

THE WHISPER

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. TOWN OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE ENGLAND - EVENING

SUPER: Gloucestershire England - 1908

The lights in the town of Gloucestershire are seen as the evening sun begins to set.

EXT. LOCKE MANOR - LATE EVENING

A beautiful large gated home is seen in the distance.

INT. LOCKE FAMILY STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Identical twins ISABELLA and ISADORE LOCKE (10) are playing in the study of their brooding father MANDOR LOCKE (45), as his rail-thin wife ELIZABETH (30) sits, humming and knitting nearby.

Isadore SLAPS Isabella across the face.

ISABELLA

Ouch!

She starts to CRY. Mandor runs over to Isabella and hugs her.

MANDOR

Sweetheart, are you OK? Isadore, why did you strike your sister?

ISADORE

She wouldn't let me play with the dolls, Father! I hate her!

Isadore runs over to Elizabeth's side.

ELIZABETH

Why do you hate your sister? You should always love each other no matter what.

MANDOR

Apologize to your sister, Isadore!

ISADORE

I'm not apologizing to her! Why do you love her more than me? You always treat her better than me, always! I will not apologize!

MANDOR

Then go to your room, young, lady
and think about what you've done!
Now!

Isadore marches toward the door.

ELIZABETH

Isadore! You apologize to your
sister. Isadore!

Isadore angrily looks back at her father rocking Isabella and
storms out of the study, just as their butler WILLIAM (50),
enters and addresses Mandor.

WILLIAM

Sir, Mister Chapman is here to see
you.

MANDOR

Thank you, William. Please show him
in.

William nods and steps out.

ELIZABETH

Mandor, I'm going to check on
Isadore.

She exits the study. Mandor looks down at Isabella.

MANDOR

Now, now beautiful. I'll have a
talk with your sister later and I
promise she will never strike you
again.

ISABELLA

She is always mean to me. Why does
she hate me, Father?

MANDOR

She doesn't hate you. I'll deal
with Isadore when she calms down,
now run along while daddy talks to
his guest.

ISABELLA

Yes, Father.

Isabella walks out of the study. William escorts a frazzled
RAYMOND CHAPMAN (50) into the study.

MANDOR

Raymond, how nice it is to see you.

Raymond bends down and kisses Mandor's ring.

RAYMOND

Thank you for seeing me in such short notice.

MANDOR

Please, have a seat. Can I pour you a drink?

RAYMOND

No, no, thank you.

MANDOR

What brings you all the way here from Wiltshire?

Mandor pours himself a drink.

RAYMOND

There is something you should know. It's about Angus Hughes' son, Jacob. His boy forced himself on my oldest daughter Ruth, and now she's having his child.

Mandor puts down his drink.

MANDOR

I see.

RAYMOND

Mandor, I want him to pay for what he's done, but I need your permission as Grand Warlock to proceed.

MANDOR

This is disturbing news. But, as you know, using spells and curses for retaliation is strictly forbidden. Such permission must be granted by the council.

Raymond POUNDS his fist on the table.

RAYMOND

They will never approve this! Angus is on the council and with his friendships and business dealings with the other members, they won't punish his son! Please, Mandor!

MANDOR

Taking actions into your own hands will only lead to trouble, Raymond. Allow the council to decide Jacob's fate and I promise a fair and impartial decision will be made. If he is found guilty of these allegations, he will suffer the full force of my power.

RAYMOND

Thank you for your support, Mandor. Then I will look forward to bringing this to the council.

MANDOR

Now, in the interest of justice for your daughter, may I ask what spell were you hoping to use?

RAYMOND

The Whispering Death.

MANDOR

Raymond, that is the most deadly curse we have, and as such it has been banned! No exceptions.

RAYMOND

I know, my Lord, but I want him to suffer just like my daughter did while he was raping her!

MANDOR

I'll prepare a meeting of the council for later this week. In the meantime, get home safely, my friend. You have a long ride back to Wiltshire.

Mandor gestures over to William.

MANDOR (CONT'D)

William will show you out.

RAYMOND

Thank you again for seeing me. May
peace be with you and your family.

Raymond bows and William closes the main doors. Mandor sighs
as he proceeds upstairs.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BAILEY LUXURY APARTMENTS - LATE EVENING

SUPER: Atlanta - 2017

INT. GIA CHESNIK'S APARTMENT - 22ND-FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The Atlanta skyline is seen from the balcony of the 22nd
floor apartment, as heavy rain pelts the city below.

Standing on the balcony in her nightgown is a gorgeous,
Caucasian model, GIA CHESNIK (22). The wind blows into the
apartment moving the curtains and whisking Gia's long black
hair back and forth. Her eyes are glassy and she SOBS
uncontrollably.

Behind her in the apartment, clothes are laid out on the bed.

Gia wipes her eyes, clutching her cell phone tightly against
her ear.

GIA

Pick up the phone, dammit! Adrian,
pick up the phone!

The RINGING stops and Adrian's voice mail is heard.

ADRIAN (V.O.)

"This is you-know-who, I'm not at
you-know-where, so leave a message
after you-know-what and I'll get
back to you when I can."

GIA

Adrian, where are you?! I need to
see you! Why haven't you called me?
You promised you would come here
tonight! I need to be with you,
Adrian! I need to be with you..!

Gia drops the phone and wipes her tears. She staggers back
inside and picks up a piece of paper on her nightstand and
begins writing. She finishes the note and drops it on the bed
next to her red silk top. Then --

She runs toward the balcony and jumps over the railing --
A loud CRASH followed by SCREECHING tires is heard below.

EXT. ADRIAN STEELE'S BUILDING - EARLY MORNING

ADRIAN STEELE (27), African American with a long scar running down the left side of his face, approaches the building after his morning jog.

INT. UNMARKED CAR - CONTINUOUS

Homicide Detectives WAYNE WILKINSON (32), Caucasian, and DARRYL PERRYMAN (40), African American, watch Adrian from an unmarked Impala parked across the street.

Perryman nudges Wilkinson.

PERRYMAN
Is that him?

WILKINSON
Yeah, that's him.

They watch as Adrian greets the building DOORMAN then enters the building.

PERRYMAN
Call it in.

Wilkinson picks up the POLICE RADIO.

WILKINSON
Dispatch, this is Car 1141. Please alert Captain Whitman that the suspect Adrian Steele has just entered his building. Over.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Affirmative, Car 1141. I'll pass this to Captain Whitman.

WILKINSON
Thank you. Awaiting instructions.

Wilkinson lights a cigarette and Perryman sips from his coffee for a moment. Then --

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Car 1141, Captain Whitman says to pick up Steele.

WILKINSON

Roger that.

INT. ADRIAN STEELE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Adrian is getting dressed in his bedroom when there's a KNOCK on his front door. He walks over and looks through the peephole.

ADRIAN

Who is it?

PERRYMAN (O.S.)

Adrian Steele, this is the Atlanta Police. We need to speak with you.

ADRIAN

The police? What is this about?

PERRYMAN (O.S.)

Mr. Steele, please open the door. We have a warrant for your arrest.

Adrian reluctantly opens the door in disbelief.

ADRIAN

A warrant? What for?

Perryman steps forward with hand-cuffs.

PERRYMAN

Adrian Steele, you're under arrest for murder. You have the right to remain--

ADRIAN

What murder?!

PERRYMAN

Anything you say can be used against you in a court of law. Do you understand your rights?

ADRIAN

I need to contact my lawyer. This is bullshit!

INT. ATLANTA DETENTION CENTER/INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

Adrian sits in the interrogation room, with numerous bruises and abrasions visible. Wilkinson and Perryman sit across him. A tape recorder is in the middle of the table.

PERRYMAN

Can you tell me where you were yesterday?

ADRIAN

I met some friends at a club. What's all this about?

PERRYMAN

Do you know Ben Jenkins?

ADRIAN

Yes, he's a good friend of mine.

WILKINSON

What about his wife, Kim?

ADRIAN

Yes, Detective, I know them. What is this all about?

PERRYMAN

They were found dead and we have an eyewitness placing you at the scene.

ADRIAN

What?! Ben and Kim are dead?

WILKINSON

We're asking the questions, Steele. What were you doing at their home yesterday?

ADRIAN

Ben called me over to talk to Kim. She thought he was having an affair and he wanted me to talk to her -- But I assure you they were both alive when I left.

WILKINSON

Why would he ask you to talk to her?

ADRIAN

Because Kim was a very jealous woman. Ben knew she had a temper. I went over to help calm things down.

PERRYMAN

You mean lie for him?

ADRIAN

I mean, I went over there to help my friend calm down his jealous, temperamental wife!

PERRYMAN

Our eyewitness said he saw you arguing with the victim's wife --

Wilkerson sees some scratches on Adrian's neck.

WILKINSON

Is that how you got those scratches on your neck?

ADRIAN

I was scratched by Kim, but--

PERRYMAN

So the tissue under her fingernails is yours then.

ADRIAN

Man, this is bullshit! She accused me of lying for Ben and threatened me if I didn't tell her who Ben was seeing. She got very angry and reached for Ben and scratched me by accident. I told her they were crazy, and I left!

The door opens and Adrian's curvy, African American lawyer HOPE ATKINSON (25) walks in, taking immediate notice of the scratches and bruises on her client's face.

HOPE

Cut the recorder off, this interview is over! Adrian, what happened to your face, did they assault you?

ADRIAN

No, the scratches are from Kim and my face is from the asshole in my cell.

HOPE

What happened?

ADRIAN

Nothing, he wanted me and things got a little rough... So, when am I getting out of here?

DETECTIVE PERRYMAN

Not so fast, counselor, we have grounds to hold your client until further test results are concluded by the crime lab. We found some skin under of one of the deceased fingernails. We believe they belong to your client.

HOPE

That's enough fishing, Detectives. My client has not been charged, and we have a preliminary hearing this afternoon, so stop trying to pin three counts of murder on him without any clear-cut evidence!

Wilkerson cuts off the tape recorder. The Detectives depart the interrogation room.

ADRIAN

This is bullshit, Hope! I didn't kill anyone!

HOPE

These are very serious allegations. They want to pin these and another death on you.

ADRIAN

What other death!?

HOPE

A woman by the name of Gia Chesnik. You know her?

ADRIAN

Yes, I know Gia. Why?

HOPE

She was found dead this morning. Her body's all over the pavement outside her building. The police think she was pushed. How well did you know her?

ADRIAN

Not that well, she's just a model I met a week ago in England. She had some emotional issues, I mean --

HOPE

Did you sleep with her?

Adrian sighs.

ADRIAN

Yes, but it's complicated. I was supposed to meet up with her this morning, but I was thrown in here --

HOPE

That's great, their timeline doesn't add up then. Now what about Ben and Kim, what happened to them?

ADRIAN

Ben was messin' around with my cousin Jessica. He said Kim would kill him if she ever found out he was cheating on her. I went over there to calm her down and she scratched me swinging at Ben and then I left. That's it.

HOPE

They're trying to pin this on you, so keep your mouth shut. I'm headed back to the office. I'm going to see if I can pull some strings and get a Judge to get you out of here.

INT. ATLANTA DETENTION CENTER - CELL 265 - LATER

Adrian is returned to his cell, where CLARENCE DOBY (42), a tattooed muscular African American built like a football player, greets him.

CLARENCE

Welcome back, pumpkin! Did you meet with your lawyer?

Adrian leans against the cell wall ignoring Clarence.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

I asked you a question! I said, did you meet with your lawyer?

ADRIAN

Yes man, I met with my lawyer. Why?

CLARENCE

Look, sweetheart, I suggest you make the best of our living arrangements and start enjoying my company.

ADRIAN

Look, Bubba or whatever your name is, I don't want any trouble. I'll be out of here today, so all I want is to be left alone. We clear?

Clarence approaches and grabs Adrian's arm and SLAMS him up against the wall.

CLARENCE

Look, you cocksucker, you just do what I say, when I say it or you're gonna get hurt --

Adrian forcefully pulls away from Clarence.

ADRIAN

I thought I made myself clear this morning, asshole! I'll tell you again -- don't fuck with me!

CLARENCE

Don't fuck with you?!

Clarence GRASPS Adrian by the throat and lifts him off the floor.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Do you think because you're rich, I'm supposed to treat you differently? You don't think I know about you and all that money you have!? Do I look dumb to you, cocksucker?

Adrian GASPS for air and kicks the cell bars. A nearby OFFICER hears the commotion and pulls out his whistle and BLOWS --

OFFICER 1

Let him go, Doby! Goddammit, I said let him go!

CLARENCE

This motherfucker's gonna die today!

OFFICER 1

(yelling)
Open Cell 265! Open 265!

The cell door slowly open and a team of OFFICERS rush into the cell and attempt to subdue Clarence.

OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)
 Let go of him, Doby! You're killing
 him!

Clarence releases Adrian. Adrian slumps to the floor unconscious. Clarence starts fighting the Officers -- throwing one against the side of the cell, as another Officer reaches for his TASER.

The taser hits Clarence in the chest. He falls to the floor twitching.

Officer 2 takes Adrian's pulse.

OFFICER 3
 Is he gonna make it?

OFFICER 2
 He's alive, but he'll be sore when
 he comes to.

Officer 2 stands and looks down at Doby's unconscious body.

OFFICER 2 (CONT'D)
 Get that piece of shit out of here.
 Take him to the infirmary and when
 he wakes up, take him to solitary.

OFFICER 3
 Yes, sir. Should we tell Director
 White?

INT. DETENTION CENTER INFIRMARY - AFTERNOON

DR. PAUL ROBERTS (40s) and NURSE SUSAN WALKER (30s) are monitoring Adrian's progress when Adrian slowly comes to and tries to speak.

DOCTOR ROBERTS
 Don't try to speak. You took a good
 beating, a few more minutes and we
 wouldn't be having this
 conversation.

ADRIAN
 What happened?

DOCTOR ROBERTS
 Doby strangled you. Fortunately for
 you, the Officers on patrol got
 there in time.

Adrian tries to sit up.

DOCTOR ROBERTS (CONT'D)
Here, let me help you.

Dr. Roberts assists.

