

THE SCRIPT

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FADE IN:

EXT. IRELAND. MORNING. PRESENT DAY.

Solemn music. Woman's voice keening song for dead.

Steady drizzle of rain over fields.

Deserted. One-Lane road leads to small country church.

EXT. COUNTRY CHURCH. SAME.

Beat-up truck parked across the road from church.

TWO MEN, middle-aged, rough laborers, lean against truck, talking, smoking.

Periodically look up and down road, anxiously.

INT. CHURCH

Light trying to peek through the gloomy, darkened interior.

Open coffin before the altar. Inside the CORPSE of a WOMAN, early 30s, dressed in a long cobalt blue dress. Her face is pale and her red hair has traces of gray.

Young woman, MAEVE, eighteen, red-haired Irish beauty, very pale. Dressed in black. She kneels before coffin.

OLD WOMAN, sixties, crouched over, covered in black sits in front row.

Maeve genuflects and crosses herself. Kisses fingers. Traces face of corpse.

MAEVE

Rest in peace, mother.

Stands. A glance at old woman as she exits the church.

EXT. OUTSIDE CHURCH.

Maeve stands alone, in entrance, hiding from the rain.

The two men turn their backs to Maeve, crossing themselves repeatedly and mumbling "Hail Marys."

BACK TO INT. CHURCH

The old woman shuffles forward. She leans over the corpse and mumbles some words.

Suddenly, the dead woman's eyes open and her hand shoots up. Grasps old woman's head and pulls it down. Whispers in her ear. Releases old woman who removes a gold thumb ring with a bright emerald stone in the center from the corpse.

Old woman stands and exits church.

EXT. CHURCH

Old woman joins Maeve. She puts the gold ring on the young girl's thumb. Whispers in her ear.

The women leave church grounds and shuffle off down road together.

The two men watch them leave. They cross themselves repeatedly.

TALL MAN

Let's get this over with quickly.
Priest'll give us holy hell if he
finds out we let them use the
church.

The men enter the church with a wheelbarrow.

A few moments later, they exit with a closed coffin perched atop the wheelbarrow. They close the church door.

They take the coffin across the road to unhallowed ground.

They lower the coffin into the grave. They mumbled and cross themselves before filling in the grave.

EXT. LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA. TWO WEEKS LATER. EVENING.

Evening sun.

LA VIE ANTÉRIEURE. AN EXCLUSIVE FRENCH RESTAURANT.

Taxis pull up outside and couples get out. Greeted by the doorman of the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT-SAME.

Crowded. Waiters move between tables.

Two brothers, AIDEN and CONNLA O'NEILL, are tucked away in an isolated corner.

Aiden, early 40, is casually dressed: silk shirt, no tie, tan slacks, Italian loafers, no socks.

Connla, mid 40s, is dressed more formally: Light blazer, handkerchief in top pocket, silk shirt, tie, dark pants, laced shoes and socks.

They stop talking as the wine waiter pours drinks. He leaves.

AIDEN
(arms gesture)
Check this, brother!

Connla sighs and rolls his eyes.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Thunder, lightning.

Connla grabs Aiden's arm which almost hits a waiter.

CONNLA
Less dramatics!

AIDEN
Clearing in a dark forest.
Abandoned two-story house. Old VW
van pulls up outside.

Connla stops his brother.

CONNLA
OK, Aiden! I get it! Another
bullshit horror movie pitch.

He waves his arms dramatically, imitating his brother.

CONNLA (CONT'D)
Overgrown driveway to house.
Shuttered doors and windows creak
and swing in the howling wind.

Aiden smiles and gives Connla the thumbs up.

EXT. FOREST. NIGHT.

Dark forest. Fog swirls around the two-story house.

Four teenagers get out of VW van. Action as described in V.O.

AIDEN (V.O.)

Four early twenty somethings. Two males, two females, shorts and T-shirts.

CONNLA (V.O.)

Knowing you, the females have no bras. Drenched T-shirts cling to their bodies. Both wrap themselves in fear around blonde muscular male.

BACK TO RESTAURANT.

CONNLA

How am I doing?

AIDEN

Passably.

BACK TO OLD HOUSE.

As described.

CONNLA (V.O.)

Other male is a geek. Glasses misted over. Cellphone in top pocket. He's left to carry all the backpacks.

BACK TO RESTAURANT. PRESENT.

Aiden laughs. He toasts his brother.

AIDEN

Connla, don't forget the bit where the geek is killed by the hunchbacked butler . . .

CONNLA

. . . leaving the hunk to screw the two young women who run around topless throughout the rest of the movie.

(pause)

Now can we order?

AIDEN

But what if the nerd is the hunk's brother? Didn't think of that, did you?

Connla shakes head. He hands Aiden a menu.

CONNLA

You deal with your bullshit fantasy, and I'll face everyday reality in the courtroom.

The waiter stops at the table. The brothers point to items on the menu. Waiter leaves.

AIDEN

What if . . . ?

CONNLA

Holy Mary, mother of God, no more what ifs! Here's the real story. My horny brother is alone in his office with a twenty-something female. Big smile. Eyes glowing. Aiden O'Brien, hotshot Hollywood literary agent, feigns interest as he listened to her going-nowhere script. And what is my brother really thinking?

AIDEN

Take your top off, sweetheart. I listen better when I see those puppies jiggle.

Connla buries his head in his hands.

CONNLA

I thank God I'm gay.

Waiter fills their drinks. Leaves.

CONNLA (CONT'D)

Don't forget tomorrow night. Mine and Shawn's three-year anniversary. Do you have a date?

Pause.

CONNLA (CONT'D)

No, not Miss "Four teenagers in the rain." So soon. Here's my free legal advice--again. Give her the usual. "Definite talent.

(MORE)

CONNLA (CONT'D)

Enter some contests. Get some reviews." And send her on her way.

Commotion. MAITRE D' and WAITERS try to subdue Maeve, now dressed in tennis shoes, jeans, and dark-green hoodie. She waves a script and points to Aiden.

MAEVE

Give it to him! He's got to read it!

Connla leans across to his brother.

CONNLA

It's her! Four teenagers and a VW has found you out, brother!

Aiden shakes his head.

Waiters try to subdue Maeve. She thrusts the script into the Maitre D's hands.

MAEVE

He has to read it! He doesn't have much time left!

The customers watch as the waiters wrestle the young woman out of the restaurant.

Maitre D' approaches the brothers.

MAÎTRE D'

I do apologize, Mr. O'Brien. We try to maintain the strictest privacy.

Aiden waves off the excuse. Points to the script.

AIDEN

You can dump that!

Maitre D' leaves with script. Dumps it.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

(to Connla)

No, that was not Miss four teenagers and VW. Never seen her before. Irish accent. Cute.

Connla points to food. They eat.

EXT. OUTSIDE RESTAURANT. DUSK. LATER.

Brothers exit the restaurant.

Aiden hails a taxi.

As he enters the taxi, he sees Maeve across the street staring at him.

INT. TAXI

Aiden shifts in his seat, looking for Maeve. She's gone.

A driver, RUBEN, bald, latino, turns to face Aiden.

RUBEN
Where you headed, boss?

AIDEN
Haddington House Apartments.

RUBEN
Name's Ruben.

AIDEN
(looking out of the
window)
Whatever.

The car edges out into traffic.

Sudden lurch as taxi races forward at breakneck speed.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
What the hell?

Ruben has gone. An OLD CRONE stares back at Aiden. She has long gray unkempt hair, beady eyes, and a long nose and chin. She is dressed all in black and shrieks with laughter as she drives.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Ruben?

OLD CRONE
(cackling)
Níl mórán ama aige! He doesn't
have much time!

EXT. STREET-SAME

Taxi lurches back and forth at breakneck speed.

INT. TAXI

Aiden thrown from side to side.

AIDEN

Watch the road, you stupid cow!

The driver cackles. She throws the steering wheel back and forth, cackling with delight.

EXT.

The taxi rushes through red lights. Vehicles crash. The taxi screeches around corners.

EXT. HADDINGTON HOUSE APARTMENTS.

The taxi screeches to a halt.

INT. TAXI.

The driver turns around. It's Ruben again.

AIDEN

What the fuck was that?

RUBEN

Sorry about the delay, boss. Lot of traffic out tonight.

EXT. HADDINGTON HOUSE APARTMENTS.

Aiden leaps out of the taxi. He throws dollars in through the driver's window and rushes into the apartment building.

INT. LOBBY

JERRY, an older, black uniformed desk attendant, looks up.

JERRY

You okay, Mr. O'Brien? Look like you seen a ghost!

Aiden shakes head.

Jerry hands him a script.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Young lady dropped this by. Said
you left it at the restaurant.

AIDEN
(pointing to the trash
bin)
Get rid of it! If she comes again,
tell her this is not the way it's
done.

Jerry dumps the script.

Aiden gestures to elevator.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
She didn't . . . ?

Jerry shakes his head.

INT. EIGHTH FLOOR.

Aiden exits the elevator. He looks up and down the corridor
before exiting to his apartment.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM

Aiden enters. Neat, well-maintained apartment. A large sofa
and full-size television. Contemporary furniture.

Aiden exits to kitchen. He returns with bottle of Irish
whiskey and a glass. He settles on the sofa and pours
himself a drink.

Closes eyes. Open them when he hears noises outside.

EXT. BALCONY OFF LIVING ROOM.

Aiden appears on the balcony, drink in hand.

In an opposite apartment, TWO YOUNG WOMEN, naked, shriek as
they battle each other.

AIDEN
Don't rush, my beauties! This is
too good to miss!

Aiden ducks inside apartment. He reappears with a camera
with a telescopic lens wrapped around his neck.

He focuses on it on the two women.

SHORT WOMAN struggles. TALL WOMAN digs her claws into Short woman's neck. Her nails rip the skin red raw drawing blood.

Short woman collapses. The tall woman takes the limp body and hurls it off the balcony.

The tall woman stares at Aiden. Manic smile. He drops camera so it falls around his stomach.

She transforms. Her eyes glow fiery-red. Her outstretched arms become huge, bat-like wings with talons for fingernails. Long horns grow from the top of her head. She has a long tail of fire.

TALL WOMAN
(screaming as she flies at
Aiden, talons stretched)
His name is Aiden O'Brien!

INT. APARTMENT.

Aiden dives back inside his apartment and slams shut the sliding glass door. Locks it. There is a flapping of wings and shrieks outside.

TALL WOMAN
Aiden O'Brien! His name is Aiden
O'Brien!

Aiden waits until noise quietens. He glances outside. Slowly opens glass door and pokes his head outside.

EXT. BALCONY.

Aiden emerges. Looks to balcony opposite. Nothing.

Aiden looks down. A figure steps from shadows below.

It's Maeve. She rubs the gold thumb ring as she stares up at him. Aiden dives back inside.

INT. FRONT DESK. NEXT MORNING.

Jerry is working on the on computer.

Aiden exits the elevator. He looks exhausted.

AIDEN
Anything unusual happen last night,
Jerry.

JERRY

Not that I know of, Mr. O'Brien.
You get any sleep, or you stay up
all night reading them scripts and
giving yourself nightmares? A body
needs sleep, you know.

Aiden gestures to front door. Jerry opens it for Aiden.

EXT. OUTSIDE BUILDING.

Jerry signals taxi. One pulls in.

Aiden stares inside the taxi.

AIDEN

Let me see your authorization card.

LEONEL, the driver, young, latino shows it to Aiden. He
studies it.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Okay, Leonel. 1350 Wilshire. And
drive slowly, understand?

LEONEL

Slow it is.

