

Ben Saves Time
(Alt: Does It Make A Sound)

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EXT. BRICK BUILDING -24TH FLOOR - DAY

The 24th floor of the old brick building has several large windows spaced fairly far apart. The blinds are closed.

Underneath the windows there is a small concrete ledge that runs around the building.

A large raven flies down and lands on the ledge directly in between the last two windows on the right hand side.

The raven holds in his beak what appears to be a large black marble. He walks back and forth a little bit, drops it onto the ledge, ruffles up his feathers, and flies away.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The lights are out in the large office but sunlight is creeping in around the blinds on the three large windows. There are several cubicles scattered about and all of the normal equipment you would expect to see in an office. On the far end there is a set of double doors.

The doors open and BEN GORDON, 30-ish, dressed in a suit, comes in and walks over to the four light switches on the wall. He flips them all up and nothing happens. He looks around, then flips them up and down again. The lights still don't come on.

He makes his way over to a near by desk and opens one of the drawers. He pulls out a flashlight and turns it on. The beam of light bounces around as he makes his way over to the nearest window.

When he gets to the window he opens up the blinds and light pours into the office. It's still fairly dim but he has enough light now to see so he turns off the flashlight. Ben goes over to the next window and opens up the blinds on that one as well.

As he makes his way up to the next window he passes a large desk that sits against the wall and he stops in his tracks and stares at a big dark spot on the white wall that is spherical in shape and about the size of a bath mat. He turns on the flashlight and aims it at the wall just staring at the spot.

He makes his way over to the last window and opens the blinds without ever taking his eyes or the flashlight off of the spot.

Ben walks back over to the desk and picks up the phone that sits on top of it. With the flashlight still on in his hand he begins to dial but stops half way through.

He presses down the button to hang up the phone and waits a few seconds. Then he presses the button again a few times in rapid succession and the beam from the flashlight bounces up and down on the wall. He hangs up the phone and turns off the flashlight.

He makes his way back toward the double doors he came in through and sets the flashlight down on a desk as he passes.

When he gets to the light switches on the wall he flips them up and down one last time and then goes back through the doors and they close behind him.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The hallway is fairly nondescript. A couple of random pictures hang on the white walls, the carpet is gray-ish, and there is a little enclave where the elevators are located.

Ben walks along passing the turn where it branches off to the elevators and makes his way to another set of double doors at the opposite end of the hall.

He opens the door, leans in, and looks around. All the lights are on.

BEN
(to no one in particular)
Just checking to see if you guys
have lights.

Ben turns around and gets out his cell phone and quickly dials a number. He walks slowly back toward his office.

BEN
(into the phone)
Yes, Ben Gordon here. I'm up on the
24th in suite 215 and we don't seem
to have any power. The phones seem
to be out too...That'd be great.
Thanks.

As he hangs up the elevator doors open up and KYLE, a twenty something hipster, white shirt, skinny tie, black pants, walks out.

Kyle is carrying a something like a large man-purse that has a white piece of fabric hanging out from under the flap.

KYLE
Hey Ben, What's up?

BEN
You're late.

KYLE
(shrugging)
I know. Traffic. Why are you
standing here in the dark.

BEN
Power's out. You walk to work. Are
you going to karate in the morning
too?

They start to walk back toward the office together.

KYLE
Krav Maga. (looking around) Where
is the power out?

BEN
In our office. Crag what?

Kyle stops and looks around.

KYLE
Krav Maga. It's like Israeli
martial arts. The rest of the floor
has power?

Ben opens the door for Kyle.

BEN
Seems to.

Kyle goes into the dark office and Ben follows him.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Kyle walks over to the light switches and tries them out and
of course gets no response.

He puts his bag on a desk.

KYLE
Is there a breaker box in here?

BEN
If there is I don't know where it
is. I called maintenance and
somebody's on their way up.

KYLE

Do we have a flashlight?

Ben grabs the flashlight off the desk and hands it to Kyle. Even though there is plenty of light to see around Kyle turns the flashlight on and begins to walk slowly and scan the walls.

BEN

So you take Crack My Jaw in the morning and Karate at night?

KYLE

Ju Jitsu.

BEN

What? Here, come here and tell me what you make of this.

Ben walks over to the desk with the spot above it.

KYLE

It's not Karate, it's Ju Jitsu. (he sees the spot) Whoa! That wasn't there Friday when I left.

Kyle follows him over and shines the light on it.

Behind them the doors swing open and ROB (Male, 50's, chubby) the maintenance guy walks in. Ben and Kyle are startled and turn around quickly.

ROB

What are you guys doing up here in the dark?

Rob walks over to the light switches and tries them all but the lights don't come on for him either.

BEN

The power's out.

ROB

Looks like it huh?

BEN

Any ideas?

ROB

Gimme a minute to look around.

Rob makes it over to Kyle and Ben and stops and looks at the wall.

ROB
What's that?

KYLE
We were hoping you could help us
figure that out.

ROB
Looks like a pipe broke. We're
gonna need a plumber.

Rob reaches back and pulls out his walkie-talkie and raises it to his mouth.

ROB
Tommy. I need you up on 24. Suite
215.

TOMMY (O.S.)
(on the walkie-talkie)
Be right up.

ROB
Help me move this desk.

Ben moves around to one side of the desk and Rob goes to the other.

BEN
Kyle, why don't you grab the
directory in my office and start
calling everyone to let them know
the situation.

KYLE
Sure thing.

Kyle goes over to the door that is directly across from the double doors at the other end of the office and opens the door. He points the flashlight inside.

KYLE
Hey! It's dark in here!

BEN
You'll be fine Mr Miyagi.

Ben turns back to Rob. Rob is holding one side of the desk and he motions to Ben to grab the other side.

ROB
You ready? 1, 2, 3.

They pull on the sides of the desk, grunting, and it slides out from the wall a few feet. They both straighten up and walk around their respective sides and get in between the wall and the desk.

Rob pulls out his flashlight from his utility belt and aims it at the spot on the wall. He reaches up and touches the spot and a big chunk of the dripping wet plaster falls away revealing several small boards with what seem to be roots growing out from in between them.

BEN

Are those roots?

Rob reaches up and touches them and little blue sparks shoot into his finger. He jerks his hand away.

ROB

(quietly to himself)

Huh, she's cute.

BEN

Who's cute? I thought he power is out? Where's the electricity coming from?

ROB

Yeah.

Kyle comes bounding out of Ben's office up to the desk.

KYLE

Phones are out too. I used my cell but...(he looks to where Ben and Rob are staring) are those roots?

The double doors swing open once again and TOMMY (almost Rob's twin but in a grey jumpsuit) the plumber comes rambling in.

TOMMY

Why are the lights out?

He stops like everyone else and tries the light switches with the same results.

ROB

Come here Tommy and take a look at this.

Tommy makes his way over to the desk and gets his flashlight out as well and shines it on the wall where Kyle and Rob are already shining theirs.

TOMMY

Looks like a small leak in a pipe.
Are those roots?

BEN

That's what I said?

TOMMY

But where are they coming from?

They all look at each other and then Ben moves over to the window and tries to get a good look outside.

BEN

No good. Gotta open the window.

Ben undoes the latch on the window and tries to push it up but it the old window won't budge.

BEN

Gimme a hand with this.

The other three move over and they all start pressing up on the window. After a second the window is thrust open violently and they all kind of stand in shock. Ben leans his head out the window and looks over to the right.

BEN

Holy shit! It's a tree! Or a shrub
or something!?

KYLE

What?!

Kyle steps up and gets behind Ben and leans out the window as well.

EXT. BRICK BUILDING - 24TH FLOOR - DAY

Ben and Kyle are leaning out of the window together looking at the tree that is just to the right of the half way point between the last two windows.

It's not huge tree by any means but it's pretty big considering where it's growing.

It's about five feet high, about four inches around with a thick bunch of branches and leaves at the top and a mean, desperate looking group of roots that are wrapped around and through the cracking ledge and bricks.

It sticks out from the building at an angle of about twenty degrees from the bricks.

KYLE
Holy shit!

Kyle and Ben's heads disappear from the window and are replaced by Rob and Tommy's.

ROB
I'll be damned.

TOMMY
I never seen anything like that.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The four men are now standing around the window conversing with each other.

ROB
Before me or Tommy an do anything
we gotta clean all that out of the
wall. The tree's gotta come out.

BEN
And how do we do that?

He looks around at the men.

TOMMY
Don't look at me. I'll fix your
pipes but I ain't going out on no
ledge.

BEN
What about the window washers? Can
we get a hold of them and have them
set something up?

KYLE
On it.

Kyle heads off toward the double doors with the flashlight and his phone in the same hand. He puts the phone up to his ear and the flashlight beam bounces along the ceiling.

BEN
(yelling to Kyle)
And ask around about a place close
by, like a nursery or something so
I can get some supplies. Maybe the
place on the corner?

ROB
What about us?

BEN

I guess just try and move stuff
around in here to make some room.
Can I borrow a flashlight really
fast?

Tommy hands Ben his flashlight and Ben runs over to his
office.

TOMMY

Man, this is weird.

ROB

Who cares. Just grab the desk.

Tommy and Rob grab the desk and start to drag it out of the
way. They neglect to unplug all of the things on the top of
the desk and they fall to the floor in a clutter.

TOMMY

Shit.

Ben runs out of his office and sets the flashlight down on
the desk.

BEN

Everything okay?

ROB

Yeah, some stuff fell. That's all.

BEN

Okay, I'll be back. Everyone is
gonna be showing up for work in a
minute or two. Try to keep people
out if you can.

Ben takes off toward the double doors.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Ben comes out of the doors as Kyle rounds the corner.

KYLE

The window guys are on their way.
Meg's, the place on the corner of
Fourth and Dover is open.

BEN

Thanks. Try and help out around
here. I won't be long. And try not
to let a bunch of people in.

Ben heads to the elevators and Kyle goes through the double doors.

EXT. MEG'S NURSERY - DAY

Ben walks up the sidewalk next to a large black iron fence that surrounds lots of flowers, plants, and trees. As he passes up the gate he turns and walks through a glass door that is standing open.

Over the door is a hand painted sign that reads "MEG'S GARDEN"

INT. MEG'S NURSERY - DAY

Ben sits in the middle of one of the aisles on a large ceramic pot he has turned upside down. He is quickly flipping through the pages of a large book.

GWEN (brown hair, late 20's) sees him and begins to walk over. She has on a green apron over her T-shirt and jeans and is attractive. When she reaches him she stops. Ben doesn't even notice she is there and she seems to find him somewhat humorous.

GWEN
(smiling)
Uhm, can I help you.

Ben without looking up.

BEN
Oh, maybe. Yes. I hope so. I have a problem.

He flips a page in the book.

GWEN
Okay.

BEN
I have a tree.

GWEN
Oh my. That is a problem.

Ben finally looks up at Gwen and is taken aback for a moment.

He stands up but doesn't shut the book.

BEN

Uhm. Uh. No, see it's uhm, somewhere it shouldn't be and I need to move it but I don't want to hurt it or anything but I can't find it in any of these books and I need to hurry.

GWEN

Alright. Slow down. Where is the tree exactly.

BEN

It's growing on a ledge on the 24th floor of the building I work in.

GWEN

Really? Hmm. C'mon. Help me get some things together and we'll get over there.

Gwen starts off down the aisle. Ben just stands there for a second then sets the book down on the ceramic pot and follows after her.

BEN

You mean, you'll come with me? Right now?

GWEN

You said you were in a hurry.

BEN

But, can you just leave?

GWEN

Yeah. I'm the owner.

They round the corner and keep walking.

BEN

Oh, well thanks Meg.

GWEN

Gwen.

BEN

I thought it was Meg's Garden?

GWEN

It is. I bought it from Meg.

BEN

Well then thanks Gwen. I'm Ben. I really appreciate this.

GWEN

Ha! We Rhyme. Gwen and Ben. Nice to meet you.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Ben and Gwen are moving quickly up the sidewalk in front of his building. Ben has some rope and a big bag of topsoil on his shoulder. Gwen is carrying a burlap sack and some pruning clippers.

Gwen is just slightly ahead of Ben and he reaches up and grabs her shoulder. She looks back at him and he points up.

BEN

Look.

She stops and looks up to where he is pointing and there is a little green dot on the side of the building way up near the top.

There are TWO GUYS on window washing scaffolding about halfway up the building directly beneath the tree.

GWEN

Wow! I thought you were...

Ben keeps on walking.

BEN

C'mon.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The double doors swing open and Ben and Gwen walk briskly into the room that is now filled with people milling about and it is considerably noisier than it was when he left.

There are several flashlight beams bouncing around the room now and there is even a REPORTER and a CAMERAMAN. The camera has a big bright light on the top of it.

Kyle runs up them. He looks a little confused.

KYLE

Gwen? What are you doing here?

GWEN
Hey Kyle I...(beat) Wait.

She looks to Ben like she just made an important connection.

BEN
You two know each other?

KYLE
We take Ju Jitsu together.

GWEN
And that makes you Ben that didn't
want to go out with me.

BEN
What? Oh no. You're kidding.
(to Kyle)
This is that Gwen?

KYLE
I uhm..

BEN
And you told her?

GWEN
Well, I'll just be going.

She starts to leave but Ben grabs her arm.

BEN
No wait, I can explain. It was
just, I didn't know it was *you*.

Gwen smirks.

GWEN
It's fine.

It's not. All her sweetness has vanished.

GWEN
Let's just get on with it.

She moves off toward the crowd near the window. Ben and Kyle
follow just a few steps behind.

BEN
(whispering but pissed)
I can't believe you told I didn't
want to go out with her.

KYLE
(defensive)
You said you didn't.

BEN
I know but not her specifically. I
just...(beat) Never mind. Who the
hell are all these people?

KYLE
Mostly just people from the
building.

BEN
Is that the news?

KYLE
Yeah! Isn't it great?

BEN
Who called them?

KYLE
I did. I thought it was a good
idea. Are you mad?

BEN
No. Sort of. I guess not. How's
everything look?

They make it over to the crowd of people around the window.
Kyle gets nudged out of the way before he can answer.

Rob and Tommy are over talking to the Reporter. When the
Reporter sees Ben and Gwen walk up he motions the Cameraman
and they walk over to them with the giant light shining the
way.

Ben sets the bag of topsoil down on a desk and heads over to
the window. Gwen puts the rope and the burlap sack down next
to it.

The Cameraman and the Reporter are trying to get over to them
but they are having a hard time due to all the people.

REPORTER
Ben! Can I get a few words with
you?

Ben ignores him completely and heads over to the window with
Gwen. Gwen pushes through the people leaning out the window
as she puts on her gloves. She starts to climb out.

BEN
Gwen! Hold on!

Ben is trying to force his way through the people but before he can make it to Gwen she's already out the window. Ben finally gets through and leans out the window.

EXT. BRICK BUILDING - 24TH FLOOR - DAY

Gwen is standing on the platform the window washers set up. Ben is hanging halfway out the window.

BEN
Jesus. I didn't realize...

Gwen has a hold of the tree and is shaking it gently but it doesn't move much. The concrete and brick where the roots are attached is crumbling and some of it falls out.

GWEN
It's in there pretty good but it shouldn't be too hard. Come out here and help me. Unless you don't want to.

Ben fumbles through the window and lands on the platform causing it to swing around. He struggles getting up to his feet as the platform sways.

BEN
That's not how it was. That's not how it is. I just...(beat) Blind dates...
(changing the subject)
Have you ever seen anything like it?

GWEN
No not really.

BEN
Not really?

The Cameraman leans out the window with his camera and aims it at them. They look over but then go back to looking at the tree. A boom microphone pops out over the Cameraman's head.

GWEN
Trees are pretty stubborn. They'll take root on the top of a rock or anywhere there's a hint of dirt. But, I've never seen a tree grow anywhere like this.

Ben tries to hand her the clippers.

BEN
Here. Go ahead.

GWEN
No, you cut it out. I'll get up and
hold it so it doesn't fall.

She starts to climb up on the ledge and Ben puts out his hand to help her.

BEN
But I don't know what I'm doing.

GWEN
Obviously. I'll walk you through
it. You'll do fine.

She situates herself in between the wall and the tree and grabs a hold. Her elbow touches the tree causing her to jump and make a bewildered face.

BEN
Are you okay?

GWEN
I just...never mind. Start on the
roots farthest out and work your
way back toward the building. Try
to leave as much of the root as you
can intact.

She grabs the tree again and makes an odd face then shakes her head.

BEN
You ready?

GWEN
Yup.

Ben takes the clippers and slides the bottom blade underneath one of the roots and then clips it off. His hand jumps back involuntarily and he drops the clippers and they almost fall off the platform.

BEN
What the fuck?

GWEN
You felt it too?

BEN
It shocked me.

GWEN
I thought I was imagining things.

BEN
It must have it's roots into the
building's wiring. Hold on.

Ben moves over to the window and the Cameraman doesn't move out of his way so Ben just shoves his camera and climbs halfway back in.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ben is leaning in the window and the Cameraman and the Reporter are right in his face.

REPORTER
How are things going Ben? Will you
be able to save the tree?

BEN
Rob!

Rob makes his way over.

REPORTER
Who is the lady you brought with
you? Is she a specialist?

Rob shoves the Reporter out of the way.

ROB
Yeah man?

BEN
We're getting shocked out here. Is
the electricity on or something?

ROB
No way. After...I went down and
made sure it was off myself.

