: the Fat Lieutenant, Matilda, Duncan, Pumpkin, BRETT TRUANT, and KYLEE WILLARD.

Sitting in a chair -- the only person sitting -- is a stoic, yet emotional Imogen Runtzer. She looks absolutely horrible, with gray hair, wrinkled skin, and colorless lips.

A well-dressed man goes to talk to her, but she shrugs him off, and continues staring ahead at her husband's casket.

Duncan holds Pumpkin tight, perhaps tighter than he should.

Brett and Kylee are holding hands, but Brett breaks away to cover his face, as the emotions finally get to him. Brett steps away, glimpsing the black limousine up on the hill.

INT. LIMOUSINE - SAME

Inside, GILLIAN TRUANT sits next to Jacque. They're holding each other, staring ahead at nothing in particular. They're completely silent.

INT. TRUANT MANSION - WINE CELLAR - SAME

The Arabian, wearing a protective suit, is carefully scrubbing up the mess of blood and pus on the cement floor.

He briefly looks up to the ceiling, sweat on his brow, and nods in silence. Then, arms outstretched, he proceeds to pray, worshipping East.

INT. WHITE CEMETERY - SAME

The ceremony ends, and people begin walking away. Imogen, however, sits still in her seat. As mourners go to wish her well, she ignores every one of them.

CUT TO:

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Gillian finally pulls away from Jacque.

GILLIAN
What?

JACQUE
I didn't say anything.

GILLIAN
(sadly)
I know. And it's driving me crazy.
Just tell me what's bothering you.

JACQUE
I... don't want to talk about it.

GILLIAN
You're you. All right? Look at me.

Gillian squeezes her boyfriend's cheeks playfully.

GILLIAN (CONT'D)
You're you. I'm me. We're all who
we're supposed to be.

JACQUE
Not my dad....

Gillian looks down, not wanting to pry, but so wanting to pry. She notices something in his pocket, and she pulls it out. It's a silver LETTER OPENER.

GILLIAN
What's this?

JACQUE
It's nothing. Just a letter opener.
Something stupid he gave me when I
went to college.
(quick beat)
I -- I didn't know.... If that's
what you're wondering.

GILLIAN
Oh?

JACQUE
I mean, I don't think I knew, that
he was... different. But now that I
think back, there were some things
in the past few months.
(MORE)

JACQUE (CONT'D)

Weird things. Did I just overlook them, or did I not care enough to ask?

Gillian rubs his leg softly.

GILLIAN

This is not your fault. Believe me, I've been in your position, Jacque. It's not anything you did.

(beat)

Give me a kiss.

He gives her a fake smile, then pecks her on the lips.

GILLIAN (CONT'D)

Do you want to go back out there, or not?

JACQUE

Not.

GILLIAN

We can stay here then. Let's stay here....

Jacque puts his arm around Gillian and pulls her closer.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE CEMETERY - DAY

Brett has walked several yards away from the grave plot. He's **WEEPING** openly. His hand is suddenly grabbed by a soft, delicate hand. He turns around to see Kylee standing there, and he's not at all embarrassed for her to see him like this.

KYLEE

Can I get you anything?

BRETT

I'm fine.

KYLEE

You're not fine. Your partner just died. Let me get you something.

BRETT

(wiping his eyes)

There's nothing I want.

KYLEE

I'll... let you be.

Brett turns away, and she slowly backs away from him.

AT THE GRAVE, Matilda puts her hand on the cold wood of the casket. She closes her eyes and mouths a silent prayer.

Behind her, Duncan and Pumpkin begin walking back to the limousine. On the way, a voice shouts out.

WARDEN (O.S.)

Duncan?

Duncan turns, and immediately sees the familiar face. It's WARDEN CROSS, from the California Maximum Security Penitentiary. He's dressed for the occasion, in a black suit.

DUNCAN

My God. Warden?

Warden Cross slowly approaches. He nods his hellos, but doesn't take his hands out of his pockets.

WARDEN

Duncan. It's been awhile.

DUNCAN

You can say that again.

WARDEN

(smiling warmly)
And you must be Pumpkin.

PUMPKIN

Yes.

DUNCAN

(introducing)
Sweetness, this is Warden Cross.

WARDEN

Unfortunately, I'm not here for a simple hello.

DUNCAN

Oh?

WARDEN

I realize this is horrible timing, but would you mind following me for a moment? It won't take long.

Duncan looks to Pumpkin for her okay. She nods.

PUMPKIN

Go ahead. I'll wait at the limo.

Duncan KISSES her, then follows the Warden.

AT THE GRAVE, Matilda finishes praying. Then, surprisingly, she bends down and softly kisses the outside of the casket.

MATILDA

(quietly)

Goodbye....

Imogen, still sitting, glares at Matilda.

IMOGEN

Hey! What do you think you're doing?

Matilda stands back up and turns to Imogen. She glares.

MATILDA

Paying my respects. If you had any yourself, you'd stand and join me.

Imogen glares at her -- clearly, not a good first impression.

IMOGEN

Who the hell are you anyway?

MATILDA

A friend.

IMOGEN

What, he been sleeping around on me? Great. Just great....

MATILDA

On the contrary. Your husband was a great man. He spoke highly of you -- more times than I can tell you.

(looking her up and down)

Don't see what all the fuss is about myself.

Imogen quickly stands, furious.

IMOGEN

Get the hell away from my husband!
Now.

MATILDA

I don't fight with widows. You get your wish.

Matilda hikes up her dress, then begins walking across the grass, on the way to the limo.

IMOGEN

Wait. How -- How did you know him?
From work?

MATILDA

You could say that.

IMOGEN

I've never seen you at the company parties. That must mean you're -- you're with the other job?

Matilda stops walking, mid-step. She slowly turns to Imogen.

MATILDA

I'm sorry?

IMOGEN

I'm right, aren't I? He worked with you at the mansion. Stopping The Poisoned.

Matilda grimaces, clearly unhappy Runtzer spilled the beans.

MATILDA

So... Detective Runtzer liked to gossip, did he?

IMOGEN

Tell me something, lady. And please God, let it be the truth. Did he really die in a car accident, like they're telling me?