Aiden gets in. The taxi pulls out into traffic.

INT. TAXI

A rosary, small family pictures, etc, hang from the rear-view
mirror.

AIDEN

That's one helluva lot of bling you
got hanging there.

LEONEL

Rosary beads, crucifix, Mother
Mary, . . .

AIDEN

What about those charm things?

LEONEL

Mucho milagros. Miracle charms.
From my grandmother. Protection
for me and my passengers.

AIDEN
From what? That Chupa-- thing?

LEONEL
No names! You name it, it come
looking for you.

AIDEN
You believe that? Superstitious
crap, you ask me.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDINGS

Taxi stops outside the building. Aiden gets out. Hands
driver fare.

DRIVER
Got you here safely, boss. Outside
the cab, you ain't got no good-luck
charms. You're on your own.

Aiden stares after the taxi as it drives off.

INT. OUTER OFFICE. AIDEN O'BRIEN LITERARY MANAGEMENT.

BARBARA COLLINS, 50s, secretary, sits at her desk. Pants
suit, high heels, stylish round-rimmed glasses.

Aiden enters.

BARBARA
Morning, Aiden. Appointment
calendar on your desk. Brother's
party tonight. Thank you for
buying the large bottle of
Jameson's they wanted, Barbara.
And it's all wrapped. Thank you
again, Barbara.

Hands him the present. Aiden kisses her cheek. He mouths
thanks.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Young woman waiting for me when I
arrived. Practically threw this
script at me before she left. Said
you had to read it.

She laughs. Looks at The Script.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 Calls it, "The Script." A nothing
 title . And then there's some
 strange language underneath. No
 name, phone, email.

She offers it to Aiden. He refuses.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 I glanced at a few pages. Funeral
 scene in Ireland. Young, old
 women. Suddenly switches to
 restaurant . . .

AIDEN
 Here? In LA?

BARBARA
 Yes. Two brothers talking.
 Interruption. Young woman trying
 to get one brother to read a
 script. Refuses. Gives it to
 Maitre D'. Leaves. Next scene in
 a taxi. Driver changes into old
 woman. Blah, blah! blah! Boring!
 Not worth your time, Aiden.

She flicks through The Script.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 Rest of script is blank pages.
 Don't these people know the basics
 of screenwriting?

She continues to flick through it.

AIDEN
 Dump it! Dump the damned thing!

Barbara drops The Script in trash.

BARBARA
 (shocked at his reaction)
 Consider it dumped. Ready for your
 first client?

Aiden nods. Enters office.

Barbara opens outer office door and signals to YOUNG MAN, 25,
 suit and tie. She points to Aiden's inner office.

INT. AIDEN'S INNER OFFICE.

Aiden signals young man to chair and gestures "pitch."

YOUNG MAN

The Tutor is a horror movie. The central figure is an older woman, the tutor of young girl abandoned by her mother. She gives the girl a doll . . .

Young man continues. His voice fades. Aiden writes on a pad.

BARBARA (V.O.)

Funeral scene. Ireland.
Restaurant, LA. Two brothers.
Young woman. Script. Taxi. Old woman.

Young man finishes his pitch. Aiden glances at "notes." There's nothing written.

AIDEN

Your pith shows real promise.
Enter it in some film festivals.
Get some feedback. Then come back.

Stands. Shakes hands. Young man leaves.

Aiden looks around. Door opens and YOUNG WOMAN, 35, enters.

He gestures for her to sit and begin pitch.

YOUNG WOMAN

Brain Injury is a horror movie. A young boy who suffers a traumatic brain injury. He sees visions of the future. .

Voice fades again.

SUPER

Series of various CLIENTS' faces as they pitch to Aiden.

Images and V.O. voices continue as Aiden writes.

VOICES

He visits a graveyard with his grandmother . . . Clown with face locked in smile . . . Teenagers on drugs in graveyard . . . Ouija board . . .

(MORE)

VOICES (CONT'D)

They find an old book in attic . .
. Coven of witches in forest . . .
Face in mirror not his. . . Book of
Shadows . . .

Aiden scribbles notes: "Two women. Naked. Apartment opposite. Taller one rips apart shorter one. Hurls her over balcony. Huge bat figure flies at me. Young woman looking up at me same as restaurant."

As clients finish.

AIDEN

Film festivals. Feedback. Come
back. Real promise.

Stands. Shakes hands. Last client leaves.

END SUPER.

Aiden phones.

AIDEN

Barbara. No more. I've got a
splitting headache. I need to
clear my head for Connla's party
tonight. I'll grab a burger and
fries and take a walk. No clients.
No phone calls.

EXT. PARK. MIDDAY.

Sunny. There are flower gardens, and a large fountain in the center.

Aiden sits on a bench. He has burger, fries, and a large soda.

Beautiful middle-aged woman, dressed in a long cobalt blue dress sits on the side of the fountain. Her body sways back and forth as she keens and combs her waist-length hair, red with traces of gray.

She stops singing and turns, unsmiling, to stare at Aiden.

Aiden looks down at his food. When he looks up, she has gone.

Aiden stands and throws his unfinished food in the trash. Leaves.

EXT. CONNLA AND SHAWN'S HOUSE IN MALIBU. THAT EVENING.

A taxi pulls up. Aiden exits.

INT. HOME.

The living room is crowded.

SHAWN, Connla's partner, 35, tall, handsome, silk shirt and slacks greets Aiden.

Aiden gives Shawn the wrapped bottle of whiskey.

SHAWN

You remembered! Or was it that
sweetheart of a secretary, Barbara,
who remembered for you?

Nods. He knows

SHAWN (CONT'D)

I don't suppose you convinced your
mother to come? Still hasn't met
her charming son-in-law. Who
knows? Maybe one day.

Gesturing to the group.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Bevy of young ladies to keep you
entertained, Aiden. Get yourself a
drink. I'll go thank Barbara for
buying us your gift.

He leaves.

Aiden sees Barbara. Crosses to her.

AIDEN

(to Barbara)
That young woman . . .

BARBARA

You mean Miss "Four Teenagers in a
Haunted House"? She's over there,
waving to you. Her name's Janet in
case you forgot. Which you did.
And you also forgot you invited her
here.

Janet waves to them.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

She's almost falling out of her dress. One good sneeze and she'd be naked! Do you plan on taking her home with you?

AIDEN

Not here. The young woman with the script called The Script. Is she here?

Barbara looks around.

BARBARA

The one with the thumb ring?

AIDEN

Thumb ring?

BARBARA

Didn't I mention her gold thumb ring with a bright emerald stone in the center? Hypnotizing. Kept rubbing it.

Looks around again.

BARBARA

No, don't see her.

AIDEN

Tell me if you do

BARBARA

Why the sudden interest? Bit young for you.

Janet interrupts.

JANET

Thanks for inviting me. It's so exciting.

AIDEN

Janet, right? Let me catch up with you in a minute. Got some questions for my brother-in-law.

Aiden grabs Shawn and pulls him aside.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

We need to talk.

SHAWN

We? Anxious to share one of your horror stories again, Aiden? Remember, you're from the States. I'm from Ireland, the old country. We still don't like talking about these things. It gives us nightmares.

AIDEN

This young woman. Your brother knows her. She was in the restaurant last night.

Shawn rolls eyes.

SHAWN

Yes, he told me! Made quite a scene.

AIDEN

She had this script. Quick version. Two women making out.

SHAWN

Here we go! Another middle-aged, straight man's fantasy.

AIDEN

One rips the other to shreds before she tosses her off balcony.

SHAWN

Well that's a little different, I suppose.

AIDEN

So then the taller one, the one still on the balcony transforms into a creature with burning red eyes, bat-like wings, talons, and a fiery tail.

Shawn looks very uncomfortable. Stares intently at Aiden.

SHAWN

Did this thing call out a name? Your name?

AIDEN

Yes!

Shawn very uncomfortable.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Come on, Shawn, you can't leave me hanging.

SHAWN

There is such a creature in Irish mythology, but that's all I want to say.

AIDEN

For fuck's sake, why so uncomfortable? Who or what is she?

SHAWN

Listen to me! Promise you'll stay away from that woman. Both the writer and her script. I don't suppose this script has a beautiful woman, in a long blue dress, crying near some water and combing her long hair as she sings.

AIDEN

And what if it did?

SHAWN

Did this script also have a huge black dog with burning red eyes? Or maybe some tiny figures with a goat-like faces and long ears?

AIDEN

Leprechauns? I thought they were friendly little fellows.

SHAWN

No, not leprechauns. And these are not friendly, believe me.

Shawn turns away.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

That's enough, Aiden! You may be able to hold this stuff at arm's length, but I can't.

AIDEN

But . . .

SHAWN

I said enough! I have other guests.

Moves away.

Janet grabs Aiden.

JANET

I know some of these people are in the business, Mr. O'Brien. Can I call you Aiden?

He nods.

She wraps her arm around his.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT. LATER.

Aiden and Janet enter. They're drunk. Aiden guides Janet to the sofa. He offers her a drink.

AIDEN

We can talk about your script.

JANET

(seductively}
You mean after?

She giggles as he leads her to the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM.

Both undress.

They kiss and fondle in bed.

AIDEN

So who gets the girls? The hunk or the geek?

JANET

Maybe the hunchbacked butler gets all four! Girls and boys!

AIDEN

Naughty, naughty!

Both laugh.

Aiden rolls on top of the naked Janet.

INT. BEDROOM. LATER.

Aiden staggers to bathroom. Janet sleeps.

INT. BATHROOM.

Aiden closes door.

He splashes water on his face. Checks himself in mirror.

A low growling at the door. Growling gets louder. Snarling Banging and scratching at door.

Aiden locks door. Puts his shoulder to the door as the thing outside crashes against it.

The noise stops.

Aiden opens door cautiously. He looks around. Nothing.

INT. BEDROOM.

Shambles. The sheets and drapes are ripped to shreds.

The young woman is dead, her body torn. She is covered in blood.

Large letters, written in blood above bed: Ní fhaigheann an tam atá caite bás!

Aiden take a photo of the writing with his cell phone.

INT. LIVING ROOM.

Aiden shuts the bedroom door and rushes to the phone.

AIDEN

Jerry! Get up here immediately!

He stands at room door, waiting.

Knock.

Aiden checks spy hole.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

That you, Jerry?

JERRY

Sure is, Mr. O'Brien. What you needing this time of night?

Aiden opens the door. Jerry enters.

Aiden glances up and down hallway.

He points Jerry to bedroom.

AIDEN

Tell me what you see in there.

Jerry opens bedroom door and looks inside.

JERRY

What am I supposed to see, Mr. O'Brien?

AIDEN

The woman, the blood, the sheets, the drapes. The writing on the wall.

Jerry shakes head.

JERRY

Don't see nothing like that, Mr. O'Brien, sir.

Aiden rushes to bedroom.

BACK TO BEDROOM.

The room is tidy. The bed is made, untouched.

The Script lies on the bed. Aiden picks it up.

Aiden compares the photo on his cell with the language on The Script.

AIDEN

You see these words? They're the same as on this script I got.

Jerry looks confused.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

What about the young woman? The one I brought back last night from my brother's party?

JERRY

You didn't come back with no woman, Mr. O'Brien. Came home alone.

AIDEN

Are you sure?

JERRY

Positive. Ain't much I miss 'round here, Mr. O'Brien.

Aiden paces floor.

AIDEN

Are there any animals in the building? Dogs?

JERRY

None. Regulations. No animals.

AIDEN

What about that script I asked you to throw in the trash yesterday?