BEN
Huh. Well, do have some gloves?

Rob reaches into his back pocket and pulls out some brown cotton gloves and hands them to Ben.

ROB
There you go.

BEN

Thanks.

Ben slides back out the window and the Cameraman tries to lean out to film some more but Ben pushes the window back most of the way. The Cameraman tries to open it but Kyle comes up and stands in front of it and pulls Rob over for good measure.

EXT. BRICK BUILDING - 24TH FLOOR - DAY

Ben puts on the gloves and grabs the clippers. Once again he slides the blade in. This time he hesitates a bit and leans back. Then he clips it. Again his hand shoots back and Gwen tenses up a little.

BEN

You okay?

GWEN

Uh huh.

BEN

Alright. I'll hurry.

Ben puts the clippers up to the second to last root but before he touches it there is a blue spark that arcs between them. He pulls his hand back and looks at Gwen.

GWEN

Go ahead.

Ben moves the clippers back up to the root and there are several more sparks. He gets the clippers in place and grimaces. Gwen's arms are tensed up and shaking. Ben clips the root and there is a bright flash of light and a popping noise.

Gwen's feet slip out a little and Ben stumbles back. He braces himself and the platform sways dramatically.

GWEN

I'm losing my grip.

Ben steps back up and aims the clippers at the last root. A long continuous blue spark arcs out to meet Ben's arm. He moves forward slowly grimacing. Gwen closes her eyes.

BEN

This is crazy. What are we doing?

GWEN

Hurry!

Ben steps in and crams the clippers onto the root and clips. Again there is a loud pop and a bright flash of light. Gwen and the tree both fall forward onto Ben.

Ben is on his back on the platform with the tree on top of him and Gwen on top of the tree. Tree sandwich style. There are little blue sparks shooting around between them and the tree.

BEN

Are you okay.

GWEN

Yeah. I feel good.

BEN

Yeah. Me too.

GWEN

Me too.

BEN

Me too.

They just kind of sit there and stare into each other's eyes for a moment with the sparks shooting back and forth.

BEN

I'm sorry I didn't go on that date with you.

GWEN

Me too.

BEN

Me too.

A telephone starts ringing loudly.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

All the lights are on and the phones are ringing like crazy. The crowd of people are converging on the window.

KYLE

Back up! Back up!

He shoves a few people and opens the window. Gwen climbs through. Ben is standing outside and he pushes the tree in and Gwen and Kyle both grab it.

Little blue sparks shoot up both their arms and Kyle looks at Gwen but she doesn't pay any attention.

Ben climbs back inside a second later and looks around like he's a little confused.

GWEN

We need to get the roots covered up.

BEN

Right.

He snaps out of his daze and moves over to the desk and grabs the burlap sack. Kyle and Gwen walk over with the tree. Someone is taking lots of pictures with a flash.

Ben opens the burlap sack and they place the tree inside. He then gets the bag of topsoil and tears it open and pours some into the sack while some spills onto the floor. After that he grabs the rope and ties it around the top of the bag.

The tree is set down between Ben, Gwen and Kyle. They are both smiling. Another flash goes off.

BEN

Show's over everybody!

He and Gwen pick up the tree and start walking toward the double doors. Kyle is following them.

KYLE

So it's back to normal tomorrow?

BEN

It's back to normal right now. Call everybody and get this cleaned up.

KYLE

Yeah.

BEN

I gotta get a pot for this.

Kyle moves ahead of them and opens the double doors.

GWEN

I'll help you pick one out.

Ben and Gwen walk out into the hallway and the doors shut behind them right in Kyle's face.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ben opens the door to his dark apartment with some effort. The light from the hallway seeps in. In one arm he is carrying the tree which now has a brownish metal pot on the bottom and in his other arm is his briefcase.

He sets the tree down on the floor and turns on the light. Then takes his briefcase and sets it down on the table. He goes back over to the tree.

BEN

Let's find a good place for you.

He picks the tree back up, carries it over and sets it down in an empty spot on the hardwood floor next to a tall lamp that stands in the corner about ten feet from the window.

BEN

How's that?

He bends down and rubs the tree. Then stands up and moves over to the table and opens his briefcase while he sits down.

He pulls out his laptop and opens it up. He stares at the screen for a minute then rubs his eyes. He looks back at the screen and then shuts the laptop.

Ben looks over to the tree.

BEN

What? I'll get to it tomorrow. I'm beat. I'll see ya in the morning.

Ben stands up and heads over to his room. He turns off the lights as he passes by them. He goes into his room and shuts and the door.

After a few seconds of darkness the lamp next to the tree lights up dimly.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Ben comes out of his room and heads to the kitchen without looking over at the tree, wearing only his pajama pants.

BEN

Good morning. How'd you sleep?

In the kitchen Ben starts brewing some coffee. He comes out and sits down at the table where he left his laptop. It is now open and running but he's still tired and thinks nothing of it.

He still doesn't look over to the tree. He doesn't notice that not only is the lamp on, but it's been knocked over and the tree has moved. It is tipped over and leaning out the now open. Potting soil has spilled everywhere.

He hits a few keys on his keyboard then stops. He squints his eyes and hits a few more.

CLOSE UP. COMPUTER SCREEN

The only thing on the computer screen is a bunch of 1's and 0's in what appears to be a random order.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT. MORNING

Ben sits at his computer just staring at the screen.

BEN

That's weird. You know anything about this?

He finally looks over to see that the lamp has fallen over and that the tree has moved over to the window.

Ben slowly pushes his chair away from the table and stands up. He looks around the apartment. After a minute he moves cautiously over to the tree.

He stops at the lamp and picks it up. As he does so he stares at the light bulb and once he's stood it up he turns it off then focuses his attention back on the tree.

He takes another cautious step forward and looks down to see that there are scrape marks on the floor from where the tree's metal pot dragged across the hardwood floor. He drags his hands across them.

BEN

What's going on here?

He walks over and stands the tree up. Closing the window he shakes his head.

BEN

I gotta go to work. Don't go anywhere until I get back.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Ben walks out of his apartment wearing a suit and carrying his briefcase. He takes a few steps and then stops and turns around. He gets out his keys and locks the dead bolt.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ben comes in carrying his briefcase to find the lights already on. Rob and Tommy are over by the wall working on covering up the hole. No one else is in the office yet.

BEN

You guys are here early.

They both turn around and look at him.

TOMMY

Gotta get this hole fixed up.

BEN

Thanks for all you help guys.

ROB

She's cute.

BEN

Who?

ROB

You know who.

TOMMY

What'd you do with the tree?

BEN

It's at my house.

Ben moves on down to his office and goes in.

Rob and Tommy go back to patching the wall.

INT. BEN'S PERSONAL OFFICE - DAY

The office isn't too big and the desk takes up most of the room. There are no windows but there is a painting of an eagle flying on the wall. Ben sits down, opens his briefcase and pulls out his computer. He opens it up, hits a few keys then waits.

BEN

Shit.

He reaches over and picks up the phone. He hits one button then waits.

BEN

Kyle, Where are you? Good. There's something wrong with my computer. I'm...

Kyle walks into the office wearing about the same thing as the day before. He has a black eye. He has his phone up to his ear but he lowers it once he's face to face with Ben . As he comes in Ben puts the phone down but continues talking.

BEN

Going to need you to take a look at it ASAP. What happened to your face?

Ben spins it around and Kyle leans down to take a look.

KYLE

Class. When did this start?

BEN

This morning. Shit, first the power's out and now this. This is getting to be a real headache. Is it a virus or something?

KYLE

I don't know. It looks like binary code.

BEN

You mean like computer code?

Kyle hits a few keys.

KYLE

It looks like there is a pattern. See watch.

Kyle turns the computer toward Ben a little and props himself up on the desk a little.

KYLE

No matter what you touch it does the same thing.

He hits a key and the 1's and 0's start moving for a few seconds then stop.

BEN

Are you sure it's the same?

KYLE

No, but if you let me borrow this I can probably figure it out before lunch. In the mean time you can use mine.

Kyle grabs the computer off his desk and heads out.

Ben opens a desk drawer on his right and pulls out a rolo-dex and sets it on his desk.

He begins to flip through the cards then stops.

BEN

Shit.

He reaches into his pocket and gets out his cell phone. He presses a few buttons then puts the phone to his ear and waits.

BEN

Uh, hello? Gwen? Yeah yeah it's Ben. Yeah?...Yeah, no, okay. I know where it is. Okay. Sure, 10:30 sounds great. Okay. See you then.

INT. DIMITRI'S OFFICE DAY

DIMITRI (grey hair, crew cut, nice suit, maybe 70 years old) reads today's newspaper as he sits with his feet up on a large, shiny black desk that appears to grow out of the floor which is the same obsidian color.

The desk has nothing on it and sits toward the back of the large room. The ceiling is the same smooth black as the floor and desk and Dimitri's reflection can be seen as clearly in it as it can be seen on the desk and the floor.

The walls are a smooth, flat white and the corners have been rounded out. Warm light emanates from the top and bottom of each wall all the way around the room though there are no lights of any kind visible.

There is a KNOCK as if someone were knocking on a door.

Dimitri lowers his paper and looks toward the far wall.

DIMITRI

(Eastern European accent?)
Come in.

A door opens up out the wall and DOYLE (40ish, fit, well dressed) walk in followed by JED (60's, trucker hat, flanel shirt and jeans)

JED
(Looking around)
Whoa?

Out the doorway it is completely dark except for a long row of light bulbs hanging by wire from the ceiling that go on so far they just disappear into the darkness.

DOYLE
Mr. Dimitri, this is your driver.

Dimitri lowers the newspaper and casually folds back up then lays it on the desk. He takes his feet off of the desk and turns to face them.

Ned steps forward and puts out his hand to shake Dimitri's.

Dimitri doesn't move.

Jed steps back and puts his hands behind his back.

JED
Nice to meet you.

DIMITRI
(Nodding slightly)
Yes, fine.

Doyle turns to Jed.

DOYLE
Head back the way we came. Turn left at the bottom of the stairs and you'll come to the shipping area. They'll have all the information you need at the desk.

JED
That's it? You brought me up here...

DOYLE
Goodbye.

He grabs Jed firmly by the arm and turns him toward the door.

Jed looks over his shoulder as Doyle firmly nudges him into the hallway. He makes his way down the hall and becomes a shadow and then disappears into the darkness.

Doyle turns back to face Dimitri.

DIMITRI

One thousand years Doyle. Do you know how long that is?

DOYLE

A long time Mr. Dimitri.

DIMITRI

Yes it is Doyle. Yes it is.

Dimitri shoves the newspaper of his desk and it scatters on the floor at Doyle's feet.

Doyle looks down at the mess and sees a picture of Ben, Gwen, and Kyle standing with the tree.

DIMITRI

Find them. Start with the girl.

DOYLE

Yes sir Mr. Dimitri.

Doyle turns and walks out of the room into the dim light of the hallway.

The door closes behind him and disappears back into the wall.

INT. DARK, MUSTY CONCRETE STAIRWAY

There is one dim light at the top of the stairs, no cover just the bulb sticking out of the fixture on the wall.

The stairs are almost wet it's so humid and the walls appear to have moss growing on them. Paint flakes off the metal handrail that is rusting so badly it barely clings to the wall.

Just below the light is an old cracked wooden door. The door opens and Jed steps out. Before the door shuts the long row of hanging bulbs is visible going off into the darkness.

Jed shuts the door and makes his way down the stairs. At the bottom there is another, much newer, much nicer door with an "EXIT" sign right above it.

To the left of the door the stairs keep going down. Jed hesitates and looks down the stairwell. It is dimmer and damper and less inviting than where he came from.

Jed takes a quick look around. He reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out a small plastic bottle and pops the top.

He shakes one small, white, circular pill into his hand
tosses it into his mouth.

He twists his head vigorously from one side to the other and
heads cautiously down the stairs.

At the bottom of the stairs is a long hallway with pipes
running along the ceiling that seem to all be leaking.

There are a few dim light bulbs randomly placed. Several of
them flicker.

Jed slowly makes his way up the hall.

There are a few doorways on both sides. None of them have
doors and Jed glances in them as he passes. Each room
contains one or more hydroponic growing stations complete
with tanks, lights, giant barrels of fertilizer etc. Every
station is growing different varieties of flowers plants in
various stages of growth.

At the end of the hallway there is a another door. This one
is closed but it has a small rectangular window with wire in
the glass. There is light and noise coming from inside.

Jed looks inside and sees what can only be described as five
giant witches cauldrons. There are chains and shackles hooked
to the wall above them and bubbling, frothing liquid in each.

Jed shakes his head. An OLD WOMAN in dirty clothes hobbles
into view.

JED

Well, I'll be damned.

DOYLE

You just might be. This is not the
way we came in.

Jed nearly jumps through the ceiling. Doyle grabs him firmly
by the arm.

JED

Jesus! You got...I must have made a
wrong turn.

DOYLE

Yes you did.

Doyle leads Jed back down the hallway.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Ben walks down the sidewalk with his coat draped over his arm. He's headed toward a small cafe that has a little green picket fence up surrounding the few tables lined up out on the sidewalk.

Gwen sits at one of the tables outside by herself. She has a stack of unorganized papers that she is shuffling through and she doesn't notice Ben make his way up.

BEN

Gwen, I'm glad you could make it.

Gwen looks up at Ben's big smile still wearing a face of extreme concentration. She seems to be completely absorbed in whatever she is doing. She hasn't even touched her coffee.

GWEN

Hey, sit down. You want a coffee?

Ben throws his coat over the back of a chair and pulls it out from the table to sit down.

BEN

Yeah sure. Hey, What is all this.

He reaches out and flips through the corner of one of the stacks.

GWEN

This is a whole bunch of research that says your tree doesn't exist.

BEN

I don't get it. Of course it exists. It's at my house.

The WAITER comes to the table with a coffee pot and a cup.

WAITER

Can I get you something to drink sir?

BEN

Uhm, yeah, I'll have a coffee.

WAITER

And a warm up for you ma'am?

Gwen looks at her coffee and takes a big sip without hesitation.

GWEN

Yes please.

The waiter puts down a cup for Ben and fills it and then puts a little more into Gwen's cup.

WAITER

And would you like to see a menu?

BEN

Can you give us a minute?

WAITER

Certainly.

The waiter walks away.

Gwen is still looking through the stack of papers.

Ben tries to take a drink of his coffee but it's too hot.

BEN

So what exactly does all of that say?

GWEN

I'm trying to find it.

BEN

Find what?

GWEN

The story.

BEN

Story?

GWEN

Yeah, the story about the tree.

BEN

The tree has a story?

Gwen stops shuffling.

GWEN

Ahah! Here it is.

She finally looks up at Ben and holds up three sheets of paper. Two of them have words typed on them and one of them has a very poor quality picture of the tree.

BEN

What about the rest of this.

Ben pats the big messy stack.

GWEN

All of that says your tree isn't real. (She shakes the three pages) This says it is.

BEN

So we start with that one since we do indeed have a tree.

GWEN

Right. Only, the problem is this.

She holds up the pages and shakes them again.

BEN

I thought that was the tree story?

GWEN

That's just it, it's a story. It's make believe. It's not real.

Ben reaches out his hand for the story.

BEN

Can I see it?

Gwen hands it over to him.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

A middle aged Japanese man , PAPA, is on his knees toiling in his garden. There is a small house in the distance behind him.

GWEN(V.O.)

The story starts in a garden in ancient Japan with a father and his son.

A young boy of eight or nine , the man's SON, runs up to the man as he works with his little green plants and begins to dance around in the dark tilled soil.

PAPA

Stop it! Stop it! Go play in the forest!. Do not disrupt me or my garden or you won't have any food to eat!

SON

Okay Papa.

The boy continues to skip around but works his way out of the garden and into the woods not far away.

EXT. FORREST - DAY

The young boy skips along through trees and foliage singing a little tune to himself.

He's not paying much attention to his surroundings as he goes. He finally slows down and looks around but there is nothing but forest as far as he can see. He realizes that he is far away from home and he's not sure which way home is.

SON

Papa?

He begins to walk slowly and cautiously now. He keeps looking all around as he makes his way. The young boy is getting more and more upset as it dawns on him that he is lost and that it will be dark soon.

The boy slips and falls and rolls down a short hill. When he stops he finds himself right on the edge of a very steep cliff. There is a waterfall in the distance crashing onto some ominous looking rocks. Everything is covered in moss and there is a bit of fog in the air.

SON

Papa?

He is very scared now. As he looks around something catches his eye. He doesn't dare stand up this close to the edge so he begins to crawl over to a spot a few feet away.

When he reaches his destination he finds what appears to be a large black marble that is stuck in between two rocks. He reaches down to pick it up and as he touches it blue sparks course over his hand and up his arm.

He seems surprised but unhurt as the blue sparks course over his whole body. Lying there as he is he simply closes his eyes and falls asleep.

EXT. FORREST - DAY

The young boy is lying on the ground still clutching tightly to the black sphere. He slowly wakes up and looks around with a big smile on his face. He jumps up and begins to run.

SON

Papa!

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

The father is down on his hands and knees with a small shovel digging in the rich brown soil of his garden. He hears the sound of his son running in the distance and looks up in his direction.

His son is running up through the trees.

SON

Papa! Papa! Look what I found!

The son reaches his father and opens his hand to reveal a plain brown seed that is the same size as the black sphere he had before.