DOCTOR ROBERTS (CONT'D)
You're the third person Doby's put
in here in 2 months! They should
hurry up and ship him straight to
Rikers Island. There's a lot of
guys that won't put up with his
shit there.

Adrian points to the water.

DOCTOR ROBERTS (CONT'D)
Do you want some water?

Adrian nods. Dr. Roberts hands him some.

DOCTOR ROBERTS (CONT'D)
You're going to be sore for the
next few days. I suggest you keep a
warm cloth around your neck and
softly massage the area around your
throat.

Nurse Walker enters.

NURSE WALKER
Dr. Roberts, Doby is awake. He says
he needs some pain medication. The
x-ray shows he has a slight crack
on his collar bone; should I
prepare some morphine?

DOCTOR ROBERTS
We need to clear it with Director
White first. We were told not to
administer any narcotics without
his permission.

ADRIAN
I need to see my lawyer.

DOCTOR ROBERTS
I'll let them know to contact your
lawyer. In the meantime, sit back
and get some rest.

ADRIAN
What about Doby?

DOCTOR ROBERTS
 Don't worry, Doby's in solitary;
 he'll be there for awhile.

The infirmary phone RINGS. Nurse Walker answers.

NURSE WALKER
 Nurse Walker speaking... Yes, I'll
 bring him up.

She hangs up.

NURSE WALKER (CONT'D)
 Director White wants to see Mr.
 Steele in his office.

ADRIAN
 What about?

NURSE WALKER
 He didn't say.

DOCTOR ROBERTS
 Whatever it is, it must be
 important. He never calls for
 inmates, unless it's serious.

INT. DETENTION CENTER/ 5TH FLOOR - LATER

The elevator doors open on the 5th floor and Nurse Walker steps out of it, pushing Adrian in a wheelchair. The pair is escorted by a GUARD down the long corridor and into Director White's office.

INT. DETECTIVE WHITE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The Guard closes the door behind Adrian who wheels himself toward the desk where DIRECTOR THOMAS WHITE (52), Caucasian, heavy-set sits.

DIRECTOR WHITE
 Good Afternoon, Mr. Steele. My
 sincerest apologies for the earlier
 incident with Clarence Doby. He
 should have been sent to state
 prison last week, but his trial was
 rescheduled. Anyway, I was just
 informed that you are being
 released--

ADRIAN
 It's about time.

DIRECTOR WHITE

Sorry for bringing you all the way up here, but given how important you are, I wanted you to hear it from me first. I'm sure you'll think twice about any legal actions or negative publicity you might pursue against us concerning this unfortunate incident. Mr. Doby is in confinement, so you can return to your cell and pick up your belongings for release.

ADRIAN

That won't be necessary Mr. White, but I'll definitely take suing you into consideration.

Adrian turns and wheels himself out of the office. He looks up at the Guard waiting in the hallway.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Get me out of here!

Adrian and the Guard proceed down the hall.

EXT. BAILEY LUXURY APARTMENTS - AFTERNOON

Outside Gia Chesnik's building, a CRIME SCENE POLICE VAN and a POLICE CRUISER is parked. A YELLOW TARP covers the spot and body where Gia Chesnik fell.

INT. BAILEY LUXURY APARTMENTS/LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A CSI TEAM darts back and forth from the elevator to the exit. Hope walks through the revolving doors and approaches DETECTIVE SERGEANT WALTER JOHNSON (45), African American.

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

Hope, glad you made it. The moment I saw Adrian's name I figured I'd better call you before the media found out.

HOPE

Thanks for looking out for us, Walter. How have things been?

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

Not too good for my stomach after seeing what's left outside, but things are well otherwise.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I was promoted to Detective Sergeant last year, thanks to you!

HOPE

Congratulations on your promotion, Detective Sergeant. My client thanks you for testifying on his behalf against the wishes of the prosecution. Even though he did six months upstate for nothing. Did they ever find the gun or is your partner still looking for it?

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

Abrams was killed a few months ago. Cancer.

HOPE

Oh, I'm sorry. My condolences... So what do we have here?

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

The victim was Gia Christine Chesnik, 25. From the looks of it she was a model of some kind. There were no signs of forced entry and the door was locked from the inside. We found several sets of fingerprints, semen, her personal diary... and get this, a suicide note.

Hope appears intrigued. She walks over to the elevator.

HOPE

Can I go up and look around?

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

You know better than that, Hope. I can't let you snoop around an active crime scene! I called you here to let you know that Adrian's name is all over her diary and I believe we'll find those are his fingerprints and fluids up there.

HOPE

Can I see the diary?

Detective Johnson considers.

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

Fine, but this stays between us.

He crosses over to a bin of collected evidence and retrieves a diary in a zip-lock bag.

Hope pulls it out and flips to a random page.

HOPE

(reading)

June -- "Dear Adrian, these past few days have been amazing. I go to bed thinking of you, I wake up thinking about you. You're like a drug I can't put down. I'm going mad just thinking about the next time we'll be together!"

She and Detective Johnson exchange a glance.

HOPE (CONT'D)

"Adrian, where are you? I can't handle this. I cancelled all of my engagements. I need your arms around me. I need you, Adrian!"

(she turns the page)

"...Adrian, it's been three days. I can't think clearly without you..."

Hope shakes her head and closes the diary.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Can I see the suicide note?

Johnson retrieves the suicide note.

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

Listen, do you have time for lunch?

HOPE

Walter, Adrian's sitting in lockup for a crime he didn't commit. Having lunch with you is the last thing on my mind right now. And by the look of that ring outline on your finger, it should be the last thing on yours, too. Now Detective Sergeant, can I please see the damn note?

Detective Johnson sighs and hands it over. Hope reads --

HOPE (CONT'D)

"Being without you is tearing me apart!"

(MORE)

HOPE (CONT'D)

Not making love to you is killing me and I can't go on living if I can't be with you. Goodbye, Adrian. I will always love you..."

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

Now that's deep. But what the hell does Adrian have to make this woman take a swan dive?

HOPE

I don't know, but something isn't right.

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

You want to hear something strange, Hope? The victim was a lesbian! Everyone we interviewed confirmed it.

Johnson reaches for some photos and hands them to Hope.

DETECTIVE JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Look at these pictures, she's seriously hugged up on this one.

HOPE

Do we know who this woman is?

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

Her name is Katherina Surapova. She's another model, Russian. But you don't have to be a detective to figure what's going on. Here's her info --

Johnson hands Hope Katherina's contact information.

HOPE

Was the victim bisexual?

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

Not according to the testimonies of the doorman and her neighbors. They saw her with plenty of women, but no men... Until Adrian.

HOPE

Hmm. Well, thanks again Walter for contacting me. This helped a lot. Sorry if I seemed a little pushy earlier, but Adrian has never been in this much trouble before.

DETECTIVE JOHNSON
Consider us even. And I can
understand your worries, Hope: this
just doesn't add up.

Hope's cell phone RINGS. She answers.

HOPE
Hello? Assaulted?! Is he--
(frantic)
Oh my God! I'm on my way.

Hope hangs up.

DETECTIVE JOHNSON
Is everything OK?

HOPE
That was the detention center,
Adrian's been assaulted.

DETECTIVE JOHNSON
Get out of here. I'll update you as
things develop.

HOPE
Thank you.

Hope proceeds out through the revolving doors.

EXT. ATLANTA DETENTION CENTER - AFTERNOON

Hope dashes through the rain toward the entrance.

INT. DETENTION CENTER - MAIN LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Hope enters and checks in at the main desk, just as Director
White approaches.

DIRECTOR WHITE
Hope, how are you?

HOPE
What the hell happened? What kind
of place are you running here?

DIRECTOR WHITE
Everything is under control.
Adrian's doing fine, he's just a
little shaken and bruised.

HOPE

He already had bruises from that lunatic! Why was he back in with him?

DIRECTOR WHITE

Processing mishandled his paperwork, and we're short staffed due to city budget cuts.

HOPE

You better pray he forgives you or I'm closing this fucking place down!

DIRECTOR WHITE

Mr. Steele and I spoke earlier and he didn't mention a lawsuit. If he needs anything, anything at all, just call me.

Director White passes Hope his business card.

DIRECTOR WHITE (CONT'D)

He's at Prisoner Release waiting for you. My apologies again.

INT. DETENTION CENTER/ PRISONER RELEASE - LATER

Adrian sees Hope walking into the release area.

ADRIAN

Over here!

Hope gives Adrian a hug.

HOPE

What happened?

ADRIAN

My cellmate went postal.

HOPE

Are you hurt?

ADRIAN

Just my neck and my pride, but I'll be OK.

HOPE

It's not the first time this shit has happened here.

(MORE)

HOPE (CONT'D)

An inmate was killed two years ago
over a box of cereal. The Mayor
needs to do something!

ADRIAN

Look, I just want to go home and
wash this place off me. I've had
enough for one day.

Hope nods and they start walking down the hall.

HOPE

Sorry, I had to leave earlier, but
I had to follow up on the Gia
Chesnik case. She wrote all about
you in her diary... And she
addressed her suicide note to you.

ADRIAN

No kidding?

HOPE

Apparently you meant the world to
her. All of this after a week of
knowing her? How long did it take
for you to get in her pants?

ADRIAN

Hope, you don't understand--

HOPE

Then make me understand!

ADRIAN

I don't know if I can.

HOPE

Adrian, Gia Chesnik was a fucking
lesbian! She didn't fuck men!
Surprising, right?

ADRIAN

Not so much, but--

HOPE

She loved women her entire life,
then meets you and falls head over
heels in love in seven Goddamn
days? You're Adrian Steele, the
lesbian changer!

ADRIAN

Well, I wouldn't say that--

HOPE

Plus there's Ben and Kim! If I'm counting correctly, that's three fucking dead bodies associated with you!

Adrian looks over to Hope and sighs.

ADRIAN

I know how this looks, Hope, but I swear I can explain --

HOPE

You better.

They reach the door and see the rain is coming down hard. They push them open and make a mad dash toward Hope's MERCEDES BENZ 500 SL.

INT. HOPE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Hope starts the car and they proceed out of the parking lot.

HOPE

I have to stop by my office before I take you home, I forgot to get the state a document for my trial next week.

ADRIAN

No problem.

HOPE

So there's plenty of time for you to explain yourself. Now, start from the beginning.

Adrian takes a moment to gather himself and then he begins.

ADRIAN

A couple of months ago I contacted my cousin, Jessica Locke, in England to plan a family reunion with all of my remaining family members. I knew my Great Great Grandfather was from England, so I decided to hire a professional ancestry firm to track down everyone on my parent's side and provide me with a list of living relatives. I paid for all of their airfares and hotels and I invited Ben and we left for England...

INT. LONDON ENGLAND - HEATHROW AIRPORT - MORNING

SUPER: One week earlier

Adrian and BEN JENKINS (27), bald, athletic, proceed down the crowded HEATHROW TERMINAL to customs.

BEN

This place is huge!

He notices a suit in the Mall Shop Window.

BEN (CONT'D)

Look at those prices. What's a pound worth in dollars?

ADRIAN

I don't know. Jessica should be waiting outside by now.

BEN

Oh no, not her. She's probably upset with me. I haven't seen her since she was 16. Man, did we have some great times? I wonder if she still has those big ole juicy--

ADRIAN

Ben, that's my cousin. Try to behave yourself.

Ben takes off his wedding ring and places it in his pocket. Adrian looks over at him.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Oh, hell no! Kim's not going to kill me because you want to reminisce about a fling you had with my cousin ten years ago! You know how jealous Kim is! Put your ring back on, I'm not co-signing this!

Adrian and Ben reach the front of the line and approach separate customs booths.

EXT. HEATHROW AIRPORT - LATER

Adrian and Ben exit the airport with their luggage in tow. Adrian starts looking around when a loud horn BEEPS.

JESSICA

Cousin Adrian! Adrian, over here!

JESSICA LOCKE (26), busty, attractive, jumps out of her car and runs toward Adrian.

Jessica gives Adrian a hug and kiss and stares over at Ben.

ADRIAN

Hello, Jess! You look great, Cuz!
Are you able to buy drinks yet?

JESSICA

Yes silly, I've been legal for
years now.

Jessica looks at Ben and smiles.

BEN

Hello stranger, long time no see.

ADRIAN

And he's married now, right Ben?

JESSICA

Well, well, well, if it isn't Ben
"I can't call anybody" Jenkins. How
are you doing? It's been a long
time, what -- 10 years? Why didn't
you call me after I left Atlanta?

BEN

Sorry, Jess, I never thought we
were going to be together, so I
didn't --

She interrupts.

JESSICA

Didn't what? Bother! It's OK and I
see you moved on, right?

Jessica rolls her eyes at Ben. Everyone starts walking toward her parked car.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Cousin Felix is here too, he's
waiting on more relatives to
arrive, they should be here before
we kick off this evening. Memema
Emira is here too.

ADRIAN

Really?

JESSICA

She just turned 107 and she scares the shit out of me. She's been here for two days, and all she does is tell stories about the family back in the day. She's a freaking family encyclopedia, and her memory is razor-sharp.

ADRIAN

I haven't seen her since I was a child, but I'm sure she has some really good stories about my Dad and Grandfather. Hey, anyone hungry?

BEN

Yeah, I could eat something.

Ben scans Jessica's body up and down. She catches him looking and smiles.

JESSICA

We've got a long ride to Gloucestershire. There's a pub close to the house that serves really good food and cold pints. Put your bags in and let's go.

Adrian, Ben, and Jessica proceed into the car and away from the airport.

EXT. LOCKE FAMILY RESIDENCE - LATE EVENING

Adrian, Ben, and Jessica make their way toward the front entrance of the generations-old home.

INT. LOCKE FAMILY RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Adrian, Ben, and Jessica walk in. EMIRA (MEMEMA) LOCKE (107), very old and fragile, is speaking to numerous FAMILY MEMBERS in the living room.

ELDER EMIRA

When I was your age, parents were treated with better respect than they are today. All of these young men showing their asses. What a damn shame. Yeah, times sure have changed...

Emira notices the new arrivals.

ELDER EMIRA (CONT'D)
(to Adrian)
Hello, honey. What's your name,
sweetie?