He gives Jerry The Script. Jerry glances at it.

He shakes his head.

JERRY

No. Didn't give no script, Mr. O'Brien. You had this one with you when you came in last night. Tucked under your arm. Took it upstairs with you.

Jerry uncomfortable as Aiden stares at him.

JERRY (CONT'D)

That all, Mr. O'Brien. Must get back to the front desk. Can I get you anything before I leave?

Aiden shakes his head.

Jerry exits.

Aiden phones.

AIDEN

Connla. Is Shawn awake? No, don't wake him. Tell him I'll come by the university tomorrow. I need to talk. Tell him it's urgent.

Puts down phone.

Switches on TV. Cartoons. Eyes wide open. Looks around.

Grips The Script to chest tightly.

INT. OUTER OFFICE. NEXT MORNING.

Aiden paces floor. Barbara enters.

BARBARA
Someone's in early. You didn't
stay long at the party last night.

AIDEN
And I left with--?

BARBARA
You left alone. Janet was asking
after you, but--.

AIDEN
And that young woman? The one who
left the no-name script?

BARBARA
Never saw her all night.

Aiden hands her The Script.

AIDEN
This is the script she left, right?
Read a couple more pages!

Barbara puzzled. Reads The Script.

BARBARA
The central figure is Aiden. Your
name. He's in the bathroom. Hears
growling at the door. Scratching.
Sounds like a huge dog. Something
about a woman being torn to shreds.
Bloody writing on the wall.

She flicks through the next few pages.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
That's it! Blank pages.

AIDEN
Shred it! Shred the fucking thing!

Barbara looks at Aiden, troubled. Feeds The Script into
shredder.

High-pitched screaming forces Aiden to hold his ears.

BARBARA
Are you okay?

AIDEN
Don't you hear--?

Barbara shakes head.

Aiden rushes to inner office.

INT. AIDEN'S OFFICE.

Aiden stares at pile of scripts on his desk. Whisperings and chatterings from around the room.

Tiny figures scurry across the ceiling and walls.

Aiden's clasps hands over his ears. The sounds grow louder. He collapses in his chair.

A small creature, goat-faced with long rabbit-like ears sticking straight up stares back at him. It's covered in wisps of dark hair. Its smile widens into snarl, baring its long, pointed teeth. It's giant eyes redden as it lunges toward Aiden.

Aiden screams. Swats at figure.

Barbara rushes in.

AIDEN
Get that fucking thing away from
me!

Protects face and head.

BARBARA
I don't see anything, Aiden!

He gradually calms down.

Aiden grabs phone and dials.

AIDEN
Is Peter in? I don't care if he
has a fucking appointment! Tell
him it's me, Aiden O'Brien, and
I'm coming to see him. Now!

He slams down the phone.

Barbara looks around the room. Nothing.

INT. OUTER OFFICE

Aiden rushes into the outer office.

The young woman's script lies on Barbara's desk. Aiden grabs it.

BARBARA

Do you want me to phone for a--?

He's gone.

EXT. STREET

Aiden hails a taxi.

He holds The Script tight against his chest.

INT. TAXI.

Aiden stares at the taxi driver.

The driver checks rear-view mirror, conscious of Aiden hugging The Script close to his chest.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDINGS. LATER.

Aiden exits taxi.

INT. OUTER OFFICE OF PETER BOWLES, PSYCHIATRIST.

Aiden rushes in. FEMALE SECRETARY, 40s, attempts to stop Aiden.

SECRETARY

He's busy with a . . .

Aiden slams The Script on her desk.

AIDEN

Toss the fucking thing! Get it away from me . . . If you can!

He marches to the inner office. Secretary dumps The Script.

INT. INNER OFFICE OF PETER BOWLES, COUNSELOR.

Aiden bursts in as PETER BOWLES, middle-aged, balding, looking over the top of his glasses, talks with OLDER FEMALE CLIENT.

Aiden paces back and forth.

PETER
(to client)
We'll pick this up next time.

Client is about to protest.

AIDEN
He told you to fucking leave.

She leaves.

PETER
She's gone, Aiden. We're alone.

Aiden points to corner where the woman dressed in a long blue dress sits crying as she combs her waist-length red hair.

AIDEN
Then why the fuck is she still here? Get her out of here!

Large crows peck at the window.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
And what about them?

Peter guides him to the chair.

PETER
Yours is a stressful job, Aiden. Reading those scripts everyday can cause . . .

AIDEN
Blah, blah, blah. You've said that to me a thousand times, Peter. "You need to distance yourself from your work, Aiden. Learn to relax. Take a vacation. Meditation classes. Yoga. Are you getting enough sleep?" Blah, blah. Always the same. "Let me prescribe these anti-anxiety pills. These will help you sleep." And let's not forget your spiel about my childhood traumas.

(MORE)

AIDEN (CONT'D)

"Did your father beat you?" No,
no, fucking no!
(and then, looking to the
corder)
And she's still there!

PETER

There is a new pill on the market
that might . . .

AIDEN

Here comes the bullshit! You're
not hearing me, Peter! I'm telling
you. This is fucking different.

He points to the woman.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

She's not in my head. She's behind
you! And what about those goddam
crows pecking at your window?
"Maybe it's time to put you away
for a little while, Aiden. A few
weeks in the funny farm will do you
the world of good."

Aiden takes out his cell phone.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Here! This was written in blood
above my bed.

PETER

It's not a language I know!

AIDEN

I'm telling you, this is different.
I sit through tales of zombies, of
vampires, of headless monsters,
giant praying mantis who bite men's
heads off, a gigantic black widow
spider who drags men into her web
and slowly devours them, and on and
on, day in day out. And the most I
get is a fucking headache! I leave
the office, have a drink, find a
young lady to spend the night with
if I'm in the mood, and that's it.

Pointing to the other corner where the old crone Aiden saw
earlier cackles quietly as she sits knitting.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Meantime I'm sitting here with you,
spilling my fucking guts, and
you're going to tell me you can't
see that woman crying, or that old
woman, in the other corner,
knitting. Maybe there's a pill for
her too!

PETER

Is there anything out of the
ordinary that's happened recently,
Aiden?

AIDEN

No! Scripts, scripts, fucking
scripts! Accept one, reject ninety-
nine point nine! "Strong project,
just not the right fit." Rules of
the game!

PETER

But there must be something.

AIDEN

Nothing, except for this young
woman and this goddam script I keep
trying to get rid of.

Both women jerk their heads to face him. Intense stares.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

But it's still here. I told my
secretary to shred it. She did.
But it's still here. And it'll be
waiting for me when in your outer
office when we're through.

PETER

I think I should prescribe . . .

Aiden stands.

AIDEN

You're nothing but a fucking pimp
for the pharmaceutical industry!

PETER

That's not fair!

AIDEN

My brother's partner comes from
Ireland.

(MORE)

AIDEN (CONT'D)

He says, to talk of these demons,
to use their names, brings them to
life. And I say, Bullshit! He
rattles on about us having detached
ourselves from the mysteries of the
Old Country. And I say, Double
bullshit! And you say, take this
pill, take that pill, take a whole
host of fucking pills. And I say,
triple bullshit! They don't get
rid of the woman, ripped to shreds
in my bed! Or those two goddam
women behind you!

Peter turns.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Fuck this! I shouldn't have come.

He stands.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Jesus! And to think I'm paying you
two hundred bucks an hour!

Pointing to the back of the room.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

And I'll take my lady-friends with
me.

He leaves.

Peter looks around the room.

OUTER OFFICE

To secretary.

AIDEN

Where's the script I gave you?

Secretary retrieves it from trash.

SECRETARY

I thought you wanted me to . . .

Aiden grabs The Script.

AIDEN

Seems to be it's the only fucking
thing keeping me safe these days.

Stares at The Script.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Still no name. Who the hell are
you? What are you?

Stuffs it in briefcase. Leaves.

EXT. STREET

Aiden confronted by YOUNG DRUG ADDICT, 20s, knife in hand.

ADDICT

Money. Wallet. Any valuables.
Make it quick.

Aiden hands over his wallet. Addict grabs it. Rips
briefcase from Aiden's hands.

ADDICT (CONT'D)

Might get something for this piece
of shit.

Addict disappears into an alley.

Sudden roar and screams from the alley.

Aiden rushes to the alley.

A huge, black dog with fiery red eyes tears the Addict to
shreds.

It disappears taking the remnants of the addict with it.
Wallet, money and briefcase are left on ground.

Aiden picks them up. There are words written in blood on the
wall. Aiden checks them against words on The Script. Same.

Aiden rushes to the street and hails taxi.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. LATER

Students walk between classes. Some chat in groups on the
lawn. Some play frisbee.

Aiden waves to Shawn who points to free bench.

Shawn eats his sandwich from paper bag. He places a flask of
coffee on bench. Aiden joins him.

SHAWN

Holy Mary, you look a hell of a sight, Aiden. Have you eaten? We could go to Student Union if you want. Won't be as private.

Aiden shakes head. Takes out cell phone.

AIDEN

What does this say?

Shawn reads.

SHAWN

Irish Gaelic.

AIDEN

Can you translate it?

SHAWN

Ní fhaigheann an tam atá caite bás!
Rough translation, The Past Does
Not Die.

Shawn stares at Aiden.

AIDEN

It was written on my bedroom wall.
In blood.

Aiden shows Shawn The Script.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Some words as here, right? And on the wall of an alley--. Forget it!

SHAWN

In blood on your bedroom wall, you say?

Shawn stares at The Script, then at Aiden. He's troubled.

A bell rings.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

I have to get back to my office hour. Students are . . .

AIDEN

Suddenly you have to leave? Look, there's this nameless young woman, this script and this phrase. What does the fuck does it all mean?

Shawn stands.

SHAWN

I don't know, and I don't want to know!

AIDEN

This is me, Shawn. Your brother-in-law. I need help!

SHAWN

Did you talk to your psychiatrist?

AIDEN

Shawn!

SHAWN

Don't get me involved in this, Aiden! Those things you told me about at the party: the flying monster, the beautiful lady combing her hair. And now the dog. All happening to you, right?

Aiden nods.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

I thought so. You don't get it, do you? They're not just words and stories to me. Things dreamed up to titillate a teenage audience. They're mysteries. Ways of explaining things. Still alive.
(tapping his forehead)
In here.

AIDEN

I need help, Shawn!

Shawn scribbles on a piece of paper.

SHAWN

She'll either help you, or you'll think I'm crazy for sending you to see her. I've got to go.

Shawn rushes off.

EXT. SAN FERNANADO VALLEY. LATER.

Aiden drives his Mercedes through a quiet suburban neighborhood.

Stops his car outside a middle-class home and checks the address Shawn gave him.

He drives to end of street to check the street name.

He returns to home.

AIDEN

Shawn, you're bullshitting me!

Middle-aged WOMAN, typical suburbanite, 45, leggings, oversized sweater, slip-on loafers.

She leaves house with two pre-teen CHILDREN dressed in soccer uniforms.

A van pulls up. The children get in. Wave goodbye to woman.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

You are definitely bullshitting me,
Shawn!

The van with the children pulls away.

Aiden starts his car, preparing to leave.

The woman beckons to Aiden.

She returns to her house, leaving the front door open.

Aiden puts The Script in his briefcase. Gets out of the car and approaches the house.

INT. HOUSE. LIVING ROOM.

Woman, AISLING, is in the kitchen, washing dishes.

AISLING (O.C.)

Come in, Aiden. Shawn told me to expect you. Find yourself a seat. I'll bring you some coffee.

Aiden looks around.