SON

I found it by the edge of the cliff
and I fell asleep. I had the most
wonderful dream that I planted it
in your garden and...

PAPA

And what son?

SON

I don't know. It was just so
wonderful!

PAPA

Let me see it.

The father puts out his hand and his son hands it to him. The father examines the seed closely for a few moments and then blue sparks begin to shoot up his hand. His eyes get wide and he drops it quickly to the ground.

His son reaches down and picks it up.

SON

Can I plant it in your garden Papa?

PAPA

No. You must not plant it in the
garden. You must not plant it at
all.

SON

But Papa!

PAPA

No! Do as I say! Throw it into the
ocean immediately and then go to
your room.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The boy, his father, and his MOTHER all sit around the dinner table eating.

The boy has one hand under the table while he eats.

MOTHER

Why do you sit like that? What are you up to?

The son looks at his mother and then his father.

PAPA

Did you do as I told you?

The son just stares at his plate.

MOTHER

What is this about? Why is your hand under the table?

The son slowly starts to pull his hand out from under the table and his father reaches over and yanks his arm out faster. The boy holds his hand closed while blue sparks shoot up his arm.

His father jumps up from his seat so quickly he knocks it over.

PAPA

You disobeyed me!?

SON

But Papa!

The father strikes his son across the face with the back of his hand and there is a bright blue flash. The boy falls to the floor. The mother just turns her head.

PAPA

Now do as I told you and throw it into the ocean. They are probably on their way already.

MOTHER

Now?

PAPA

Yes now!

MOTHER

But it's too dark and he'll get lost in the forest.

Let him wait until the morning.
What can it hurt? Even they are on
their way they won't make it...

PAPA

Fine! (He slams his hand on the
table) I'll go with you in the
morning and make sure you get rid
of it.

The boy finally picks himself up off the floor and walks out
of the room still holding the seed.

INT. SON'S ROOM - NIGHT

The young boy lays on his back with the seed in his hand
clinched tightly to his chest. He stares out the window with
the moon lighting his face. He pulls the covers back and
climbs out the window.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

The boy is kneeling in the very center of the garden using
his hands to dig a hole in the soil.

After a moment he stops digging and drops the seed in and
begins to cover it up.

INT. SON'S ROOM - MORNING

The boy sits on the edge of his bed dressed and ready to go.
He is holding his hand as if he still has the seed in it.

His father walks in and sees him sitting there.

PAPA

Good you're ready. Let's go. You
won't disobey me again.

The boy stands up and he and his father walk out of the room.

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

The father and his son exit the front of the house. The
father is carrying a walking stick with him and the son is
still pretending to hold the seed.

As they walk past the garden they both stop in astonishment. Where the boy planted the seed the night before there is a small tree that has sprung up. It is the same tree that Ben found growing out of the side of his office.

The father turns to his son.

PAPA

What have you done? Open your hand!

The boy opens his hand and there is nothing there.

PAPA

You planted it!

The father storms over to the tree raising his walking stick over his head. His son rushes over and jumps in front of him and throws his arms around the tree. Blue sparks twinkle all over his body.

SON

Don't Papa!

The father swings a massive blow down on the tree and his son at the same time. At the moment of contact there is a bright blue flash and a loud pop.

The mother rushes outside with her arm up to block the light. Just as the bright blue light is fading she sees her son laying motionlessly on the ground with his head split open and then sees her husband laying next to him and he seems to be badly burned.

MOTHER

No!

The tree seems to be unharmed but there is a black colored fruit that is hanging from one of its little branches.

In the distance, TWO MEN ON HORSE BACK are racing up through the woods.

The mother comes over to her husband and son and kneels down touching both of them. Tiny blue sparks shoot over her hands. She sees the black fruit and touches it and there are even more blue sparks.

The men on horseback draw closer.

The woman looks up at the men getting closer then back to the black fruit. She squeezes firmly as the sparks grow more intense. With a quick twist she pulls the fruit from the tree. A small drop of blood drips from where the fruit was connected.

She stands up and starts to run away from the men on horseback.

EXT. FORREST - DAY

The woman runs wildly through the woods clutching the fruit in her hand as tight as she can.

The two men on horseback are gaining on her rapidly.

She runs to the edge of a very steep hill and pauses, but only for a moment. The ocean is visible in the distance through the trees.

As she makes her way down the hill she loses her footing and begins to slide.

The men dismount at the edge of the hill and begin making their way after the woman on foot.

The woman cannot regain her footing and she continues to slide faster and faster. She can now see that she is headed for a cliff.

As she approaches the edge of the cliff she tries desperately to stop herself. She is unable to stop or even slow her descent. Plunging head long over the edge she cartwheels out over the water still clutching the fruit. She quickly falls the 100 feet into the ocean.

The two men reach the edge of the cliff and almost tumble over as well. They stare as the woman sinks.

One of the men, YOUNG DIMITRI, removes his mask. He is young, maybe 20, blondish hair, and handsome. His eyes are blue and cold. He takes a step back as if to follow after the woman.

The man still wearing his mask puts his hand on the other man's chest.

MASK

What are you doing?

YOUNG DIMITRI

My duty.

He pushes the masked man aside and throws himself over the edge.

The other man, YOUNG HIRO (20's Japanese), stands on the edge of the cliff and pulls his mask off.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

Ben and Gwen are still seated at the little table at the sidewalk cafe. Ben is flipping back and forth through the stack of papers.

Gwen is waiving her coffee cup in the air trying to get the waiter's attention for more coffee.

BEN

So that's the end? The tree grows fruit? How did it get here?

GWEN

It doesn't say.

BEN

So what do we do?

GWEN

There's one person I can think of that might be able to help.

BEN

Who?

The waiter finally comes over and fills up their cups and drops the check.

GWEN

There's this exotic plant dealer that I use sometimes as a last resort. I've only dealt with him over the phone. He kinda gives me the heebie geebees so I normally avoid him if I can but he always comes through.

Ben grabs the check as Gwen is reorganizing all of her papers.

BEN

Well, we should get a hold of him.

He throws a couple dollars on the table.

GWEN

Right, I'll call him as soon as I get back to the store.

They both stand up.

BEN

Okay, well, thank you.

GWEN

No problem.

Ben and Gwen leave the cafe going in opposite directions.

Gwen takes a moment to look back at Ben. She is obviously a bit smitten but Ben doesn't seem to notice and continues to walk away.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Just moments after leaving the cafe Gwen is walking down the street alone with her stack of papers.

A black stretch limo with tinted windows pulls up next to her. Gwen looks over and sees her reflection in the glass of the window.

The window begins to roll down and DOYLE (mid-forties, odd/ugly looking) is seated there looking out the window at Gwen. He is seated the opposite direction to the way she is walking.

GWEN

Can I help you?

DOYLE

Yes I think you can.

Gwen stops walking and the car stops. The door opens quickly two sets of arms reach out and yank her into the back seat. Some of her papers scatter to the ground as the door slams and the limo speeds away.

INT. LIMO - DAY

CHUCK and PAUL (virtually identical thug types dressed in suits) sit on either side of Gwen holding her still though she isn't struggling. She is clutching the last few pages of to her chest.

Doyle is seated across from her calmly smoking a cigarette with his legs crossed. Doyle waves a hand and Chuck and Paul let her go.

GWEN

Who the hell are you?

DOYLE

That's of no importance. I work for a man that wants something you have.

GWEN

I don't have anything.

She moves for the door but Chuck and Paul grab her quickly and tightly. There is a brief struggle but Gwen settles back down.

DOYLE

Yes you do. You are in possession of a tree my employer wishes to have.

GWEN

A tree? You should really just come by the store.

DOYLE

You know which tree I mean.

GWEN

Buddy, you must have gotten the wrong lady. Now if you don't mind.

She leans toward the door but is once again restrained. Doyle knocks his knuckle on the glass behind his head and the car stops. He waves his hand in a dismissive manner and looks away.

Chuck and Paul shove her out of the car rather roughly and once again she loses some of the paper she carries. Paul picks them up off the floor of the limo.

Doyle puts out his hand and Paul hands them to him. Doyle flips through them and stops on one in particular. It is a a bad photo-copy of a drawing but it is obvious it is the tree.

DOYLE

Keep an eye on her.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Gwen stands on an old deserted street lined with buildings that have broken windows and boards over doors and in general don't seem to be occupied. Holding the last few remaining pages she watches as the limo tears off down the road.

She turns and starts walking quickly. She looks over her shoulder as the limo turns a corner and then she breaks into a run.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

It's just a regular apartment hallway. There are a few doors on the sides and a staircase at the far end.

Gwen comes hurrying up the stairs and walks quickly up to the last door on the right. She knocks and waits. When there is no reply she knocks again. There is still no reply so she tries the doorknob but it is locked.

She turns and puts her back on the door and slowly slumps down onto the floor. She pulls her legs up to her chest and lays her head on her knees.

The sound of something moving comes from behind the door and Gwen lifts her head and puts her ear to the door. After a second she hears the unmistakable sound of the door unlocking.

She stands up and tries the knob again. This time it turns and the door opens slightly. She hesitates for a moment then opens the door all the way. All the lights are off.

GWEN

Hello? Ben?

The light from the hallway makes it possible for her to see partway into the dark apartment. She looks around and sees that there are scrape marks on the hardwood floor right in front of the door and that lead back into the dark.

She takes a few steps into the apartment but doesn't shut the door all the way.

GWEN

Ben? It's Gwen. Are you here?

She follows the scrape marks through the apartment and sees that they lead to the tree which is now perched next to the open window soaking in the sun. The rest of the windows have the curtains drawn.

She makes her way over to it slowly. She looks out the window to the street then sits down on the floor next to the tree and stares at it.

GWEN

What are you doing?

She puts out her hand and runs it down the trunk of the tree and little blue sparks shoot out along her hand and bounce up her arm. Her eyes begin to close and she slowly relaxes onto the floor and falls asleep.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ben comes through the double doors headed for his office.

Kyle sees him and comes running over with Ben's laptop in his hands.

KYLE

Ben! Shit man, where have you been?
I've been trying to get a hold of
you.

BEN

I was having lunch. I must have
left my phone in my office.

They make it to Ben's office and go inside. Ben sits down behind his desk and Kyle slides the computer across the desk at him.

KYLE

There were some guys here looking
for you. Well, not for you, for the
tree.

BEN

What? When?

KYLE

They just left. Not very friendly
either. Said his name was Doyle or
something.

BEN

What did you tell him?

KYLE

I told him to go screw.

BEN

Good. What about this?

He opens up his computer and sees that the screen is still
1's and 0's.

KYLE

Yeah, that.

BEN

Shit. I thought you said you could
fix it.

KYLE

Don't you wanna know what it is?

BEN
Sure, yeah.

KYLE
It's a message. Or a sentence
rather.

BEN
Well what's it say.

KYLE
It says "Take me home." Over and
over and over.

Ben stares at the screen.

BEN
Take me home?

KYLE
Take me home. That's it. That's all
that's left inside that computer is
that one sentence. Everything else
is gone.

BEN
Take me home?

KYLE
Don't worry though, I made a back
up of your hard-drive last week
when we were finishing Murphy's
account.

Ben opens up one of the drawers on his desk and pulls out a
phone book. He shoves the computer back across the desk to
Kyle.

BEN
Do something with that.

KYLE
What are you gonna do?

Ben is flipping through the phone book quickly.

BEN
You think you can handle this place
for a day or so?

Kyle snags the computer off Ben's desk excitedly and slams it
closed.

KYLE

Hell yeah! Where are you going?

BEN

I was gonna wait until this weekend
but...

He finds what he is looking for in the phone book and picks up the phone on his desk and starts dialing.

KYLE

But what? What are you planning?

BEN

I'm gonna take it home.

KYLE

An adventure! I love it! I wanna
come!

BEN

(shaking his head) Kyle,
no.

Kyle jumps and spins and runs out of the room singing the theme song to Indiana Jones.

BEN

(yelling after him) Kyle!

Ben puts the phone up to his ear.

BEN

Yes hello?

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Ben comes up the stairs carrying a nondescript medium sized brown cardboard box. It's approximately 18 inches cubed. He has on a new leather motorcycle jacket.

As he makes his way up the hall he digs in his pocket to find his keys. He gets his keys out just as he gets to his door and sees that it is ajar. He stares for a moment and then pushes it open.

He looks down and sees the marks on the floor as he walks quietly through his apartment. He puts the box down on the table and makes his way towards the tree.

As he rounds the corner he sees Gwen sleeping soundly on the floor. He stops for a moment and then makes his way over and kneels down beside her. He puts his hand on her shoulder.

BEN
(quietly)
Gwen.

Gwen stirs a little and then opens her eyes. She sees Ben and jumps back. She is very disoriented and tries to gain her composure.

GWEN
I uh...I was...I had this weird dream.

BEN
What are you doing here? How did you get in? It's okay but...

Gwen sits up straight and looks over at the tree.

GWEN
These guys made me get in their limo so...I had a dream we were riding on a motorcycle.

Ben stands up and takes a step back from her giving her a quizzical look.

BEN
What guys? How did you...

GWEN
Right after you left. He said his name was Doyle and that his boss wanted the tree. I was scared so I came here and the door unlocked.

She rubs her eyes.

BEN
No, the door was locked. What's going on here?

GWEN
No, I know. But it unlocked. And then I dreamed we were on this old country road on a motorcycle with the tree in the side car.

Ben puts out his hand and she takes it. He pulls her up and turns her so she is facing the window. He pulls the curtain back and there, parked next to the curb is a brand new Triumph motorcycle with a side car.

GWEN
(surprised)
You do have a motorcycle.

BEN
I didn't. I just bought it.

Gwen stares out the window and Ben moves over to the box on the table and begins to open it up. He pulls out a helmet.

Gwen turns to see what he is doing.

GWEN
I don't think we should give anyone
that tree.

BEN
Neither do I.

GWEN
Can you leave now?

BEN
Yeah. Can you?

GWEN
Yeah.

BEN
Okay.

GWEN
Okay.

INT. KARATE DOJO - EVENING

The dojo is a large, open, fairly nondescript room. There are mirrors on some of the walls and mats on the floors.

There are dozens of people in white Karate uniforms spread out through the room practicing various moves with teachers and each other.

Kyle comes in wearing his normal clothes carrying his overstuffed man-purse and makes a dash for a door towards the back.

INT. DOJO CHANGING ROOM

The room is empty and quiet though the muffled noises can be heard from the other room.

Kyle pushes through the door and the noise from the other room pulses into the changing room. He rushes in and hurriedly starts to get changed.

He gets his shirt off and the door opens again. This time much more slowly.

An old Japanese man with grey hair who must be at least 70 years old comes in. It is HIRO. He stands beside the bench very serenely.

KYLE
Sensei! Shit, I know...

HIRO
You are only letting down yourself.

KYLE
Thanks? It's just that I was at work and...

Kyle grabs his karate jacket from his bag and puts it on but doesn't bother to close it.

HIRO
You came to me looking for direction Kyle.

KYLE
I know. And I know being late doesn't make it seem like...

Kyle is takes off his pants and reaches into his man-purse. He pulls out some wrinkled up white karate pants.

HIRO
If it is important to you, you will be on time.

KYLE
It is important to me. How long have I been coming here?

HIRO
Many years.

KYLE
And how many times have I been late?

HIRO
Many times.

KYLE

Okay but how many times since I received my black belt?

Kyle gets his black belt out of his bag and wraps it around his waist.

HIRO

Three times.

KYLE

See, only three times. Including this one.

HIRO

No, this one makes four.

Kyle begins to walk toward the door and Hiro just stands there.

KYLE

Well four isn't that many.

HIRO

It has been one month.

Kyle gets to the door and stops. He looks back at Hiro and smiles.

KYLE

Yo Teach? You coming or what?

He opens the door and the noise from the dojo fills the locker room.

Hiro smiles and begins to walk toward the door.

HIRO

So why were you late this time Kyle?

KYLE

Well, like I was saying before your lecture, yesterday after class I go to work and there was a tree growing out of the side of the building.

Hiro makes it to the door and Kyle holds it until he passes through then lets it go. The door closes and the locker room is quiet again.

INT. KARATE DOJO - EVENING

Hiro and Kyle have just left the locker room and are making their way through the dojo to the far corner where there is a group of men and women all wearing black belts practicing martial arts moves.

KYLE

...and then these guys showed up and said they wanted the tree and I cracked the code on the computer and all it said was "Take me home."

Hiro stops.

HIRO

(in disbelief)
Chiearuki?

KYLE

What? Cherokee?

He stops and turns around.

HIRO

Chiearuki. The Tree of Knowledge.
Your friend is in great danger?

KYLE

What? Sensei, what in the world are you talking about?

HIRO

(excitedly)
We have to get to the tree before they do.

Hiro turns quickly and walks back to the locker room. Kyle runs to catch up.

KYLE

Sensei wait up.

Hiro stops just outside the locker room door and turns to face Kyle.

HIRO

Kyle gather up the rest of your class. We much must move quickly.

Kyle stops in his tracks.

KYLE

Adventure! Yes Sensei!

Hiro opens the door and steps into the locker room.

Kyle runs across the dojo.

He turns and runs back toward the group.

KYLE
Guys! Guys!

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Everything is calm and quiet inside Ben's empty apartment. There is a quiet knock at his door.

A brief moment passes and then the door gets smashed in.

Doyle steps inside followed by Paul and Chuck.

DOYLE
Ben? Gwen?