ADRIAN
Hi Auntie. I'm Adrian, Adrian
Steele.

ELDER EMIRA
You're Frederick's little boy! I
remember seeing you when you were
just a little pup.

ADRIAN
Yes Auntie, I remember you too.

ELDER EMIRA
You were always getting into
things. I remember you well, you
were one ugly ass baby when you
were born. You had two black eyes,
but you sure did grow into your
looks! Except for that scar--

ADRIAN
Thank you, Auntie... I think?

ELDER EMIRA
What happened to your face, child?

ADRIAN
I was injured in a car accident
several years ago. The accident
that killed my parents.

ELDER EMIRA
Oh, that's right. I heard about
that. What a shame, child. I'm sure
it wasn't the curse that killed
them.

She points over to a portrait of Isabella hangs on the wall.

ELDER EMIRA (CONT'D)
Did you know your Great Great
Grandfather had a curse placed on
him?

ADRIAN
I'm sorry, Auntie, did you say a
curse?

Emira turns and looks at Ben and Jessica.

ELDER EMIRA
Who are you, precious?

JESSICA
It's me, Jessica.

ELDER EMIRA
Oh yes honey, you're Walter's little girl. You know your daddy got VD when he was 16. He came running into the house holding his little penis. That's before he joined the Royal Air Force and married your momma. Let's see, that was 22, or was it 30 years ago.

JESSICA
Memema!

ELDER EMIRA
(to Ben)
And who are you, honey?

BEN
Me?

ELDER EMIRA
Yes, young man, I'm talking to you.

BEN
My name is Ben, I'm Adrian's friend.

ELDER EMIRA
I don't know you. You said you are a friend of who?

BEN
Adrian.

ELDER EMIRA
Sweetie, can someone get me something to drink?

ADRIAN
Memema, you said something about a curse?

ELDER EMIRA
You're Frederick's little boy. Did you know your father peed the bed?
(MORE)

ELDER EMIRA (CONT'D)

That's right, he didn't stop peeing the bed until he was about 13 years old. All you Steele boys did that. I bet you did too.

ADRIAN

No, ma'am, it must have skipped me. I never peed the bed.

ELDER EMIRA

Isadore and Isabella Locke were my first cousins.

ADRIAN

Uh, OK... Who are they?

RELATIVES begin to gather to hear Memema's story.

ELDER EMIRA

Isadore and Isabella Locke were twin sisters. Isabella was my Great Grandfather's Father, Matthew's mother, who died in 1922. Rumors started to spread throughout that your Great Great Grandfather Dominic slept with both sisters...

INT. HOPE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Hope looks over at Adrian unamazed.

HOPE

(laughing)

Adrian, is this a flashback within a flashback? Is this going to be a long story?

ADRIAN

No, Hope this is not funny! This is her story. Now, please don't interrupt me.

INT. LOCKE FAMILY RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Everyone sitting in front of Emira leans in with interest as she tells her story.

ELDER EMIRA

Dominic Steele was a beautiful, light-skinned African and Italian man who worked for my Uncle Mandor at his cannery.

(MORE)

ELDER EMIRA (CONT'D)

My Uncle was very protective when it came to his daughters, especially Isabella. Isadore and Isabella's relationship was always shaky because of Isadore's jealousy over Mandor's love for Isabella. Being a mighty Warlock and the town's leader, Uncle Mandor had to make sure anyone who married his daughters would care for them not only financially, but be fit to be his successor after his death. He immediately took Dominic under his wing, hoping one day to turn over the business to his stepson, but when rumors of Dominic's infidelity spread, Mandor became very suspicious...

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. LOCKE MANOR - AFTERNOON

SUPER: Gloucestershire, England - 1921

INT. LOCKE MANOR - DOMINIC AND ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Two hands cover Dominic's eyes. Their hands drop, and Dominic sees a provocative gown on the beautiful frame of his wife.

She pushes him onto the bed and gets on top of him, removing her clothes. Dominic takes off his clothes, and they begin to make love...

INT. LOCKE MANOR - DOMINIC AND ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Isadore Locke rolls over and looks over at Dominic and smiles.

ISADORE

I can see why my sister loves you,
Dominic: you're a fantastic lover.

Dominic looks over and notices it's Isabella's twin sister Isadore and jumps out of bed.

DOMINIC

Isadore, what is this!? Get out of here before Isabella or someone sees us!

Isadore laughs and jumps out of bed. She starts getting dressed.

ISADORE

Don't worry, lover, my beloved sister went into town with Father this morning. I couldn't resist having you. I wanted to see firsthand what all that noise coming from here was all about. I guess they're right when they say that identical twins are identical.

She laughs and sits up in the bed.

DOMINIC

You're insane, Isadore!

ISADORE

If you think I'm insane, wait until I tell Father.

Dominic grabs Isadore's wrist.

DOMINIC

I don't know what kind of game you're playing, but no one will ever believe you!

ISADORE

That's a chance I don't think you're willing to take Dominic. Once Father finds out, there's no telling what he'll do to you! You've never seen an angry Warlock before, have you?

DOMINIC

I swear if anyone finds out about this I'll--

ISADORE

You'll do whatever I say, that's what! We'll do this one more time or else!

The main door opens and Isabella yells upstairs.

ISABELLA (O.S.)

Dominic, come down and look what I've brought!

ISADORE

Go and run to your wife, Dominic.
But remember what I said!

Isadore walks out of the bedroom laughing. Dominic yells down to Isabella.

DOMINIC

Coming Bella, I'll be right down.

BACK TO:

INT. LOCKE FAMILY RESIDENCE - RESUMING

Adrian, Jessica, Ben and the rest of the relatives are transfixed by Emira's story.

ELDER EMIRA

After Isabella's tragic death, Dominic fell into a deep depression. One evening Dominic got drunk and tried to explain to Mandor, but everything got taken out of context. Mandor, in anger, ordered Dominic to his room, but Isadore had her own plans...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DOMINIC AND ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

SUPER: Gloucestershire, England - 1922

Intoxicated, Dominic slowly opens his eyes. He believes he sees Isabella lying by his side.

DOMINIC

I knew this was a horrible nightmare. I--

ISADORE

It's no nightmare my darling, I finally have you for myself.

Dominic realizes it's not Isabella.

DOMINIC

Isadore! Do you have no shame?

ISADORE

I told you, I get what I want!

DOMINIC

You're mad! I could never love a vile woman like you! Get out of my bed!

ISADORE

Look at me, Dominic! I am Isabella, we are the same and you can have her again!

DOMINIC

You could never be my Isabella! You may have the same physical appearance, but only one of you can ever have my love!

The door SLAMS open and Mandor enters the room.

MANDOR

What the hell is this?!

A naked Dominic and Isadore sit up in the bed.

DOMINIC

Mandor, this is not what it looks like! Isadore, please explain--

ISADORE

(playing scared)

Father, Dominic forced me into his bed!

MANDOR

He did what!?

ISADORE

(fake crying)

Dominic was drunk and he, he, took advantage of me. He kept calling me Isabella!

DOMINIC

Father, these are lies! I would never do this. I love Isabella--

Mandor looks over at a naked Isadore.

MANDOR

Get out of his bed and put some damn clothes on!

DOMINIC

Father, I loved Isabella with all my heart, why would I do this to her memory?

MANDOR

Never speak Isabella's name again! I'm standing here looking at you with my daughter just hours after-- I want you out of here! Get out!

DOMINIC

But what about my son?

MANDOR

You have no son! I'll raise him as my own. I never want him to know about you. You betrayed our family!

DOMINIC

You can't do this Mandor! You can't take my son away from me!

A devilish and evil smile appears on Isadore's face.

ISADORE

I will raise him as my own.

MANDOR

Isabella would still be alive if you'd taken her inside with you.

DOMINIC

I don't know what you heard Mandor, but I assure you, I was only gone for a few minutes...

MANDOR

And then you rape Isadore!?

DOMINIC

I didn't rape her! I would never rape anyone, nor would I betray Isabella, I loved her--

MANDOR

I told you never to--

ISADORE

Yes, Father, he kept yelling at me. I tried fighting him off me, but he was too strong. He forced me down and then he, he raped me!

DOMINIC
Mandor, she's lying!

Mandor clutches his hand and points his finger at Dominic.

MANDOR
(angry)
I curse you, Dominic Steele! I
curse you and your bloodline
forever!

BACK TO:

INT. LOCKE FAMILY RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Elder Emira looks out at her relatives, all on the edge of their seats.

ELDER EMIRA
Now, I don't know the exact words used, but when the story was told to me, Mandor got so angry he burst a blood vessel in his forehead. It is said that as long as the curse is placed upon the Steele Bloodline, they will never find happiness. Whoever hears the word "Bella" let that name bring ecstasy and pleasure and a short agonizing death by their own hands. Isadore Locke was evil when she got into Isabella's bed that night, and Mandor was a powerful Warlock with unimaginable powers...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DOMINIC AND ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - RESUMING

A strong wind rushes through the room after the curse is spoken by Mandor, shutting wooden shutters and flowing out of the open window. Dominic gathers his belongings.

Isadore smiles as she watches near the bedroom door.

DOMINIC
You placed a curse on me for loving your daughter and rejecting this witch that would lie to your face!
I'm going to the authorities!

MANDOR

My boy, I'm the authority in this town. I control everything, including the police.

DOMINIC

I have no doubt of your control over this town, Mandor, but how could you dismiss me after loving me as your son?

MANDOR

Isabella is dead! She died so my new son could live, and I will never forgive you. You are no longer my son, now get out!

He gazes at Dominic threateningly.

DOMINIC

I'm leaving! You can put a curse on me, but it won't change the fact that I loved Isabella and I loved you!

He starts to move then turns back --

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

I'm coming back to get my son, do you hear me, Mandor? I'll be back!

MANDOR

Then you will die.

Dominic grits his teeth and continues on, stopping by Isadore.

DOMINIC

Shame on you, Isadore!

Dominic exits.

BACK TO:

INT. LOCKE FAMILY RESIDENCE - RESUMING

Elder Emira wraps up the story.

ELDER EMIRA

Dominic never did return. Around Christmas of that year, he was committed to a mental hospital and died from acute depression.

(MORE)

ELDER EMIRA (CONT'D)

Isadore became pregnant with Dominic's child and had a baby boy named Saul. After Mandor died, your Grandfather Matthew Steele took over the Cannery and married an American nurse by the name of Sheila Perry. In 1945 your father, Frederick Steele, was born.

ADRIAN

So, whatever happened to Isadore?

ELDER EMIRA

Isadore married a member of parliament by the name of Peter Wilkerson. They had a daughter, Anita, before they were both killed in a plane crash over the Andes in 1956. And Anita's brother Saul had a son named Victor Mandor Locke.

ADRIAN

That's some story, Auntie.

ELDER EMIRA

Remember, you must know your past before you know your future.

Emira looks around the room.

ELDER EMIRA (CONT'D)

I'm looking forward to seeing all of you again tonight. But for now I need to rest. I'll tell you more when I awake.

ADRIAN

Wait, Memema -- you mentioned the word, Bella...

Elder Emira turns to Adrian with a grave expression.

ELDER EMIRA

You fool! Never say that word, even in jest! It's very powerful and dangerous. It should never be spoken, especially by you!

ADRIAN

Ok, Ok. I'm sorry --

Emira shakes her head in disbelief. She is led into her bedroom by a relative. She turns back and yells to Adrian once more --

ELDER EMIRA

Remember, you should never speak
that word! Do you hear me?!

Emira COUGHS and her door closes.

ADRIAN

Wow, have you ever heard anything
like that before?

BEN

She said if you speak the word you
will have ecstasy and pleasure!

ADRIAN

Yeah, and then there will be an
agonizing death. Shit Ben, I didn't
believe anything she said. Let's
wait until she wakes up and then
I'll ask her to repeat everything
about the curse.

BEN

I know what I heard. Saying "Bella"
will get you laid and trust me,
brother, you need to be laid!
Bella, Bella, Bella!

ADRIAN

Stop fucking around, Ben! I just
don't know if she remembers very
well. Some of that may be
exaggerated from what really
happened. Hey, let's go meet the
rest of my family, then I need to
call Hope. She just finished a very
big murder case and I want to find
out how it went.

BEN

What's going on between you two?

ADRIAN

She's like a sister to me. We had
an attraction at first, but after
the car accident and the deaths of
my parents, I saw her differently.

BEN

I see how she looks at you, I think
she's in love with you.

ADRIAN

Leave it alone, Ben. There will never be anything between us. Do I care for her? Yes, but look at me, look at my face, do you think anyone wants to be with a freak like me?

BEN

But you're also rich as hell. Trust me, someone will get you.

Jessica approaches.

JESSICA

Adrian, go introduce yourself to our other cousins.

Adrian nods and crosses over to greet his relatives.

Ben and Jessica head outside alone.

INT. LOCKE FAMILY RESIDENCE - LATER

The relatives are all dressed up in upscale cocktail attire, mingling and putting on their coats.

ADRIAN (V.O.)

Later, we were all dressed up and ready to leave for dinner at a nice restaurant in town, but our plans were delayed...

A loud SCREAM is heard. Adrian and Ben run down the stairs. Jessica is crying by Emira's room door. The other family members run to see the commotion.

ADRIAN

What is it? What happened?

JESSICA

It's Memema... She's dead!

ADRIAN

Dead?

JESSICA

She's old, Adrian, I think her heart just stopped.

Adrian walks into the room.

INT. EMIRA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A light on the table is on and Memema's teeth are floating in a glass. Memema's mouth and eyes are open. Adrian sits on the edge of the bed and holds her hand.

ADRIAN

There was so much I wanted to know.
Rest in peace, Memema.

He kisses her hand and places it down beside her BIBLE, which is opened by her side. Adrian looks curiously at the highlighted pages and picks it up --

ADRIAN (V.O.)

I looked in her Bible and noticed a family tree. The name before the last branch on the Steele tree was Victor, followed by me.

INT. LOCKE RESIDENCE - GLOUCESTERSHIRE ENGLAND - MORNING

Adrian and Jessica are sitting drinking coffee in the kitchen.