AISLING (O.C.) (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Not what you expected, eh? Shawn told me about your line of work. I suppose you want beaded curtains, soft music, incense and an old woman with a crystal ball.

(MORE)

AISLING (O.C.) (CONT'D)
"Cross my palm with silver." And
don't forget a large black cat
sitting on the table staring at
you?

She laughs. Exits kitchen with two cups of coffee.

AISLING (CONT'D)
Give me time and I'll slip into my
witch's costume and come flying in
on my broomstick! The wicked witch
of the West.

Laughs.

AISLING (CONT'D)
I must be a disappointment. You
can leave if you want. I won't be
offended. Of course, I don't know
where you'd go. They'll follow
you!

She offers him the coffee.

AISLING (CONT'D)
Made from an ancient Irish brew!
Guaranteed to make you see demons
and monsters.

Loud laugh.

AISLING (CONT'D)
Just regular coffee. Bought in
Starbucks. Here I'll drink first,
just to show you I won't change
into some strange beast.

She drinks. Aiden drinks.

AISLING (CONT'D)
The kids have gone to soccer
practice. My husband is at work,
so I'm all yours. Shawn said
something about Gaelic writing.

Aiden takes out his phone. Shows writing.

She reads.

Looks at Aiden and sighs heavily.

AISLING (CONT'D)
And you have no idea what all this
means?

Aiden shakes head.

AISLING (CONT'D)
Is the beautiful woman combing her
hair and humming here now?

Aiden looks around the room. He shakes his head.

AISLING (CONT'D)
What about the old crone knitting?
Sure she's not hiding in the
corner?

AIDEN
No!

AISLING
Ah, he speaks! Why do you think
they're not here? Me? Special
charms I have hanging around the
house? Maybe a spell in the
coffee.

She laughs.

AISLING (CONT'D)
Look around the room. Tell me if
you see anything unusual.

Aiden looks. Photographs of Aisling with her husband and
children.

Soccer trophies. Irish tokens.

AISLING (CONT'D)
Satisfied? Time to show me The
Script.

Aiden opens his briefcase. Give it to her. She reads words
on front cover.

AISLING (CONT'D)
"The Past Never Dies."

She flicks through The Script

AISLING (CONT'D)
And it stops exactly where I
thought it would. Here. In my
living room with you facing me.

Gives Aiden The Script. He checks it.

AISLING (CONT'D)
Well, first things first.

AIDEN
Whatever it costs.

She laughs.

AISLING
Look in your scrips. That's exactly what it says. "Aiden. Anxious. Whatever it costs." Don't bother looking. It's there. Together with you waiting outside my house. Children going to soccer practice, etc.

AIDEN
(standing)
This is a waste of time!

AISLING
I'm sorry!

AIDEN
Why are these things, whatever they're called, here in my life?

She holds out her hands and stares into his eyes.

AISLING
If I hold your hands, say a silent prayer, and do not open my eyes, I may speak their names and try to find out why they follow you.

Aiden holds her hands. She closes her eyes and mutters something.

As she does, the room darkens. Haunting sounds. Shadowy, undefined figures fly about the room.

AISLING (CONT'D)
You've heard of leprechauns. Fairies. The movies have made them into charming little folk who grant wishes. Pots of gold at the end of rainbows and all that. Maybe you've even heard of the banshee. Not so charming.

She takes a deep breath before blowing out air as a slow hiss. Indistinct mutter. Sounds louder.

AISLING (CONT'D)

Have you heard of the Dullahan?
No. Sluagh, Balor or the Dearg-
due? No, no, no. Maybe the
Morrigan, crow harbinger of death?
No. What of pookas? Some of which
you've already met. Some you'll
meet soon. The question is, why
have they chosen you?

Long pause. She nods as if hearing something. Mutters.

Releases Aiden's hands. Opens her eyes. Taps The Script.

AISLING (CONT'D)

The answer's here. The past never
dies.

AIDEN

That's it? That's all you've got?
How do I stop it?

AISLING

You can't until--

Aiden jumps to his feet and curses.

AISLING (CONT'D)

Do you know what a geas is?

Aiden shakes head as he paces the floor.

AISLING (CONT'D)

This young woman, the one whose
name you don't know, has a geas, a
task, placed upon her.

AIDEN

What's the fuck does that have to
do with me?

AISLING

You have a curse on you. This
young woman's task is to reveal
that curse. To make you see. And
then to help you play out the geas.

AIDEN

Curses, tasks? This is starting to
sound like more and more bullshit
to me.

AISLING

That's all I can tell you. There's something you know. Something you've forgotten, but it's there. It's part of you. The Past Never Dies.

AIDEN

I want answers! You sound like you're pitching a fucking script to me! Curses, tasks? Why don't we throw in a dark forests and witches stirring cauldrons? I just need to stop this crap. Name your price. Do you Irish voodoo or whatever you call it and I'm out of her.

Aisling looks at The Script.

AISLING

Shawn told me to expect something like this. You want me to recommend a pill?

She reads from The Script

AISLING (CONT'D)

No. You've already been to your counselor or psychiatrist or whatever they call themselves. That went nowhere.

Aiden grabs The Script.

AIDEN

I'm leaving. You, Shawn, this girl and her script. It's all a fucking big waste of my time!

AISLING

What you've seen is only the beginning. Until you resolve this, until the geas is completed, the demons will haunt you.

She jumps up and opens the front door.

AISLING (CONT'D)

You must go now! Staying too long brings your curse upon my home and family. Leave quickly!

AIDEN

I am out of here!

He leaves.

Aisling watches through window as Aiden tosses The Script in trash can.

A screech of tires as his car roars off.

EXT. HIGHWAY. LATER.

Aiden's car pulls into a roadside bar: The Otherworld

INT. THE OTHERWORLD

Aiden enters.

Irish music. Men playing and watching pool.

No one acknowledges Aiden.

He goes to the bar.

BARMAN, 60s, pot-belly, balding, large, T-shirt with flag of Ireland. Doesn't look at Aiden.

AIDEN

Hey, I need a beer!

BARMAN

A beer for you. And an Irish whiskey for the lady.

He gestures to a young woman, covered in a long cobalt blue dress who sits in the shadows. Her red hair falls, covering the NAKED BABY she feeds at her breast. Hums as she rocks back and forth.

AIDEN

I just need a fucking beer for myself.

Bar goes quiet. Music stops. All turn to face Aiden. Threatening.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Fuck this! I'll go get a beer somewhere else!

Door locked. Men form circle around Aiden.

BARMAN

I said, A beer for you, and an Irish whiskey for the lady.

AIDEN
But she's feeding . . .

Men move closer. Aiden slinks back to the bar.

Barman pulls a beer and pours an Irish whiskey. He puts both before Aiden and takes his money.

Barman gestures for Aiden to take the whiskey to the woman.

All watch as Aiden carries drink to her. She gestures for him to sit. He does.

Bar returns to its activities. Music.

Woman bends down and picks up The Script from the floor.

Hands it to the baby.

WOMAN
You left this behind! Best keep it
with you at all times!

The baby falls to the floor. It crawls to Aiden, gabs his trouser leg and pulls itself up. Its long nails rip into Aiden's pants and leg.

The baby stares up, wide-eyed, unblinking at Aiden as it thrusts The Script into his hands..

WOMAN (CONT'D)
The baby likes you.
(and then)
The geas will be fulfilled.

She picks up the baby and returns it to breast-feeding.

Aiden stands. Takes The Script.

Customers form a narrow tunnel for him to leave.

EXT. ROAD.

Aiden drives. Looks in rear-view mirror. No bar.

INT. OUTER OFFICE, CONNLA O'BRIEN, LAWYER.

Aiden staggers in. His pants are ripped and bloody.

AIDEN
Is he free?

SECRETARY phones. Gestures to Aiden to enter.

INT. CONNLA'S OFFICE

Connla looks up.

CONNLA
What the hell--?

AIDEN
I need to talk to that husband of yours.

CONNLA
Shawn told me about some woman in the Valley. Descendant of Irish witches, he said.

AIDEN
It was a joke! A middle-class neighborhood. Woman seeing her kids off to soccer practice.

CONNLA
And she did this to you?

AIDEN
No! That was from some biker bar with a woman breast-feeding her--. This sounds so fucked up!

The buzzer on the phone rings. Connla picks it up.

CONNLA
I have a client waiting to see me. I don't need her to see you looking like this. Hide in the bathroom. Should be a spare pair of pants in the closet.

AIDEN
Why do you need . . . ?

CONNLA
Shawn phoned. Told me you'd come rushing in looking like this!

AIDEN
How did he . . . ?

CONNLA
Go get yourself cleaned up!

Aiden steps into bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

Aiden looks at himself in the mirror. Takes off trousers. Bloody scratches on leg. Washes with washcloth.

O.C. sound of client entering.

CONNLA (O.C.)
Let me get that chair for you.

MAEVE (O.C.)
Won't take long. I'll stand.

Aiden reacts to the sound of Maeve's voice.

MAEVE (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Here are the necessary papers.

CONNLA (O.C.)
You could have had a messenger service do this for you.

MAEVE (O.C.)
That's true. I could have. But I didn't.

Aiden opens door a fraction. Sees Maeve neatly dressed. She hands a large envelope to Connla.

She turns quickly and stares at the bathroom.

Aiden jerks back.

She leaves.

Aiden exits bathroom.

AIDEN
That was her!

CONNLA
What are you talking about? And for God's sake get those pants on.

Aiden pulls on trousers.

AIDEN
Her! The young woman with the script! The one in the restaurant!

Grabs envelope.

CONNLA
Put that down!

AIDEN
It's that fucking script!

Prepares to rip it open. Connla grabs it.

CONNLA
It's an extradition order.

AIDEN
For whom? For what?

CONNLA
A young woman was murdered in Ireland. The killer escaped to the States before they could catch him. Satisfied?

AIDEN
Why you? Why here? Why Los Angeles? Why not Washington?

CONNLA
Believe it or not, brother, I'm a damn good lawyer I've dealt with these cases before. And we live in a world of emails and DocuSign. Los Angeles, Washington, Dublin, wherever. The world is a lot smaller than you think.

Connla goes to the closet and pours Aiden a drink

CONNLA (CONT'D)
For God's sake pull yourself together! You need to get away from LA and those goddam horror scripts. Take a vacation!

He takes the ripped pants from Aiden and holds the door open for him to leave.

EXT. UNDERGROUND PARKING AREA - LATER.

Aiden heads for his car.

Small figures slip between pillars, chattering, laughing.

Suddenly a scream in his ear. Turns. It's a small man with an elongated face, fierce eyes and large ears.

Another figure screams in his other ear.

Figures pluck at his shirt.

Aiden tries to swat them away, but they avoid his blows. He fights them off and jumps in his car. They swarm the car.

He drives. They fly off.

INT. OUTER OFFICE. AIDEN O'BRIEN, LITERARY MANAGER-LATER.

Barbara jumps up when Aiden enters.

BARBARA

You look like hell! And where have you been? I've had to reschedule and reschedule for you. Aaron Walters has been trying to get ahold of you. Needs your help checking out a couple of locations for a script he has. Figured you'd be a good choice.

AIDEN

Why me?

BARBARA

A recommendation from some woman he knows. Simple job. Set up some location shots in Ireland.

AIDEN

And you said, No, I hope!

BARBARA

He said you'd say that! It's not a horror movie. Romantic comedy. Hallmark has already optioned it. He needs you to check out some possible locations. In and out. A week tops. Easy money. Connla said you needed some R&R. Here's the script!

Aiden cautious. Looks at title.