Paul and Chuck go through all the rooms.

DOYLE
See if there is any indication of where they went.

Paul moves over to the open window and looks out.

PAUL'S P.O.V.

Paul is looking out the window of Ben's apartment and sees Ben and Gwen turn out of the alley on the motorcycle with the tree strapped in the side car.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT

Paul doesn't even turn around he just points out the window.

PAUL
There they go! They are heading toward the expressway!

DOYLE
You two grab the car and follow them. Wait for orders before you do anything.

Paul and Chuck rush out of the apartment.

Doyle looks over and notices a cell phone sitting on the dining room table. He casually picks it up and looks it over. He puts it in his pocket.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Ben and Gwen are on the motorcycle racing down the highway that cuts a wide path through the heavily wooded countryside.

The tree is still with them strapped into the sidecar.

It's a nice, sunny day.

Gwen sees a sign for a rest stop and taps Ben on the shoulder.

GWEN

We should stop. I have to pee.

Ben nods and puts on his blinker as the rest stop comes into view in the distance.

EXT. REST STOP - DAY

The rest stop looks fairly old but well kept. The surrounding woods have grown up around it over the years.

Ben steers the bike up into the grass off to one side. He pulls the bike under the shade of a large tree and parks.

Gwen hops off the back, takes off her helmet and hurries off to the rest room.

Ben takes off his helmet gets out a blanket from one of the compartments and spreads it out on the ground. He lays down on it and stares up at the sky. Within seconds he is asleep.

Moments later Gwen comes walking back and sees him lying there peacefully. She looks over at the tree for a moment and then lies down next to Ben.

LATER

Ben and Gwen are still asleep on the blanket but the tree has somehow found it's way over to join them. It's laying on its side right in between them and some of the dirt from its pot has spilled out. Both Gwen and Ben have a hand resting on it.

A very large semi truck rumbles up disturbing the silence. As it slows down the brakes hiss and squeak loudly waking up Gwen.

She looks over just as the truck comes to a stop and the driver's door opens.

Jed steps out and spits chewing tobacco out on the ground. He looks over and sees Gwen staring at him. She waves to him and he walks right over.

JED
Afternoon ma'am.

GWEN
(bewildered)
Have we met?

JED
You look familiar but...
(shaking his head)
I don't reckon we have. Seems like
I'd remember a pretty girl like
you. Say, what's yer fella doin'
sleepin' with a tree?

Gwen looks over at Ben.

GWEN
He's not really...

Jed walks over to Ben and crouches down. He puts his hand on the tree and blue sparks shoot out between he and Ben.

Ben jumps awake and tightens his grip around the tree.

GWEN
Are you sure we haven't met?

Jed looks them both over slowly as Ben stammers to his feet.

JED
I'm gonna suggest you two gets to
movin'.

BEN
Who the hell are you?

GWEN
Ben...

JED
Name's Jed.

He sticks his hand out and Ben shakes it with some reluctance.

BEN
Hi Jed. Why should we leave?

GWEN
I know, I saw you in my dream.

Ben looks at Gwen briefly.

JED
Look, I just got a feelin' is all.

Gwen grabs Ben by the arm lightly but he doesn't follow her.

GWEN
We should go. Lets go.

BEN
Now wait a second.

Gwen goes over and starts folding up the blanket and putting the tree back in the side car.

JED
I'd say she's got the right idea.

GWEN
C'mon Ben.

BEN
Look, I didn't have a dream. But,
okay, we'll leave. But not because
you say so. Because you're creepy.

JED
Whatever floats it fer ya mister.

Ben walks over to Gwen and the bike and helps her finish strapping the tree down. He occasionally looks over to Jed who just stands there watching them.

Ben gets on the bike and starts it up.

Gwen puts on her helmet and gets on the back. She waves goodbye to Jed as they take off toward the expressway.

Jed waves back as he watches them go.

JED
See y'all later.

He makes his way to the rest room. On his way he sees a big black Lincoln Continental with tinted windows pull in to the parking lot.

Jed reaches in his shirt pocket and pulls out one singular pill. He holds it gingerly between his index finger and his thumb. He blows off the pocket lint and tosses it into his mouth.

A grin spreads wide across his face.

JED

Okay boys. Lets see whatcha got.

He rolls up the sleeves on his flannel shirt.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jed is alone in the rest room standing at one of the urinals along the wall.

Doyle's two thugs Chuck and Paul stroll in and move over to the urinals as well.

JED

Let's all just finish takin' a
squirt here fellas and we'll get at
this.

Paul and Chuck both look over at Jed who is staring at the wall.

Jed does a little finishing dance and zips his fly. He moves to the sink, hesitates, then decides against washing his hands.

He turns around just as Chuck and Paul finish with their business. They stare at Jed for a second or two.

Jed cocks his arm back and throws a wild punch at Paul who side steps it easily sending Jed flailing harmlessly in to the wall.

JED

(to himself)

That's not how it's supposed to go.

Chuck and Paul look to each other, uncertain as to what exactly is happening.

Jed grabs a nearby garbage can and hurls it at them.

The can glances off of Chuck's right shoulder and smashes into the wall sending paper towels all over the floor.

Jed tries to bolt for the door by doing a half hearted leap between Paul and Chuck.

Paul snatches Jed by the leg and lets the rest of him hit the floor.

Chuck steps over to the door and flips the lock then turns back around.

Jed is struggling on the floor, grasping around for something to grab onto. He manages to get a hold of the very bottom of the toilet stall.

When Jed pulls away from Paul he merely lifts his torso up off the floor.

JED

Alrighty then boys. I guess this is
how it's gonna go down.

Chuck looks over to Paul and shrugs.

PAUL

(nodding to Chuck)
I guess?

Chuck steps in with a swift kick to Jed's exposed rib cage.

EXT. REST STOP - DAY

The men's room door is closed. The round blue sign with the white stick figure is hanging upside down.

The door swings open briskly and Jed steps out as he finishes re-rolling up his sleeves.

There is a trickle of blood coming out of his nose. He dabs at it with his finger and looks at the blood. A big reddish mark covers his left cheek.

Jed snags the ashtray and wedges it under the door handle.

He chuckles a little bit and begins whistling a tune on the way back to his truck.

Jed stops both the walking and whistling abruptly as he comes upon the big black Lincoln Continental that belongs to the goons in the bathroom.

He picks up the whistling as he pulls his pocket knife off his belt. He strolls around to the front of the car and casually jabs the blade into the front right tire.

A loud hissing begins as the air quickly flows from the tire. Jed just whistles a little louder.

The first tire is flat in a matter of seconds and Jed, calm cool, and quick, moves to the other three repeating the process.

After hitting all four tires he heads over to his truck. He opens the door and swings himself effortlessly into the cab like he's done it a million times.

The truck starts up and Jed pulls out of the rest stop parking lot just as the door to the rest room bursts open and Chuck and Paul stumble out disheveled and bleeding.

They make their way back to the car and see that the tires are flat.

There is the sound of a ringing phone and Chuck pulls his cell phone out of his pocket and puts it to his ear.

CHUCK

Doyle? We got a problem.

INT. DOJO CHANGING ROOM

Hiro sits on the bench in front of a row of lockers. Kyle and the KARATE CLASS (including Kyle there are 10 total, many ages and races, male and female) sit on the floor in front him.

HIRO

Do any of you have any questions? I can not force you to go with me. It is my duty, not yours, but I will need all the help I can get. So I *am* asking for your help.

The Karate Class sits in silence for a moment looking back and forth at each other.

KIM (30's, brown hair) raises her hand.

HIRO

Yes kim.

Kim Stands up and bows to Hiro.

KIM

Thank you Sensei.

HIRO

We have very little time for formality.

KIM

Right. So, does this mean you expect us to believe that you're a thousand years old?

HIRO

I am much older than that.

Kim looks around the room at the rest of the class. They sort of give her a collective shrug.

KIM

And you want us to go fight against this other guy with you to save this Cherokee tree...

HIRO

Chiearuki.

KIM

Right. Because otherwise this guy is gonna use the tree to open up a hole in the universe so he can live forever?

HIRO

Unlocking limitless power for the forces of evil.

KIM

And Gwen's mixed up in this?

Hiro nods slowly.

Kim looks sternly into Hiro's eyes and he meets her gaze.

KIM

I'm in.

Kyle jumps up.

KYLE

Me too!

The whole group jumps up and shouts.

GROUP

ME TOO!

HIRO

Then there is no time to waste. We must find the tree before Dimitri.

KYLE
I'll call Ben.

Kyle steps out of the hustle and bustle of the locker room.

INT. LIMO - DAY

Doyle sits in the back seat as the limousine cruises down the expressway.

A phone begins to ring. He pulls out his cell phone and looks at it but it isn't ringing. Then he remembers that he grabbed Ben's phone and reaches into his other pocket.

Pulling it out he looks at it, sees Kyle's name and puts it to his ear.

DOYLE
Kyle? (beat) Don't worry about
that. Where is the tree. Hmmp.

Doyle rolls the window down and tosses the phone out onto the expressway.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Ben, Gwen and the tree are cruising down the road at a good pace. The weather is taking a turn for the worse and the clouds in the sky are almost black.

They come upon a long gravel driveway and pull in. Several hundred yards from the road there is a little red brick farm house and close to there stands an old wooden barn.

Halfway up the driveway there is a deafening crack of thunder and it begins to bomb rain so hard that Ben and Gwen almost disappear in the down pour.

INT. BARN - DAY

There are no doors on the old bar. Just a big opening on both ends.

There are tracks down the middle that appear to have been left by a large vehicle.

Ben steers the motorcycle into the barn and Gwen jumps off quickly. Ben pulls over to the side so the tree is close to the wall and puts the kick stand down.

They both take off their helmets.

Gwen shakes her head to get her hair loose and gives an all over shake.

Ben stays seated on the bike.

GWEN

Brrrrrah! Man it got chilly out there.

BEN

I haven't seen it rain like this in years. It's a good thing you knew about this place. How did you...

GWEN

It will sound crazy.

BEN

Crazier than a thousand year old tree that grows out of the side of a building on the 24th floor? Try me.

GWEN

I dreamt it.

Gwen begins to pace.

BEN

Like you dreamt of the guy at the rest stop? Which by the way, what a creep.

GWEN

He's not a creep he's...look, yes, sort of. It's not like a dream. It's like since the first time I touched the tree I've been having crazy deja vu.

BEN

Deja vu? I haven't had any deja vu and I've touched the tree as much as anyone else? I don't even have any dreams at all.

Gwen stops and looks around the barn.

GWEN

I dreamt you had a motorcycle. I dreamt Jed would help us. I dreamt of this barn and I dreamt...

BEN

What?

GWEN

I'm gonna go see if anybody is home.

There is a huge clap of thunder.

BEN

I don't know if that is a good idea.

GWEN

It's fine.

She walks out of the barn into the rain.

BEN

Okay. Fine.

Ben gets off the bike and pops open a side compartment.

He pulls out the blanket he used for his nap at the rest stop and starts to lay it out on the ground between the wall and the bike.

BEN

I have dreams you know. I don't need your help. Just because my dreams don't predict the future doesn't make them any less important you know.

He lays down on the blanket and reaches out and gives the tree a few affectionate pats.

BEN

Don't worry. We'll have you home soon.

AT THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE

Gwen is about to knock when she is startled by the roar of a loud engine. She turns and sees Jed's big semi truck barreling up the driveway. Gwen smiles.

INT. DIMITRI'S OFFICE DAY

Dimitri sits at his desk with his eyes closed and his feet up, arms gently folded across his chest. There is a KNOCK at the door.

Dimitri doesn't move.

DIMITRI

Come in.

The invisible door opens and Doyle steps in.

DOYLE

I'm sorry Mr. Dimitri. I don't know how to explain it. The guys...

DIMITRI

No matter.

Dimitri swings his feet down and quickly stands up. He comes around the front of the desk.

DIMITRI

The tree is on its way here without your goons help.

Dimitri sits down on the edge of his desk.

DOYLE

It is?

Dimitri just looks at him.

DOYLE

I mean, of course it is Mr. Dimitri. What would you like me to do?

DIMITRI

The driver you brought me will be here soon. When he arrives, I want to speak with him.

DOYLE

Certainly Mr. Dimitri.

DIMITRI

And if your thugs are stupid enough to come back here, they go in the basement.

DOYLE

Of course sir.

EXT. KARATE DOJO BACK PARKING LOT - DAY

The Group is loading into a white 15 passenger van that say's "Hiro's Heros" on the side. They are all still in full karate gear in a nearly empty parking lot.

Kyle is sitting in the driver's seat with the window down.

Hiro rides shotgun.

The last person gets in and the door shuts.

KYLE

Everybody buckled up? (He looks over his shoulder) Here we go!

Kyle grabs the gear shift and drops it into reverse while almost simultaneously slamming on the gas and cutting the steering wheel.

The van whips around furiously with a loud SCREECH.

Kyle drops it into drive and once again slams his foot into the gas pedal. The van lurches forward wildly and they blast off into the street narrowly missing an oncoming car.

INT. JED'S HOUSE - DAY

Jed and Gwen sit on the couch. It's still raining outside. Gwen's hair is damp but she is wearing one of Jed's flannel shirts and a pair of his jeans.

JED

I don't know. I mean, I've seen a lot of shit go down in my day. I took magic mushrooms, LSD, hell, I took peyote more than an a few times, but a magic tree?

GWEN

You knew those guys were after it. I know it sounds nuts but we're just trying to get it back to where it needs to be.

JED

Well, like I said, I'm headin' to the same place. The guy is kinda creepy, but I'll be damned if he don't know somethin' 'bout it. Hell, he might be the one after it for all we know.

GWEN

Fine with me. I mean, what's the worst that could happen? He keeps it for himself and the guys you fought go after him?

INT. BARN - DAY

Ben sleeps soundly. It's still raining. Jed's semi is now parked in the barn. The tree is gone.

There is a loud CLAP OF THUNDER and Ben is startled awake.

He looks around and when he sees the tree is gone and that there is a semi parked in the barn he jumps up.

BEN

Gwen!?

He looks around and then runs out into the rain toward the house.

Right by the edge of the stairs that lead up the front porch is a down spout from the house's gutter. It is pouring water out from all the rain. The tree has positioned itself directly underneath it.

Ben stops and stairs at it for a second.

BEN

Thirsty? Where's Gwen?

He looks up to the house. The screen door is closed but the main door is open and he can see Jed and Gwen sitting in the living room.

He walks up the steps and stops in front of the screen door.

INT. JED'S HOUSE - DAY

Gwen and Jed are still sitting in the living room talking.

JED

...and I just keep climbing and climbing but it's like the ladder isn't there.

GWEN

How strange.

Ben is standing, soaking wet outside on the porch. He KNOCKS lightly on the door.

Gwen and Jed look over.

GWEN

Ben!

JED

Don't just stand there in the rain.
Come on in and make yourself at
home.

Ben opens the door and comes inside. The screen door swings closed quickly and lets out a loud SNAP as it shuts.

BEN

Oh, sorry.

Jed stands up and puts out his hand for Ben to shake.

JED

Don't be. Name's Jed.

BEN

Hi Jed, I'm Ben.
(to Gwen)
What are you wearing?

Ben Shakes Jed's hand.

JED

Sit tight. I bet I got some dry
clothes for you too.

Jed runs off into another room.

GWEN

Ben, Jed saved us from some guys
that were after the tree.

BEN

What? What guys?

JED (O.S.)

Couple of fellas at the rest stop.

BEN

How do you know they were after the
tree.

Jed comes bounding back in with yet another flannel shirt and some jeans and hands them to Ben.

BEN

Thanks.

GWEN

The tree told him Ben. He beat them up in the bathroom.

BEN

What? It talks to him too? Who else gets to talk to the tree?

JED

(Pointing)

You can change in the bathroom right there.

Ben walks over to the open door that Jed pointed at and goes inside

GWEN

He doesn't experience it.

JED

Hmm. No blue sparks for Benny?

GWEN

The sparks are there's just no dreams no nothing.

JED

Well I could do without the invisible ladder.

GWEN

I don't know, I kind of like the dreams. I get a good feeling about the whole situation. Like it's already planed out so there is nothing to worry about.

Ben comes out of the bathroom dressed in Jed's clothes. He is in better spirits now that he's more awake and somewhat dry.

JED

OOOOHWEE! Handsome devil!

GWEN

My my.

Ben does a little spin with his arms out.

JED

So Benny, I was just tellin' Gweneth here that I'm headin' to the same place as y'all.

BEN
What, you work there?

JED
No, I'm freelance. I own the rig,
they own the trailer. I'm
contracted through a company called
Guaranteed Overnight Shipping and
Hauling.

Ben sits down.

BEN
Oh, G.O.S.H. I know them.

JED
Yeah, so apparently this guy has an
issue with drivers being on time
and so G.O.S.H. calls me 'cause I
got a spotless record.

BEN
I see.

Jed reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out his little
plastic bottle and rattles it around.

JED
Never been late Benny. Ever.

He pops the top and shakes a little white pill out into his
hand.

Ben seems a bit nervous.

BEN
Hmm.

Jed looks right at Ben.

JED
Yellow Jackets. Trucker speed.
Ephedrine. It's harmless.

BEN
Uh.

JED
Just kiddin' man. It's real speed.
Benny, meet - Bennie. Benzedrine.
Been doin' it for years. You want
some.

Jed looks to Gwen who politely shakes her head no.