ADRIAN

So, tell me about Victor.

JESSICA

I don't know much about him, other than he owns a massive tech conglomerate called SolarTech. The main company is here in Gloucestershire, but they also have offices in Germany, Spain, China and one in the States. In Atlanta, actually.

ADRIAN

I've heard of it. Whose son is he again?

JESSICA

That would have been a good question for Memema. I believe his Grandmother was Isadore Locke and his father was her son, Saul. So his mother would be Saul's wife, Roxanne.

ADRIAN

Is there someplace that keeps birth records?

JESSICA

Yes, but most of the people in this town were born at home, so there are no records that I know of. The person to speak with about that is Maedeem Forester. She assisted with hundreds of births for towns members dating back to the early 40s. If anyone knows, Maedeem does.

INT./EXT. JESSICA'S CAR / MAIN STREET - AFTERNOON

Jessica's car drives along the road with Ben and Adrian inside.

ADRIAN (V.O.)

Ben, Jessica and I proceeded to Maedeem's house. But when we got there, her house had been demolished. We learned that Maedeem had died not too long ago from pneumonia, but left all of her birth documents with her Goddaughter, Terri Scarver. We found where Terri lived and proceeded to her home.

EXT. SCARVER RESIDENCE - LATER

The car pulls up in front of a small but modest cottage. Adrian, Ben and Jessica exit and walk up to the front door.

ADRIAN

Let me do the talking.

Adrian rings the doorbell. The heavy-set TERRI SCARVER (45) opens the door and rests her eyes on Adrian.

TERRI

Hello, may I help you?

ADRIAN

Are you Terri Scarver?

TERRI

Yes.

ADRIAN

My name is Adrian and this is Ben and Jessica. Do you know Maedeem Forester?

TERRI

Yes, but Ms. Forester died some time ago.

ADRIAN

I know, we are inquiring about some birth records she kept. Can you help us?

TERRI

Madam Forester's records are personal and cannot be released.

ADRIAN

Please, Ms. Scarver, we lost our Aunt recently and we were wondering if you could just check the records to see if one of Madam Forester's clients is related to us.

TERRI

I do understand, but--

ADRIAN

I'm sure I can make a small donation to you for your service.

TERRI

Please come inside.

INT. SCARVER RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Adrian, Ben and Jessica go inside.

TERRI

Have a seat. Can I get you some tea?

ADRIAN

That will be fine.

BEN

None for me, thank you.

JESSICA

Yes, please. You have a lovely home, Ms. Scarver.

Terri enters the open kitchen and places a pot of water on the stove.

TERRI

Thank you, my dear. We've lived here for quite some time. We were in the middle of remodeling when my husband passed. I just couldn't see myself finishing it.

She looks inside a large beautifully painted storage locker.

JESSICA

I'm sorry for your loss, ma'am.

TERRI

It's quite alright, sweetie, he had heart issues-- Oh, here it is.

Terri takes out three large binders numbered 1,2 and 3 wrapped with a large leather tie and a brass buckle.

BEN

Those books look very old.

TERRI

Madam Forester became a midwife back in the late 30s. She must have birthed over a thousand children!

ADRIAN

Ms. Scarver?

TERRI

You can call me Terri.

ADRIAN

Terri, we're looking for a man by the name of Victor Locke.

TERRI

Victor Locke, the chairman of SolarTech?

ADRIAN

Yes, we believe he was a relative of Emira Locke.

TERRI

Then he would be in volume 2.

Terri opens up Book 2 and looks for Victor's name.

TERRI (CONT'D)

I don't see a Victor Locke posted in this book. Let me look at Volume 1 again.

Terri closes Volume 2 and looks in Volume 1 again.

TERRI (CONT'D)
Ahh, here he is! Victor Mandor
Locke, born 5/22/58 to a Saul and
Roxanne Locke.

ADRIAN
Do you have anything on a Saul
Locke?

TERRI
Let me check.

Terri looks back through the first book.

TERRI (CONT'D)
Yes, Saul Locke born 4/17/1923 to
Dominic Steele and Isadore Locke.

JESSICA
Are you sure? I mean is there any
way your records could be wrong?

ADRIAN
Memema was right, Isadore had Saul
out of wedlock from my Great Great
Grandfather Dominic, nine months
after my Grandfather Matthew was
born.

Ben and Jessica nod, up to speed.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)
Let's visit Victor.

EXT. SOLARTECH CORPORATION - LATER

Adrian, Ben and Jessica make their way toward the entrance of
the large, looming building marked "SolarTech Corp."

INT. SOLARTECH CORPORATION - CONTINUOUS

Adrian, Ben and Jessica exit the elevator on the penthouse
floor and approach the reception desk where the genuine and
beautiful receptionist, TAMARA (30s) greets them.

TAMARA
Hello, can I help you?

ADRIAN

Yes, we're here to see Victor. Is he in?

TAMARA

I'm sorry, Mr. Locke is away today on business, but I'm expecting him back anytime now. Can I inquire as to what this is about?

JESSICA

There was a death in the family, his Aunt passed away last evening. We're here to inform him and ask if he will be attending the funeral service.

Tamara looks at Victor's schedule.

TAMARA

Mr. Locke is booked the entire month.

ADRIAN

The entire month?

The office door opens, VICTOR LOCKE (54), Mulatto, tall, slim, well-dressed carrying a long-handled umbrella walks out. He looks over at them.

TAMARA

Good evening Mr. Locke, can I get you some tea?

VICTOR

No, but I will have a scotch on the rocks.

Ben turns to Adrian.

BEN

(quietly)

He knows it isn't raining, why is he carrying that umbrella?

ADRIAN

It always rains in London. Hello, Cousin Victor --

Victor looks at Adrian and at his long scar.

VICTOR

And who are you?

ADRIAN

I'm your cousin Adrian Steele, from
The United States.

VICTOR

Sorry, I don't know you.

ADRIAN

You don't know your family in
Gloucestershire either. We're here
to tell you that your Aunt died
yesterday.

VICTOR

My Aunt?

ADRIAN

Emira Locke.

VICTOR

I'm sorry my good man, I don't know
any of my relatives in
Gloucestershire.

BEN

Look Mr. Locke, we're here to
inform you of her passing.

VICTOR

And who may you be?

BEN

My name is Ben Jenkins and thank
God, we're not related.

ADRIAN

I know you're very busy running all
of this, but we only stopped by to
relay the news of her death to you.
If you can free up some time in
your busy schedule, I would like to
talk to you about something.

VICTOR

Adrian, right?

ADRIAN

Yes.

VICTOR

Adrian, there is nothing to
discuss.

(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)

I appreciate you stopping by, but I have no intentions of going to a funeral for someone I don't know.

Victor looks over at Tamara.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Tamara, please show Adrian and his party to the elevator.

TAMARA

Yes, Mr. Locke.

Adrian turns around in anger.

ADRIAN

You're not a Locke, you're actually a Steele. Your real name is Victor Steele!

VICTOR

Excuse me?

ADRIAN

You heard me! Since you want to be an asshole, I thought you'd want to hear what I wanted to speak with you about in private.

Victor slams his umbrella tip on the floor.

VICTOR

How dare you come into my office and insult me! Tamara, please hold my calls. Mr. Steele, come with me!

They go into his office and close the door.

INT. VICTOR LOCKE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Adrian glares up at Victor.

ADRIAN

Look, you snobby asshole! I tried to get you alone to tell you this. I've never treated anyone like this before, but I don't appreciate your attitude towards our family.

VICTOR

I'm not a snob nor am I a fool! How much do you want to keep this silent?

ADRIAN

How much do I want? You ignorant piece of shit! Look, I don't need your money. I'm already a wealthy man, I just came here today to tell you of your Aunt's death and give you the opportunity of attending her funeral.

VICTOR

I'm sorry my good man, I know meeting me for the first time was not the highlight of your day, but--

ADRIAN

Really, but the offer still stands. The service is in two days. I'll leave my number and the address to the service with your secretary.

VICTOR

Why, certainly.

With a sinister smile on his face, Victor extends a handshake to Adrian. Adrian hesitantly shakes it.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

No hard feelings, mate?

ADRIAN

No hard feelings, Victor, I hope to see you at the service.

Adrian exits his office.

INT. SOLARTECH CORPORATION - CONTINUOUS

Ben and Jessica are flirting in the waiting area. Adrian strides toward them and then stops when he sees Tamara, and suddenly has an idea.

He changes direction and saddles up next to her.

ADRIAN

Thank you for your help. What did you say your name was?

TAMARA

Tamara. And you're welcome!

ADRIAN

Can I tell you something, Tamara?

TAMARA
What is it?

Adrian leans in and WHISPERS --

ADRIAN
Bella...

He backs away from her ear and sees her staring at him, glassy-eyed.

TAMARA
You're so handsome! We have to be together!

She grasps his hand. Adrian looks at her, confused...

INT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT - EVENING (PRESENT)

Adrian is making drinks. He's looking at Hope's body from the corner of his eye.

ADRIAN
Here you go, one Amaretto and Pineapple juice.

HOPE
Thanks.

ADRIAN
Can I ask you a question?

HOPE
Sure.

ADRIAN
Did you believe me?

HOPE
About the curse?

ADRIAN
Yes.

HOPE
I've seen and heard a lot of things during my stint as a defense lawyer, and if I didn't know you, I would have called you a liar and left... but I do know you. And I believe you.

ADRIAN

I just wanted to know. I didn't know how you were going to explain this to anyone or better yet, get a jury to believe you. Just explaining it sounds crazy.

HOPE

We definitely have to prepare for the worst. That's why we need evidence.

ADRIAN

Evidence? How are we going to get that? I can't say it without someone dying.

Adrian's phone rings.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Hold on.

Adrian answers the phone.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Hello?

VICTOR (V.O.)

Hello, Cousin. It's Victor.

ADRIAN

Victor, what's going on?

VICTOR (V.O.)

You said you were not going to tell anyone about me.

ADRIAN

I didn't tell anyone...

VICTOR (V.O.)

Well someone did, I'm all over the London Times today. They're calling me a fraud. SolarTech's shares are down 40%.

ADRIAN

I assure you, Victor, I told no one. Are you sure your office isn't bugged?

VICTOR (V.O.)

I get my office scanned daily.

ADRIAN

Why didn't you come to the funeral?

VICTOR (V.O.)

I gave it a lot of thought and decided not to attend, plus I don't have a receptionist anymore. Tamara took her life right after you left. She seemed fine the last time I saw her.

Adrian's face goes pale.

ADRIAN

Oh no! I'm so sorry... I mean, I'm sorry for your loss.

VICTOR (V.O.)

I'm in Atlanta on urgent business, can we meet for drinks tonight?

ADRIAN

Sure, where are you staying?

VICTOR (V.O.)

The Ritz Carlton in Buckhead. I'll be in the bar around eight.

ADRIAN

I'll see you then.

Adrian hangs up.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Victor's in Atlanta. He wants me to meet him for a drink.

INT. VICTOR'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A Female Flight Attendant uniform is draped over a chair, a STEWARDESS (20s) is lying naked in the bed crying. Her eyes have a glazed and glassy look. Victor walks into the bedroom.

STEWARDESS

Where did you go, Victor? Come back to bed, I need to have you next to me. Please make love to me again, please? I love you.

Victor lights his cigarette and takes a drink of his scotch and finishes getting dressed.

VICTOR
I love you too.

INT. RITZ CARLTON BAR - EVENING

Victor is sitting at the bar drinking. Adrian walks in and makes his way toward the bar.

VICTOR
Over here, Adrian.

Adrian approaches Victor cautiously.

ADRIAN
Victor, what brings you to Atlanta?

VICTOR
You, dear boy, you. I have a few things to clear up here, then I'm leaving.

ADRIAN
Why are you here to see me?

The BARTENDER approaches and interrupts their conversation.

BARTENDER
Can I get you anything?

ADRIAN
Yes, I'll have a Blue Moon with two orange slices.

VICTOR
I'll take another double shot of your finest malt scotch.

BARTENDER
Coming right up.

The Bartender walks over and pours some beer into a mug from the tap.

VICTOR
You could have at least sent flowers.

ADRIAN
Excuse me?

VICTOR
Let's cut the shit, cousin. You killed her. You killed Tamara!

The Bartender brings Adrian and Victor's drinks.

ADRIAN

What? How do you--

VICTOR

I know all about the curse, you can say I'm an expert on it.

ADRIAN

How did you find out?

VICTOR

I found out from my Mother when I was 18. She always wanted the best for me.

ADRIAN

Your mother, Roxanne Locke?

VICTOR

My mum molded me into what you see today. She told me if I want something, I should take it in droves. I used the gift for the first time after my 18th birthday. Oh, cousin Adrian, you should have seen them beg for me. The first few were difficult to get through emotionally, but once you get the hang of them crying and waiting for them to die, it becomes much more tolerable. I even whispered the word to you. But I see you are immune to its power.

ADRIAN

How many women have you killed, Victor?!

VICTOR

A hundred, maybe two? I lost count.

ADRIAN

And if I take this information to Interpol and the FBI, what would they say?

VICTOR

Let's see, "Hello constable, I whispered into a woman's ear and my words made her kill herself."

ADRIAN

I have someone that believes me,
someone the authorities trust.

VICTOR

Ah, Ms. Atkinson.

ADRIAN

Yes, but how--

VICTOR

I know all about your pathetic
life. I know all about your wealth,
dear boy, and I even know what
makes you tick. So, you want to
play games? Well, I'm going to up
the ante.

ADRIAN

Victor, I'm not playing any Goddamn
games with you! You're fucking
insane!

VICTOR

Insane?! You killed the woman I
loved!

ADRIAN

I'm sorry about Tamara, I didn't
know what would happen--

VICTOR

Bullshit!

Victor slams his fist on the counter and spins his seat in
Adrian's direction.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. TAMARA'S APARTMENT - ENGLAND - EVENING

SUPER: A few days earlier

Tamara lies dead on the floor of her apartment, a gun at her
side. A suicide note rests nearby. Someone BANGS on the door.

VICTOR (O.S.)

Tamara? It's me, Victor. Open up!