AIDEN

"Returning home." What's the pitch?

BARBARA

"Young man, disillusioned by rat race in Los Angeles, visits ancestral home in Ireland. Finds peace, joy and love." Sound like some 1950s movie. No pressure. Perfect for you.

Gives Aiden "Returning Home" script.

AIDEN

Written by--?

BARBARA

Some retired professor desperate to recall his lost youth. You need this, Aiden! An all-expenses paid vacation and a sickly love story.

Aiden glances at the script.

AIDEN

Give me ten minutes to think it over.

Heads for inner office.

INT. INNER OFFICE

Aiden holds "Returning Home" script out before him as he looks around office. Nothing.

Spins around. Hold script to corners. Nothing. He laughs.

INT. OUTER OFFICE.

Aiden re-enters.

AIDEN

Tell Aaron I'll do it. When does he want it?

BARBARA

ASAP. Says he's got everything set up. Just needs those locations before he moves the cast and crew. You fly into Shannon, drive across country and return from Dublin. I can get you on a first-class flight tomorrow.

AIDEN

Do it!

EXT. CONNLA AND SHAWN'S HOUSE IN MALIBU. THAT EVENING.

Aiden pulls up in his car. Exits.

Knocks on door.

INT. HOME.

Connla answers.

Aiden offers his brother a bottle of Irish whiskey

CONNLA

Another one? What are we celebrating?

AIDEN

Nothing.

Shawn joins them.

SHAWN

We're celebrating nothing?

AIDEN

Exactly. No women combing their hair. No bat-like figures flying at me. No funny little men. Nothing. Whatever it was. Whatever I ate. It's finished.

SHAWN

I'm happy for you.

AIDEN

Your Irish demons have met their match. A hardened, callous, all-American, non-believing son-of-a-bitch!

CONNLA

So it's back to business as usual. Clients with going-nowhere scripts fawning over my brother.

Aiden laughs. Pours three drinks.

AIDEN

Not exactly. First a vacation.

Swallows his drink down.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Last night I slept in peace. It's time to celebrate. You two enjoy the whiskey. I am going to find myself a young lady I can pleasure for the night. Tomorrow I leave for a short, but profitable, assignment.

CONNLA

Where?

AIDEN

(smiling)
Ireland.

Connla looks at Shawn.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Sláinte! Here's to nothing!

Aiden leaves.

Connla stares at Shawn.

CONNLA

Say it!

Shawn shakes his head.

SHAWN

Let's hope I'm wrong.

CONNLA

But you don't think you are.

Shawn shakes head.

INT. LAX. NEXT MORNING.

Aer Lingus ticket counter.

Aiden enters priority aisle. TALL UNIFORMED MALE ATTENDANT gestures him forward.

TALL ATTENDANT

We'll begin boarding in a half-an-hour, Mr. O'Brien. Please make use of our first class passengers' waiting room.

INT. FIRST CLASS PASSENGERS' LOUNGE

Aiden finds a chair. SHORTER FEMALE ATTENDANT brings him a whiskey

SHORT ATTENDANT

Please relax, sir! We'll call you when it's time to board. Newspaper?

Aiden shakes his head. Relaxes. Sips whiskey.

Looks at television. "Breaking News" banner.

TELEVISION ANNOUNCER

We continue to follow the story of the young woman who disappeared soon after the funeral of her mother.

Fuzzy images of the bog lands of Ireland.

TELEVISION ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

She was last seen by two workmen at her mother's funeral. The priest of the local church denies giving the mother the Last Rites, nor was the burial held in his church. At this time, foul play is not suspected. Anyone with information about the young woman's whereabouts is asked to contact the Carlow police.

Aiden looks up. Maeve stares at him through the glass porthole in door.

He leaps to his feet

INT. CONCOURSE AT LAX.

Aiden opens door.

AIDEN

Stop, stop! I need to . . .

Passengers look at him.

Nothing

INT. FIRST CLASS PASSENGERS' WAITING ROOM.

Aiden returns.

Takes "Returning Home" script out of his briefcase.

He begins to read. Sleepy.

Opens his eyes. "Returning Home" has changed to "The Script."

Dumps it in his briefcase.

Loudspeaker announces first-class boarding for flight to Shannon. Aiden stands.

INT. CABIN OF AIRCRAFT. LATER

Aiden sits. Checks every PASSENGER and ATTENDANT as they pass down aisle.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT, male, neatly-dressed approaches.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
My name is Lachlan, and I'm your
first-class flight attendant. May I
get you something to drink, sir?

Aiden looks up. Sees Maeve. Reacts.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
Are you feeling alright, sir? \

AIDEN
No. Sorry. Whiskey. Irish.

Flight attendant talks to ANOTHER ATTENDANT, female. Nods at Aiden.

Returns with drink.

EXT. AIRPORT RUNWAY.

Aer Lingus flight leaves.

BACK TO CABIN.

Aiden closes eyes.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE.

EXT. IRISH BOG LAND.

--Irish bog lands. Evening.

--The body of dead YOUNG WOMAN, pregnant, floats in black pool.

--An OLD WOMAN pulls a sled to edge of bog.

--She drags the dead body of pregnant woman from the bog and loads it on a wheelbarrow.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

BACK TO INT. CABIN..

Aiden thrashing about.

Shaken away by flight attendant.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Sir, sir! Are you alright? You're disturbing the passengers.

Aiden sits up.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
Can I get you something?

AIDEN
Maybe another whiskey. Do you have a copy of the Irish Times I could look at?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Certainly, sir.

Leaves. Returns with a bottle of whiskey, glass and newspaper.

Headlines. *Police with dogs search the bog lands of Ireland for the missing young woman.*

Aiden drops paper. Rests head. Falls asleep.

BACK TO DREAM SEQUENCE.

INT. OLD WOMAN'S HUT.

--Old woman pours herbs into cauldron of boiling water.

--She takes the mixture from cauldron and pours over the pregnant woman's dead body. The body stirs.

--The dead woman is given something to drink. She vomits.

--The woman heaves and screams as she gives birth.

--The old woman delivers the BABY GIRL.

--She wraps the baby and tends to mother and baby.

END SEQUENCE

BACK TO CABIN.

Aiden thrashes. He's shaken away by flight attendant.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Sir, we have motion sickness pills
if you need them.

AIDEN

A bad dream. That's all. How much
longer?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

About three more hours. There are
thunder clouds ahead. Are you sure
I couldn't get you those pills?
They might help.

AIDEN

Another drink.

Flight attendant leaves. Returns with drink.

Aiden drinks. Rests his head.

BACK TO DREAM SEQUENCE. YEARS LATER.

INT. OLD WOMAN'S HUT.

--A young woman, Maeve, sits beside mother's bed.

--She feeds soup to sick mother.

--There is yelling outside hut.

--The old woman goes to the door.

EXT. HUT.

--ANGRY TOWNSFOLK with dogs threaten the old woman.

--As the old woman holds up hands, two huge black dogs with fiery eyes appear at her side.

--She holds them back with a chain.

--They snap and snarl at townsfolk. The townsfolk's dogs cower.

A TOWNSMAN steps forward.

TOWNSMAN

We know what you did! It's
ungodly. Witch!

OLD WOMAN

They're my daughter and
granddaughter. You will not touch
them.

--There is a clap of thunder, and a huge murder of crows descends on the townsfolk, driving them away.

END OF SEQUENCE.

BACK TO CABIN

Aircraft shudders. Thunder, lightning outside.

"Fasten Sean Belts" sign.

Aiden thrashes.

AIDEN

Daughter. Granddaughter. Witch!

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Calm down, sir! Please put on your
seatbelt. We'll be through this
storm in no time.

EXT SHANNON AIRPORT. MORNING.

Aircraft bumps onto the runway. Thunder, lightning.

INT. AIRCRAFT

Flight attendant shakes Aiden.

Aiden jerks up.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT.

We've arrived, sir. Fáilte go dtí
Aerfort na Sionainne! Welcome to
Shannon Airport!

Aiden leaves aircraft.

INT. SHANNON AIRPORT.

Aiden checks exiting passengers.

Flight attendant points out Aiden to policeman. They follows him.

The old woman selling cloth shamrocks approaches Aiden. He refuses. Suddenly she transforms into the old crone from the taxi.

OLD CRONE

I'm thinking, you came to Ireland a
long time ago, sir. 'Tis good to
have you back again.

He struggles to get away as she pins a shamrock on his lapel.

OLD CRONE (CONT'D)

Ní fhaigheann an tam atá caite bás.

AIDE

In English.

OLD CRONE

'Tis an Irish expression, sir. It
means, The Past Does Not Die.

Aiden reacts.

OLD CRONE (CONT'D)

Don't you be worried, sir. Just an
expression. It means what it
means, sir. Nothing more.

She turns away.

AIDEN

Wait!

Grabs for the old crone.

The policeman moves towards Aiden.

OLD CRONE
No charge for the shamrock, sir.
Let's hope it brings you good luck.

She disappears into the crowd.

Aiden deposits the shamrock in a trash can and joins the crowd moving toward the luggage pick up.

He grabs his luggage and leaves.

EXT. BUS STOP FOR RENTAL CARS.

Bus pulls up.

Aiden gets into bus. Loads his luggage.

As the bus pulls away from the airport, Aiden sees the old crone with shamrocks at curbside staring at him.

INT. RENTAL CAR OFFICE. LATER

Signs for rental car.

Rental car ATTENDANT hands Aiden keys.

ATTENDANT
Here you go, sir. You have the car for a week. Returning it to Dublin Airport.

AIDEN
Do you have a map?

Attendant hands him one.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
How far is it to Killarney?

ATTENDANT
About 135 kilometers. Roughly 84 miles. Exit the airport and look for sign for the N21 south.

EXT. AIRPORT

Aiden leaves the rental car office. He finds the rental car and loads his luggage.

INT. RENTAL CAR. LATER

Aiden consults map.

As he prepares to drive, Maeve and the old crone stand in front of the car.

AIDEN

Get away from me! Leave me alone!

EXT. AIRPORT

He jumps out of car. Neither Maeve or old crone to be seen.

Aiden returns to the car.

INT. RENTAL CAR

He digs into his briefcase. Takes out "Returning Home" script. Sets it on his lap and breathes deeply

EXT. ROAD. LATER.

Signpost: FÁILTE GO CILL AIRNE, KILLARNEY

INT. RENTAL CAR.

Aiden turns on radio. Irish music.

ANNOUNCER

We interrupt this program to bring you this update. The reclusive young woman from Carlow has now been missing for over almost two weeks. Police are focusing their sights on some of the bog lands. More information as we receive it. Now back to our regular broadcasting.

Irish music.

EXT. ROAD. AFTERNOON.

Driving alongside the Kerry Bog near Killarney.

Aiden stops his car, gets out and takes photographs.

AIDEN

An American returning home to his ancestral home. To this? I don't think so. Unless there's a little cottage, and a stunningly beautiful turf digger's daughter who falls for a wealthy American. Big Irish wedding. Music, drink. And everyone lives happily ever after.

He laughs as he gets back into car.

EXT. PUB-HOTEL. LATER

Aiden pulls into the parking lot. He grabs luggage and enters.

INT. PUB-HOTEL.

INNKEEPER'S WIFE, buxom, 60s, curly gray hair, signs Aiden in.

INNKEEPER'S WIFE

Los Angeles, is it? 'Tis a long way you've come. Room A at the top of the stairs on the left. Food at the bar. Pub grub.

Aiden thanks her and takes his luggage.

INT. ROOM.

Aiden washes face.