Ben puts his hand up as his refusal.

BEN
No thanks Jed.

Jed pops the pill into his mouth.

JED
Anyway, this guy Mr. Dimitri brings me into his office to talk to me but then all he does is give me one look and send me on my way.

Ben sits forward a little bit.

BEN
I'm sorry. I don't see what this has to do with the tree.

GWEN
Ben, Jed thinks the guys that came for the tree might work for Dimitri.

BEN
Oh, so what, we're like we're heading toward the lion's den or something? Isn't that a bit dramatic?

JED
Just bein' cautious here Benny. Maybe it's nothin'.

GWEN
He's just suggesting that we let him go ahead of us and if anything seems off he can let us know.

Ben stands up and walks around a bit.

BEN
Alright. You're right. We can hang back and if anything is weird you can give us a call.

INT. JED'S SEMI - DAY

It's no longer raining. Jed is cruising down the expressway at a good pace. In front of him there is a flat bed tow truck carrying the black Lincoln Town Car that the thugs were driving.

Jed smiles, puts on his turn signal and begins to pass the tow truck.

INT. BARN

Ben and Gwen are getting ready to leave. The tree is already in the side car.

GWEN

Come on Ben. He's helping us.

BEN

He's also admittedly on amphetamine. I just don't know if we can trust him or this Dimitri guy.

GWEN

Well what other choice do we have?

BEN

I have a plan.

Ben hops on the bike and kick starts it in one try.

GWEN

Ooh, do tell.

Gwen throws her leg over the bike and wraps her arms around Ben's torso.

BEN

I know a good place to hide it.

Ben lets the clutch out and twists the gas and the motorcycle lunges forward.

EXT. DAY - LOADING DOCK -OLD BRICK WAREHOUSE

Jed's truck pulls around the corner of the old brick warehouse. He is heading towards the loading dock. The area isn't as nice as it could be. There is trash all over the place and homeless people wandering around.

INT. DIMITRI'S OFFICE DAY

Dimitri sits with his feet up on his desk. The palms of his hands are facing each other but only his finger tips are touching. His head is leaned back and his eyes are closed.

There is a soft knock.

Dimitri opens his eyes but doesn't move.

DIMITRI

Come in.

The invisible door in the wall opens and Doyle steps in immediately followed by Chuck and Paul who are dragging a badly beaten Jed. Blood is trickling down his face slowly.

DOYLE

Sir?

DIMITRI

To the basement.

DOYLE

Yes sir.

They begin to turn.

DIMITRI

And Doyle?

DOYLE

Yes sir?

DIMITRI

If he drips in here you might as well stay down there with him.

Doyle looks over and sees a drop of blood getting ready to fall off Jed's chin. He quickly reaches out and wipes it before it drips.

Dimitri smiles.

DOYLE

(to Chuck and Paul)

What are you waiting for?

They all turn and try to cram out the door.

Dimitri closes his eyes again.

EXT. DAY - EXPRESSWAY

Kyle and his Karate class are barreling down the expressway in the big white van with the windows down. The radio is blaring "You're the Best" by Joe Esposito.

Everyone is singing along except Hiro.

HIRO
Maybe we give the song a rest Kyle?

KYLE
(to the rest of the group)
You wanna give the song a rest
guys?

GROUP
NO!

Kyle looks over to Hiro and shrugs with a smile. He then turns it up even more.

Hiro closes his eyes.

EXT. DAY - CITY STREET

The street is quiet. There are run down brick warehouses all around. Ben and Gwen cruise up the street slowly on the motorcycle but the tree is not in the side car.

Ben slows down as they come to an alley opening between two buildings.

Gwen taps Ben on the shoulder and points down the alley to Jed's truck. It's backed up to the loading dock and there are men using dollies to haul metal 55 gallon drums off the back of it.

GWEN
Look! Jed made it. Just around the
corner is the main entrance.

Ben hits the gas and they pull around to the front.

FRONT OF THE WAREHOUSE

There are a few open parking spaces near a tinted glass door and Ben pulls into one. Once the motorcycle engine is off the area is eerily quiet.

Ben and Gwen take off their helmets and look around.

GWEN
If Jed didn't call it means
everything is fine right? He was
only gonna call if we shouldn't
come.

BEN
Well, maybe he couldn't call.

GWEN
Maybe we should wait.

Ben starts to head toward the door.

BEN
C'mon. We're just gonna go talk to
this guy and see what he knows. If
he really wants the tree that bad
he's got to let us leave to go get
it right?

GWEN
Yeah I guess so. This place is just
giving me the creeps.

Ben opens the door and Gwen goes through and he follows her.

INT. DIMITRI'S OFFICE DAY

Dimitri sits behind his big black shiny desk in the same
position he was in before. There is a low BEEP.

Dimitri opens his eyes quickly and sits up. He taps a spot on
the desk twice and a section lights up and then begins
showing video feed from inside the building.

ON THE SCREEN

Ben and Gwen are talking to an OLDER ASIAN LADY near a row of
big wicker baskets.

Dimitri touches another part of the desk.

DIMITRI
Doyle.

DOYLE
Yes sir?

Doyle's response seems to emanate from close by.

DIMITRI
They are here. Go meet them and
bring them to me.

DOYLE
Yes sir.

INT. BASEMENT

Doyle is in one of the rooms in the basement of the building where he caught Jed snooping around before.

The room is dark and damp.

He wears a white smock, a black latex apron, big black rubber gloves and safety goggles.

He takes off the gloves and sets them on a filthy counter beside him where there are several beakers of differing shapes filled with fluid lined up next to a Bunsen burner that is turned on but nothing is on top of it cooking.

Doyle continues to take off the safety gear when there is a quiet moan from somewhere near by.

He looks over and there is Jed hanging from a set of shackles attached to the stone wall. Jed is literally dangling into a cauldron filled with liquid. There are several other cauldrons of liquid along the wall as well.

DOYLE

Oh don't worry. I'll be back soon enough. I'm just going to introduce myself to your friends.

Doyle finishes taking off the apron and smock and tosses them casually onto the counter.

He opens the door to the room as someone else in a smock wearing a gas mask passes by.

DOLYE

Chuck. Keep an eye on him.

Doyle shuts the door abruptly.

INT. DIMITRI'S RETAIL STORE

Ben and Gwen are still with the Older Asian Lady by the wicker baskets.

The store area is absolutely massive. There beyond the baskets are terra cotta pots and beyond that are concrete yard statues and on and on in all directions.

GWEN

No, we don't need a basket. We would like to speak to Mr. Dimitri if he's here.

OLDER ASIAN LADY
Feel it. It's nice.

She closes her eyes and rubs her hand down one of the baskets.

Ben puts a hand over his eyes and sighs.

BEN
This is pointless.

A door opens quite a way down from where they are standing and the three of them look over.

Doyle comes out and makes his way quickly down to them.

GWEN
(whispering)
That's him!

BEN
That's who?

GWEN
That's the guy from the limo. Ben
we gotta go.

Ben and Gwen turn to leave and as they take the first step Paul walks out from behind a corner and stands in front of them. He smiles. His face is still bruised and cut from the fight with Jed.

Ben and Gwen stop in their tracks and turn back around. Doyle is only a few steps away.

BEN
Shit. Why didn't Jed call?

The Old Asian Lady slips quietly out of the way and goes back about her business.

They are trapped.

DOYLE
You have brought us the tree?

GWEN
What tree?

DOYLE
Don't play stupid. We know you have
the tree because we have Mr.
Sarnos.

BEN
Who?

GWEN
Jed!?

DOYLE
Paul, grab him. Mr. Dimitri wants
to see them.

Paul steps up and grabs Ben in a bear hug and begins to move him around. Ben doesn't fight it.

BEN
I'm not struggling. I'll go with
you. Jeez.

GWEN
Ben?!

BEN
It can't hurt to talk to him. It's
why we came.

Doyle takes Gwen by the arm and nods to Paul. Paul lets go of Ben and simply moves behind him.

With Doyle leading the way the group makes their way over to the door that Doyle came from a few moments before. On their way they pass tons of arts and crafts supplies lining the selves in all sorts of disarray.

They arrive at the door. It's very unassuming. Even with the sign on it that says "EMPLOYEES ONLY" it's easy to miss.

Doyle opens the door and Gwen goes through followed by Ben and Paul.

DOYLE
Up.

Doyle steps through and the door shuts behind them.

STAIRWELL

They are now in the dark musty stairwell that leads up to Dimitri's office and down to the basement where Jed is being held.

Gwen cautiously makes her way up to the door at the top of the stairs with the dim light bulb jutting out of the fixture above it.

DOYLE

It's just through that door.

Gwen reaches the door but hesitates.

GWEN

I have a bad feeling about this.

BEN

C'mon. I know it's creepy but he's the only option we've got.

Paul nudges Ben. Ben looks back at him.

BEN

Okay. Man you're pushy.

Ben opens the door and stops. The only thing that lights the way is the row of dim light bulbs hanging from the ceiling that go off as far as the eye can see into the darkness. Some of them swing gently in a breeze that comes from no where in particular. The floor beneath the lights is barely illuminated and there are no visible walls.

BEN

Okay maybe we're not going in there.

DOYLE

You've wasted enough time already. You're going.

Doyle grabs Ben by the arm and the back of the neck and Paul grabs Gwen. They shove them into the darkness toward Dimitri's office.

DARK HALLWAY

Doyle is shoving Ben and Paul is dragging Gwen down the strange dark hallway.

GWEN

Get off me! Help!

DOYLE

(laughing)

There is no one that can hear you.

BEN

Okay, enough. We're coming. Just stop pushing her.

Doyle stops abruptly so they all do. They have made it to the middle of the hallway. The door they came through is no longer visible and there is still nothing in front of them.

GWEN

Where are we? Where are you taking us.

DOYLE

I'm taking you to see Mr. Dimitri like you want. As for where we are, I will leave that for him to explain if it pleases him.

BEN

Can you just let her go? I mean, just stop with the man handling.

Paul lets Gwen go. She stands up straight and rearranges her clothes a bit. She then takes just a moment to reach her hand very slowly out into the darkness to her right.

She stretches her arm all the way out and begins to lean into the darkness.

Paul goes to stop her.

DOYLE

No Paul. It's alright.

Gwen takes a small step so that her face goes into the darkness and she gasps. Doyle grabs her by the shoulder and quickly pulls her back.

DOYLE

Careful there.

BEN

Gwen?! What's out there?

GWEN

(whispering)
Nothing.

DOYLE

(smiling)
Nothing at all. Come.

He puts his hand on her shoulder and gently turns her toward Dimitri's office.

They begin moving again following the row of hanging lights and after a few steps an old wooden door appears in the darkness in front of them.

Doyle steps to the front and knocks on the door.

DIMITRI (O.S.)

Come in.

Doyle turns the knob and shoves gently on the door. It opens without a noise.

DIMITRI'S OFFICE

Dimitri stands relaxed by his desk with his hands behind his back watching the wall open up where the invisible door is.

As it opens all the way Doyle steps in followed by Ben, Gwen and Paul.

Ben and Gwen look around at the odd room in amazement.

Dimitri waves a hand at Paul and he steps out and the door shuts.

Ben watches it close nervously.

Dimitri tenses up noticeably.

DIMITRI

Why did you not bring Chiearuki?

BEN

What? Cherokee?

DIMITRI

Chiearuki, the tree as you must call it.

BEN

Oh, right. Sorry to waste your time but, look, this is all pretty weird. We just want to know...

DIMITRI

Waste my time? Time is a concept that even your most skilled mathematicians can barely comprehend. It is ironic that, when verbalized in your somewhat primitive language, your real problem is that you simply haven't had enough *time* to understand *time* correctly. I highly doubt you could grasp the irrelevance of time as you think of it in this situation.

BEN

I'm not sure I'm following you.

DIMITRI

You are not. When you come to a full understanding of what time actually is and how it functions your perception of time will change.

Gwen steps up to Dimitri and points a finger in his face.

GWEN

We may not know exactly what the tree is but we're not giving it to you.

DIMITRI

Ha! What you know and do know is of little consequence in relation to what you will or will not do. While it is true that in this form my power is limited, I'm still in far more control of this situation than you. You will bring me the tree.

BEN

This form? What the hell are you talking about. What does our concept of time have to do with the tree?

GWEN

Why do you want it?

Dimitri, becoming agitated, begins to pace around the room.

DIMITRI

The chances of you understanding are very, very slim, but I will try.

GWEN

Boy, thanks.

DIMITRI

Doyle, leave us for a moment.

The door opens slowly and without a sound. Doyle steps out and the door closes again disappearing into the wall.

BEN

Why's he gotta leave?

DIMITRI

He already knows he is happy to not know more than he can understand.

GWEN

What? Do you practice being confusing?

DIMITRI

This will not be easy for any of us but, mostly for you. I just find it tiresome to communicate so slowly.

Ben and Gwen look at each other and then back to Dimitri.

GWEN

Okay Mr. Condescending, just tell us.

DIMITRI

I will show you.

Dimitri takes off his white gloves and little blue sparks flash across his hands and in between his fingers.

BEN

(surprised)

Oh my.

Dimitri holds his hands about three feet apart and the lights in the room dim very slowly as the sparks that fly wildly between his hands grow longer and brighter and begin to curve up and down.

Once the room is completely black the blue sparks between Dimitri's hands have changed into a smooth translucent sphere.

GWEN

Are you a magician?

DIMITRI

As all objects are, the tree, is time.

As he speaks he moves his hands away from the glowing blue sphere and it remains floating in the air. It then quickly changes shape to look like the tree and then begins to shrink.

DIMITRI

Time is movement. With enough information, movement can be predicted.

Dimitri holds out his open hand as if to catch the shrinking tree but then curls up all but his index finger and lets the little blue dot come to rest on the tip of his finger.

DIMITRI

Your planet, as you like to think of it, follows a time line through space.

BEN

Sure, it revolves around the Sun.

DIMITRI

That is a good enough place to start since that is what you have observed.

Dimitri takes his finger away from the blue dot and uses it to draw a quick elliptical line around the dot. The line he draws lights up in the darkness in blue just like the dot.

DIMITRI

The Earth revolves around the Sun. From your limited prospective it appears to follow the same path continuously. But if you look closer you will see it does not.

Dimitri reaches out and with a swipe of his hand makes the Sun and the Earth bigger. When he does it becomes clear that the line he drew to represent the Earth's course around the Sun is ever so slightly off. Thus what appeared to be a closed loop actually is not.

Though the line Dimitri drew ends exactly where it started it has moved up ever so slightly in its path so that if it continued it would not connect, but overlap itself like a compressed Slinky.

Dimitri moves his other hand in an upward motion and the whole display stretches out from below their feet to above their heads seemingly passing beyond the confines of the floor and ceiling.

The Sun is no longer a sphere but it has now become a line, and the Earth's path coils around it.

GWEN

It looks like a pencil wrapped in a phone cord.

DIMITRI

What most of you fail to think about is the fact that the Sun itself is moving. It has a path, as does every other object. And the path it follows is dictated by the path of the center of the galaxy which is also following a path.

BEN

You're saying that the super massive black hole at the center of our galaxy is moving?

Dimitri moves his hand toward the tower of blue light and the center bends noticeably and the coil follows suit.

DIMITRI

That is 1,000 years on *your* planet as seen from my perspective. Only over simplified. What you have named a black hole is merely the opposite of a star.

GWEN

Are you trying to say you're not from Earth? You're an alien?

DIMITRI

You haven't devised a way to measure so called negative amounts yet which limits your ability to see things as they are.

Dimitri reaches down and grabs the bottom of the shaft of light with his right hand and begins swinging his arm around in big swooping clockwise circles and as he does so the light moves like a ribbon getting longer and narrower and forming a cone about six feet long, like a horizontal tornado made of one long line with the wide open end facing him.

DIMITRI

Imagine one of your Air Force jets refueling mid flight as they sometimes do, but far more complicated. For the plane the pilot is trying to link up with is invisible to him. And he is in turn invisible to the other pilot. They must simply trust that they exist.

Now he grabs the end of the line of light from the wide mouth with his left hand and begins to make the same motion as before only now he moves his arm counter clockwise.

This spiraling cone of blue light is the same size as the other and Dimitri moves his hand until it is positioned across the other one so that in some places the lines intersect. Where they touch the intersections light up even brighter.

GWEN

My head hurts.

BEN

This doesn't explain why you want the tree.

Dimitri claps his hands and keep them together. Immediately above the two intersecting cones appears the exact same image. He begins to move his hands apart and the new cones begin to swing in to two other angles and then intersect the first two cones. Now all the cones intersect in numerous places lighting up brighter in those spots.

There are two spots fairly close together where all four lines intersect with one another. At those points the light begins pulsating. It then changes from blue to violet and then into red.

Dimitri points with both his index fingers toward each spiraling cone. When he does, a little bulge of brighter blue light begins traveling up from the small end of the cone at different rates of speed.

BEN

So the moving dots are the tree, Earth, you *and*?

DIMITRI

There is another who would have the tree.

The lights traveling up the lines are approaching the first red dot four way intersection.

BEN

And the red dots, that's where we all meet?

DIMITRI

Though none are exactly an accurate description, there is order, and there is chaos. There is free will and there is determinism. There is good, and there is *evil*.

(distracted)

Ah-ha.

He looks into the mess of curving lines and intersections and sees the travelling lights converging on a red dot that is relatively close to another red dot. The shape the lines and dots form resembles a banana.