Imogen walks closer to Matilda. Now it's her turn to read Matilda's features.

IMOGEN (CONT'D)

I need to know. If it's the last thing I ever know. Tell me how he died.

Matilda looks over at the limo, where Kylee and Pumpkin are just arriving. Then, she turns back to Imogen.

MATILDA

Just so we're clear, I owe you nothing. Got that?

Imogen nods, understanding.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Do you have a car?

IMOGEN

I do.

MATILDA

Let's go get coffee. You're buying.

Imogen's eyes light up, though she doesn't smile. With one last glance at her husband's casket, she turns back to Matilda, and then the two old ladies walk across the grass.

AT THE CEMETERY'S ENTRANCE, Duncan and the Warden are talking quietly, away from everyone else.

WARDEN

I know about The Poisoned.

DUNCAN

How?

WARDEN

After your mother ordered your release, I of course was just a little curious. Not that I had a problem with releasing you -- not at all, Duncan. Frankly, I'm surprised you took that man's punishment for as long as you did.

Duncan GRITS HIS TEETH, clearly not wanting to remember his time in jail.

WARDEN (CONT'D)

So, I met with your mother, made her tell me everything, or else I'd go public with the truth.

DUNCAN

So you know about The Poisoned. But what is this about now?

WARDEN

I've got two things, actually. But for today, I'll only bother you with one.

(explains)

It's my daughter.

DUNCAN

I didn't know you had a daughter.

WARDEN

Pauline. A great girl. Good fisherman too -- she could teach you a few things.

(beat)

She's a doctor in a free clinic over in Chinatown, and she says that over the past 24 hours, there's been a rash of patients coming in with varying illnesses, all with strange symptoms.

DUNCAN

(explains)

Flu season.

WARDEN

(quietly)

Duncan, some of these diseases -- they don't even exist anymore.

DUNCAN

Well, what do you think I can do? I'm no doctor....

(beat; realizes)

You don't think this has to do with The Poisoned?

WARDEN

I think... something strange is going on. And my daughter's there. Please. Do this for me. Find out what's going on....

Off of the Warden's pleading eyes, Duncan turns to the grave, where Brett is now the only one there, paying his final respects in silence.

DUNCAN

I'll see what I can do. But I'm not promising anything.

Warden Cross follows Duncan's eye line, seeing Brett.

WARDEN

Does he know the truth? That you're really innocent, all this time?

Duncan ignores the question.

DUNCAN

I'll call you.

With that, Duncan walks away from his old friend, and joins up with his family at the limousine.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHINATOWN - DAY

Downtown Chinatown. It's CHAOS on the streets, as people are huddled up in a mob outside the free clinic, each with their own symptoms.

Some people are COUGHING BLOOD, while others have pustules on their skin, while still others have rashes on their faces.

Everyone YELLS over each other, as the door to the clinic is completely flooded with patients!

We're watching the scene from the P.O.V. of someone far away. Slowly PAN AROUND to reveal that it's Maxwell Lhora who's watching the spectacle.

He's not smiling, but he's not frowning either. His eyes FLASH BLACK. At his side, his hand appears old and wrinkled -- as if it's covered in a strange-looking disease.

Maxwell's hand changes back to normal. Then, he rubs his chin, as he watches the chaos across the street.

MAXWELL

Look what they made me do....

Maxwell's eyes FLASH BLACK again, then his lips purse slightly, in the form of a tiny smile.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Runtzer's fancy sedan drives quickly down the highway. Soon, the car begins SWERVING in its lane. The driver pulls over to the side, as the other cars zoom past, HONKING rudely.

Duncan quickly gets out of the driver's side door, covering his mouth. He rushes to the side of the road, and then VOMITS over the side of the railing.

He looks up, to the busy freeway, and to Runtzer's car. Duncan closes his eyes for a moment. Then, he jumps back into the car, and proceeds to drive on down the highway.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHINATOWN - DAY

Duncan walks the streets of Chinatown, a look of disgust on his face as he sees the dozens and dozens of SICK PEOPLE along the sides of the streets.

Ambulances are present, with all kinds of MEDICS wearing masks, trying to aid as many people as they can.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey! Are you Duncan?

Duncan turns to the sound of the voice. He finds himself staring at a strapping Chinese-American detective (40s), with a hint of a goatee. It's DETECTIVE LI SHENG.

DUNCAN

Who's asking?

SHENG

Detective Sheng. The Warden said he was sending you to help us out over here. But I really don't see --

He's interrupted by an OLD CHINESE MAN, who HACKS UP BLOOD on the sidewalk. Duncan goes to help, but Sheng pulls him away.

SHENG (CONT'D)

No! Don't get close to them. Not without one of those.

DUNCAN

One of what?

Sheng points behind Duncan, to an ambulance filled with BIOHAZARD SUITS. Sheng immediately removes his expensive-looking detective's jacket, and grabs a suit for himself.

SHENG

Grab one. You'll thank me later.

Duncan quickly follows, grabbing one of the yellow suits.

Out of the corner of his eye, he spots a dozen BODY BAGS lying carelessly on the cement. He stares at them in horror.

SHENG (CONT'D)

Something wrong?

DUNCAN

Body Bags. I just put my old friend in one, and now....

SHENG

Well, suck it up. You'll be seeing a lot more by the time this is all over. Come on.

They walk toward the clinic.

CUT TO:

INT. FREE CLINIC - LATER

Wearing their biohazard gear, Sheng and Duncan squeeze through the crowded front door of the clinic. They step into the waiting room, and Duncan's eyes immediately go wide at the sight of disgust and decay all around him.

There are literally people everywhere. Several DEAD BODIES line the ground, with the sick patients sitting right on top of them, having nowhere else to sit.

DUNCAN

My God....

SHENG

Disgusting, eh?

Duncan quickly steps aside as an ITCHY WOMAN with rashes on her neck bumps against him.

ITCHY WOMAN

Please... help me....

SHENG

Back off! Go on!

Sheng rudely pushes the woman away, and she trips over a dead body on the ground, falling back into the mess of people!

DUNCAN

Hey!

SHENG

(adamantly)

Don't let them touch you! These suits are made of plastic, And that's the only thing protecting you right now. Got it?