After a moment, Victor KICKS the door in and sees Tamara on
the floor. He rushes over to her.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Tamara?

His face goes pale and he swallows hard as he takes in the moment. He looks at the blood and the gun, then he spots the suicide note and he reads it -- *"I loved you so much, Adrian. I needed you! I needed you, Adrian..."*

VICTOR (CONT'D)

No... no!

Victor wraps his arms around her lifeless body and SOBS.

BACK TO:

INT. RITZ CARLTON BAR - RESUMING

Victor shakes off the memory and glares at Adrian.

VICTOR

I loved Tamara, she was my life. She knew me like nobody else. She never did anything to you, but you took all that away from me.

ADRIAN

I'm sorry, Victor--

VICTOR

Now I'm going to make you suffer as I did! How does it feel knowing that the one you love the most in this world, the person you care about most in this world is going to die an agonizing death?

ADRIAN

I didn't know--

VICTOR

What? That Tamara had been working for me since she graduated college, that I took over her career and got her a modeling assignment with Vogue? You've taken her away from me. Who would have known that I would be face to face with someone who knew about my secret, our secret, and the things that we've done?

ADRIAN

I didn't know she was with you. I was just getting back at you for the way you were acting. I never knew she--

VICTOR

What, that she meant anything to me?

ADRIAN

Yes.

VICTOR

So now you know.

ADRIAN

How do I turn it off? How do I get rid of the curse?

VICTOR

You can't get rid of it, silly boy. You'll have to stay with them or die before they do and you don't look like a man that's going to stay with anyone for more than a few hours, right?

Victor stands up.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

I'm not going to lie, cousin, the next few days are going to be very tough for her. Well, that's if she doesn't try and fight it. You wouldn't believe how many of them die within the first couple of days. You always hear people say "have strength", well in this case, having strength will kill you fast.

Victor smiles and takes a sip of his scotch.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

I'm surprised you're not going through withdrawals. For me, using the curse is like using cocaine, you keep doing it and doing it.

Victor stands up and pushes the stool close to the bar.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

I lacked confidence and judgment at first.

(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)

I couldn't fathom what was going to happen or how this was going to change my life. Gabrielle was my first. She lived down the street and her father was in the wine business. Gabby was so beautiful, but her death was a test for bigger things to come. You always remember your first, right cousin?

Victor starts to laugh.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Not knowing when or how I will do it is priceless. It could come from a phone call thousands of miles away. One word is all it takes to end a life, but you should know all about that, right cousin?

ADRIAN

Please Victor, please don't involve Hope.

In one swig, Victor finishes his drink and walks towards the exit.

VICTOR

You should have thought about that before you took Tamara from me.

ADRIAN

Do you hear me, Victor!? Please don't do this!

Victor walks away.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Victor!

INT. HOPE ATKINSON'S OFFICE - EVENING

Hope gets off of the elevator. The light in the office is on.

HOPE

Donald, is that you?

DONALD WADE (25), 6' 1", bald, athletic peers out from around the corner.

DONALD

No, it's Charles Manson. Yes, it's me!

HOPE

Where are you on your closing arguments?

DONALD

You don't have to be here. I know this is very important to the firm, but this is not my first rodeo, I can handle this trial.

HOPE

We have a lot riding on an acquittal. This is our first gang-related case.

DONALD

This is not a gang-related case Hope, our client is the son of a mob Don, who could kill us if we lose.

HOPE

I stand corrected. So what's your take on the trial so far?

DONALD

The state has a very strong case, but their witnesses are weak. I killed them during cross, but I saw some of the jury members and I believe we may have some minor worries, but we have a lot of reasonable doubt. I'm considering putting Salvatore Rossi on the stand. If I can get the forensic expert in first and follow-up with the movie ticket booth operator, then I can call Salvatore to the stand.

HOPE

OK, then let's do it, we need to strengthen his alibi. Do you think he did it, I mean did he kill that boy?

DONALD

I don't know, but I think we should have passed on this one. Coming on board this late into a trial is a disadvantage for everyone, especially the client. Taking over for someone else never sits right. Where's Adrian?

HOPE

Speaking of Adrian, I'm sorry for what happened today. I never meant to get you two started.

DONALD

It's OK, it was bound to happen. I'm glad we finally got that off of our chests.

HOPE

I dropped him back at his condo and came here. He's been through a lot in the past 48 hours.

DONALD

Did you ever find out what happened to the Jenkins?

HOPE

Not necessarily, I have an appointment at the morgue tomorrow morning. I'm meeting with Dr. Green. You know him?

DONALD

Know him? He practically wrote the bible on forensic investigations! He can piece together muscle tears, facial expressions and solves crimes with details that everyone else overlooks.

HOPE

He was vital in solving the case in Miami of that missing 3-year-old little girl who died.

DONALD

Oh yeah, that case. He used the decay of the child and skeletal remains to determine that the mother suffocated her daughter and placed her in the woods just outside of her parents home.

HOPE

Yes, he and Adrian's father were best friends and he wanted to come in and look at the case. He knows Adrian had nothing to do with their deaths and so do I.

Donald turns Hope around.

DONALD

Do you know how I feel about you?

HOPE

Yes, Donald, I know. That's why there can never be anything between us. I don't want to mix business and personal feelings. I told you this already if you're going to keep pushing yourself on me this way, things are going to have to change.

DONALD

So, what happened in Paris was a lie?

HOPE

Look, we were both drunk that evening. We said and did things we shouldn't have. I never meant to lead you on like that, and I've apologized to you before... It was nice and something I needed at the time, but I don't want to give you the wrong idea, especially now.

DONALD

So, you're in love with him?

HOPE

Does it matter? I've known Adrian for years and I think he understands me very well. That's why he keeps coming to me when things go wrong!

DONALD

You can't always be there for him, he's going to have to grow up without you one day!

Hope takes in his words. Then --

HOPE

Sorry for distracting you from your case. You are a really good attorney and sometimes I get controlling, especially when someone is fighting for his or her freedom. So yes--

DONALD

Yes, what?

HOPE

You can take me out to dinner, but just a business dinner and nothing more, do you understand me? A girl has to eat, so promise me you'll come back tonight and get prepared for court tomorrow.

DONALD

How does Chinese food sound? I know a really good restaurant down the street.

INT. BEN AND KIM JENKINS HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Hope and the heavy-set medical examiner DR. ELLIOT GREEN, (60s), walk inside the home of Ben and Kim Jenkins.

HOPE

Jesus, what's that smell?

DOCTOR GREEN

Decomposing blood. The police left the crime scene as is.

Hope points to the bedroom.

HOPE

That's where they were discovered.

They walk into the room.

INT. BEN AND KIM JENKINS HOUSE/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Green inspects the crime scene.

DOCTOR GREEN

There's a lot of blood, but no sign of spraying anywhere... It seems Mr. Jenkins just bled out.

HOPE

The police report has Ben laying on the bed and then falling to the floor. There are some blood stains on the top of the mattress and some on the side of it.

DOCTOR GREEN

Well, from the position where he was found it looks like she stabbed him repeatedly and then turned the knife on herself.

HOPE

She must have been very rageful.

DOCTOR GREEN

It doesn't take much especially if the one you love is unfaithful.

HOPE

Doctor, do you think this is consistent with a murder or suicide?

DOCTOR GREEN

I need to see their bodies.

HOPE

They're at the county morgue.

INT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Adrian gets out of bed and staggers into the bathroom. He picks up his cell phone and dials Hope's number.

HOPE (V.O.)

Hello?

ADRIAN

Where are you?

HOPE (V.O.)

I'm on my way to the county morgue with Dr. Green, you OK?

ADRIAN

I'm fine, but I need to talk to you about Victor. Can you meet me later?

HOPE (V.O.)

Can you just tell me over the phone?

ADRIAN

It's very important that you don't answer your phone again until we meet, promise me you'll do that?

HOPE (V.O.)

Donald's case is today and I have my office calls forwarded to my cell. Adrian, what's going on?

ADRIAN

I'm coming down to the morgue, just wait for me in the lobby, OK?

Adrian hangs up the phone.

EXT. COUNTY MORGUE - LATER

Hope and Dr. Green arrive at the County Morgue.

INT. COUNTY MORGUE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Hope and Dr. Green show the DESK CLERK some paperwork. She signals for the COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER, who leads them to the cadaver freezer.

INT. CADAVER FREEZER - CONTINUOUS

The County Medical Examiner shows Dr. Green the bodies of Ben and Kim.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

(looking at the toe tag)

Here's Benjamin Jenkins and Kimberly Anderson-Jenkins. If you could help me move the bodies to the examining area, you can start your examination.

Dr. Green helps roll out the bodies, then pulls back the cover exposing Kim Jenkins.

DOCTOR GREEN

Hope, please move the light closer.

Hope complies.

HOPE

Is that OK?

Dr. Green nods.

DOCTOR GREEN

We have an African American female in her late twenties with knife wounds to both wrists and carotid artery. She is approximately 5' 5" and slightly--

HOPE

Dr. Green this is not a full autopsy, we can fill in the formalities later.

DOCTOR GREEN

Hope, from what I initially see and without going through a complete autopsy, this woman died by her own hands. There are no signs of a struggle or any defensive wounds. Her fingernails are clean except for Adrian's tissue from the scratch and the obvious caked on blood belonging to her husband. Let's examine Mr. Jenkins.

Dr. Green moves the gurney carrying Kim away and moves the gurney carrying Ben under the bright examination lights. The cover is pulled back exposing Ben.

DOCTOR GREEN (CONT'D)

Oh dear...

HOPE

What?

DOCTOR GREEN

This was definitely a crime of passion. Look at his hands.

HOPE

I don't see anything.

DOCTOR GREEN

That's my point. He must have been asleep. Look, the first incision was right under the heart and the last seven are all over the chest cavity. He was lying down when this happened. He rolled off of the bed and onto the floor. From the position of the body in the photos, his last breaths were trying to reach the phone. Do you have his belongings?

HOPE

We have their phones, clothes and laptops.

DOCTOR GREEN

Can I see his phone?

HOPE

What is this about?

DOCTOR GREEN

I don't know, but I have a hunch.

Dr. Green turns on Ben's cell phone. He looks at the last few numbers called from it.

DOCTOR GREEN (CONT'D)

Didn't you tell me Ben and Adrian recently came back from England?

HOPE

Yes, they went there for Adrian's family reunion.

DOCTOR GREEN

They were gone for a week, right?

HOPE

Yes.

DOCTOR GREEN

It looks like Ben called Ms. Anderson twice, but he called someone overseas 15 times.

HOPE

Ben returned home and Kim looked in his phone and found all of these phone calls to England. She called the number and must have heard another woman's voice.

DOCTOR GREEN

And in a jealous rage, she stabbed Ben. When she realized what she'd done, she killed herself.

HOPE

Will you testify to that?

DOCTOR GREEN

That's just speculation, Hope, but I think with all the evidence gathered today a jury might believe it.

HOPE

Thank you, Dr. Green. Can you finish up here and take a cab back to your hotel? I promised to meet Adrian in the lobby. He's gonna be surprised by what we found.

DOCTOR GREEN

Call me when a trial date is set.

HOPE

I will.

Hope leaves the Morgue's freezer area.

INT. COUNTY MORGUE MAIN LOBBY - LATER

Hope departs the elevator and heads towards the lobby. Victor approaches Hope and speaks in an American accent.

VICTOR

Hi, are you Hope Atkinson?

HOPE

Yes, can I help you?

VICTOR

My name is Reggie, I'm a friend of Adrian. He told me to tell you he was running late. He wanted me to pick you up.

HOPE

That's so sweet of him, where was he?

VICTOR

He's stuck in a meeting. This way, please.

Hope and Victor leave County Morgue.

EXT. COUNTY MORGUE - CONTINUOUS

Hope and Victor walk towards the parking deck.

VICTOR
You can either ride with me or
follow me there. I'm sure he'll
bring you back to your car.

Victor points at his car.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
I'm over here.

HOPE
Wow, you have the new Audi A7! I'll
ride with you!

Hope gets into the car.

INT. VICTOR'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Victor gets into the driver's side and locks the doors.

HOPE
Reggie, what do you do?

VICTOR
I'm in the extermination business.

HOPE
Really? It must be hard getting rid
of all those pests.

VICTOR
Not as hard as you may think.
You're an Attorney, right?

HOPE
I have a small firm, yes.

VICTOR
If I tell you something will you
hold it against me?

HOPE
What is it?

VICTOR
Adrian didn't want me to tell you
this, but--

HOPE
Tell me what?

VICTOR
Come closer, I don't want to shout
out loud.

Hope moves closer to Victor and he WHISPERS into her ear.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Bella...

INT. COUNTY MORGUE LOBBY - DAY

Adrian walks into the County Morgue. He waits by the door entrance. Dr. Green walks off the elevator towards the entrance doors.

DOCTOR GREEN
Adrian?

ADRIAN
Yes. Do I know you?

DOCTOR GREEN
It's been a long time, but I was
friends with your father, Fredrick.

ADRIAN
How did you know it was me?

DOCTOR GREEN
Your scar, son. So where's Hope?
She said she was meeting you here.

ADRIAN
How long ago was that?

DOCTOR GREEN
About 25 or 30 minutes ago.

ADRIAN
What was she wearing?

DOCTOR GREEN
She was wearing a gold skirt and a
white blouse.

Adrian walks to the Desk Clerk.

ADRIAN
Have you seen a woman with a gold
skirt standing here?

DESK CLERK

I saw a woman, but she was with a man and they left together.

ADRIAN

Do you remember what the man looked like?

DESK CLERK

Yes, he had a short haircut, slim build and he was carrying an umbrella.

ADRIAN

Thanks.

Adrian starts rushing toward the front door.

DOCTOR GREEN

Did you find her?

ADRIAN

She's in trouble. I have to go.

DOCTOR GREEN

Is there anything I can do?

ADRIAN

Pray.

Adrian runs through the main doors and into his car.

INT. ADRIAN'S CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Adrian pulls out his cell phone. His car screeches down the street.

ADRIAN

Is this the Ritz Carlton in Buckhead!?