He looks out of window. Maeve is staring up at him.

He rushes downstairs.

EXT. HOTEL.

Aiden exits hotel. Maeve nowhere to be seen.

INT. BAR. LATER.

Aiden order food and drink from portly BARMAN. 60s, portly, ruddy complexion, smiling.

Aiden opens his laptop at a table. He loads photos.

Ghostly shapes of women blend into his bog-land photographs.

Shuts laptop.

YOUNG WAITRESS, teenage, thin, unsmiling brings him his food.

WOMAN, twenties sitting at end of bar. Stunning beauty. Long, red hair, which she combs. Floor-length cobalt blue dress.

She smiles at Aiden.

Aiden goes to bar.

AIDEN

(to Barman)

Whiskey for me. And one for the lady at the end of the bar.

BARMAN

One whiskey.

AIDEN

And one for the lady at . . .

BARMAN

Don't you be looking at her, sir. She's not there.

AIDEN

But she's sitting . . .

BARMAN

Blue dress, combing her red hair, am I right?

Aiden nods.

BARMAN (CONT'D)

And I'm telling you, You don't see her. She's not there.

AIDEN

But . . .

BARMAN

Listen carefully, sir. I'm saying, It's best you don't see her. Look away! The lovemaking will be intense, unforgettable, and, when it's over, she'll rip you to shreds. So the story goes.

AIDEN

You're bullshitting me!

Barman goes to end of bar. He waves his hand through the woman. She's not there.

BARMAN

I'm saying, Look away, sir! She'll get bored quickly enough. Find another poor soul. Remember, this is not America. It's Ireland. The land where they live. Just warning you, sir. Finish your meal, have your drink, and then best head up to bed.

Aiden finishes his food and drink. He takes a last look down the bar. The woman is no longer there.

Aiden heads upstairs to bed.

INT. PUB-HOTEL. ROOM. MIDNIGHT

Aiden woken by screams. He rushes to the window.

Outside, a YOUNG MAN, 20s, struggles with the woman in the blue cobalt dress. She rips at his clothing and body. He collapses at her feet.

She turns and looks up at Aiden, blood dripping from her mouth.

He pulls back from the window and draws the curtains.

He lies in bed, awake.

INT. BAR. NEXT MORNING.

Aiden with suitcase.

Pays barman.

AIDEN

Did anything happen in the night?

BARMAN
Nothing I heard of, sir.

Pause.

BARMAN (CONT'D)
Will you be traveling far today?

AIDEN
Wicklow Mountains National Park.

BARMAN
'Tis a healthy journey you have
ahead of you. Two, maybe three
hours. Don't be loitering, sir.
Best get there before dark. 'Tis
then the people of the sidhe, the
faery folk, like the woman you saw
last night, be wandering.

Aiden smiles and shakes his head.

BARMAN (CONT'D)
It's listening to me you should be,
sir. Just warning you to be
careful. Handsome, wealthy man
like yourself could be finding
himself where he doesn't want to
be. Now don't you be choosing
wrong. That's all I'm saying.

Turns to deal with another customer. Aiden leaves.

EXT. OUTSIDE PUB-HOTEL.

Blue X painted on windshield of Aiden's car.

Returns to pub. Comes back with paper towels. X gone.

Aiden gets into the car.

INT. RENTAL CAR.

Aiden checks the back seat before driving.

Turns on radio. Irish music.

EXT. LATER. DAY.

Signpost: FÁILTE GO WICKLOW MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK.

Steady rain over the bog lands.

Signpost: WICKLOW WAY.

Aiden stops his car in the parking area. Exits the car.

He looks out across the bog lands of Wicklow Way before walking along the steel pathway that passes over the bog.

Stops to take photos.

A blue arm reaches out of a nearby bog. Slowly a beautiful woman's blue head appears.

Her arm grasps for Aiden.

He runs back along the steel pathway.

Jumps into car.

INT. RENTAL CAR.

Aiden pants. Stares back at the bog.

EXT. WICKLOW WAY

Blue woman pulls herself out of the water and begins moving toward Aiden's rental car.

BLUE WOMAN

O'Brien is his name! O'Brien is
his name!

INT. RENTAL CAR.

Aiden struggles to start car.

Engine turns over. Aiden puts car into reverse.

Checks rear-view mirror. Maeve stands behind him.

Quick check of blue woman moving toward him.

AIDEN

(to Maeve)

Get out of the way! Get out of the
fucking way!

Rams accelerator down and reverses.

No thud. He races away.

EXT. GAS STATION.

Aiden pulls in for gas.

INT. GAS STATION.

GAS STATION ATTENDANT, young, thin, droopy-eyed is staring at television.

Aiden enters. He buys some snacks.

The YOUNG FEMALE TELEVISION ANNOUNCER is speaking in Gaelic.

AIDEN

What's she saying?

ATTENDANT

Police and tracker dogs searching Kerry Bog, near Killarney for that young woman from Carlow. Been missing for more than two weeks.

The television returns to gaelic football.

Aiden pays for gas and snacks.

AIDEN

How much further to Annamoe?

ATTENDANT

Next town. Half an hour should see you there.

Aiden returns to car.

Notices blue streak on bumper.

Takes roll of paper towels out of car.

Blue streak gone. Gets into car and drives off.

EXT. EVENING.

Signpost: FÁILTE GO ANNAMOE, COUNTY WICKLOW.

Aiden's rental car stops on the cobbled street outside a Bed and Breakfast.

Aiden exits car and enters B&B.

INT. BED AND BREAKFAST.

The OWNER of the B&B, plump, elderly female, greets him.

OWNER
 (pushing guest book forward)
 Would you be signing in?

Aiden nods and signs the guest book.

OWNER (CONT'D)
 O'Brien, is it? All the way from
 Los Angeles. Come to our little
 town of Annamoe, half a world away.
 'Tis a sister I have somewhere
 outside of Los Angeles she'll be
 living. Don't suppose you'd be
 knowing her. First name's Aisling.
 Have a photo of her house
 somewhere. Right smack in the
 middle of a middle-class
 neighborhood. Two kids. Long way
 from the bog lands where she was
 brought up. Bit of an odd one her.
 Spend two minutes and she'll know
 all about you. Folks 'round here
 think she had the gift.

Aiden looks confused.

OWNER (CONT'D)
 Talking to the wee folk. That
 gift.

Aiden stares at her as she talks.

OWNER (CONT'D)
 What would you be after seeking in
 these lonely lands, sir?

AIDEN
 Photographs of the bog lands.
 Scouting sites for a movie.

OWNER
 A movie, is it? Wouldn't be about
 that young woman who went missing.

AIDEN
 It's a romantic comedy.

OWNER

A romantic comedy in the bog lands?
Still, you people in the movie
business must know what you're
doing.

A pause.

OWNER (CONT'D)

Pub just down the way if it's a
meal you'll be seekin' I'll have a
nice breakfast for you in the
morning. Oh, and as for tonight,
you'll not want to be staying out
late.

AIDEN

Why's that?

OWNER

A fearful thick mist comes rolling
in across the bog lands. A person
could get lost, even though the
pub's only just down the road.

INT. PUB. LATER

Barkeeper welcomes him. Identical to barkeeper in Killarney.

BARKEEPER

Evening, sir. Cold night tonight.
Soon mist will be so thick, a man
wouldn't get to see his hand in
front of his face.

Aiden stares at the Barkeeper.

AIDEN

Didn't I see you at the bar back in
Killarney? Warning me about some
lady sitting at the end of the bar?

BARKEEPER

Not me, sir. Strictly a Wicklow
Mountains man myself. Lived here
all my life.

AIDEN

Then you have a double.

BARKEEPER

Maybe that's so, sir. Now what'll
it be?

AIDEN

Do you have a pie of some sort?

Barkeeper turns and calls to the YOUNG LADY in the kitchen.

She's identical to the young woman in a floor-length cobalt blue dress, long red hair, sitting at the end of the bar in the previous pub.

BARKEEPER

Glas. Would we have a nice warm pie for our guest? Keep out the chill, it will.

She holds up a pie.

GLAS

Would you like it heated, sir?

AIDEN

Yes. I--. Have we met?

GLAS

Not us, sir. Unless you've been here in this bar before. You'd remember me, I'm sure.

AIDEN

Yes, I would.

(to Barkeeper)

Interesting name Glas. Never heard it before.

BARKEEPER

It's an old Celtic word for blue. She always wears blue.

AIDEN

I'll take a double whiskey with that pie.

Glas brings the pie. Looks down seductively look at Aiden.

He eats. Glas returns to the kitchen, never taking her eyes off Aiden.

BARKEEPER

Would you look at the time? It's getting late, and the mist is rolling in from the bog lands. Drink up please, ladies and gentlemen.

Customers leave. Aiden only one left.

BARKEEPER (CONT'D)
Best be going, sir.

Aiden stands and leaves.

AIDEN
Good night!

BARKEEPER
Here's hoping it will be a good
night for you, sir.

Aiden leaves pub. Last look at Glas.

EXT. PUB.

Mist coming down the cobbled streets.

Aiden looks back at pub.

Upstairs Glas stands in a sheer blue nightgown. She stares
down at him.

Mist swirling thicker around him.

Sudden sound of horse galloping on cobbled street.

Aiden stares into the mist.

A headless rider. Her female head carried by long, black
hair swings from her hand. She gallops towards Aiden.

A light shines through the eyes on the female's head which
stares, unblinking, at Aiden. She has a flaming red whip in
her hand.

Her horse is jet-black with flaming white eyes.

DULLAHAN
O'Brien is his name! O'Brien is
his name!

Barkeeper throws open the door of the pub.

BARKEEPER
Get you home, sir! Look what
you've brought upon us! 'Tis the
Dullahan itself rides this night!

Slams door shut.

In the upstairs window, Glas throws back her head and laughs.

Aiden ducks just in time to miss the flaming whip.

The Dullahan shrieks.

DULLAHAN

One of you will die soon! One of
you will die!

The Dullahan turns her horse, ready to charge again.

Aiden rushes to the front door of the Bed and Breakfast.

Bangs on door.

The door opens and a hand drags him inside just as the whip
lashes.

INT. BED AND BREAKFAST.

Owner slams door shut and locks it.

OWNER

Did I not tell you not to stay out
too late? You're a lucky man, sir.
Must be that shamrock you have
pinned to your coat.

Aiden looks down. Shamrock is there.

OWNER (CONT'D)

Breakfast or no breakfast, you'll
be leaving first thing in the
morning, sir. Don't need your type
'round here.

Draws curtains.

OWNER (CONT'D)

Whatever it is you've done, sir,
whatever it is you're going to be
doing, you've stirred up a
frightful anger in the bog lands
this night. Tomorrow morning you
leave.

She gestures up the stairs.

Aiden climbs upstairs to his room.

Thunderous boom. Lightning. Hailstorm.

INT. ROOM

Aiden lies in bed. Whole house shakes.

INT. DINING AREA OF BED AND BREAKFAST. NEXT MORNING.

Aiden comes down the stairs.

Owner busies herself preparing breakfast. She places it before Aiden.

He points to coffee pot.

AIDEN

Coffee?

Owner places her finger on her lips. Silence.

She listens for sounds.

Pours coffee.

Not a word spoken.

Aiden gestures for another cup of coffee.

Owner gestures drink up then leave.

Aiden goes upstairs. Returns with suitcase.

Owner opens door. Glances outside.

Signals for Aiden to leave.

EXT. BED AND BREAKFAST.

Heavy freezing rain.

Large slash across the roof of the car.

Puts suitcase in car.