Duncan nods, then follows Sheng as he walks through the sea of sickness, to the back hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - WORKOUT ROOM - DAY

Kylee is running quickly on the treadmill, breathing roughly, as she goes faster and faster and faster.

She slows to a stop, then walks to a weight machine, passing by the window that overlooks the mansion's large back yard.

Kylee sits down -- and that's when she GASPS loudly!

KYLEE

Oh my God!

JUMP CUT TO: Maxwell Lhora!

Maxwell stands calmly in the room, watching her. He closes the door, then LOCKS it, trapping them inside. He still looks rather deathly, with sweaty features and ragged clothing.

MAXWELL

Kylee....

KYLEE

Get away from me! Help! Someone!

Maxwell's hand clenches at his side.

MAXWELL

Kylee. Please don't make a fuss.

Kylee GULPS loudly as Maxwell's eyes quickly FLASH BLACK.

FADE TO:

EXT. RUNDOWN STREET - FLASHBACK

Epoch walks along the sidewalk in the low-end neighborhood, walking his brown dog SPIKE on a leash. Spike runs off to go smell a tree, full of energy. He raises his leg in the air.

EPOCH

No, not there. What have I told you about peeing on trees?

Epoch drags the dog out to the middle of the street.

While Epoch waits, he looks around the corner, past the mailbox that reads "William Epoch," and to his tiny yellow house. To his surprise, there's a man on the porch, KNOCKING on the front door. It's Maxwell Lhora.

EPOCH (CONT'D)

C'mon, Spike, someone's here.

He pulls on Spike's leash. They step around Epoch's bright green yard and walk up the cracked sidewalk.

EPOCH (CONT'D)

Can I help you, sir?

Maxwell turns. He's pale as all get out, and his hair is thinning on top of his head. Epoch recognizes him.

MAXWELL

Is William Epoch home?

Epoch becomes uneasy at the mention of his father. He bends down and pets Spike, as Maxwell squints at him.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Wait. I know you. You were at the wedding, last November.

EPOCH

I was.

MAXWELL

Strange.... So, do you know? Is he home?

EPOCH

William? No. He, uh.... I'm sorry to say that he's passed on.

MAXWELL

Oh. Oh, dear.

Maxwell's face falls. His shoulders slump.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
That's terrible. Just terrible....

EPOCH
Did you know him?

Maxwell begins walking down the broken staircase.

MAXWELL
I didn't. He was just... suggested
to me.

EPOCH
"Suggested"?

MAXWELL
By my doctors. As a last resort.

Epoch looks at the clump of hair on Maxwell's head. He sees the man's pale skin, and the dried blood on his shirt.

EPOCH
It's not just a cold, is it?

MAXWELL
(clears his throat)
I've been diagnosed with HIV.
Apparently, my days are numbered.

Epoch takes his hands off of Spike, and stands up. He meets Maxwell's eye level.

EPOCH
I'm so sorry. That's horrible.

MAXWELL
No. You know what's horrible? I'm a
blood donor. Have been all my life,
ever since college. I gave blood
last winter, and apparently, the
needle they used wasn't clean.
How's that for cosmic irony?

Epoch looks down, not knowing what to say.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
But anyways, if William's not home,
then I have no reason to be here.
Take care, kid.

Maxwell pets Spike under the chin, then walks away. Epoch opens his mouth to say something, his eyes revealing that he so wants to speak up, but he ultimately doesn't.

EPOCH
 (to Spike)
 I can't do it, boy. I won't be like my father. I won't just waste it on anyone....

Epoch CLEARS HIS THROAT, then takes Spike into the house.

Maxwell walks slowly down the street, holding back tears.

FADE TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - WORKOUT ROOM - PRESENT DAY

Maxwell approaches Kylee, still sitting at the weight machine. She tries desperately to not show any fear.

MAXWELL
 They cleaned up the floor real nice. But no one bothered to patch up the garage door.

KYLEE
 What are you doing here, Maxwell?

MAXWELL
 I just want answers. We're friends, you and I. That's why I'm coming to you now.

KYLEE
 We were friends. But not now!

Maxwell approaches even closer. He bends down right next to her face, and SNARLS loudly.

MAXWELL
 Tell me the truth, and I'm gone.

KYLEE
 Anything....

MAXWELL
 I don't like what I've become. I despise it. So I need to know. Where is my son?

KYLEE
 Jacque? I -- I don't know --

MAXWELL
-- WHERE IS HE?!

Maxwell's eyes FLASH BACK, and his clenched hand grows wrinkled, and covered in a red rash.

KYLEE
I don't know! I haven't seen him
since the funeral!

Maxwell backs up slightly. Kylee squints her eyes angrily.

KYLEE (CONT'D)
The funeral for the man you killed!

Kylee suddenly JUMPS UP! She attacks Maxwell for all she's worth, punching him and kicking him as hard as she can!

Maxwell pushes her down to the floor ceaselessly. He steps back and CHUCKLES. Then, he lowers his infected arm to her head... and brushes aside the hair on her face.

MAXWELL
So sorry....

Still smiling, Maxwell backs up and exits the room.

On the ground, Kylee wipes away her tears. She pulls her hand away from her face, and looks at her fingers.

It's not tears that she's wiping away, but BLOOD!

PULL BACK to reveal that Kylee's face instantly fills with pulsating BLACK BOILS! She's infected!

KYLEE
Aaaaaahhhh!

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. ST. FJORD HOSPITAL - FLASHBACK

A silent flashback, as Maxwell Lhora is sitting at a table, being tested by several DOCTORS wearing protective suits.

They take his blood, test his hair samples, poke and prod at his body -- as all the while, Maxwell just sits there, a completely lost look on his face....

FADE TO:

INT. LOCAL CAFE - PRESENT DAY

Matilda and Imogen sit in a booth against the window. Matilda has a steaming hot cup of coffee in front of her.

MATILDA

So, Runtzer told you everything?

IMOGEN

Enough. I know that he was working to try to stop a group of people who became infected, or Poisoned.

MATILDA

He didn't tell you about the Book? Or Epoch's curse?

IMOGEN

No. Wait -- Whose curse?

Matilda takes a sip of her coffee.