RITZ RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

Yes, can I assist you?

ADRIAN

Do you have a Victor Locke staying there?

RITZ RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

Mr. Locke checked out this morning. Is there anything else I can assist you with?

ADRIAN
No, thank you.

Adrian abruptly hangs up and proceeds towards HARTSFIELD-JACKSON International Airport.

EXT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Victor and Hope walk up to the main door of Adrian's building. Hope's face is expressionless and her eyes are glassy. The Doorman greets them.

DOORMAN
Ms. Atkinson, it's very nice to see you again. Mr. Steele is not at home, can I assist you?

Victor hands him \$20.

VICTOR
No, we'll wait for Mr. Steele in his apartment. Here you go, sir.

DOORMAN
Thank you, sir! This way, please.

The Doorman opens the door.

Victor and Hope walk towards the elevator. Hope is holding Victor's arm tightly and starts kissing him. The Doorman looks on as the elevator door closes.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Hope is all over Victor.

HOPE
I want you so bad Victor, let's make love right here.

Hope places Victor's hand down her shirt.

VICTOR
We're almost there, darling. We're almost there.

HOPE
I never felt about anyone like I feel about you. I want you now Victor!

The elevator bell RINGS. The elevator doors open on the 15th floor. They depart the elevator and proceed down the long corridor to Adrian's apartment.

INT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Hope unlocks and opens the door and they walk in. Victor turns on the lights.

VICTOR
So this is how you live, cousin.

Hope kisses Victor.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Stop it, sit down and leave me
alone!

Hope takes off her shirt, grabs at Victor's pants and starts undressing him.

HOPE
No, I want you now! Don't push me
away!

VICTOR
I said leave me alone!

Victor SLAPS Hope hard across the face. She falls down on the couch.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
I don't want you, I don't need you
and I don't love you! You're just a
piece of flesh to me! You're weak
and you're gonna die.

Hope's body shakes and she sweats as she tries to fight the curse. She begins to cry.

HOPE
Don't say that, I love you!

VICTOR
Look at you, you don't even know
how beautiful you are, do you? He
took away the only woman that ever
truly loved me...

He strokes his hand down Hope's face.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
It's going to be a such a shame to
watch you die.

The doorbell RINGS. Victor goes to the door and looks through
the peephole. Donald is at the door.

DONALD (O.S.)
I know you're in there, Hope! I
tracked your phone, so open the
door!

Victor gestures to Hope.

VICTOR
Come here!

Hope gets off the couch and walks towards the door.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Who is this?

Hope looks through the peephole.

HOPE
Donald Evans, he works with me.

VICTOR
Why is he here?

HOPE
I don't know. I can get rid of him.
Is that what you want, Victor?

VICTOR
He'll mess up everything.

DONALD (O.S.)
I'm not leaving until I see you,
Hope, open the door!

VICTOR
Get rid of him!

HOPE
If I get rid of him can we make
love?

VICTOR
Get rid of him or I will!

Victor goes into the bedroom and Hope opens the door.

DONALD

What took you so long!?

HOPE

I was--

DONALD

Where is Adrian and why are you half dressed? Where's your shirt!?

HOPE

I told you, Donald, I don't want you.

DONALD

Why are you acting weird? What's wrong with your eyes?

HOPE

There is nothing wrong with me Donald, I feel great. Adrian's not here. What do you want?

Donald looks around.

DONALD

The client went to pieces on the stand. The prosecutor broke him down and caught him in lie after lie. There was nothing I could do. The jury is in deliberation and there should be a verdict soon. Whoever you are in the bedroom, get out here now!

HOPE

I'm afraid you're going to have to leave, Donald, we can talk about this another time. Thank you for stopping by, but this can wait until--

DONALD

Who's in the bedroom?

HOPE

Um, I--

DONALD

Hope, the doorman told me that Adrian was not here. He said you were up here with someone else?

HOPE

Victor!

Victor walks out of the bedroom clapping.

VICTOR

Very good, young man. You are very observant.

DONALD

Who are you? What have you done to Hope?

VICTOR

The same thing I'm going to do to you.

Victor rushes Donald. Donald punches and pushes away. Victor staggers back into the large bookcase and drops to the floor. Donald runs towards the door and Victor gets up. Donald unlocks and opens the front door.

DONALD

I'm going for help, I'll be back in
ahhhhhh--

Victor is standing behind Donald breathing hard while holding his long umbrella handle. The umbrella handle is a long double-edged blade. The long blade is impaled through the left side of Donald's back coming out through his stomach. Donald falls to the floor GASPING for air. Hope looks down at Donald with a glassy-eyed expressionless stare.

VICTOR

Sorry mate, I tried to make it as painless as I could, but you had to push it.

Donald looks up at Hope. Blood runs out of his mouth as his eyes begin to close. Victor pulls the blade out of Donald's back and wipes it off on Hope's shirt.

HOPE

Can we make love now, Victor?

Victor places the blade back into the umbrella casing and throws Hope's bloody shirt on the floor next to Donald's body. Victor looks at his watch.

VICTOR

Put on another shirt, we have a plane to catch.

Hope grabs another blouse out of the hallway closet and they walk out of the front door. Donald's fingers twitch.

EXT. HARTSFIELD-JACKSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - AFTERNOON

Adrian parks his Maserati and runs inside the airport.

INT. AIRPORT DEPARTURE COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

TRAVELERS are standing in line checking in their luggage. Adrian runs up to the front of the line and jumps in front of several waiting passengers.

ADRIAN

I need to speak with whoever's in charge, please!

TICKET AGENT

Excuse me, sir, you just jumped the line, I need for you to rejoin at the back of the line.

ADRIAN

I don't need a ticket, I need to see Airport Security immediately, can you call them for me?

TICKET AGENT

You need to go to customer relations, they can assist you there.

ADRIAN

You don't understand, my friend has been kidnapped and I think they're trying to take her out of the country --

TICKET AGENT

I can't help you here sir, but customer relations is down the corridor. Someone there can assist you.

She looks at the next CUSTOMER.

TICKET AGENT (CONT'D)

Can I help you, sir?

CUSTOMER

Yes, we have two tickets to Miami--

Adrian runs and arrives at the Customer Relations desk and speaks with the DESK AGENT.

DESK AGENT

Good Afternoon sir, can I help you?

ADRIAN

Hello, you have a few flights leaving for London. I believe my Cousin is on one of those flights, and I need to stop the planes from departing.

DESK AGENT

Sir, we can't stop a departing flight, that's against policy. Let me check the flight schedules, do you know what airline they are flying?

ADRIAN

How many flights do you have leaving for London today?

She looks at the computer screen.

DESK AGENT

We have 5 flights leaving for London this evening.

ADRIAN

Do you have a Victor Locke on any of them?

DESK AGENT

Again, sir, I cannot give you that information. It's against regulations.

ADRIAN

It's a matter of life and death! My, my girlfriend is being held against her will and if I don't stop him, she's going to die! Please help me! Please?!

She looks at Adrian's face and back at the computer screen.

DESK AGENT

I cannot assist you sir, but I can tell you that there is nobody by that name on any of the passenger lists I have. Have a good day, Sir.

ADRIAN

Thank you!

She looks up and Adrian and speaks quietly --

DESK AGENT

You might want to check the smaller
Airports like Charlie Brown
Airfield. He may have booked a
private jet.

ADRIAN

Thank you, ma'am! Thank you!

Adrian turns around and runs out of the airport to his car.

EXT. CHARLIE BROWN AIRPORT - AFTERNOON

Jets are landing on the runway at Charlie Brown Airfield.
Propeller Airplanes are in the hangers being worked on by
mechanics.

Victor's limousine pulls up to the hanger. Victor gets out of
the limousine followed by Hope. She staggers out and onto the
pavement. The LIMO DRIVER observes.

VICTOR

Please forgive her my good man,
she's a little car sick.

Victor looks at Hope.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

The more you fight it, the faster
it consumes you.

Hope holds Victor tight around his waist. He gives the limo
driver a large tip.

A mid-sized Jet Gulf Stream G6 is parked inside the SOLARTECH
Corporate hanger. They walk up the jet's stairs and the Pilot
WALTER HUMPHRIES (50s) African American, walks out of the
cockpit and stands outside of the plane's door.

HUMPHRIES

Good day, Mr. Locke, will there be
two traveling today?

VICTOR

Yes Humphries, please make
arrangements for two to London. How
long before we take off?

HUMPHRIES

A few minutes, Sir. I'm still waiting on our itinerary to be approved. Would you like champagne for you and the lady?

VICTOR

Yes, champagne will be fine.

Victor and Hope enter the aircraft.

EXT. ADRIAN'S MASERATI - CONTINUOUS

Adrian's car is proceeding down the highway at great speed. The speedometer on the dashboard approaches 100 mph. Adrian punches the car horn and proceeds off the exit and sharply turns the corner.

INT. SOLARTECH'S AIRPLANE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The pilot steps into the cabin and calls to Victor.

HUMPHRIES

Sir, we've been cleared for take-off. We'll be taking off shortly.

VICTOR

Thank you, Humphries.

HUMPHRIES

Will the lady be OK? She's not looking very well.

VICTOR

She's just afraid of flying. She'll be fine.

Humphries nods and steps out. The sound of the jets engine ROARS. Hope begins to CRY.

HOPE

Why don't you love me, Victor? I've done everything I could to please you. What can I do?

VICTOR

It'll be over soon, my dear. Try to enjoy the flight.

EXT. ADRIAN'S CAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The Maserati crashes through the gates of the airport. Adrian hops out and spots the SolarTech Jet as it slowly rolls out of the SolarTech hanger and heads toward the runway.

Several TSA PATROL CARS roll through the crushed gates after Adrian. Adrian jumps into a parked baggage car and moves into the path of the Corporate Jet, waving his arms wildly.

ADRIAN
Hey! Stop the plane!

The jet jolts to a stop and the doors to the jet open. Humphries looks out of the door.

HUMPHRIES
What the hell are you doing?! Move that cart out of the way, you dumb sonofabitch!

ADRIAN
Victor, get out here! Victor!

HUMPHRIES
I don't know who you are, but I've contacted the tower and the police have been notified --

Victor appears behind Humphries out of the doorway, his umbrella in hand. He glowers down at Adrian and CLAPS.

VICTOR
Adrian my boy, good work on finding us. I underestimated you!

ADRIAN
Where's Hope?

VICTOR
She's in here of course!

He looks back inside the cabin.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Hope my darling, there's someone here that wants to see you.

HUMPHRIES
Should I get rid of him, Mr. Locke?

VICTOR
No, that won't be necessary. The police will handle that for us.

(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)
 Hope, look who's here to say
 goodbye to us--

Hope steps out by Victor holding his arm.

HOPE
 Yes, my love?

Adrian's face flashes with relief. He YELLS over the roaring jet engines.

ADRIAN
 Hope, come with me! Walk down the
 stairs and let's go!

Adrian sees Hope fighting the curse.

HOPE
 I'm not going anywhere with you.
 I'm going with Victor, I'm in love
 with him!

ADRIAN
 No you're not, Hope! You're under
 the curse. Remember the curse? You
 only think you love him. You need
 to stay calm and don't fight it.
 Come with me, I'm going to get you
 to a hospital.

VICTOR
 No you're not, Cousin. My wife and
 I are leaving.

Victor turns speaks and gestures to Humphries.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
 Let's go, close the door.

ADRIAN
 Your wife?

VICTOR
 Ah yes. We got married today
 cousin, she's now Mrs. Hope Locke.

ADRIAN
 You dirty sonofabitch!

Adrian runs up the jet stairs and grabs Victor by the collar and throws him out of the door and to the airport tarmac. Victor's umbrella flies out of his hands and onto the tarmac, the roaring jet engines blow the umbrella away from the plane.

Adrian punches Victor again and he flies back against the plane's front wheels.

Victor gets up and starts running away and Adrian runs after him. A BYSTANDER runs up to a POLICE CAR and points towards the direction of the scuffle. Victor picks up his umbrella and ducks into a deserted hangar.

INT. AIRPLANE HANGER - CONTINUOUS

Victor slowly hides in a corner of the dark side of the hanger's interior. Adrian comes into the hanger behind him.

ADRIAN

You can't hide, Victor! You have a lot of explaining to do to the authorities. Especially trying to explain the deaths of at least a hundred women!

VICTOR

Cousin, don't forget about Hope!

Victor unsheathes the blade from the umbrella casing, as Adrian searches for him.

ADRIAN

Why did you have to marry her?

VICTOR

That's the only way to get her out of the country legally without procuring kidnapping charges.

ADRIAN

Why not just let her die?

VICTOR

And miss out on you watching her lust after another man? Where's the fun in that?

Victor looks around the corner as Adrian turns his back in the dim lit hangar. Victor slashes Adrian across his chest. Victor ducks back around the hangar corner. Adrian winces in pain as blood begins to soak his shirt.

ADRIAN

Come out and face me like a man!

Adrian walks to the far side of the hangar.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)
I said, come out Goddammit!

Victor looks around and sees Adrian holding his sliced stomach. Blood begins to fill up in the palm of Adrian's hand.

VICTOR
See what you made me do? Look at you, you're bleeding all over the place!

ADRIAN
Wait until your shareholders hear about your extracurricular activities! You'll be lucky if they keep you on the board after this.

VICTOR
You'll never live to tell, I'll see to that!

Just then, a biplane exceeding the speed limit comes down the tarmac and in the direction of the hangar doorway.

Adrian runs out of the doorway and dives out of the way, just missing the plane's propellers.

Victor sees Adrian and lunges after him -- landing right in the path of the biplane's propeller!

Victor's eyes grow wide and he scrambles to get out of the way, but it's too late -- the propeller slices through Victor's body, tearing it to pieces and sending his head flying into the hangar doorway.

Safely on the ground, Adrian watches the horrific scene in disbelief. He looks over at the shreds of Victor's body lying in all directions. Victor's legs are still twitching. Hope runs down the tarmac to where Adrian is laying.

HOPE
Adrian! Adrian! Are you OK?

Hope kneels on the ground. Adrian covers Hope's face, shielding her from the blood and gore. She holds Adrian tightly in her arms.