BEN

Good and evil? Which one are you?

Dimitri looks at him and smiles a very pleasant smile. Ben smiles back confused.

Dimitri reaches in and carefully grabs the banana and pulls it out along with the traveling lights and some extra lines on both ends of the banana.

The rest of the lines fade out slowly and the room is now very dark.

Dimitri tosses the electric banana in the air and it increases in size until it is about 5 feet across. The traveling lights hit the first red dot.

GWEN

So that's now.

DIMITRI

No.

(obviously pissed at the interruption)

That is 1095 years ago. Your year 915 AD. Almost 400,000 days ago, four times came together.

GWEN

Wait, you've been here for 1,100 years?

DIMITRI

Your planet's time and my own met 1,124 of your years ago to be exact. The tree arrived shortly there after.

BEN

And the other guy.

DIMITRI

Yes.

The traveling lights pass through the first red dot and keep moving but now there are only two and one of them is much brighter than the other.

BEN

Wait, what just happened? Where are the other dots?

DIMITRI

Myself and the other chose to stay on your planet after the first crossing of time. Thus we all travel the same time.

BEN

Stay? Why? Why didn't you get the tree the last time you crossed paths.

Dimitri is getting upset.

DIMITRI

Due to the altogether vague aspects of your language, my only option is to say it was our choice. Though "trapped" would make more sense to you, we were not and are not trapped. We chose to stay.

Gwen points to the next red dot.

GWEN

You knew you'd have another chance.

DIMITRI

Yes. And that chance is now.

The two traveling lights reach the next red dot and it brightens significantly. After a brief moment the red light dims again and though there are four lines coming out the other side, only one light travels past the red dot.

Ben and Gwen watch the dot as it travels to the end of the line and then the whole glowing banana fades away. There is nothing but darkness.

GWEN

Only one made it out.

BEN

Why now? There were tons of places that the lines intersect. Why not just pick one where it's just you and the tree and take it?

DIMITRI

It is not that simple, for you I have made only four paths for you to follow. Anyone can calculate the path of an object in time. Many have found ways to calculate the outcomes of multiple objects intersecting. But past a certain point...

GWEN

You can't do the math.

The lights begin to come up in the office slowly.

DIMITRI

Your attempt at an insult only shows your naivety.

(he starts pacing again)

We are in a very rare time. Just outside that door, a thousand million paths cross! The perfection of nature and order and what you refer to as good, is coming together in a way that happens so rarely...

GWEN

(whispering)

The nothing?

BEN

Which light made it out?

DIMITRI

(ignoring them completely and getting really worked up)

And with a sacrifice the tree will bare fruit and I will be able to see...and choose and move paths at will! The perfection of chaos...absolute disorder!

BEN

Sacrifice?! What happens to us? What happens to Earth?

Dimitri stares at the wall.

GWEN

He is evil.

Gwen turns and begins to bang on the wall where the door used to be.

GWEN

Help! Open the door! Let us out!

Ben runs at Dimitri but hits an invisible wall and falls backward onto the ground.

The door reappears about two feet away from Gwen as it opens and Doyle and Paul step in and grab her.

DIMITRI

Take her down with the other one.

Doyle and Paul Yank her out of the room.

GWEN

Get off me!

BEN

Where are you taking her?

Dimitri finally turns and looks at Ben as he tries to get up off the floor.

DIMITRI

You will bring me the tree.

BEN

No! I'll call the police.

DIMITRI

Then she dies.

Ben is finally up off the ground.

BEN

Wait, okay. I'll go get the tree.

DIMITRI

(grinning wildly)

Hurry, it is your time.

BEN

What does that mean?

DIMITRI

Only you can bring me the tree.

BEN

Oh man.

Ben turns around heads out the door. It closes slowly behind him.

EXT. FRONT OF WAREHOUSE - DAY

Ben kicks open the front door and hurls himself onto his bike. He starts it in one kick and tears off down the road.

INT. BASEMENT

Jed is still hanging on the wall with his lower half submerged in the cauldron.

The door swings open and Doyle shoves Gwen into the room and she falls on the floor.

Paul and Chuck stand in the doorway behind Doyle.

DOYLE
Give me a hand with her.

PAUL
Right.

Paul and Chuck step inside and shut the door.

Gwen looks up and sees Jed.

GWEN
Jed!?

Jed's head rolls a bit but he doesn't respond.

GWEN
What are you doing to him?

Doyle smiles and slams the door.

DOYLE
The same thing we are doing to you.
Preparing him.

Doyle steps over her and yanks her up of the floor. Paul and Chuck both grab an arm and drag her over to a cauldron right next to the one Jed is in.

GWEN
Owe! You realize that by helping
him you are killing yourself right?
You kill us all. Or didn't he
explain that part to you?

Paul and Chuck look at each other.

DOYLE

Put her in.

They lift her up and tries kicking her legs but it's useless. They easily subdue her and put her into the liquid. It sloshes around and spills onto the floor.

GWEN

You have no idea what you are doing
do you?

Paul and Chuck raise up both of her hands and Doyle locks her wrists into the chains and they let her drop. The chain gets tight as she splashes down and she jerks violently. She screams in pain.

DOYLE

I know exactly what I am doing.

He moves over to the counter top and grabs a syringe and a small clear bottle. He plunges the needle into the bottle and fills up the syringe.

GWEN

What!? What are you doing?

DOYLE

I'm making fertilizer.

Doyle flicks the syringe a few times and then squirts a bit of liquid out. He turns to face her with a grin in his face

GWEN

Oh my god.

DOYLE

Hold her.

Paul and Chuck grab her so she can't squirm too much and Doyle plunges the needle into her abdomen pushing in the plunger and releasing the contents into her blood stream.

She struggles wildly for a moment then begins to calm down.

DOYLE

(to Paul and Chuck)

You two go follow the other one.
I've got this under control now.

PAUL

Right.

DOYLE

But just keep an eye on him! Don't
get involved.

Chuck and Paul move quickly out of the room and head down the hallway.

Doyle begins to put his protective lab outfit back on.

INT. PASSENGER VAN

Kyle is still driving the van at a rather ridiculous speed down the expressway.

His phone rings and he puts it to his ear.

KYLE

Hello? Ben!? Jesus fucking Christ
where are you!? What? Uhm.

Kyle looks around wildly.

KYLE'S P.O.V.

He sees a huge water tower that says "FLORENCE Y'ALL" on it.

KYLE

Exit 181. Got it. That was Ben.
He's at a Lowe's near here. He said
they've got Gwen!

Kyle tosses his phone into the cup holder and puts his foot to the floor. The van surges forward.

EXT. LOWE'S STORE - DAY

Ben's motorcycle is parked on the sidewalk directly between the pay phone and the outdoor entrance to the Lowe's nursery and gardening area.

Ben is at the pay phone. He hangs up quickly and runs into the nursery.

NURSERY

Ben is jogging along down a row of small potted trees. Some ficus, some pine, etc the regular assortment of what you would find a huge chain nursery.

He comes to a stop and bends down and moves several trees out of the way. Directly in front of him is an empty space. The tree is not there.

BEN

You've got to be kidding me!

He looks around feverishly in all directions.

He sees a WOMAN (40's dressed casually but nicely) pushing a cart with the tree in it just as she steps through the sliding glass doors that lead back into the main store.

BEN

Hey wait!

Ben jumps up and runs after her.

BEN

Stop! That's my tree!

INTERIOR LOWE'S

The woman is pushing her cart directly towards the U-Scan checkout lanes.

Ben is in such a hurry he is coming through the automatic doors before they even open all the way and he hits his shoulder on one and loses his balance. He stumbles into the store barely missing a display and running into another customer's cart as they come around a corner.

BEN

Stop her! Ma'am! Ma'am!

The CHECK OUT GIRL comes over to the WOMAN because she is having trouble scanning the tree. She is holding it by the pot swinging it repeatedly over the scanner.

Neither of them actually touch the tree itself, just the pot.

After neither of them can find a price tag or barcode they set it down on the scanner.

U-SCAN COMPUTER VOICE

Please remove the item from the scanner and call for assistance.

It repeats this phrase every few seconds while the tree remains on the scanner.

WOMAN

It doesn't have a price tag on it but it was with the other trees that were \$19.99

CHECK OUT GIRL

Sometimes they get misplaced. I
don't recognize this kind of tree.
Let me call someone from gardening.

Ben finally regains his composure and runs over to the U-Scan
lanes.

BEN

Ma'am, I'm sorry but that is my
tree.

The Woman looks at Ben for the first time.

WOMAN

Excuse me?

BEN

(catching his breath)
That tree. It's mine. It's my tree.

The Check Out Girl picks up the phone from her work station.

CHECK OUT GIRL

(into the phone)
Can someone from gardening dial
124? Someone in gardening dial 124.
(the sound of her voice
booms over the stores
intercom system)

WOMAN

You must be mistaken sir. I'm just
about to buy this tree.

BEN

No I'm certain it's mine. That's
why it doesn't have a price tag. I
brought it here to hide it.

CHECK OUT GIRL

Sir is there a problem?

The phone rings at her station and she picks it up.

CHECK OUT GIRL

(into the phone)
Yeah Gary, can you come to U-Scan?
I got a tree with no price tag.
Okay.

She hangs up the phone and comes back over to the scanner.

CHECK OUT GIRL

Gary's on his way. He'll know what kind of tree it is.

BEN

What? No. It's my tree.

WOMAN

Excuse me but it is not your tree. I found it here.

The doors that lead outside at the far end of the store open and Chuck and Paul walk in but Ben is oblivious. They see him and hide behind a display of wrenches. They peek out to keep an eye on him.

Ben grabs the tree by the trunk and takes it off the scanner. The U-Scan computer voice cuts off half way through it's request.

Blue sparks surge up Ben's arm

BEN

I'm sorry but if I don't...

WOMAN

Thief! He's stealing my plant!

BEN

It's not your plant.

CHECK OUT GIRL

Yeah, you haven't paid for it yet.

Ben turns with the tree to walk away and GARY (huge, hillbilly, camouflage shirt and hat) is standing directly behind him.

GARY

What's going on?

CHECK OUT GIRL

Nothin'. This lady wants to buy this tree but it ain't got a price tag and this dude says it's his tree.

GARY

Lemme see it.

Gary reaches out to take the tree from Ben.

Ben takes a step back.

BEN

No. I'm sorry. I don't have time for this.

GARY

You're not stealing that tree.

Now the sliding glass doors closest to Ben open up and Kyle and the rest of the karate class run in to the store.

Kyle sees Ben in his current situation.

Chuck and Paul see Kyle and duck back behind the display.

KYLE

Ben!

Ben turns to see Kyle and the karate class running over to him.

BEN

Kyle! Help!

GARY

What the fuck?

CHECK OUT GIRL

I'm callin' the cops.

WOMAN

Good idea.

The Woman gets out her cell phone and the Check Out Girl goes over to her work station and picks up the phone.

As Ben is distracted by Kyle, Gary reaches out and tries to grab the tree from him. He touches the trunk and blue sparks shoot up his arms. Ben is startled and Gary jumps back.

GARY

What the fuck?

Kyle makes it over to Ben with the rest of the class surrounding the U-Scan area.

KYLE

Ben!? What is going on?

Gary looks at Kyle.

GARY

Do I know you?

Kyle ignores him.

KYLE

Ben come on! Where is Gwen?
We have to get out of here.

BEN

She's not here.

The Woman and the Check Out Girl stand and stare in disbelief at the strange scene that is unfolding before them.

GARY

No, I've met you before.

Kyle continues to ignore him.

Ben and Kyle turn and head for the door. As they make their way the rest of the karate class falls in line behind them.

EXT. LOWES PARKING LOT - DAY

Ben and Kyle are rushing out of Lowe's followed by the dozen or so karate students.

They head directly towards the white 15 passenger van where Hiro is waiting for them in the front seat. Steve Miller's "Fly Like An Eagle" is on the radio.

RADIO

Time keeps on slippin', slippin',
slippin', into the future...

KYLE

Sensei!

Hiro looks over and turns the radio off. When he sees the Ben carrying the tree he jumps out of the van.

Kyle does a quick introduction.

KYLE

Ben, Hiro. Hiro, Ben.

BEN

Nice to meet you.

HIRO

Chiearuki!?

BEN

Cherokee? Now it's Native American?

HIRO

Not Cherokee. Chiearuki.

KYLE
It sounds the same.

HIRO
Chi-ah-ruki. Chiearuki.

The entire group shakes their heads to say that they can't tell a difference either.

BEN
So what do we do?

Hiro reaches out slowly and touches the tree. Blue sparks move up his hands and arms as well as up Ben's.

Hiro closes his eyes for several seconds.

Ben looks over to Kyle and then around to the rest of the class.

BEN
There really isn't time for this.
Gwen is in trouble.

Hiro quickly removes his hands and opens his eyes.

HIRO
She is in grave danger. You must
take the tree to him.

BEN
I just said that.

KYLE
I thought that was what we were
trying to stop?

HIRO
(to Ben)
The tree's path is with you.

BEN
You too huh?

KYLE
We'll go with you!

KARATE CLASS
(all together)
Yeah!

HIRO
No! He must deliver the tree to
Dimitri alone. It is the only way.

The sound of POLICE SIRENS can be heard in the back ground.

BEN

Then we're wasting time here.

He takes off toward his motorcycle.

Kyle looks to Hiro in disbelief.

KYLE

Sensei! You can't let him go alone!

HIRO

It is not my choice. The tree must follow it's own path.

KYLE

(pleading)

We have to do something!

Hiro is silent. Kyle looks to the rest of the class. No one says a word. Some of them shrug.

Kyle looks at Ben running across the parking lot with the tree. Just as Ben reaches his motorcycle Kyle takes off running after him.

KYLE

Ben Wait!

AT THE FRONT OF THE LOWE'S

Ben is packing the tree into the side car. The sound of POLICE SIRENS is getting louder.

Kyle comes running up.

KYLE

Ben! Ben!

Ben looks over at Kyle as he runs up. He finishes strapping down the tree and stands up.

BEN

Forget it Kyle. Even Hiro says I have to do this alone.

KYLE

No, he said you have to take the tree alone. He didn't say anything about what happens after that.

Kyle reaches in his pocket and pulls out his cell phone.

BEN
You don't even know where the
warehouse is.

KYLE
We'll follow you.

Ben shakes his head.

BEN
This is nuts. If I have your
phone...

KYLE
I'm setting to Kim's number. You
remember Kim? Anyway, we'll give
you ten minutes. Just keep it in
your pocket and as soon as this
guy Dimitri's got his hands on the
tree you just hit the button. If we
don't hear from you in ten, we'll
come in.

BEN
I'm telling you Kyle, this guy...I
think this shit is real.

Kyle jumps up and down with excitement while putting the cell
phone into Ben's hand.

KYLE
I know isn't it great!

The glass doors they are standing next to slide open and Gary
steps out.

GARY
Y'all better leave man. The cops
are on their way.

The Woman is heading toward the doors.

Ben puts on his helmet and jumps on the bike.

KYLE
Good luck. We'll be right behind
you.

Kyle takes off running back to the van and Ben starts the
motorcycle and heads for the parking lot exit.

Kyle is waving everyone into the van as two police cars pull
up to the door where Gary is standing.

INT. BASEMENT ROOM

Doyle is back in his apron, gloves, and goggles mixing things in the beakers on the counter top.

Jed and Gwen are still hanging off the wall. The liquid in Jed's cauldron is now a strange yellowish white. It is the color of glow in the dark paint.

The liquid in Gwen's cauldron is still clear.

Doyle removes a glass container with greenish liquid in it from over the Bunsen burner. He pours a small amount into two separate glass containers.

DOYLE

A little bit for the lady.

DIMITRI (O.S.)

Doyle, it's almost time. Get everyone ready.

Doyle closes his eyes and sets down the beaker he is pouring from.

DOYLE

(obviously perturbed)
Sir, I'm not finished with..

DIMITRI (O.S.)

Now! You can finish that later.

DOYLE

Yes sir.

He takes off the goggles and gloves but doesn't bother with the apron as he storms out of the room. He slams the door closed behind him.

Jed lifts his head slowly and looks over to Gwen.

JED

Gwen? Sweetie? Wake up. We gotta get out of here.

Gwen's head sways a little from side to side and her eyes open a bit.

JED

That's it, wake up. I'm gonna need your help.

GWEN
(mumbling)
They're by the terra cotta pots.

JED
Shit. Okay, here goes nothin'.

Jed grabs the chains with his hands and lifts himself as high as he can out of the water. He awkwardly tosses one leg out over the edge of the cauldron and then the other so that the backs of his knees rest on the edge.

The yellowish liquid is thick and lumpy and drips off of him and down the side of the cauldron.

He rolls to his left a little and manages to get one foot up on the edge and then the other. After he gains his balance he begins to inch his hands up the chain until he reaches the hook that is anchored to the wall.

With one hand he hold onto the hook and with the other he tries to flip the chain off the hook. Every time he flips the chain his other had slips a tiny bit.

After several attempts the chain finally comes off the hook but just as it does he loses his grip and he falls backward into the cauldron full of yellowish white goop.

Sloshing wildly he gets his head out and coughs violently several times as he leans over the side.

He slowly drags himself out onto the floor and gets into his left hand shirt pocket. He gets out his little bottle of pills and wipes his mouth off.

JED
Just sit tight Gwen. I'm comin' for ya.