MATILDA

You don't mind if I smoke, do you?

IMOGEN

Actually, yes.

Matilda ignores her. She pulls out a long, slender cigarette and quickly lights it. Behind the counter, a TIMID WAITRESS frowns, and walks over.

TIMID WAITRESS

Um, I'm sorry, um, ma'am, there's no smoking allowed in here.

Matilda stares up at her icily.

MATILDA
What's the soup today?

TIMID WAITRESS
Um, corn beef and cabbage.

MATILDA
Disgusting.

Matilda looks back at Imogen, and the waitress quickly walks away from the table. Imogen GRUMBLES.

IMOGEN
You're in a foul mood. Is this how you pay your respects to Edgar?

MATILDA
Edgar isn't the only one I lost this week....

Imogen pries with her eyes, but Matilda changes the subject.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
What do you do?

IMOGEN
Retired. So one of these Poisoned people killed my husband? Is that what I'm being led to believe?

Matilda just stares at her, then slowly nods.

IMOGEN (CONT'D)
Which one?

MATILDA
(exhaling)
You're just a citizen, Mrs. Runtzer. And what my Team does, it requires a certain level of experience, and secrecy.

IMOGEN
Then let me join.

Matilda CHUCKLES, then puts out her cigarette by dropping it into her coffee mug. She slowly stands out of the booth.

MATILDA
Never.

IMOGEN

Tell me. Tell me who's responsible,
dammit!

MATILDA

My Team is falling apart as I stand
here. One man is dead, one woman
betrayed us. You'll have to forgive
me for not just taking on anyone
that asks. Especially an untrained,
emotional woman whose only desire
to join is to get revenge.

(rudely)

I'll find my own way home.

With that, Matilda exits. Alone at the table, Imogen's face
falls. For the first time, a tear forms in her eye.

IMOGEN

(quietly)

I need you, Edgar....

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUANT MANSION - DRIVEWAY - DAY

It's chaos outside, as two PARAMEDICS rush a stretcher across
the ground and into the back of their ambulance!

Kylee lies on the stretcher, her face covered in pustules!
She's breathing through an oxygen mask, and her eyes reveal
her thoughts: she's scared for her life.

Brett chases after the stretcher, SCREAMING. Pumpkin stands
on the staircase, holding Gillian close to her. The Arabian
stands at the ambulance, helping to hold the doors open.

BRETT

Hurry! My God, hurry!

PARAMEDIC

Step away, sir! Please!

The paramedics finally push the stretcher into the back of
the ambulance, then close the doors, hiding Kylee from view.

BRETT

I want to ride with her. Please!

PARAMEDIC

No. We have to go now!

(to the driver)

Go!

The ambulance quickly PEELS OUT in the driveway, driving away. Brett wipes the tears from his face.

GILLIAN
Brett...? What happened to her?

BRETT
I don't know, dammit! She was just lying on the floor, covered in that rash, gasping for her life....

ARABIAN
It was Maxwell. It has to be.

BRETT
(adamantly)
I'm following them....

Brett rushes to his squad car.

GILLIAN
Brett, can I come?

BRETT
Get in if you're coming!

Brett jumps into the driver's seat and turns on the ignition. Gillian rushes down the staircase, and just barely makes it into the passenger seat before he slams on the gas.

Pumpkin slowly looks over at the Arabian beside her.

PUMPKIN
First Runtzer, now this....

ARABIAN
And these were supposed to be the "good" Poisoned.

They stand in silence, watching Brett's squad car speeding down the driveway, after the ambulance.

CUT TO:

INT. CHINATOWN - FREE CLINIC - DAY

Duncan and Sheng walk up a narrow staircase in the clinic, going past infected patients sitting on the stairs.

DUNCAN
What caused this? Does anyone know?

SHENG

All they know is that there's at least twenty different illnesses here. Pneumonia, smallpox, Kaposi's sarcoma, Necrotizing fasciitis.

DUNCAN

Necro-what?

SHENG

Flesh-eating disease. Though this strain is much more rapid than anything they've ever seen.

They arrive at the top of the stairs, where there's a makeshift fence, blocking off the patients.

Sheng shows his badge to the STANDING GUARD, and he opens the gate. Sheng and Duncan squeeze through, when --

-- HISS! SNARL! Two of the stair-dwelling INFECTED MEN jump up and try to get through the fence!

STANDING GUARD

Back! Get back, or I'll shoot!

INFECTED MAN #1

Help us!

INFECTED MAN #2

Please!

The Guard kicks them away like they're garbage, then quickly closes the gate. Duncan stares at them in shock.

DUNCAN

Hey! They just want some help! What do you people think you're doing?

SHENG

Saving ourselves from infection.

Sheng pushes ahead. Duncan sheepishly follows behind.

INT. FREE CLINIC - SIDE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sheng and Duncan enter a side room, where a tired-looking doctor, PAULINE CROSS, is looking under a microscope.

SHENG

Pauline. This is Duncan.

Pauline looks up. She has dirty blonde hair and blue eyes. She doesn't extend her hand, and doesn't smile.

PAULINE

About time. So what do you think,
Duncan? Are these people Poisoned,
or what?

Sheng and Pauline wait for an answer, while Duncan just looks between them, a bit caught off-guard by the question.

CUT TO:

INT. MODERN HOSPITAL - DAY

Kylee rests peacefully in a hyperbolic chamber, surrounded on all sides by plastic. She's lying on her back, staring up at nothing in particular. The chamber is connected to all kinds of tubes and machines.

WIDER. Brett sits in a chair, staring intently at Kylee through the chamber. He stares at her swollen lymph nodes and black boils in utter horror. And in complete silence.

OUT IN THE HALL, Gillian talks to a DOCTOR.

GILLIAN

Say that again?

DOCTOR

We can't give her the treatment she
needs, because the disease doesn't
even exist anymore.

GILLIAN

What? Well, what does she have?

The Doctor looks down at his chart.

DOCTOR

I'd have to run the test again....

GILLIAN

Tell me.

DOCTOR

It appears as though Miss Willard
is infected with a bacterium called
Yersinia pestis. Otherwise known...
as the Bubonic plague.

GILLIAN

The Black Death?