ADRIAN
I thought I lost you today, I thought you were going to die.

HOPE

The only thing I can remember is talking to your friend Reggie.

ADRIAN

Reggie? No, that was Victor, remember me telling you about him.

HOPE

Shit, was I--?

ADRIAN

Yes, you were and you got married too.

Hope looks at her hand. Sure enough, there's a single silver band. She grimaces and pulls it off and tosses it away.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)

Don't move! Stay right where you are!

Adrian turns to see several charging POLICEMEN running over with their weapons drawn.

ADRIAN

I'm too sore to get up.

The policemen handcuff Adrian.

HOPE

I'll get you out of jail tonight or first thing in the morning. Once they piece all of this together, they'll drop all the charges.

ADRIAN

Are they going to believe you?

HOPE

Let's hope so.

INT. ATLANTA DETENTION CENTER - NIGHT

The GUARD places Adrian into a cell and walks away.

A bandage is wrapped across Adrian's stomach with little red patches showing. He places his belongings on the top bunk and looks over at the man sleeping on the bottom bunk and walks over to the sink and turns on the water.

Adrian reaches down and touches his wound and splashes some water on his face and towels off. He lowers the towel and Clarence Doby is standing right behind him.

CLARENCE (O.S.)
Well, well, well look who the fuck
it is.

Startled, Adrian turns and gulps, taking a step back.

ADRIAN
Clarence, I thought you were in
solitary confinement?

CLARENCE
They're transferring me back to New
York and to Rikers Island tomorrow,
but we have some unfinished
business today.

ADRIAN
Help! Officer --

CLARENCE
You have to be one of the luckiest
men alive. The Officers saved you
and gave me a good beating, but no
one's gonna help you this time!

Clarence slowly walks towards Adrian.

ADRIAN
You don't have to do this, Doby.

Clarence lunges and grabs Adrian by the neck and pins him down on the bottom bunk. Adrian tries to speak, but the weight of Clarence on top of him is too much. He tries to gain leverage, then faintly WHISPERS --

ADRIAN (CONT'D)
Bella...

Clarence releases Adrian's neck. Clarence's eyes are glassy.

CLARENCE
Oh my God, did I hurt you?

Clarence begins to weep and drops to his knees.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
Will you let me love you? Can I
make love to you? Please can I?!

Adrian backs away and holds his throat. Clarence starts crying hysterically.

ADRIAN

Doby, I want you to get in your bunk and go to sleep. I don't want to hear a word from you, do you hear me!?

CLARENCE

Yes, my love, I hear you.

Adrian gets into his bunk and while staying alert, listens to Clarence crying in his bunk below.

INT. ATLANTA DETENTION CENTER - MORNING

Officer 1 approaches Adrian and Clarence's cell.

OFFICER 1

(yelling)
Open up cell 234!

CLARENCE

Don't come in here, leave him alone
you motherfuckers! No, Adrian!

Adrian walks out of the cell and starts walking away with Officer 1.

Clarence SCREAMS again. Several of the Officers draw their batons and storm into the cell.

INT. DETENTION CENTER - PRISONER RELEASE - CONTINUOUS

Hope waits for Adrian at prisoner release. They walk out of the Detention Center holding hands.

EXT. ATLANTA DETENTION CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Adrian looks up at the sky.

HOPE

I just came from the hospital.
Donald's going to make it. He lost
a lot of blood, but he's in a
stable condition. Your Doorman
saved his life.

ADRIAN

How?

HOPE

He saw Victor and I leave the building and not Donald. He came up to check your apartment and found Donald and called for an ambulance.

ADRIAN

So, what was it like being under the curse?

HOPE

Have you ever been locked in a dark closet and couldn't get out?

ADRIAN

No, but--

HOPE

I tried everything I could to fight it, but I had no control over myself. The more Victor talked, the more I wanted to please him. It's the most powerful feeling I've ever experienced. Now I know how those poor women felt before they died.

ADRIAN

How are you going to deal with my involvement with the deaths of Tamara, Gia and Katherina?

HOPE

I need to report it to the police since I am an officer of the court.

ADRIAN

I understand.

Hope starts to laugh.

HOPE

I'm just messing with you! You're not guilty of anything malicious. Even if I told the Police or DA, you'll have to demonstrate and prove all of this. So you'll have to promise never to use the curse again.

ADRIAN

I promise, but there has to be a way of breaking it?

HOPE
 Maybe someone in the Locke family
 can reverse the spell.

She thinks a moment. Then --

HOPE (CONT'D)
 Hey! I'm a Locke now, right? Maybe
 I can do it!

ADRIAN
 It's got to be someone with Locke
 blood. I know, Memema's family
 Bible!

HOPE
 Family Bible?

ADRIAN
 The one on the nightstand in
 Memema's room the day she died. It
 had all the family members from
 Mandor to me. I need to contact
 Jessica to see who's on our family
 tree that's still living.

They reach Hope's car and get inside.

INT. HOPE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Adrian looks down at a NEWSPAPER on the passenger seat and
 picks it up as he sits down.

The front headline reads: *"SolarTech CFO Dies, New Alleged
 Wife Inherits Company."*

ADRIAN
 What's this? You have complete
 control of SolarTech now?

HOPE
 Apparently. But don't worry, I want
 nothing to do with it.

ADRIAN
 You don't want to run a Fortune 500
 company?

HOPE
 No, I don't--

Hope grabs Adrian's hand.

HOPE (CONT'D)

To be honest, Adrian, all I ever wanted was for us to be together. I loved you from the moment we met, but you treated me like we were related.

ADRIAN

Are you still under the curse?

HOPE

I'm serious, Adrian. I see things a little clearer now. After what I experienced with Victor, I'm not holding back my true feelings anymore. No more being scared. If you don't want me, just say no and we can go back to how things were before, but I need to know right now if I should pursue my feelings for you or just leave you alone?

ADRIAN

You should always fight for the one you love. You should--

Hope grabs Adrian and pulls him close to her. They passionately kiss. Adrian looks at Hope and they both start laughing.

HOPE

What are we going to do now?

ADRIAN

I don't know, this is still setting in, but let's take it slow, OK?

HOPE

You just want to rub this in, don't you?

ADRIAN

Would I do that?

They share a smile. Hope turns the ignition and they drive away.

INT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Adrian dials Jessica's number.

ADRIAN

Hi Jess. It's me, Adrian.

JESSICA (V.O.)
Adrian, how are you?

ADRIAN
I have some bad news. Victor's
dead.

JESSICA (V.O.)
Somehow I expected that.

ADRIAN
He used the curse on Hope to get
back at me for using the curse on
Tamara.

JESSICA (V.O.)
So you did kill her?!

ADRIAN
I used the curse on her, but I
didn't know it was going to do
that.

JESSICA (V.O.)
Memema told you not to use--

ADRIAN
Ben is dead too.

JESSICA (V.O.)
Oh my God! How is his wife taking
it?

ADRIAN
She's the one who killed him.

JESSICA (V.O.)
What happened?

ADRIAN
It's a long story Jess, and I'll
explain it to you another time, but
I have another issue to speak with
you about. Memema's Bible.

JESSICA (V.O.)
Yes, the one next to her bed?

ADRIAN
Yes, that one. I need a name from
the family tree.

JESSICA (V.O.)
 Going in that room gives me the
 creeps, what are you looking for?

ADRIAN
 I think her name is Allison or
 Anita, something like that. She's
 Victor's Cousin.

JESSICA (V.O.)
 What does she have to do about all
 of this?

ADRIAN
 Hopefully, she can free my family
 of this curse once and for all. I
 need to find someone in their
 family to remove it.

JESSICA (V.O.)
 If I find her, I'll text you.

ADRIAN
 Just find that name.

JESSICA (V.O.)
 Adrian, Ben was a really nice guy.

ADRIAN
 Yes, he was. I'll look for your
 text.

JESSICA
 Bye.

Adrian hangs up the call.

EXT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Adrian walks out of his apartment building and down the
 street past a diner and hails a cab.

In the diner's window, a Breaking News Update flashes on the
 television. The Headline news banner scrolls -- "*Three
 inmates at the Atlanta Detention Center escape.*"

INT. INSIDE THE DINER - ON THE TV - CONTINUOUS

The headline news banner scrolls across the bottom of the
 screen. A "Breaking News Alert" is posted on the screen. A
 news anchor, BOBBY LITTLE (30s) African American, speaks.

BOBBY LITTLE

This is Bobby Little, Channel 9 News. It's just been reported that three inmates from the Atlanta Detention Center escaped this afternoon. Clarence Doby, Chris Allen and Gerald Hawkins overpowered several Officers, killing one and injuring three others before escaping through an unlocked rear door...

INT. CAB - MOVING - LATER

Adrian signals to the CAB DRIVER.

ADRIAN

Over here, please.

The cab driver pulls over to the corner at W. 45th Street. Adrian gets out of the cab.

INT. QUANTUM BOOKSTORE - DAY

Adrian walks into the store as KWAN KAUN (66) Hindu, Skinny is dusting off the books on the shelves.

KWAN KAUN

Can I help you?

ADRIAN

Yes, I'm looking for a book on curses and spells?

KWAN KAUN

What kind of curse and what do you want the spell to do?

ADRIAN

I don't want to put a spell on anyone. I'm inquiring about a curse that someone has put on me or should I say, my family's bloodline.

KWAN KAUN

There are many, many curses and spells young man, but you have to believe in them before they will work. Most people don't believe so, what kind of curse was placed on you?

ADRIAN

My Father's Father's Father was
cursed by a powerful Warlock and I
have the curse now.

KWAN KAUN

Go on.

ADRIAN

Who can break the curse, a First
Cousin, Uncle, maybe an Aunt?

KWAN KAUN

My friend, if a curse is placed on
you, only the immediate family can
break it. If a father placed it,
then the Father, Son, Daughter or
Cousin can remove it. If the Sister
then a Brother, Son or Daughter of
the Sister, so forth and so on.

ADRIAN

So my only chance is to get someone
in my immediate family to break it.
How do they do it? What can break
the curse?

Kwan reaches up on the bookshelf and pulls down a book. He
opens the book.

KWAN KAUN

It's very important that the one
who breaks the curse uses their
blood to seal the forgiveness of
the original curse and they must
believe. Do you hear me, they must
believe?

Kwan reads from the page. Adrian writes down the passage.

KWAN KAUN (CONT'D)

All is forgiven, and all is
cleared, the curse is lifted,
there's nothing to fear. Those who
are cursed and have taken their
life. The end of this curse is now
in sight. No more agony, death, or
pain and to love you to death will
never remain. A gift of forgiveness
is well in hand, I break this curse
on your family's clan.

ADRIAN

So, they will have to read this and the curse will be lifted?

KWAN KAUN

Yes, but it must be spoken word for word and sealed with three drops of their blood on the paper you wrote on.

Adrian finishes writing down the passage and hands Kwan a stack of bills.

ADRIAN

Thank you, Sir, you've been a big help.

Adrian walks out of the vintage bookstore.

EXT. OUTSIDE QUANTUM BOOKSTORE - CONTINUOUS

Adrian enters the street and his cell RINGS.

ADRIAN

What do you have, Jess?

JESSICA (V.O.)

Her name is Anita Wilkerson-Tandy, she's Victor's Cousin. Isadore was Anita's Mother and Victor's Grandmother.

ADRIAN

That's great!

JESSICA (V.O.)

And get this, she lives in Birmingham Alabama. That's close to you, right?

ADRIAN

Yes. Text me her address and phone number.

JESSICA (V.O.)

Good luck and be careful.

ADRIAN

I will.

Adrian hangs up the phone and dials Hope.

HOPE (V.O.)
I was just thinking about you.

ADRIAN
Jessica found Victor's first cousin
Anita, she lives in Birmingham
Alabama. Do you want to join me?

HOPE (V.O.)
Sure, I was preparing for a case,
but it can wait.

ADRIAN
I need to get a few things from my
apartment and then I'll pick you
up. I'm contacting Anita to let her
know we're coming. See you soon.

Adrian hangs up and hails a taxi. A taxi pulls up and he gets
in.

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Adrian calls to the DRIVER.

ADRIAN
Fifty-First and Westchester,
please.

The driver nods and begins driving.

Adrian cellphone BEEPS. Jessica's text with Anita's
information comes in.

Adrian dials Anita's phone number. A voice belonging to PERRY
CANADY (47) answers the phone.

PERRY (V.O.)
This is the Tandy residence. May I
ask who is calling?

ADRIAN
Yes, my name is Adrian Steele, can
I speak with Mrs. Tandy, please?

PERRY (V.O.)
Mrs. Tandy is taking her evening
swim, what's the nature of your
call?

ADRIAN

Please tell Mrs. Tandy that her cousin, Adrian Steele, needs to talk to her and it's very important.

PERRY (V.O.)

One moment, please.

Adrian waits for a moment. Then --

ANITA (V.O.)

This is Anita Tandy, who is this?

ADRIAN

Hello, you don't know me, but my name is Adrian Steele. I'm your cousin. I'm the last one to see our cousin Victor alive.

There is a slight pause.

ANITA (V.O.)

Victor's dead?

ADRIAN

Yes, is it possible to speak with you concerning an urgent matter?

ANITA (V.O.)

What matter is this concerning?

ADRIAN

I prefer not to talk about it over the phone. Can we meet at your house tonight?

ANITA

Where are you now?

ADRIAN

I'm in Atlanta, but I can leave for Birmingham this evening.

The taxi pulls up to the front of Adrian's condo.

INT. PARKED SILVER KIA SERENTO - DAY - CONTINUOUS

In a stolen Silver Kia parked across the street, Clarence Doby watches Adrian exit the taxi and talk to the Doorman.

Clarence CRIES and MUMBLES to himself, ducking down.

CLARENCE
My Adrian! I need you, Adrian!

EXT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

The building VALET drives Adrian's Maserati to the front of the building. Adrian gets in and drives off.

The stolen Kia follows behind.

INT. SILVER KIA - LATER

Clarence follows as Adrian's car comes to a stop outside of Hope's apartment building. Clarence parks a little ways back.