Jed flops onto his back and pops two pills in his mouth.

After a second he struggles up off the floor. And heads over to Gwen.

Once he gets to her he leans over the cauldron and wraps his arms around her waist and lifts her up off the hook with a grunt.

Gwen's head rolls back and forth as Jed lets her down slowly into the liquid in the cauldron. He rocks her back a little and props her up on the side while he digs the pill bottle out of his pocket once again.

JED

C'mon Gwen. C'mon, you gotta help me.

He holds the pill bottle in his mouth while he washes the goop off his hands in the cauldron. After his hands are rinsed he pops the top off the pills and shakes one into his hand.

He carefully takes the pill in his fingers and puts it up to Gwen's mouth. She moves her head and mumbles incoherently.

JED

I know, I know. But it's gonna help us get you outta here.

He grabs her head gently and puts the pill in her mouth.

EXT. FRONT OF WAREHOUSE - DAY

Ben pulls up and parks right in front of the door. He unstraps the tree and opens the door to the warehouse.

DIMITRI'S RETAIL STORE

Ben rushes through the door and the Old Asian Lady is across the store dusting with a feather duster. She sees him with the tree and stops instantly.

OLDER ASIAN LADY

(whispering)

Chiearuki?!

She drops the feather duster and makes her way toward him. Just as Ben gets to the door she steps in front of him and puts her hands up.

Ben can't slow down in time and the tree just barley bumps into her fingertips.

Blue sparks shoot up her hands and forearms.

OLDER ASIAN LADY

AH!

A look of shock crosses her face as she loses her footing falls back violently into the door sliding her back down it until she is sitting in front of it.

BEN

Oh jeez I'm sorry. Are you okay?

He doesn't slow down or try to help her up. In fact he grabs the handle for the door and tries to open it even though she is firmly planted with her back against it.

OLDER ASIAN LADY
(whispering)
Chiearuki.

BEN
Uhm I'm sorry but I need to get through.

The Older Asian Lady goes into hysterics. She is flailing her arms and crying.

Ben closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

BEN
Okay. Okay.

He sets the tree down and reaches down to help her up but she jerks away from him wildly.

BEN
Really? I'm trying to help you.

INT. BASEMENT

Jed is struggling to walk Gwen around the room. Her feet just drag across the dirty floor.

JED
C'mon Gwen. Shit.

He glances through the small window on the door and sees numerous people walking past.

The hallway and the adjacent rooms have turned into a frenzy of activity.

Jed stops and looks at the Bunsen burner on the counter. He stops and puts Gwen down on the floor propping her up by the door.

JED
Wait here, I got an idea.

He starts looking through the different bottle on the table until he finds one with a warning label that reads: WARNING FLAMMABLE KEEP AWAY FROM OPEN FLAME.

He grabs the lab coat and throws it on. Then he grabs the goggles and the gloves and puts those on as well making himself look essentially the same as the people in the hall.

He gets the big black apron and uses it to cover Gwen.

JED

Alright. Sit tight just for a second.

Jed stands in front of Gwen and throws the jar at the wall just above the Bunsen burner.

It shatters against the wall and instantly flames explode into the room.

Jed ducks down as glass shards shoot through the air.

The flames engulf the table and soon other jars are exploding.

JED

Shit.

He grabs Gwen and pulls her to her feet and then yanks the door open.

JED

Fire!

Several PEOPLE stop and look. Jed steps out of the room dragging Gwen as flames erupt out of the doorway into the hall.

In the onslaught of commotion Jed slips Gwen out of the way. As people rush toward the room he drags her in the opposite direction toward the stairs.

INT. DIMITRI'S RETAIL STORE

Ben is now picking up the Old Asian Lady off the floor but she is still crying uncontrollably.

BEN

Please. I'm sorry. Just...Just get a hold of yourself.
(pleading)
Please! Just stand up!

OLDER ASIAN LADY

My baby. My baby.

Doyle, Paul and Chuck come around the corner from the opposite end of the building where the shipping and receiving loading docks are.

Ben looks down when he hears there footsteps. He is holding the Older Asian Lady by her arms and shaking her.

They stop dead in their tracks.

DOYLE
(looking at her)
Mom?!
(looking at Ben)
What are you doing to her!?

BEN
It's not what it looks like.

He lets her go and she just drops to the floor.

DOYLE
Mom!

BEN
Fuck me.

Doyle, Paul and Chuck take off running toward Ben.

Ben quickly gets out the cell phone Kyle gave him and hits a button.

He drops the phone, grabs the tree, steps over the Old Asian Lady and yanks the door open as fast as he can and disappears as the door shuts behind him.

INT. MUSTY STAIRWAY

Jed kicks open the door at the bottom of the stairs and drags Gwen up the stairs as fast as he can.

Just as he is about half way up the flight of stairs the door at the top of the stairs flies open and Ben jumps through clutching the tree.

JED
Ben!?

BEN
Jed!? What the fuck happened to
Gwen!

JED

She's okay. They drugged her but she's comin' out of it. I gave her some speed.

BEN

You what?

JED

They were gonna turn us into fertilizer! We can't let 'em get that tree. We gotta...

BEN

No, Hiro said I have to. Plus those guys...

Ben steps down and grabs her from the other side and blue sparks shoot all the way across Gwen and over to Jed.

Gwen's head pops up and her eyes open wide.

GWEN

We're in trouble.

JED

No shit.

BEN

What?

They get her up to the landing and MUFFLED VOICES can be heard behind the door.

DOYLE (O.S.)

(behind the door)

Mom!

JED

Up the stairs!

They take off up the stairs pulling Gwen along as fast as they can.

The door bangs opens and Doyle, Paul and Chuck rush into the musty stairway just as the other three get to the top of the stairs with the tree and Ben opens the door to the dark hallway.

DOYLE

Get them!

Ben, Gwen, and Jed dart into the dark hallway as Doyle, Paul and Chuck run up the stairs after them.

The door at the bottom of the stairwell opens and a long line of PEOPLE IN LAB COATS run out and head up the stairs after them.

EXT. FRONT OF WAREHOUSE

Kyle and Hiro are sitting in the white passenger van. The phone sits on the dashboard silent.

KYLE
Are you scared Sensei?

HIRO
No.

KYLE
Me neither, 'cause you're stronger than him. Right?

HIRO
No.

KYLE
Wait what?

HIRO
We're different.

KYLE
Different? Like, his power is stronger than yours?

HIRO
Different like we were designed to do different things.

KYLE
Different things? Like you do good things and he does bad? But good is stronger than evil right?

HIRO
Good and evil are perspectives based off of wants. It's not that simple. A tornado is not good or evil. It just is.

KYLE
So, we're not the good guys?

HIRO
Well, no. Not really. But in a way.

KYLE

So what's the difference if he's not the bad guy and you're not the good guy? He's a tornado and you're a, a what? A fireball?

HIRO

A cocoon.

KYLE

Did you say cocoon? Sensei, you're not exactly filling me with hope here.

Kyle looks at the clock.

KYLE

Shit, has it been ten minutes?

HIRO

No. Only eight.

KYLE

Well, I'm tired of waiting. Let's at least get ready.

He grabs the phone and opens the door. He dials a number and puts the phone to his ear.

KYLE

Yeah. Close enough, lets go.

He keeps the phone to his ear and looks back at Hiro still sitting in the van. He motions for him to follow.

KYLE

You guys make your way to the back door and we'll be at the front and then we'll all come in at once.

Hiro gets out as well.

Kyle looks around suspiciously as he walks slowly toward the front of the building trying to hide as much as possible.

Hiro just walks out in the open.

KYLE

We're almost in place.

Just then the cell alerts for an incoming call. Kyle fumbles the phone to look at it.

KYLE
Shit! It's Ben!

Kyle and Hiro take off running toward the front entrance. Kyle has a cell phone to his ear and he is yelling into it.

KYLE
Now! Everyone!

Kyle gets to the front door and opens it. Hiro blasts through and Kyle follows.

EXT. LOADING DOCK OF WAREHOUSE

The other dozen people from the karate class are swarming onto the dock.

The DOCK WORKERS try to stop them and there is a small fight but the Karate Class out numbers them and uses their martial arts to defeat them quickly.

After the brief struggle the Karate Class heads inside through the loading dock doors.

INT. DIMITRI'S RETAIL STORE

Kyle and Hiro are running in from the front and the rest of the Karate Class comes around the corner from the back.

The Old Asian Lady is still sitting on the floor crying by the door.

Kyle sees the cell phone and points to it.

KYLE
Look, Kim's phone! They must be
through that door!

They all converge on the door at about the same time.

Kim opens the door and everyone rushes through.

INT. DARK HALLWAY

The lights that hang from the ceiling sway gently as Ben, Gwen and Jed are rushing as quickly as they can down the hallway.

Jed and Ben are still helping Gwen but her legs are working again for the most part.

There is no one behind them and they haven't made it to the other door yet.

BEN
Does it seem longer than before?

GWEN
Yes. A lot.

Jed looks over his shoulder.

JED
I think we lost 'em.

BEN
What?

He looks back as well.

JED
Ain't no one behind us.

They all slow down but keep walking.

VOICES can be heard but they seem to be far away.

Ben is leading the way with Gwen and Jed following close behind him.

He comes to a quick stop and they bump into him.

Dimitri walks up directly in front of them about 30 feet down the hall.

Ben clutches the tree to his chest.

DIMITRI
Bring it to me.

Ben looks back at Jed and Gwen. Gwen shrugs.

Ben turns around to face his friends.

JED
Whatcha waitin' for? Go on and give him the tree.

BEN
I don't know. Now that we're here I just...

DIMITRI
Now!

Dimitri's voice booms through the darkness and seems to echo even though there are no walls.

Jed reaches out to Ben and gently turns him around and then gives him a push toward Dimitri.

The VOICES are getting louder.

Ben takes a few timid steps toward Dimitri then hesitates and looks back.

FARTHER BACK DOWN THE HALL

Doyle, Paul and Chuck are running as fast as they can up the hallway.

Doyle's hands are clenched into tight fists.

DOYLE
(mumbling to himself)
Fuck with my mom motherfucker.

Behind them quite a way there are the people in lab coats running as well.

EVEN FARTHER DOWN THE HALL

Hiro, Kyle and the Karate Class are bringing up the rear.

KYLE
Sensei what is this place?

HIRO
Times are converging into one path.

Far up in front of them one person in a white lab coat keeps popping in and out of the light.

KYLE
We're gaining on them! C'mon!

The whole group speeds up.

FURTHER UP THE HALL

Ben is now only a few feet from Dimitri with the tree. Jed stands just in front of Gwen and she is sort of hiding behind him.

Ben stops just short and extends the tree out to Dimitri.

Dimitri lifts his hands slowly from his sides and blue sparks shoot between his hands.

Ben turns his head half looking back for support and half just not wanting to see what happens.

Sparks are swirling around his hands as well.

The lights hanging from the ceiling are getting dimmer.

When Dimitri's hands are about two feet below the pot long bright blue sparks start to shoot back and forth with a loud crackling noise.

Doyle runs up behind Jed and Gwen and almost knocks them over. The whole group gets bumped forward. They regain themselves and due to the what is going on just stand and stare.

Dimitri's hands are almost to the pot and the NOISE from the sparks is extremely loud.

The wooden floor of the hallway gets quietly dissolved by the darkness without much notice.

The people in lab coats crash into the group but no one seems to notice them.

The light emanating from the tree between Ben and Dimitri is flooding the blackness with strange blue light. It illuminates much more of the hallway than the little hanging lights but it just proves there is more darkness.

But now Hiro, Kyle and the Karate Class can be seen as they reach the back of the large group that has formed behind Jed and Gwen.

Hiro and Kyle start pushing their way through.

The noise from the sparks is awful and unbelievably loud now. Some people are covering their ears.

Dimitri's hands hit the pot and instantly the noise stops. There is no sound at all.

A blinding light explodes from the tree and thousands of sparks shoot out in all directions into the distance and seem to get stuck in the blackness very much resembling stars.

Everyone in the group cringes except for Hiro.

The bright blue light still radiates from the tree and illuminates the darkness.

After only a brief moment Ben is sent hurtling backwards toward the group. He cartwheels through the air and Hiro raises his hands and Ben spins slowly and in a very controlled manner into an upright position in front of the group.

Kyle's eyes light up with excitement.

KYLE
(to himself)
Cocoon!

GWEN
Ben!

She jumps out and hugs him. Jed gives him a pat on the shoulder.

BEN
Okay I brought him the tree, now
let's get out of here.

HIRO
It is not that simple. You are not
at the end of your path.

BEN
No offense but I think I am.

Ben steps past Hiro and starts to push through the crowd but just as he does Doyle pushes through to the front and shoves him out of the way.

Doyle points to Dimitri who is obliviously basking in the light of the tree with his eyes closed.

DOYLE
You! This is your fault!

He takes off running toward Dimitri.

Dimitri's eyes open.

DIMITRI
The sacrifice.

As Doyle runs one long blue spark shoots out of the tree and makes a huge arc over to him. Like being lifted by a crane he is hoisted up off the ground.

With his arms and legs still moving like he is running he is spun upside down and then brought crashing down with a sick crunch face first into the side of the pot the tree is in.

The blue spark quickly lifts him back up and his head opens at the split in his face like an egg. Only instead of a yolk, his brain falls out into the pot followed by massive amounts of blood.

The spark disappears and Doyle's body hits the ground with a nasty slap and a mix of bodily fluid seeps out of him.

Someone screams and a three or four people run away into different directions into the darkness only to return moments later from different directions looking confused.

KYLE

We should do something!

Hiro puts a hand on him and shakes his head.

HIRO

Think defense.

The tree begins to glow with increasing brightness until it is just a ball of light between Dimitri's hands. He opens his mouth wide and breathes in the light.

An instant later the light jumps off the tree racing in all directions then rapidly fades out.

The stars that now are above and below everyone get a little bit brighter and all begin to move together in a circular motion like the spinning tunnel at an amusement park.

CHUCK

Fuck this! C'mon Paul!

Chuck grabs Paul by the sleeve and they run off into the darkness.

When the light has returned to normal there is one black fruit hanging from one of the tree's small branches.

DIMITRI

Finally.

He grabs the fruit carefully and twists it off the branch.

He studies it intently for a moment then lets go of the tree completely. It hits the ground hard but seems to be fine.

GWEN

We have to stop him.

HIRO

Yes, but we must wait. Once he partakes of the fruit he will be bonded with this time, he can be stopped forever.

JED

You mean even if we kill him he won't be dead.

HIRO

He would only be dead in this time.

Dimirti brings the fruit up to his mouth and takes a bite. His teeth sink in and dark, blood red juice pours out of it and runs down his face and hand. Blue sparks begin to shoot all over him.

The group watches in awe and horror.

Chuck and Paul run up behind Dimitri out of nowhere. Without turning or even acknowledging their existence, two blue sparks shoot from Dimitri's free hand, one for Paul and one for Chuck.

As the two goons are electrocuted their skin begins to change. It rapidly turns into a dense ivy. After a few seconds, when their transformation into PLANT MONSTERS is complete, they charge at the group.

Jed steps in front of Gwen to protect her.

KYLE

Now Sensei!?

HIRO

Now!

JED

Hoe-lee-shee-ut!

And with that the whole Karate Class takes a defensive stance and readies for battle.

BEN

What about the tree?

HIRO

Follow your path.

Ben looks at the tree sitting helplessly by Dimitri's feet.

Dimitri takes another bite of the fruit revealing the pit at the center. The blood red liquid pulses out of the fruit.

The pit is solid black just like the one the raven had in it's mouth that it left on the ledge of the building.

Dimitri begins to shake uncontrollably and drops what remains of the fruit on the ground and it splatters about. When it hits the ground the pit falls out and starts to roll across the floor.

The Plant Monsters reach the group and Kyle and Kim are there to greet them.

Ben takes off running toward the tree and the rolling pit.

Hiro jumps forward and runs through the air as if there is an invisible staircase that only he can see.

Though Dimitri seems to not be consciously aware of his surroundings blue sparks shoot from him toward Ben and Hiro.

Hiro drops to the floor directly in front of the Ben. Both the sparks change direction and follow them but Hiro catches them in his hands and they shrink into little blue balls of light.

Dimitri's skin is changing to resemble the tree's bark and his arms and legs are getting longer.

DIMITRI
(in immense pain)
AHAHAHAHA!

Only a few feet separate Ben from the tree now but it is still close to Dimitri.

Hiro looks at Ben.

HIRO
Take it home.

Ben jumps toward the tree onto his stomach like he is sliding into home plate. He slides across the ground with ease and grabs the black seed with one hand and wraps his other arm around the tree.

Dimitri's suit rips off to reveal that he is turning completely into a TREE MONSTER.

The Tree Monster tries to grab Ben but Hiro throws the two blue light balls at him and they explode in his face.

Ben slides off into the darkness.

GWEN
Ben!

The Tree Monster looks at Hiro.

The Plant Monsters and the Karate Class are still fighting but several people are now laying on the ground unconscious.

Gwen pushes Jed out of the way and takes off running after Ben.

JED
Gwen! No! Fuck.

Jed runs after her.

Hiro looks over to the two of them running and when he does the Tree Monster swings a huge tree branch of an arm into him knocking him towards Jed and Gwen.

Hiro flies through the air and lands on his back right in front of them. They stop dead in their tracks.