DOCTOR
 (nodding)
 We'll do our best to treat her. I
 assure you. But if I may ask, how
 did she contract it?

Gillian turns to Brett and Kylee, a tear welling in her eye.

GILLIAN
 Wrong place. Wrong time.

Kylee's machines continue to BEEP, BEEP, BEEP....

FADE TO:

INT. ST. FJORD HOSPITAL - MATERNITY WARD - FLASHBACK

We're looking through a windowed partition into the maternity ward, where there's several NEWBORN BABIES, all CRYING.

Maxwell sits in a wheelchair, looking through the glass, touching it slightly, a look of awe on his face.

EPOCH (O.S.)
 Maxwell Lhora. You're a hard man to
 track down....

Maxwell slowly turns around in his wheelchair, to see Epoch walking down the hall toward him.

MAXWELL
 You....
 (long beat)
 I forgot your name, I'm sorry.

Maxwell speaks slowly, with a weak cadence to his voice.

EPOCH
 I don't think I ever gave it.
 Milgate Epoch.

Maxwell lifts his shaky arm and they shake hands.

MAXWELL
 "Epoch"?

EPOCH
 William was my father.

MAXWELL
 Oh! Why didn't you say anything?
 That day, at your house?

Epoch ignores him. He motions to the babies with his head.

EPOCH
Are any of these yours?

MAXWELL
No. Sadly. I don't know how much
you know about this disease, but
children are not an option for me
anymore.

EPOCH
I'm sorry to hear that.

Epoch licks his lips, as he stares down at the weak Maxwell.

EPOCH (CONT'D)
Listen. There's something you need
to know, about me. Can I... escort
you outside?

MAXWELL
I don't have any plans.

Epoch smiles, then grabs the back of his wheelchair, and
begins pushing him down the hall.

FADE TO:

EXT. WHITE CEMETERY - PRESENT DAY

The Poisoend Maxwell Lhora walks on the outskirts of the
cemetery, still riled up from his meeting with Kylee. He
walks up a hill, and looks down into the heart of the
cemetery. And that's where he sees --

-- Jacque. He's standing at Runtzer's grave, all alone.

Maxwell smiles, then slowly begins approaching....

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. CHINATOWN - FREE CLINIC - SIDE ROOM - DAY

Sheng, Pauline, and Duncan are standing in the tiny room, staring down at a microscope. The horrifying SCREAMS from downstairs fill the room, giving a very uncomfortable feel.

SHENG

"Poisoned." What's that?

PAULINE

Go on. Tell him, Duncan.

Duncan licks his lips, but ultimately changes the subject.

DUNCAN

These people are all infected with normal, human-born diseases.

PAULINE

Normal?! These are some of the rarest, most quick-acting diseases I've ever come into contact with!

SHENG

(trying to catch up)
Poisoned? With what?

DUNCAN

These people are not Poisoned. Though I have a hunch one man in particular may have something to do with what's going on....

PAULINE

Good. So my dad was right in getting you out here.

Pauline grabs a wall phone and sticks it in Duncan's face.

DUNCAN

What do you want me to do with this?

PAULINE

Call this hunch of yours. If you think you know who did this, then maybe he could also undo it. Don't you think...?

She forces the phone receiver hard into Duncan's chest.

PAULINE (CONT'D)
Call whoever the hell you have to.
Just get me some answers.

Duncan finally grabs the phone. He begins dialing.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - DAY

Matilda is waiting at a crosswalk, surrounded by a flock of city-goers. Her cell phone RINGS in her pocket, and as she fishes around for it, everyone behind her begins walking across the road, bumping into her.

MATILDA
Hey -- watch it!
(snarling)
If only they knew what I do all day
to protect their sorry asses....

She angrily answers her black cell phone.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
What?

DUNCAN (O.S.)
It's Duncan. Where are you?

MATILDA
I'm downtown, 7th and Hope. Why?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. FREE CLINIC - SIDE ROOM - DAY

Duncan speaks on the wall phone, as Pauline stands at the desk, looking through the microscope.

DUNCAN
There's something terrible going on
in Chinatown. I can't explain now,
just please tell me you've been
able to apprehend Maxwell Lhora.

MATILDA
No such luck. But... we've been
dealt another blow, Duncan.

DUNCAN
What?

MATILDA

Kylee. She was attacked and infected, quite likely by Maxwell.

DUNCAN

Infected? How? Like Runtzer?!

MATILDA

I don't know. I hope to receive word. As soon as my car arrives.

Just as soon as she's said it, the Team's Limousine pulls up right beside her. The Arabian rolls down the window and stares out at her.

ARABIAN

Miss Willard's status is the same. It doesn't look good.

MATILDA

Well, are you going to help me in the car, or not?

The Arabian HUFFS, then gets out and helps Matilda into the backseat. As she gets in, she speaks into the phone.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

I'll call you when I have anything more.

(soft beat)

Oh, and Duncan? Stay safe....

The Arabian closes the door, and she escapes from view.

CUT TO:

INT. MODERN HOSPITAL - KYLEE'S ROOM - DAY

Inside her plastic chamber, Kylee is still looking sick. Then, she turns to the side, where she meets Brett's eyes. He stares at her with a huge smile on his face.

BRETT

That's the first time you moved in two hours. How are you feeling, kiddo?

KYLEE

My hair hurts....

(beat)

And did you just call me kiddo?

Brett LAUGHS loudly, a mix of relief and happiness.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE CEMETERY - DAY

CLOSE ON: the grave plot of Edgar Runtzer. There's no sign at all that there was even a funeral that day.

Jacque is still standing at the plot. He's WEEPING openly, letting his tears fall down his cheek.

MAXWELL (O.S.)

Jacque....

Jacque stops crying. He quickly wipes his face, then turns around to see Maxwell standing oddly next to a gravestone.

JACQUE

You.

Maxwell licks his lips, working out in his head how to approach him.

MAXWELL

I wanted to tell you. So many times, I wanted to tell you....

JACQUE

(timidly)

Get away.

MAXWELL

(stepping forward)

Jacque, this doesn't change anything between us. Don't you see? I love you now, the same as I always have.

JACQUE

Get back!