He watches as Hope gets into Adrian's car, even seeing them kiss through the back windshield.

Clarence ragefully POUNDS the steering wheel and drives off after Adrian's car.

INT. ADRIAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Adrian and Hope hold hands as Adrian drives.

ADRIAN
I contacted Anita and she's expecting us.

HOPE
Is she going to help you?

ADRIAN
I haven't asked her yet.

HOPE
She needs to know what's going on.

Adrian sighs hopelessly.

HOPE (CONT'D)
Anyway, I received a call from Peter McIntosh, one of the board members of SolarTech. They have an emergency board meeting scheduled for next week. Since I'm Victor's successor, they need me to come to England for a vote.

ADRIAN
Are you going?

HOPE
McIntosh hinted that they may try
to buy me out.

ADRIAN
Hinted?

HOPE
Yes, from what he implied, they
don't want me to head the company.

ADRIAN
We'll see about that, we're going!

HOPE
I told you before, I didn't want to
run SolarTech. My goals have
nothing to do with running a
company I know nothing about, plus
if Victor built it, it has to be
shady.

ADRIAN
Nevertheless, you have control of
SolarTech and--

HOPE
My mind is made up Adrian, I'm
going to sell my shares in it. I'm
a lawyer, not a CEO.

ADRIAN
Get some rest. Birmingham is about
two hours away, we should get there
before midnight.

EXT. TANDY RESIDENCE - BIRMINGHAM ALABAMA - EVENING

Adrian drives up to the Tandy residence. There is a speaker
box on the main gate. Adrian pushes the button on the box.

PERRY (V.O.)
Hello, may I help you?

ADRIAN
This is Adrian Steele, Mrs. Tandy
is expecting me.

PERRY (V.O.)
Please pull your vehicle around to
the back and park it along the side
of the garage. I will meet you
there.

ADRIAN

Thank you.

The huge gates open and Adrian's car drives through toward the back of the house.

As the gates close, Clarence runs through them and ducks out of sight behind several bushes.

EXT. GARAGE PARKING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Adrian parks the car near the back of the residence, passing by a SECURITY GUARD STATION where a SECURITY GUARD (20s), African American, waves them through.

The back door to the mansion opens and Perry Canady walks outside. Adrian and Hope get out of the Maserati.

PERRY

Welcome. My name is Perry.

ADRIAN

Nice to meet you. I'm Adrian, and this is Hope Atkinson.

They all shake hands.

PERRY

Please follow me. I'll show you to your room.

Clarence quietly looks around the corner of the house. Adrian, Hope and Perry walk into the house. Clarence hides in the pool house.

INT. TANDY MANSION INTERIOR - EVENING

Perry leads Hope and Adrian up the long spiral staircase.

HOPE

Wow, this is beautiful.

ADRIAN

It sure is.

Hope's eyes look down onto the massive living room area.

INT. TANDY MANSION/ GUEST BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Perry opens the door to the guest bedroom and places their bags on the bed as Adrian and Hope shuffle in behind him.

PERRY

I hope you enjoy your accommodations. Breakfast is at 9:00.

ADRIAN

Thank you, Perry.

Perry exits and closes the door.

Hope stretches across the bed.

HOPE

Oh, my God Adrian, this bed is wonderful.

Adrian lays across the bed next to Hope.

ADRIAN

I haven't been this close to you before.

HOPE

Do you feel differently towards me now?

ADRIAN

Nah.

They begin to kiss. Hope undresses. Adrian looks at her and smiles.

HOPE

Let's see what kind of trouble we can get into.

Adrian reaches over and turns off the light.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Oh, Adrian!

INT. POOLHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Clarence is huddled against the wall crying uncontrollably, looking up as the light in the guest room turns off.

INT. TANDY MANSION INTERIOR - MORNING

Adrian looks out the window at the beautifully manicured backyard area.

ADRIAN
This place is beautiful!

HOPE
I can't wait for the tour.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

ADRIAN
Yes?

PERRY (O.S.)
Breakfast will be served in 15
minutes.

ADRIAN
Thank you, we're on our way.

Hope adjusts her dress and kisses Adrian.

HOPE
Everything will be OK, I'm sure
she'll help you.

INT. TANDY MANSION INTERIOR - CONTINUOUS

Adrian and Hope walk out of the bedroom and down the spiral staircase. JASON TANDY (57), is sitting at the kitchen table reading the paper.

JASON
You must be Adrian and Hope. I'm
Jason Tandy, nice to meet you.

HOPE
It's a pleasure to meet you, Jason.

ADRIAN
Hello Jason.

JASON
Please, please have a seat. Perry!

Perry walks out of the kitchen area.

PERRY
Yes, Mr. Tandy.

JASON
Can you get our guests something to
drink?

ADRIAN
Yes, some coffee for me, please.

HOPE
I'll have a coffee too.

JASON
Three coffees please Perry. Make mine with a shot of brandy.

PERRY
Yes, sir.

JASON
When Anita told me she had another cousin, I couldn't believe it. I was so used to seeing Victor, I never knew there were other relatives. I'm so sorry to hear about his passing.

Adrian and Hope look at each other.

ADRIAN
It broke us up in pieces too. Is Anita coming down?

JASON
She'll be down in a few. You know women, she has to make a grand entrance.

Adrian and Hope laugh.

JASON (CONT'D)
So tell me, what do you do?

ADRIAN
Well, Jason, I don't do anything, I'm very well off financially. I dabble a little with investments, but I mainly travel and have a good time. And you?

JASON
I own a mortgage and real estate company. I'm the biggest Commercial Realtor in Birmingham.

HOPE
Jason, I love your home.

JASON

Thanks, but it's all Anita's work.
I just give her the money.

EXT. TANDY GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The garage alarm is deactivated and Perry walks into the garage and unlocks the door to the pantry and gets a jar of strawberry preserves. Clarence charges in and Perry is startled, dropping the jar of preserves on the floor.

PERRY

Who in the blazes are you and what
are you doing here?

Clarence is holding a large wrench. The wrench comes down on Perry's head. Clarence's arm begins coming up and down over and over again splattering Perry's blood into Clarence's face as his arm swings upwards.

EXT. TANDY GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The Security Guard tip-toes around the perimeter, hearing the commotion coming from inside the garage. He places a hand over his gun and slides along the edge of the garage, then peers in the window --

His eyes grow wide as he sees Clarence standing over Perry's lifeless body, covered in blood.

He quickly ducks away from the window and holds still.

INT. TANDY MANSION DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Adrian, Jason and Hope walk into the dining room. The dining room table is covered with breakfast food.

JASON

Where is Perry with our coffee?

ANITA (60), walks down the long spiral staircase, a beautiful silk dress flowing around her medium-frame.

JASON (CONT'D)

Honey, you look gorgeous!

Anita and Jason kiss.

ANITA

Thank you, darling.

JASON

Anita, this is Adrian and his friend, Hope.

Anita looks Adrian up and down.

ANITA

So we're cousins?

ADRIAN

Yes, yes we are. Nice to meet you.

ANITA

Victor never told me about our extended family.

ADRIAN

He wasn't a big believer in finding us. You have many, many relatives waiting to meet you.

ANITA

So, what's this pressing issue you need to discuss with me?

They all sit down at the breakfast table.

ADRIAN

Well, Anita, it's about Victor. He's responsible for many many deaths.

ANITA

What?

ADRIAN

He had a hand in the deaths of at least a hundred women throughout Europe and some here in the States. He also tried to kill Hope.

ANITA

You're talking about the curse?

HOPE

You know about that?

ANITA

Look around you, Victor paid for most of what you see.

ADRIAN

I don't understand?

ANITA

I found out what he was doing years ago! So he paid for my silence, and I promised never to discuss this with anyone and in return, he continued to provide me with all the luxuries you see here.

HOPE

You knew about this monster for years and allowed him to get away with killing all those innocent women?

ANITA

Don't sound so bitter, child, I really didn't have a choice.

HOPE

You're damn right I'm bitter! That crazy motherfucker almost added me to his list!

ANITA

Please keep your voice down.

ADRIAN

Anita, we can't bring back any of those women, but you can help us now put a stop to this.

ANITA

Help you do what?

ADRIAN

Remove the curse on the bloodline of my family.

ANITA

But Victor was a Locke.

ADRIAN

No Anita, he's actually a Steele using the Locke name.

INT. TANDY MANSION DINING ROOM - LATER

Adrian wraps up explaining the story to Anita.

ADRIAN

So, only you can help break the curse once and for all.

Anita shifts her eyes as she takes the information in.

ANITA
And he married Hope?

HOPE
Yes.

ANITA
So that leaves you to take over
SolarTech?

ADRIAN
Yes, she was already approached by
the Board of Directors to
relinquish Victor's seat.

ANITA
I want SolarTech.

ADRIAN
What?

ANITA
I want SolarTech and in return,
I'll help you.

Adrian turns to Hope.

ADRIAN
What do you say?

HOPE
You know how I feel about this. If
we can end this now, let's do it.

ANITA
Do we have a deal?

Anita looks over at Jason.

ADRIAN
Yes, we have a deal. Now, I have
something for you to read, but you
have to read it word for word.
You'll also have to put three drops
of your blood on the paper to seal
the spell.

The kitchen door swings open and a bloody Clarence enters
with a bloody wrench. He walks over and looks at Adrian.

CLARENCE
Adrian, I'm so happy to see you. I missed you, baby!

ADRIAN
Doby?!

ANITA
What is this, who are you?

CLARENCE
Shut up, bitch! Are you sleeping with my Adrian too?

Clarence walks over to Anita. Jason stands in front of her.

JASON
I don't know who you are, but we don't keep money in the house, now get out of here before I--

ADRIAN
Jason, please be quiet!

Clarence looks over at Hope.

CLARENCE
You little bitch! I saw you kissing my Adrian yesterday!

He grabs her by the throat.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
I don't like anyone kissing my Adrian except me!

Clarence's lifts the wrench to strike Hope.

ADRIAN
Clarence, stop it!

Clarence stops the wrench in mid-motion.

CLARENCE
I followed you from Atlanta. I had to be with you, Adrian, I just had to hold you. I can't let anyone come between us again!

ADRIAN
Let her go, Clarence. She could never come between us or our love because she's my sister!

CLARENCE

Your sister!? Then why did you two share the same bed last night? Do you think I'm stupid, do you think you can lie to me and make me look like a fool?!

ADRIAN

Listen to me, Clarence: if you love me then put down the wrench. I'll come over to you, so we can be together.

Clarence starts to shake as he fights the curse.

CLARENCE

All I want to do is love you!
That's all, I just want to love you!

Clarence starts to cry and looks down into Hope's eyes. The hand holding the wrench begins to raise.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

She's going to stand in my way,
she's going to stand in our way of
ever being happy together. She has
to die!

ADRIAN

Clarence, please don't do this. She doesn't have to die.

CLARENCE

You can only have one lover!

Clarence raises the wrench above his head and before the wrench strikes Hope, a gunshot is heard and Clarence slumps over on top of Hope.

The Security Guard is standing in the doorway of the kitchen pointing his service revolver. Adrian runs over to Hope and lifts Clarence's motionless body off of her.

ADRIAN

Oh my God, are you OK?!

Hope looks up at Adrian.

HOPE

Get rid of this fucking curse
Adrian, I can't keep going through
this!

Adrian hugs Hope and kisses her.

The Security Guard looks over at Anita and Jason.

SECURITY GUARD
That man killed your assistant,
Perry. He's in the garage, dead.

Anita is stunned.

ANITA
Oh my God, not Perry!

JASON
How did you know to come in here?

SECURITY GUARD
The silent alarm in the garage went
off and when I went to scope it out
I heard the commotion inside. I've
already called the police.

Adrian takes Anita's hand.

ADRIAN
Anita, I know this is a shock to
you, but you now see what the curse
can do. You have to believe in what
you speak before the curse can be
broken.

ANITA
Perry has worked for us for 15
years and now he's dead?! How am I
going to tell his husband?

ADRIAN
Anita! I'm sure Perry was a good
man, but I need you to focus.

Adrian hands Anita the words.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)
I need for you to read this word
for word. Remember Anita, you have
to believe.

ANITA
Yeah, sure.

ADRIAN
Let's go into the next room, so
we'll have a little privacy.

Adrian and Anita walk towards the study.

JASON
Do you need me to go with you?

ANITA
No dear, we'll be fine.

HOPE
Adrian?

ADRIAN
I know. I love you too.

INT. TANDY'S MANSION STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Adrian and Anita enter the study. Adrian closes the heavy sliding doors. Anita takes a deep breath.

ADRIAN
Are you ready?

ANITA
Yes.

Anita holds the piece of paper tightly and slowly reads the words.

ANITA (CONT'D)
All is forgiven, and all is
cleared, the curse is lifted,
there's nothing to fear. Those who
are cursed and have taken their
life.

A strong breeze flows heavily through the open window opening the study doors.

ANITA (CONT'D)
The end of this curse is now in
sight. No more agony, death, or
pain and to love you to death will
never remain.

The strong breeze rushes out of the window violently closing the doors.

ANITA (CONT'D)
A gift of forgiveness is well in
hand, I break this curse on your
family's clan.

The study is quite. Anita grabs a paper clip and pokes her finger and drips three drops of blood on the paper.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Is that it?

ADRIAN

I don't know.

ANITA

How do you know if the curse is broken?

ADRIAN

I'll have to whisper it to someone.

A scared and nervous Hope enters the study.

HOPE

Then try it on me, I've already been through it and know what to expect.

ADRIAN

If I try it and it doesn't work, then you're gonna die. And I can't lose you again!

HOPE

You don't have a choice. If it's not broken, then don't let me out of your sight. As long as I'm with you, I won't die.

ADRIAN

Are you sure about this?

HOPE

Yes, do it before I change my mind!

Adrian looks over at Anita and Jason.

ADRIAN

I need for you both to leave the study. If the curse is still present, you won't be affected.

Anita and Jason look at Hope. Anita grabs her hand, lets it go and exits the study.

HOPE

I love you, Adrian.

ADRIAN
I love you too.

Adrian leans towards Hope's ear and softly whispers.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)
Bella.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.