INT. RENTAL CAR.

Aiden rubs his hands together to warm up.

Starts engine.

INT. BED AND BREAKFAST.

Aiden's car moves off.

Owner opens door a fraction. Watches Aiden leave. She stands before a crucifix, crossing herself repeatedly. Silent prayer.

EXT. ROAD. LATER.

Thunder, lightning, rain.

INT. RENTAL CAR.

Wipers slap back and forth as Aiden stares through the front windshield.

Images of the woman in blue, the old crone, and Maeve flash before Aiden's eyes.

EXT. GAS STATION. LATER.

Aiden pulls in for snacks.

Rushes into shop.

INT. GAS STATION.

The ATTENDANT takes out his earbuds.

ATTENDANT

Not a day to be out traveling.

AIDEN

I have to get to the Bog of Allen.

ATTENDANT

'Tis between the rivers Liffrey and Shannon. Why would anyone be wanting to go to a place like that on a day like this?

AIDEN

Just want to take a few photographs and I'll be on my way.

ATTENDANT

Had a whole host of postcards would serve your purpose well.

(MORE)

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

But yesterday in comes this old woman and buys me out. Beautiful young woman with her. Couldn't figure out why the two of them wanted all my postcards, but a sale is a sale. Where are you headed after you've taken your photographs?

AIDEN

Place to stay for the night then on to Dublin. Flight back to Los Angeles.

ATTENDANT

Might try Carlow. Pretty place. Nice pub. Comfortable rooms for the night, I hear. Reasonably priced.

Aiden puts snacks on counter. Attendant adds them up.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Don't be picking up any hitchhiker. Young woman went missing. Police checking Wicklow Mountains National Park. Not too far away.

AIDEN

I just came from there.

ATTENDANT

Did you see any police?

AIDEN

Not one.

ATTENDANT

Lucky. They're checking everyone in the area, top to tail.

Takes money.

EXT. GAS STATION.

Aiden rushes to car.

Car drives nearby. Through windshield wipers Aiden sees pale face of Maeve.

AIDEN

Hey! Stop! Stop, dammit!

Car drives off.

Aiden jumps in his car and races after Maeve's car.

EXT. ROAD .

Narrow, winding lanes.

Aiden following, flashing his lights.

Aiden turns corner. Face to face with huge truck. Swerves to side of road and stops.

Truck passes. No sign of Maeve's car.

INT. CAR.

Aiden pants. Takes out map.

Tries to figure out where he is. Lost.

Through windshield he sees the old crone standing in the rain. She has a staff in her hand. She points to road ahead.

EXT. ROAD.

Aiden races on. Each corner, he gets glimpse of Maeve's car ahead.

EXT. THE BOG OF ALLEN VISITOR CENTER.

Rain stops. Aiden pulls into the parking area.

He gets out of car. His shoes sink in the ground.

Sign on the Visitor Center Door "Dúnta/Closed."

Aiden looks across the flat bog land. He wipes the rain off the sign on the path:

SIGN

"Walk safely. Follow the trail at all times. It is dangerous to leave it owing to the presence of soft ground, midden drains, brambles or nettles. Weather conditions can change rapidly. Be prepared."

Aiden walks along trail taking photographs. He points his camera at a huge murder of crows.

They suddenly change direction and fly at him. He ducks and covers his head. When he looks up, he sees Maeve and the old crone before him.

AIDEN
(rushing toward them)
I'm so sick of your fucking
bullshit!

He rushes forward, sinking into the bog.

The more he struggles the deeper he sinks until he is up to his knees.

Maeve and the old crone approach Aiden.

OLD CRONE
(staring down at Aiden)
'Tis not time yet! 'Tis not how
the geas ends.

She gestures as if lifting him and moving him through air.

Aiden stands on path. His clothing is dry.

There is no sign of the two women. In the distance, a peat-cutter stops digging and points to the road ahead.

Aiden returns to his car.

EXT. ROAD. LATE AFTERNOON.

Aiden follows the signs to Ceatharlach-Carlow. Dublin 34 km.

EXT. THE TOWN OF CARLOW. EVENING.

Aiden's car drives through the town, passing Carlow Castle.

It stops at small hotel.

Aiden get out of his car, pulls his suitcase from the trunk and enters the hotel.

INT. SMALL RECEPTION AREA.

Aiden enters. It's empty. He rings the bell.

Door to bar swings open and the barmaid, 60s, large with a mop of curly gray hair joins Aiden in the reception area.

AIDEN

Didn't we meet in Killarney?

BARMAID

Not me, love. Confusing me you are. Traveling through the bog lands can do things to a person.

(opening the guest book)

Sign in!

She looks down at his name.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

O'Brien is it? We've been expecting you.

Before Aiden can say anything, the barmaid hands him a key and gestures.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

Upstairs. Room A. To the right. Change into some dry clothes. When you're ready, come down. We have a buffet of pub grub for you. Take a plate and help yourself. Looks like you could do with some meat on those bones.

INT. ROOM

Aiden changes his clothes. He puts his wet clothes over a chair to dry.

INT. HOTEL BAR. LATER.

Crowded. Patrons stop and stare at Aiden momentarily when he enters.

Aiden picks up a plate and moves down the buffet line.

He finds a table, sets down his plate and goes to the bar for a drink.

BARMAID

Here from the States, I'm thinking.

AIDEN

Yes. I've been taking photos of the Bog of Allen.

BARMAID

Now why would anyone be taking
photos of our old Bog?

Aiden shrugs.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

Stayed to the trail, I trust.
Dangerous if not, love. Lost one
or two sheep wandering at night.

AIDEN

Anything unusual happen in the town
these last couple of nights? Woman
on horseback, or anything like
that?

BARMAID

Good Lord, no! Where do you get
such ideas?

AIDEN

No beautiful women tempting men to
their death?

BARMAID

You've been reading too many of
those tales of Irish folklore,
love.

The bar goes quiet as she joins him at his table.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

Let me tell you a true-life story.

AIDEN

I'm listening.

Aiden eats.

BARMAID

This story is of a young man who
visited Ireland from far away.

AIDEN

(smiling)
Gallop in on a white horse, I
suppose.

She stands and slams down her fist, angered. The patrons
stop talking and stare at Aiden.

BARMAID

I'm not going to be making fun of me you are as I tell this story.

AIDEN

I'm sorry. Carry on. I drive to Dublin tomorrow then on to Los Angeles, so I might as well have a fine Irish story to tell my friends back home.

Her voices rises again.

BARMAID

Quaint story of the Emerald Isle to entertain the folks back home! Is that it?

AIDEN

No. I'm sorry. I didn't mean . . .

BARMAID

Oh, I know exactly what you meant. Now listen! 'Tis a true story.

The customers gather around the table to listen.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

So this handsome young man comes from overseas. To a village nearby. He stays at the home of a old woman. She has a daughter. The most beautiful girl in all of Ireland. Long red hair flowing down her back. Clear blue eyes that could melt a man's heart.

AIDEN

Sounds like a real beauty.

BARMAID

(angry)

It's interrupting me again you are!

(she calms down)

Only problem was this young girl had no understanding of the ways of love between a man and a woman.

Rising anger.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

It wasn't long before this girl fell in love with this handsome gentleman.

AIDEN

So he carried her away to his home
far away.

BARMAID

Don't be jumping ahead of the
story! You're wrong, wrong, wrong!

Aiden grows anxious as the crowd in the bar gathers around
the table.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

That's the trouble with you
Americans. You want a nice tight
story with a romantic ending like
that "Returning Home" crap you're
carrying in your briefcase

AIDEN

How did you . . . ?

She pushes closer to Aiden. Rising anger.

BARMAID

So this man tells the daughter
about his home far away. Big
house, big car. He makes the
daughter promises. Even buys her a
gold thumb ring with a bright
emerald stone in the center.
Sealing the deal, so she thought.
That way he could get what he
wanted.. You hear what I'm saying?
To get what he wanted!

Leans into his face.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

Don't worry, says he. Lying
bastard that he was! Don't worry.
I'll return in a few weeks and
marry you. Make an honest woman
out of you! Make our child
legitimate. You hearing me?
Promised he'd make her an honest
woman. Make their love child
legitimate!

AIDEN

Did he?

BARMAID

What do you think? Should he marry this beautiful, innocent young girl knowing she had a bun in the oven?

AIDEN

Did he know?

BARMAID

DID HE KNOW? HE ASK. DID HE CARE?

Towers over him.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

Off he goes leaving nothing behind but promises. And that was it. Never heard from him again. What should he have done? What would you have done?

AIDEN

Did he know?

BARMAID

Oh, he knew alright. Letters. Messages passed on by friends. Not even a penny of blood money to help raise the baby, a daughter.

The barmaid pushes closer to Aiden.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

Not a penny of blood money. But he didn't care, did he?

A large black cat leaps on the table. Stares at Aiden.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

Not a penny. He'd had his fun with her. Sowed his seed. Time to toss her aside. And her? She waited and waited.

She places her hand on Aiden's forehead.

BEGIN FLASHBACK.

EXT. VILLAGE. past.

A TEENAGE GIRL(16), pregnant, walks through the village. Veiled head down. People point at her.

BARMAID (V.O.)
 Time came when she couldn't hide
 her swelling belly. People talked.

Groups of woman gather and point.

Youngsters her own age chase her, mocking her big belly.

INT. COUNTRY CHURCH. SAME.

BARMAID (V.O.)(CONT.)
 Church, shops--nowhere was safe!

PRIEST, tall, think with a large hook nose towers over the
 teenage girl.

PRIEST
 "Know ye not that the unrighteous
 shall not inherit the kingdom of
 God? Be not deceived: neither
 fornicators, nor abusers of
 themselves with mankind, nor
 revilers shall inherit the kingdom
 of God." First Corinthians Six.
 Verses nine through ten.

He gestures for her to leave the church.

The teenage girl stands and shuffles out of the church.

The people in church stand and point at her.

PARISHIONERS
 Whore! Whore! Whore!

PRIEST
 (screaming after her)
 "Meats for the belly, and the belly
 for meats: but God shall destroy
 both it and them. Now the body is
 not for fornication, but for the
 Lord; and the Lord for the body."
 First Corinthians Six, Verse
 thirteen.

PARISHIONERS
 Fornicator! Fornicator!
 Fornicator!

She exits the church.

EXT. STREET. PAST

BARMAID (V.O.)

Week after week the priest himself
ranted on about the sin of
fornication outside of marriage.

People on the street point at the teenage girl.

PEOPLE

Fornicator! God damn you to Hell!

Shopkeepers put up "closed" sign on their doors before she
can enter.

INT. COTTAGE. PAST.

The teenage girl sits in a rocking chair in front of a small
fire. Opposite her sits the old crone.

Stones and mud clumps thud against the window.

BARMAID (V.O.)

Girls and boys her own age threw
stones at her window and called her
hurtful names.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. BAR. PRESENT.

Customers gather closer around the table. Barmaid removes
her hand from Aiden's head.

AIDEN

What happened?

BARMAID

What happened, he asks? What do
you think happened?

Aiden shakes his head.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

Pretending not to know he is. But
he knows.

She jams her knuckles against his forehead.

BEGIN FLASHBACK.

EXT. THE BOG OF ALLEN. PAST. EVENING.

Howling wind and driving rain as the young girl, holding her swollen belly, staggers along the path.

BARMAID (CONT.)(V.O.)

Off she goes to the Bog of Allen
one cold rainy night. She strays
from the path into the cold, dark
bog.

The girl stops and says a prayer before stepping off the path and disappearing into the bog.