Jacque quickly steps backward, momentarily tripping over Runtzer's tombstone.

JACQUE (CONT'D)

You killed this man. You killed him! What did he do to you?!

MAXWELL

I had to avenge my friend, Jacque. Our friend.

(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

You don't even know this, but Norma Valens was the nurse who helped birth you almost twenty years ago.

Jacque continues to step back, as Maxwell keeps taking tiny steps forward.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

You were never even supposed to be born. I wasn't supposed to have children. But then a man healed me, took away my disease, and now here you are.

(through tears)

You mean everything to me, son. You're the one good thing I did in my life. Don't you see...?

JACQUE

No! You're a monster! And what does -- what does that mean for me?

Maxwell holds out his hand, reaching for his son.

MAXWELL

We can discover that together. You and I. We'll leave this place. Leave all of this behind. I won't hurt anyone else.

JACQUE

Anyone else? Have you hurt someone else? Besides this man here?

Maxwell's arm falls down to his side, as he's forced to accept the truth of what he's done.

MAXWELL

I couldn't help it. It wasn't me. It was this Poison inside me.

(enunciates)

I'm afraid I've hurt many, many people.

JACQUE

No!

MAXWELL

But with you at my side, that won't happen anymore! You can help me fight this. With your mother gone, you're all I have left. I don't want to think what will become of me if you don't....

MAXWELL
 (rasps)
 Time to join your husband.

Maxwell holds up his arm, and it turns DISEASED! He's just about to touch her skin with the infection, when:

JACQUE
 Stop! Please!
 (beat)
Dad!

Imogen holds her breath tightly, as Maxwell slowly turns to his son. Maxwell's eyes begin to water slightly.

MAXWELL
 "Dad"....

FADE TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL PARK - FLASHBACK

Epoch pushes Maxwell's wheelchair away from the hospital, and into a tiny park. In the sunlight, Maxwell looks even worse.

EPOCH
 I called your office, where you used to work. They gave me your address. And when I went to your house, I met with your wife.

MAXWELL
 Did you?

EPOCH
 A real nice lady. She made cookies. She told me about your journey, Maxwell.

MAXWELL
 (chuckling)
 Journey? She actually said journey?

EPOCH
 She told me about the doctor visits, the endless tests, and the loss of desperation after you discovered that your alternative hope -- my father -- had died. And most of all, she told me of your desire to start a family....

Maxwell rubs his eye, wiping away a tear. He grabs the wheels on his chair and stops it from moving. Then, he spins the chair around and faces Epoch.

MAXWELL
Why are you here?

EPOCH
Why do you think?

MAXWELL
If indeed you are William's son,
then you know what I think.

Epoch leans down and whispers to Maxwell.

EPOCH
If I do this, it can't be undone.

Maxwell struggles to stand out of the wheelchair, but he ultimately does. He stares into Epoch's eyes, as tears now stream down Maxwell's cheeks.

MAXWELL
I want a family more than anything.
I was more than happy to give up my
job as a divorce attorney, after
years of seeing all the hatred, all
the families fall apart.
(passionate beat)
If I die, without experiencing the
love of a child, my life will have
been a waste.

He grabs Epoch's hand, and puts it on his heart.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Please. Please....

EPOCH
I was initially hesitant. You have
to understand, I -- I don't really
know what this thing is inside me.
I told myself I'd only use it when
it was absolutely necessary. That I
wouldn't waste it....

Maxwell continues prying with his eyes.

EPOCH (CONT'D)
But then I realized... this is
definitely not a waste.

Maxwell smiles. Epoch looks around the park, seeing a few people sitting on benches.

EPOCH (CONT'D)

You know somewhere private we can go?

MAXWELL

Oh, yes. Ohhhhh, yes.

(beat)

Your father would be very proud of you, Mr. Epoch....

Smiling, Maxwell puts his arm around Epoch's shoulder, and they walk back to the hospital. The wheelchair remains sitting alone in the middle of the park.

FADE TO:

INT. WHITE CEMETERY - PRESENT DAY

Jacque slowly approaches his father and Imogen, both of whom are still on the ground in the cemetery.

MAXWELL

Jacque....

JACQUE

Dad, I'll go with you. But you have to stop this. Now. And let her go.

Maxwell's smile fades, as the BLACKNESS comes to his eyes.

MAXWELL

No. You're lying!

Maxwell looks back down to Imogen, and he's about to attack her again with his infected arm -- but Jacque grabs his father's head in both of his hands.

JACQUE

No! I'm not! Look me in the eyes. Look at me, dammit, and you'll see I'm telling the truth!

CLOSE-UP: Maxwell and Jacque stare into each other's eyes. Maxwell's black eyes briefly reflect in Jacque's.

Then, slowly, Maxwell's eyes return to normal again. His hand loses its infection, as a tear comes to Maxwell's eye.

MAXWELL

Oh, Jacque. I thought I'd lost you!

Maxwell leaves Imogen alone, and gives his son an enormous hug. As he does so, we follow Imogen's eye line:

She's staring at Jacque's hands, where he's holding the silver LETTER OPENER from earlier!

JACQUE

I loved you....

STAB! He impales the letter opener into his father's back!

Maxwell's smile turns to a horrified frown. But as he tries to back away from his son, Jacque hugs him even tighter!

JACQUE (CONT'D)

But I can't anymore.

He pulls out the letter opener, then STABS him again. And again. And again!

MAXWELL

Oh!

Dark blood spurts out of Maxwell's back, as he falls to his knees on the grass.

Imogen quickly pulls Jacque away. Fear in their eyes, they watch as Maxwell tries to say one last thing... but then blood comes to his mouth, and he falls down, on top of the fresh dirt pile.

AERIAL VIEW: Jacque SCREAMS loudly up to the sky! In pain. In horror. In shame....

IMOGEN

Come on. Let's get you home....

Imogen consoles him tightly. She escorts him away from the Runtzer plot, and they slowly exit.

A calm scene. Then:

CLOSE ON: Maxwell's eyes, which quickly open, FLASHING BLACK!

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. FREE CLINIC - SIDE ROOM - DAY

Duncan is still making calls with the wall phone, as Pauline swaps out the strip under the microscope with another.