GWEN
(bending down to help him)
Hiro?! Are you okay?! Where's Ben!?

HIRO
(looking up at them)
He is not gone. But we must hurry if we want to help him. You must get everyone out.

Jed and Gwen help Hiro up off the ground.

JED
Out? How? The way we came is gone!

The Tree Monster takes a shuddering step toward them. It's as if he is moving in slow-motion.

Hiro takes one of Jed's hands, moves it out to his side and places it on something.

Jed and Gwen both look over to see an almost imperceptible black ladder going out to a point of light in the distance.

JED
It's like, a sideways ladder.

GWEN
Don't ladders normally go up?

HIRO
Up is relative to your position to another fixed object.

There are no fixed objects here.
Now hurry. Get everyone out.

GWEN
What if we can't?

HIRO
They will be lost.

Hiro turns just as the Tree Monster tries to strike out again.

Hiro jumps toward the impending limb and slams into it knocking it out of the way.

JED
You stay here, I'll go get the others.

Jed grabs Gwen's hand and puts it on the rung of the ladder he was holding then takes off back toward the group fighting the Plant Monsters and leaves Gwen holding the ladder rung.

Hiro and the Tree Monster battle.

Gwen gets to Kyle and just as one of the Plant Monsters is about to punch him she yanks him backwards as she does a flying kick right into the Plant Monster's neck and sends him flying into the darkness.

Kyle looks over to Gwen.

KYLE
I had him right where I wanted him.

GWEN
We have to go now! Hiro found a way out.

Gwen points to Jed who appears to be holding onto nothing.

Kyle looks around at the chaos of the fighting in front of him. The Karate Class has the other Plant Monster on the ground beating him senseless.

KYLE
Everyone! Hey!

Everyone instantly stops what they are doing. Blue sparks surge all over the crowd. They all look over at Kyle.

He sheepishly points over to Jed who is still holding the ladder like it might float away.

Close by Hiro is wrestling the Tree Monster.

GWEN

Follow me!

Gwen takes off and the people still standing all fall in line behind her leaving the Plant Monster and a few others on the ground.

KIM

What about them?

She points to the three people left on the floor then goes and tries to help one of them.

Kyle rushes over to help her.

KYLE

C'mon! There's no time!

One of the people gets right up and the other two get dragged groggily to the ladder.

Gwen gets there first and Jed sends her up the ladder. As the rest of the people arrive he helps them up as well.

In the distance the Tree Monster breathes a thousand blue spark at Hiro while he is crouched into a ball. The sparks bounce off of him back at the Tree Monster.

Kyle and Kim finally make there way to the ladder with the last two people.

KYLE

Can you help her with them?

JED

Sure. Let's go!

He reaches into his shirt pocket and gets out his little bottle but fumbles it and it rolls off into the darkness.

JED

Shit. Oh, well.

He grabs onto one of the people.

Kyle hangs back for a second and looks over to Hiro who is fighting valiantly against the Tree Monster.

He looks up the ladder as Jed and Kim disappear then takes off running toward his Sensei.

Hiro is slowly standing up under the onslaught as Kyle runs in.

KYLE

Sensei!

Both Hiro and the Tree Monster look over at him.

The Tree Monster whips his arm around and shoots a ball of light at Kyle but Kyle ducks and drops in to a flying kick position only he is sliding on the floor. He gains speed as he slides right into the Tree Monster's leg.

There is a loud snapping noise like the sound of breaking wood.

TREE MONSTER

RAHAHAHAHAH!

The painful scream echoes into the distance as the Tree Monster topples to the ground.

Kyle is still sliding across the floor. He tries to stop himself but there is nothing to grab onto.

KYLE

Sensei!

Hiro runs after him and grabs him just as he begins to go into the darkness completely.

HIRO

I got you.

KYLE

Shit Sensei. I couldn't stop.

HIRO

That was very dangerous of you.

Hiro pulls him up off the ground.

KYLE

I couldn't leave you Sensei.

HIRO

Thank you. We must hurry.

The Tree Monster begins to get up off the ground.

Hiro pulls Kyle off into the darkness away from the ladder.

KYLE

Sensei the ladder's behind us.

Kyle looks over his shoulder only to see that the Tree Monster is no longer there. He looks back around and sees that he and Hiro are now running directly for him and that the Tree Monster is limping toward them.

KYLE

Oh shit!

Hiro grabs Kyle's arm and stops him.

HIRO

Here! Go!

He whips him around to the ladder.

Kyle gets on first and Hiro is right behind him.

The Tree Monster lumbers after them.

ON THE LADDER IN THE DARKNESS

Hiro and Kyle are climbing very quickly up the ladder.

After a moment they run into Jed and Kim struggling with the two hurt people.

JED

You made it! Where's Ben? Behind you somewhere?

HIRO

No. He is in front of us.

JED

What?

KYLE

Just keep climbing. There's something behind us but it isn't Ben.

JED

How far is it 'til we're out of here. I feel like we've been climbing forever.

In front of Jed and Kim are an assortment of the Karate Class and people in lab coats.

LAB GUY

It feels like we're headed up.

KARATE GUY

I thought you worked here? Don't
you know where this goes?

LAB GUY

I just made fertilizer.

Gwen is still up front leading the way. It's very dark and she is climbing quickly but carefully.

All of the sudden she bonks her head.

GWEN

Ow!

Someone runs into the back of her causing a chain reaction down the ladder.

LAB GUY

Why'd you stop?

GWEN

This is the end.

LAB GUY

What do you mean.

GWEN

Just give me a minute.

Gwen pounds on whatever is in front of her and it sounds like metal. She pushes and a two foot by two foot square door opens up above her.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF TOP - DAY

The top of the warehouse is massive, flat, and covered in tar. Heat waves rise up in the afternoon sun.

The small door is propped open and Gwen is climbing out onto the roof followed by the rest of the people.

Gwen looks around for a way down as the others come out of the hole one by one.

The warehouse sits right on the river.

Gwen goes back over to the door and looks in.

GWEN

Is Jed in there? What about Kyle?

Kim is on her way out and she is struggling with one of the hurt people. Gwen reaches down and helps her.

KIM

Jed is right behind me. Kyle went
back for Hiro.

Gwen pushes him out of the way and puts her head back inside.

GWEN

Jed?!

JED (O.S.)

Gwen!? We're almost there!

Jed comes up out of the darkness lugging the other hurt person.

Gwen pulls on him and helps him out onto the roof.

Everyone is milling about and Kim walks over to the edge.

KIM

Hey, there is a fire escape over
here!

Gwen and Jed both turn away from the ladder to watch every one running over to where Kim is standing.

Kim is the first to climb over the railing and get on the fire escape.

Kyle's head pops up from the hole in the roof.

KYLE

Hey guys!

Gwen and Jed turn around quickly at the sound of Kyle's voice.

GWEN

Kyle!

She and Jed both reach down to help him out.

Then Hiro pops out.

KYLE

Where's Ben?

JED

What? He's not with you?

Kyle looks to Hiro who is closing the metal door.

KYLE

You said he was in front of us.

HIRO

He is.

GWEN

No. I was the first one out. I would have seen him if he was in front of you.

HIRO

He is still in front of us. He did not use the ladder.

JED

Then what do you mean he's in front of us.

HIRO

He is ahead of us in time. He is on the tree's path now. We have to catch up with them. Come, follow me.

Hiro runs in the opposite direction from the people heading down the fire escape.

Gwen, Jed and Kyle follow along.

KYLE

But, Sensei, the way down is the other direction.

Hiro runs right up to the edge of the building and stops. He points out to the river to a tugboat slowly making it's way toward them. The top of the tug boat is painted white and the bottom half that is mostly in the water is painted black. There is a bright red stripe that runs horizontally around the middle.

HIRO

There!

GWEN

He's on the tugboat?

HIRO

Not exactly.

There is a huge rumble behind them. They all turn to see what it is but nothing is there.

The last person is just over the railing and beginning to make their way down the fire escape.

The rest of the roof is empty.

HIRO

We are running out of time. I need you to trust me.

GWEN

Of course.

HIRO

I need you to jump to the boat.

JED

Uh, I think you may need to get a new prescription on those glasses.

KYLE

Yeah Sensei. That's gotta be a 1/10 of a mile.

There is another huge rumble and the little metal door goes flying into the air.

It sails over all of their heads and lands with a splash in the river.

HIRO

I can help you but the choice must be your own.

KYLE

You mean...

HIRO

If you jump I assure you that you will make it.

GWEN

This is crazy.

Another blast behind them and the Tree Monster's arm smashed through the ceiling and he begins to pull himself onto the roof.

KYLE

I trust you Sensei.

HIRO

Then hurry.

Kyle takes a few steps backwards. He takes a deep breath and holds it, then nods.

He takes two big steps and just as his foot goes over the edge Hiro swoops his arms behind him and gently uses both hands to push him.

KYLE
Hooooooooooooo!

Kyle goes flying into the air at a tremendous speed heading directly toward the tugboat.

TUG BOAT - DAY

The deck of the tugboat is empty except for some rope.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Ooooooooooooooh!

Kyle comes down quickly but softly onto his feet directly in the middle of the deck.

ROOF TOP

Gwen, Jed and Hiro stare at the boat in the distance.

Kyle waves from the deck to let them know he is okay.

HIRO
Who's next?

The Tree Monster has smashed the roof so much that it is crumbling under his weight making it hard for him to get out.

JED
Is this a ladies first type moment here?

GWEN
I'm not so sure I wanna do this.
You go.

Jed steps back and closes his eyes.

JED
Oh Lordy Jesus.

Without opening his eyes he takes a few clumsy steps and again just as his foot goes over and he should start to fall Hiro swiftly puts his hands on his back and gives him a shove.

Jed goes sailing through the air and lands on the boat next to Kyle.

HIRO
Gwen. It's your turn.

GWEN
I can't.

HIRO
You must.

The Tree Monster is still having trouble getting out but he puts one of his big tree type hands on the tar roof and shoots sparks into it and the roof instantly catches on fire.

Gwen sees the fire and faints. Hiro catches her and instantly does a back flip of the building.

EXT. TUGBOAT - DAY

Kyle and Jed stand on the back of the tugboat staring at the building.

They both see the roof catch on fire.

JED
Oh shit.

Just then the TUGBOAT CAPTAIN comes down the stairs from the bridge to see them standing there.

TUGBOAT CAPTAIN
What the hell is going on here?

They both turn around.

KYLE
The roof is on fire and Gwen and Sensei are still up there.

TUGBOAT CAPTAIN
Huh? How the hell did you get on my boat.

Just then Hiro lands on the boat between Kyle and Jed with Gwen in his arms.

JED
Is she okay?

KYLE
Did she choose to jump?

HIRO
Implied consent.

The Tugboat Captain takes of his hat.

TUGBOAT CAPTAIN
Now wait just one goddamn minute
here!

In the distance on the burning roof the Tree Monster stands
and screams.

TREE MONSTER
RAHAHAHAHAHA!

TUGBOAT CAPTAIN
Oh my god! What the hell is that?!

The Tree Monster shoots blue sparks at the tugboat.

Hiro tosses Gwen at Jed and makes it to the edge of the boat
in time to deflect the sparks into the water.

The water boils and rolls.

HIRO
Sir, can your boat go any faster?

TUGBOAT CAPTAIN
Uh, muh, nuh nuh nuh no. This is
top speed.

HIRO
Where is the life ring?

TUGBOAT CAPTAIN
Near the front.

HIRO
Kyle go find it and keep your eyes
on the water. Jed get her somewhere
safe.
(to the Tugboat Captain)
Get back to the helm.

TUGBOAT CAPTAIN
I'll turn us around.

HIRO

No! Stay on course!

Jed and the Captain grab Gwen and head up the stairs as Kyle makes his way around the front of the boat.

The Tree Monster launches himself off the top of the building into the river but he doesn't make it nearly as far.

TUGBOAT CAPTAIN

Are you crazy?! That thing is coming right for us!

HIRO

We have to beat it to Ben and the tree.

TUGBOAT CAPTAIN

Who's Ben? What tree?

They get Gwen inside the bridge just as the Tree Monster dives into the water and begins swimming toward them. Blue sparks shoot all over the place.

BEN'S P.O.V. UNDERWATER

Ben is holding the tree close to his chest with one arm and using the other to swim upwards. He appears to be very far from the surface.

EXT. TUG BOAT - DAY

Hiro stands next to Kyle now at the front of the boat as it moves slowly toward the hulking mass of the Tree Monster swimming rather awkwardly and slowly toward them.

KYLE

What am I looking for Sensei?

HIRO

Ben and the tree.

KYLE

What? Out here? How?

HIRO

Ben's path and the tree's path are intertwined. When the times came together and he was with the tree it let him stop moving in relation to the objects around him.

But he doesn't know that and he
 doesn't know enough to control
 where he was going even if he did.

Kyle looks behind him up to the bridge and sees Jed and
 Tugboat Captain in the window arguing. He thinks nothing of
 it and looks back to Hiro.

KYLE

But you know where he is?

HIRO

No. I'm only guessing based off of
 his trajectory when we last saw him
 and the generalized rotation of the
 earth.

KYLE

Guessing? You mean we're heading at
 that thing based off a guess that
 Ben and the tree might pop back up
 in time somewhere between us and
 him?

HIRO

That thing doesn't want us. It
 wants the tree. And once the times
 converged it did know where the
 tree would be at any given moment.
 I can only hope that now that it
 is...well, that, it still knows.

INT. TUGBOAT BRIDGE - DAY

The Tugboat Captain and Jed are wrestling on the ground.

Gwen is passed out in a chair.

JED

You dumb son of a bitch! You try to
 steer us anywhere but where the old
 man says and I'll kill ya!

TUGBOAT CAPTAIN

You're fucking crazy! Get off me!
 I'll lose my license! If I steer us
 into that thing we're all gonna
 die!

JED

We're gonna die if you don't!

Gwen wakes up and jumps out of the chair.

GWEN

Holy smokes! Where the hell am I?!

The two men stop fighting and just lay still holding each other on the floor.

Gwen looks at them.

GWEN

Jed? What are you doing.

JED

Hiro says we gotta stay on course.

Gwen looks out the window to see the Tree Monster in the distance coming right at them. She also sees Hiro and Kyle standing on the front of the boat watching as well.

TUGBOAT CAPTAIN

These guys hi-jacked my boat and have us on a crash course with some, some thing! Please! Please help me. I want to save us.

JED

Hiro says we got to make it to Ben and the tree before that thing does.

GWEN

Holy shit! How do you slow us down?

BEN'S P.O.V.

Ben is still underwater but now he is much closer to the top. There is noise and light and shapes but nothing is definable yet.

There is a large dark shape just above him that is getting closer.

He nears the top of the water and can see human shapes poised along a dark curve.

Something circular and white lands just above him and he reaches for it.

As he breaks the surface of the water he sees the white, red, and black of the boat. Then looks up to see Hiro and Kyle.

KYLE

Ben! Hang on!

EXT. TUGBOAT - DAY

Gwen, Jed and the Tugboat Captain rush down the stairs and around to the front of the boat.

Hiro and Kyle are desperately pulling Ben and the tree into the boat.

GWEN

Ben!

They all take a moment to celebrate that Ben and the tree are safe.

KYLE

You did it! You're safe!

Hiro is the only one who sees it coming when the Tree Monster begins to raise up out of the water with a ball of sparks and light bigger than any they have seen before.

The noise is deafening.

Jed and Kyle pull Ben to his feet and they all turn just in time to see and feel the tugboat smash directly into the chest of the Tree Monster knocking him backwards.

As he falls the ball of sparks shoots off at them but Hiro steps in front of them all with his arms spread and absorbs the full force of the magic.

He crumples to the ground in a smoldering heap. Kyle drops to his side.

KYLE

Sensei!

The tugboat rides over the Tree Monster and it tries to grab onto the sides of the boat but it's grasp is too weak and its hands just make an awful screeching noise like fingernails on a chalkboard.

After a moment there is another noise, but this one is muffled. It is rapid and sounds like someone getting brutally thumped with a baseball bat. The whole boat shakes violently.

TUGBOAT CAPTAIN

The propeller!

He rushes to the back of the boat and all but Hiro follow.

They get to the edge of the boat and behind them are chunks of broken and shredded wood that has been pulverized and torn apart.

Some of the wood is seeping a deep red liquid but it is quickly being diluted by the water.

They watch as the wake disperses the pieces.

BEN

Hiro?!

They all rush back to the front and Hiro is trying to stand up.

GWEN

Hiro are you okay?

HIRO

I will be alright now.

BEN

What do we do with the tree?

HIRO

Give it to me. When I leave I will take it with me.

KYLE

What do you mean "When you leave"?

Hiro puts his hand on the tree and sparks shoot up his arm.

He leads them all to the edge of the boat and takes the tree from Ben. Holding it closely to his chest he very unceremoniously drops himself and the tree overboard.

Before they hit the water they fade away.

Ben realizes that he still has the black seed in his hand and holds it out so that everyone can see it. He shrugs because he doesn't know what to do with it.

JED

Give'er a toss. Trees don't grow on the bottom of the river.

Ben looks at Kyle and Gwen and the Tugboat Captain. They offer uncertain looks.

He pulls back his arm and hurls the seed as far as he can.

Just as it's about to hit the water a big raven swoops in and snags the seed out of mid air.

They all stand in disbelief as the tugboat heads to the warehouse that is now fully engulfed in flames.