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO BAR. PRESENT

A sudden shriek of laughter.

The crowd separates as a woman in a cobalt blue dress moves through them. As she walks, she stares at Aiden.

She throws open the door. Outside a thick mist stops at the doorway. The woman in blue disappears into the mist.

The crowd surround Aiden and the Barmaid and begin to chant, quietly at first, then gathering in intensity.

CROWD

The Dullahan rides! The Dullahan
rides!

Barmaid removes her hand from Aiden's forehead.

Before her, on the table, is The Script.

AIDEN

I didn't know.

BARMAID

And you didn't care, did you? What
would have you done if you had
known? Nothing!

She slams her hand down on The Script and stares at him.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

But death isn't the end of the
story, is it?. You saw what
happened. In your dream!

BEGIN FLASHBACK.

THE BOG OF ALLEN. NIGHT.

The old crone drags the bog, searching for the teenage girl, her daughter. She pulls the body of the dead pregnant girl to the side of the bog and loads it onto a makeshift sled.

She drags the sled along the path.

INT. HUT. PAST. LATER.

The hut is dark except for the light of the fire. The walls are covered with herbs. The old crone takes some herbs and drops them into huge bubbling cauldron.

She takes boiling water from cauldron and pours it over the body of the dead girl.

The girl's eyes open as the old crone removes a crying baby from between her legs. The girl's eyes look at the body before they close in death.

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO BAR. PRESENT.

The crowd now shriek.

CROWD

The Dullahan rides! The Dullahan
rides!

Customers point to the door of the hotel.

BARMAID

It's time for you to go now! Go!

Customers make a line from the table to the door.

CROWD

The Dullahan rides! The Dullahan
rides!

TWO LARGE MEN pick up the struggling Aiden and throw him out into the thick mist.

They slam the door shut and bolt it.

EXT. OUTSIDE BAR. .

The old crone stands before Aiden. She points her long, crooked staff in the direction of the Bog of Allen.

Aiden tries to reenter pub, but it's locked.

The headless horsewoman, the Dullahan, rears at end of street. It begins galloping toward him.

He runs.

A bat-like figure swoops down out of the sky, screeching and forcing him onward.

The Dullahan screams and cracks the whip behind Aiden. Sparks fly.

Each time Aiden stumbles, the whip cracks driving him on.

EXT. THE BOG OF ALLEN. .

Aiden staggers on barely able to see the track. He collapses.

Maeve and the old crone stand on the path ahead of him.

Aiden stops and stares through the mist.

AIDEN

Who are you?

The old crone shrieks with laughter.

OLD CRONE

You know who she is.

AIDEN

You were there, from the beginning.
The restaurant. The Script.

OLD CRONE

And now you are both here together.
Time to complete the gaes. Time to
begin the end.

Loud thud as she hurls The Script between them.

OLD CRONE (CONT'D)

Only one of you will leave this
place.

Maeve leaps at Aiden. Her nails rip at his face and eyes.

The fight continues with each tearing at the other.

AIDEN

Who the fuck are you? How do I
know you?

Maeve leaps again, ripping at his hair.

MAEVE

Here now in this place, I will kill
you or be killed by you.

Screams all around. The Dullahan rears, its whip cracking
the air. Bat-figure flies overhead.

Aiden has her in a choke hold.

AIDEN

But why kill each other?

MAEVE

We have to. We have no choice.

AIDEN

There is always choice. You're a
young woman and I'm a rich man. I
can . . .

An elbow in the stomach and Aiden releases her.

She leaps at him, her foot kicking him in the groin.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

You fucking bitch! You are asking
to die!

MAEVE

We have no choice. Only one of us
walks away this night.

A lunge and she's on top of him, beating him fiercely.

Aiden tucks his feet beneath her and pushes her with his
legs, hurling her into the bog.

She sinks slowly.

AIDEN

Here! Grab my hand! You don't
have to die.

She shakes her head slowly back and forth. Shrieks of
laughter as she sinks.

MAEVE

No choice. Only one walks away
this night.

Aiden stretches his arms trying to grab her.

She laughs.

Only her neck and head is now above the bog.

AIDEN

Don't struggle! You'll sink!

She laughs.

Her mouth is about to disappear.

MAEVE

(shouting)

You want to know who I am? My name
is Maeve! I'm the daughter of that
girl you abandoned! You are my
father!

Screams as she sinks into the bog.

Aiden rolls onto his back. Mighty howl.

The creatures and the old crone swirl around him before all
disappear into the clear night air.

EXT. ROAD. NEXT DAY. MORNING

Aiden's car crosses the Dublin Mountains.

Road signs for baile átha Cliath. Dublin.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF DUBLIN.

Car pulls into a gas station.

Aiden gets out and fills the car with gas.

INT. GAS STATION.

Aiden enters and grabs snacks. Puts snacks and money on the
counter.

The OLD MALE ATTENDANT pushes Aiden's money away.

OLD ATTENDANT

Tá na geas beagnach críochnaithe.
'Seo an sean scéal céanna a
insítear arís agus arís eile.

AIDEN

English.

Old man glowers at Aiden and walks to the back of the shop.

A YOUNG FEMALE ATTENDANT with long, red hair and blue eyes
and a cobalt blue blouse replaces him.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

(staring at her)
Haven't we--?

YOUNG ATTENDANT

I don't think so.

Pause.

AIDEN

What did the old man say.

YOUNG ATTENDANT

Don't speak the Gaelic myself.
Probably something about the geas
almost complete. 'Tis the same old
story told again and again.

Aiden stares at her.

AIDEN

Meaning?

YOUNG ATTENDANT

Geas is a thing from them Irish
tales of long ago. Always reading
the old stories, the old man is.
Likes the one about the Irish hero
who killed his own son. 'Course he
didn't know it was his son. Still--

The television shows the Bog of Allen. The TELEVISION
ANNOUNCER, a young female, stands in front of a line of
police cars. She speaks in Gaelic. Young attendant turns up
the volume.

AIDEN

What is she saying?

YOUNG ATTENDANT
I told you, sir, I don't speak the
Gaelic myself.

Aiden puts snacks on the table and pays. He heads for the
exit.

YOUNG ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
(calling after Aiden)
She's saying something about the
young woman found in the Bog of
Allen.

AIDEN
I thought you said you didn't speak
Gaelic.

YOUNG ATTENDANT
That I did.

She stares intently at Aiden, who exits.

EXT. GAS STATION.

Aiden looks around. The old man sits outside smoking his
pipe.

Aiden is about to approach when the old man stands and walks
away.

EXT. DUBLIN AIRPORT. LATER.

Aiden's rental car pulls into the rental car area.
Attendant meets him.

ATTENDANT
Looks like you've been driving
around in bog country. Would you
be seeing the police while you
were out there?

Aiden doesn't respond.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
Have a good flight.

A bus pulls up and Aiden boards it.

INT. FIRST-CLASS LOUNGE DUBLIN AIRPORT. LATER.

The television shows scenes of the town of Carlow.

The same female newscaster interviews the Barmaid in Carlow. She points in direction of the Bog of Allen.

BARMAID

American accent. Said he was taking photographs of the bog lands for some romantic movie. Very strange.

MAEVE (O.C)

(whisper)

Only one walks away.

Aiden whips around. No sign of Maeve.

BARMAID

Not many strangers 'round here go wandering off into the Bog of Allen at night.

Gradually Aiden's eyes close in sleep.

MAEVE (O.C.)

My name is Maeve! Daughter of the girl you abandoned. You are my father!

FLIGHT ATTENDANT shakes Aiden awake.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Call for first-class passengers to board the flight to Los Angeles, sir.

INT. FIRST CLASS CABIN OF AIRCRAFT. LATER.

Aiden settles in his seat.

The FLIGHT ATTENDANT leans down over Aiden.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Better be strapping yourself in, sir. Pilot says we've got ourselves a bumpy flight ahead.

Aiden stares up at the attendant. He shakes his head as her image merges into that of Maeve and the Old Crone then back to the Attendant.

WHISPERING VOICES

The geas is almost completed!
Almost!

Aiden looks around. Nothing.

EXT. DUBLIN AIRPORT. AFTERNOON.

Flight departs.

INT. FIRST CLASS CABIN OF AIRCRAFT.

Aiden takes two sleeping pills and falls asleep.

INT. FIRST CLASS CABIN OF AIRCRAFT. NEXT MORNING.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
We're here, sir. Slept all the
way, you did.

Aiden collects his overhead luggage.

INT. LAX. LATER.

Connla greets his brother at the luggage carousel.

CONNLA
How was it? Visit any of those
places we went to decades ago?
Remember you taking a shine to
quite a few young Irish colleens.
Look any of them up? 'Course
they'd be a lot older now.

Laughs. Aiden shrugs.

CONNLA (CONT'D)
Go anywhere near that Bog of Allen?

Aiden shakes head.

CONNLA (CONT'D)
Police found the body of that young
woman. Strange case. Couldn't
figure out if she'd been dead for
years, or a few days. Bog kept her
body intact. Puzzle for the
pathologists.

As he loads Aiden's suitcase.

CONNLA (CONT'D)

Even talk she might have been killed recently, and her killer escaped to the States.

Aiden is in a dream-like state.

CONNLA (CONT'D)

You okay? Thought you'd have plenty of time to sleep in first-class seating.

AIDEN

Jet lag. Bumpy flight. Bath and long nap.

CONNLA

No problem. Shawn wants to talk with you about that young girl chasing you with her script. Says you need to stay away from her. Something about some medieval Irish warrior traveling to Scotland and getting some goddess pregnant.

(laughs)

Makes absolutely no sense to me. Don't know where Shawn comes up with this stuff.

AIDEN

Is that all?

CONNLA

So this warrior returns to Ireland. Then his illegitimate son, older now, comes looking for his father. Won't tell him who he is. Father gets angry. Kills him. Discovers it was his son.

(laughs)

Personally, I don't see what the hell this has to do with anything. But that's Shawn. I'm probably telling it all wrong. Anyway, it's got Shawn all excited. Wants to talk to you about it. Maybe later tonight?

Aiden nods.

INT. HADDINGTON HOUSE APARTMENTS. LATER

Jerry greets Aiden.

JERRY

Good to see you back safely, Mr. O'Brien. Strange thing. That same young lady came by earlier today. Brought the script. Said it's all finished except for the ending.

Aiden takes The Script.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I'll bring your suitcase up later/
After you've had a chance to shower
and nap?

Aiden nods. He moves to the elevator.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT.

Aiden enters the living room and places The Script on a table.

INT. BEDROOM.

Aiden enters and turns on the bathwater. He returns to the living room.

Reenters bathroom with The Script in his hand.

Strips and steps into the bath. He holds The Script to his chest.

Eyes close.

BEGIN MONTAGE.

--Aiden reaches out to Maeve slowly sinking in Bog of Allen.

--She's almost gone when her arm reach out and grasps his.

--She pulls him into the Bog. He struggles to free himself.

END MONTAGE.

INT. HALLWAY. OUSIDE AIDEN'S APARTMENT.

Jerry arrives with suitcase.

Knocks. No answer.

JERRY

Mr. O'Brien? It's Jerry. I have
your suitcase.

No answer.

Inserts key into keyhole. Opens door.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Mr. O'Brien? It's me, Jerry. Mr.
O'Brien?

INT. BATHROOM.

Jerry looks inside.

The bathtub is filled with blackened mud.

Aiden's face and mouth is filled with mud. He's dead,

The Script, still gripped in his hand, dangles over the side
of the bath. On his thumb is the gold ring with a bright
emerald stone.

THE END