PAULINE
Amazing. Truly amazing. Some of these diseases I've never even seen before.

Duncan hangs up the phone and walks over.

PAULINE (CONT'D)
Hey. Why are you stopping? --

DUNCAN
Ssh.

PAULINE
Don't you dare shush me --

DUNCAN
Ssh!

Duncan motions to the door, where, to their shock, they hear a loud SCREAM from out in the hall.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
Who is it? Is that Detective Sheng?

PAULINE
Oh God! They've broken the perimeter. Quick! Close the door!

Duncan rushes across the room and grabs the door. He's about to close it, when he sees two of the angry, infected patients jump up the stairs. They're pulling Sheng by his hair!

DUNCAN
My God....

PAULINE
Close the door! Do it!

He closes the door shut, just as the diseased people reach the door! Duncan peers through the tiny window. Outside the room, the two infected men drag Sheng's unmoving body to the door, and start POUNDING on it!

INFECTED MAN #1
 We have your officer! And we'll
 kill him! We swear it!

INFECTED MAN #2
 Just give us the medicine! We know
 you have it! Do it! Now!

Duncan turns to Pauline.

DUNCAN
 Is that true? Do you really have
 medicine for these people?

Pauline slides down to the ground, breathing quietly.

PAULINE
 We received shipments from all over
 the county. But we didn't have
 time, Duncan, before the infected
 took control of the clinic, and
 used up all of the vaccines.

DUNCAN
 So there's nothing else? Nothing at
 all, to help all these people?

PAULINE
 Nothing....

Pauline wipes a tear from her eye. Duncan looks back out the window. To his shock, a dozen more INFECTED PATIENTS rush up the staircase -- a mob of disease!

Duncan slides down the wall next to Pauline. A beat passes.

DUNCAN
 Do you pray, Pauline?

PAULINE
 No. I work, and I fish. I don't
 have time for prayer. But you're no
 priest, are you?

DUNCAN
 No. I'm just a....
 (long beat)
 Pray with me.

Duncan grabs Pauline's hands, and he quietly begins PRAYING.
 From outside, they hear the ANGRY HOWLS of the mob!

CUT TO:

INT. MODERN HOSPITAL - KYLEE'S ROOM - DAY

Kylee's machines beep quietly, as Brett and Gillian watch her sleep inside the chamber. Then --

-- The machine FLAT-LINES! BEEEEEEEEEEEP!

Brett immediately stands, then SHOUTS out to the hallway.

BRETT

Help. Help us! Help us now!

GILLIAN

Oh, Kylee!

Doctors rush into the room, as the boils on Kylee's face and neck begin pulsating with her heartbeat. Then -- POP! -- they explode, spewing pus on the inside of the plastic!

GILLIAN (CONT'D)

Oh my God. No.... Not her.

BRETT

Do something! Help her!

Gillian quickly grabs her brother, trying to help calm him, as the doctors go to Kylee's aid, trying to save her.

CUT TO:

INT. FREE CLINIC - DOWNSTAIRS - DAY

The waiting room is just as packed as before, only now, most of the infected patients are following the mob up the staircase. They SCREAM and SNARL loudly. Then --

-- BANG! A bullet rings out.

Then another. BANG! BANG-BANG-BANG!

The infected people start SCREAMING in fear, and in pain, as they're hit from behind, and fall to the ground!

QUICK PAN AROUND to the front door, where the Arabian stands proudly, two guns in his hand.

ARABIAN

Sit down, and no one else dies!

ITCHY WOMAN

You need to help us! Not shoot us!

The Itchy Woman leaves her group, and starts running toward the Arabian. The Arabian GULPS loudly, then FIRES!

The Itchy Woman falls down, dead, on top of the other bodies.

ARABIAN

I know you're in pain! I know
you're scared! But you all need to
calm down, and sit down. NOW!

The remaining patients all exchange a look, and after another glance at the Arabian's guns, they all put their hands on their heads and kneel down on the ground.

SLOW-MOTION: the Arabian calmly walks through the sea of infected patients, while in his background, we see the limo parked on the street, with Matilda in the backseat.

CUT TO:

INT. FREE CLINIC - SIDE ROOM - DAY

Duncan and Pauline are still praying. Suddenly, they stop.

PAULINE

What? What is it?

DUNCAN

Listen. Hear that?

Pauline listens intently. Suddenly, there's a loud GUNSHOT, and the locked doorknob flies off! Duncan and Pauline stand and walk away from the door.

The door flies open, and they give a huge sigh of relief when the Arabian walks in, a smoking gun in his left hand, and the unconscious body of Detective Sheng hanging over his right shoulder.

Pauline nearly faints at the sight before her.

PAULINE

Oh! Thank you!

DUNCAN

Oh my God.

ARABIAN

Mr. Truant, you and I have got to
stop meeting like this.

DUNCAN

I thought you went to the hospital!

ARABIAN

Matilda thought we could be of better help here. Apparently, she was right.

PAULINE

(relieved)

I have to meet this woman.

The Arabian pockets his gun, then gives Duncan a sly smile. Duncan breathes another sigh of relief, then suddenly bursts out LAUGHING!

FADE TO:

INT. MODERN HOSPITAL - KYLEE'S ROOM - NIGHT

The hospital room is dark. Kylee is breathing again, but she still looks close to death's door.

PAN ACROSS the teary-eyed faces around her, from Brett and Gillian, to Duncan and Pumpkin, to Matilda and the Arabian. Everyone is huddled around Kylee's bed, watching in silence.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Exterior shots of Los Angeles go by in slow motion: cars driving on the freeway, clouds passing in front of the moon, the ocean sparkling beautifully. Time still passes by.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUANT MANSION - NIGHT

Duncan pulls up to the house in Runtzer's sedan. He steps out and stretches his arms up to the sky.

He approaches the mansion, and to his surprise, there's a man on the porch, leaning over the railing. It's Warden Cross.

DUNCAN

Warden, Warden, Warden. To what do I owe this pleasure?

The Warden gestures to the enormous mansion behind him.

WARDEN

Quite a difference from your previous life, yes?

DUNCAN

You can say that again.

