

Dig

by  
Alex Sinesi

alexsinesi@yahoo.com  
WGA #1468547

FADE IN:

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

A '67 Mustang idles under cold moonlight. There isn't a trace of paint on it, just sheet metal and rust.

A few yards away, dirt sprays from a muddy crater.

CELESTE -- 20s, beautiful, Goth -- is down in the hole, chopping earth with a shovel. Her Victorian dress is splattered with mud. Her breath comes in gasps.

THUNK! The shovel hits something solid. She tries to pull it out. It won't budge.

AN UNEARTHLY GROAN rises from the dirt. Black slime oozes out around the shovel blade, SIZZLING as it spreads.

Celeste closes her eyes, takes a deep breath.

She takes her shoes off and steps barefoot into the slime. It swallows her feet.

For a moment, she is calm and still. Then,

SHE CONVULSES! A violent seizure. Her eyes roll back to white as she SCREAMS.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

The skeleton of a high-rise building, beams glinting in the sun.

A pickup rolls through the gate, parks next to a rock crusher. Five workers get out. One worker, JOE, opens an electrical box and turns the crusher on. It starts with a GROWL.

The jaws of the shredder begin to move -- an unholy maw of spinning teeth.

As they gather equipment, a BLACK LEXUS glides past them. One worker spits in its direction.

The Lexus parks next to a trailer. The company name, PALERMO & SONS, is written on the side.

HUNTER EDWARDS (30) steps out of the car. He's intense, confident. An architect. He carries a sketch pad.

He looks at the building and frowns.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Not bad, huh? We're four days ahead  
of schedule.

DENTON, middle-aged and well-fed, emerges from his trailer.  
Offering his hand,

DENTON  
Denton Lewis, site supervisor. Good  
to finally meet you. It's Hunter,  
right?

Hunter doesn't notice the gesture. He's distracted by the  
building.

HUNTER  
Yeah. Did you get the new specs?

DENTON  
Uh, yes. We did.

HUNTER  
Where's the mezzanine?

DENTON  
Why don't you come on inside?

INT. DENTON'S TRAILER - DAY

Clean and well-organized, a miniature office.

DENTON  
Please, have a seat.

Hunter sits and opens his sketch pad. He sketches and talks  
at the same time.

HUNTER  
So. The mezzanine.

DENTON  
That's why I called.

HUNTER  
It has to be built before you frame  
the portico.

DENTON  
I know.

HUNTER  
And?

DENTON

With the schedule we're on right now, I don't think it's realistic.

Hunter looks up from his sketch.

HUNTER

You signed off on it, didn't you?

DENTON

Since I joined this project, it's been revised four times. Four. All I'm saying is, it wasn't in the brief. We don't need it.

HUNTER

I need it. Angelo needs it. Who is *we*?

DENTON

We is me.

HUNTER

Ah. Why don't *you* think *we* should build it?

DENTON

It would be extremely difficult, and expensive.

HUNTER

Difficult? It's never been done before, difficult is understood. And what do you mean expensive? It's not your money, is it?

DENTON

My men have other jobs they could be doing. I can't afford to waste their time.

HUNTER

Are you asking for more money?

DENTON

No. I'm advising that you don't build the goddamn mezzanine!

HUNTER

The building is nothing without it. You understand? This could be something remarkable. Unique.

DENTON  
Oh, it'll be very unique. Don't  
worry about that.

HUNTER  
Very unique. Yes, I'm sure it will  
be more unique than other unique  
things.

DENTON  
What?

Hunter looks at him sadly.

HUNTER  
You have no passion for this.

DENTON  
Yeah, well. Some of us have to live  
in the real world.

EXT. ROOF OF UNFINISHED BUILDING - DAY

Twenty stories up, the worker Joe stands on a platform next  
to exposed beams.

He plugs an air hose into a rivet gun. Pressing the muzzle  
against a beam, he squeezes the trigger.

PSH-SHUNK! A rivet slams into place.