WARDEN

I'd like to thank you for helping Pauline, keeping her safe. What you did today is something I'm never going to forget.

DUNCAN

The horrors I saw at that clinic.... Warden, it won't be long now, until the world knows about The Poisoned. And then watch. If you think the world's a scary place now, just wait to see the panic.

WARDEN

You did a favor for me today. And now I'd like to do one for you.

DUNCAN

Is that so?

The Warden takes a step back, and KNOCKS on the front door. The mansion's door opens, and out steps Brett and Gillian. They look just as confused as Duncan.

GILLIAN

Duncan? What's going on?

DUNCAN

(confused)

I don't know. Any news on Kylee?

BRETT

She's still stable. They're trying to find medicine to help, but so far, no luck. I'd like to get back to her, as soon as possible.

The Warden stands up straight.

WARDEN

Brett, Gillian, my name is Frank Cross. I'm the Warden at the California Maximum Security Penitentiary -- have been for almost twenty-five years now.

DUNCAN

(realizing)

Warden, no....

Brett looks back and forth, from his father's worried face, to the warden's. He's truly curious.

WARDEN

Duncan, it's time.

(to the kids)

Twenty-one years ago, your father was imprisoned for a crime... he did not commit. He took the fall for another man. A Senator. Now, I won't go into the specifics, but just know that your father here --

He pats Duncan on the shoulder.

WARDEN (CONT'D)

-- He was innocent. He spent two decades behind my walls, and I just can't go on another day without you two knowing the truth.

Gillian squints, studying her father for all it's worth, as Duncan's eyes flutter. Brett LAUGHS in disbelief!

BRETT

Please! You expect us to believe that?

GILLIAN

(shocked)

It's true....

DUNCAN

(timidly)

Yes. It is.

BRETT

I don't buy that for a second!

From around the corner, a man suddenly appears. A balding man with glasses, wearing a suit and smoking a cigar. It's SENATOR DEDECUS!

SENATOR DEDECUS

You should. It's the truth.

Duncan locks eyes with the Senator, for the first time in twenty years. He GULPS quietly, completely silent.

SENATOR DEDECUS (CONT'D)

Hello, Brett. Gillian. I'm Bill Dedecus, Senator of California.

(MORE)

SENATOR DEDECUS (CONT'D)
 (long beat)
 It's truth time....

Duncan, still in shock, walks forward without looking at anyone, and exits quietly into the house.

WARDEN
 He'll be fine. I can't imagine how this must be for him. This is for real, guys.

BRETT
 Holy God....

The Senator takes a puff of his cigar.

SENATOR DEDECUS
 Your father took the fall. For me. And it's about damn time that you guys know what really happened that day. Don't you agree?

Gillian and Brett exchange a strange look -- "is this for real?" Off the image of the four of them on the porch --

CUT TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Duncan storms into the room, full of emotion. He rubs his bald head furiously, willing away the demons of the past.

To his surprise, the conference room is already full. Matilda and the Arabian sit at the table, debriefing Jacque, who's covered in his father's blood.

DUNCAN
 Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't know this room was occupied. I'll --

JACQUE
 -- No. Come in. It's fine. I don't care who hears.

Duncan quietly sits down. Jacque turns back to Matilda.

JACQUE (CONT'D)
 That's all I know. I swear.

MATILDA
 You're a brave, brave boy, Jacque.

ARABIAN

(sternly)

There was no one else in the cemetery? You're sure of that?

JACQUE

Just me, Imogen, and my father. That's it.

ARABIAN

Because if someone saw you kill him, you're going to be asked a lot more questions than we're asking you now.

Jacque nods, understanding.

MATILDA

And the body?

JACQUE

We left it on the dirt. Oh, God! We just got out of there.

MATILDA

It's okay. We'll deal with it.

Matilda looks to the Arabian, and he nods in agreement.

Jacque suddenly loses composure again. He hides his face in his hands, embarrassed.

DUNCAN

Jacque, it's okay. Let it out.

JACQUE

He's dead! I killed him! And he was trying to be good! He really was!

MATILDA

"Good"? Jacque, he was lying to you. He infected Kylee. He killed Detective Runtzer. Not to mention the thirteen people in Chinatown who lost their lives.

ARABIAN

As much as they may claim it, there is no good Poisoned. I've said it before, and I'll say it to my grave. They're evil. Every person that was healed. No exceptions. And this proves it.

Duncan, still rubbing his head and still emotional from before, speaks up quietly.

DUNCAN
You don't know that....

ARABIAN
Excuse me?

DUNCAN
I said, you don't know that for sure.

ARABIAN
You have knowledge I don't, Mr. Truant?

DUNCAN
These people today.... Their desire to save themselves -- it was powerful. And it was so very human.

MATILDA
Duncan, they were not Poisoned.

DUNCAN
But that's the thing. In that moment, they sure didn't seem human to me. And it just brought home to me, how all this time, we've been treating The Poisoned as if they were monsters. Well, they're not. They're us.

ARABIAN
Need I remind you what happ--

DUNCAN
(interrupting)
-- Just shut up! All right?

Matilda is shocked by Duncan's tone. She watches him closely.

MATILDA
Duncan? Are you all right? You don't seem yourself.

DUNCAN
Outside right now....

His voice trails, and then he CHUCKLES.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
 "Truth time," he said....

Jacque, the Arabian, and Matilda all exchange an odd glance. Duncan's losing it right before their eyes.

MATILDA
 Can I get you something?

Duncan looks up, and in that moment, he suddenly stands. He stretches his arms out at his sides, just standing there.

DUNCAN
 You're wrong. You're both wrong.
 The mentality of this team is wrong
 at its core.
 (explains)
 Not everyone who was healed has
 turned evil.

MATILDA
 Duncan? What are you saying?

Everything hinges on Duncan's next words.

DUNCAN
 I know, because I'm fine....
 (beat)
 And I was healed.

The Arabian quickly jumps up, SCRAPING his chair across the floor! He stares daggers across the table, as a stark silence fills the room.

Matilda slowly, slowly stands. She looks at Duncan, fear in her eyes -- then she suddenly EXPLODES with anger!

MATILDA
SHACKLE HIM! NOW!

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW

CUT AWAY TO:

SHACKLES