PSH-SHUNK! PSH-SHUNK! Two more, very loud.

Joe wipes sweat from his brow.

PSH-CRUNCH! A rivet goes in crooked.

The beam VIBRATES down to the foundation, where hairline  
cracks appear.

Black slime drips from the rivet.

Joe examines his gun. It's jammed. He trades it for a  
sledgehammer and starts knocking the rivet straight.

UNKNOWN POV: While Joe works, SOMETHING approaches his back.  
It pauses over his shoulder, ready to strike.

Joe tenses, realizing too late that something is behind him.  
He turns to find --

Nothing. Just an empty roof.

He shakes it off, goes back to work.

INT. TRAILER - DAY

Denton and Hunter stand over a blueprint.

DENTON

We could extend the W-tens here and here, leave our options open.

HUNTER

That's fine, but you still need to frame it in the next two weeks. Otherwise, the whole facade has to be re-done from the ground up.

DENTON

Life is full of compromises.

HUNTER

Not in my experience.

Hunter grimaces, sits down quickly.

DENTON

You alright?

HUNTER

Yeah. I just get these headaches sometimes.

DENTON

I know the feeling.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Joe pounds away with the sledge. He's almost got the rivet straight.

The unseen force circles him, like a cat toying with its prey.

Suddenly, it rushes his left flank.

Joe turns -- again, too late -- and is hit by a gust of wind. He grabs the beam and holds on for dear life.

JOE

Jimmy, you asshole!

But Jimmy isn't there. No one is there.



INT. TRAILER - DAY

Hunter and Denton are brooding over the specs when

A HORRIFIC GRINDING NOISE breaks their silence, followed by DESPERATE SHOUTING.

Hunter and Denton look at each other like: "What the fuck was that?"

They leap out of their chairs.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - CONTINUOUS

Hunter and Denton exit the trailer and witness:

A worker covered with blood, not his own. He vomits.

Another worker, frozen in disbelief. Tears in his eyes.

A PILE OF INTESTINES AND A SEVERED ARM at the base of the crusher.

The crusher's funnel top, still chugging, splattered with blood.

Denton takes just a second to regroup. Breaks into a run.

Hunter remains in the doorway -- shocked, breathless.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

An empty lot adjacent to the site.

The accident is hidden behind a cinder block wall, but the PANICKED SHOUTING can still be heard.

Celeste's Mustang pulls into the lot.

INT. MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS

Celeste sits behind the wheel, cigarette dangling from her lips. PUNK ROCK blares out of the stereo.

Her shovel lies across the backseat, a steamer trunk beside it.

She glares at the unfinished building. The place is calling to her -- offering a challenge.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

It looks like a great place to overdose or get in a gunfight.

Celeste's Mustang rolls up. She gets out, stretches, and grabs her trunk.

INT. MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Dimly lit and dilapidated. The MOTEL OWNER sits behind bulletproof glass. Opposite him, a vending machine offers condoms and pork rinds.

Celeste is unfazed by her surroundings.

MOTEL OWNER

Looking for a room, baby doll?

He smacks his lips.

MOTEL OWNER

It's fifty a night, if you want to pay in cash.

She just stares at him.

MOTEL OWNER

What are you, deaf?

Slowly, she takes out her wallet, pushes the bills through the slot.

MOTEL OWNER

Alright. Fifty in cash.

He comes out from behind the glass with her KEY. She grabs it but he doesn't let go.

MOTEL OWNER

You need anything, you let me know.

She yanks the key away. He watches her exit, grinning.

EXT. OCEANFRONT MANSION - DAY

Hunter parks his car in a circular drive by a fountain.

A three-story behemoth towers over him. This is the home of benefactors, THE PALERMOS.

He climbs a set of limestone steps to the entrance, presses 'TALK' on an intercom.

HUNTER

Angelo?

A woman, DARLENE PALERMO, responds in a Southern drawl.

DARLENE (O.S.)

He's around back, dear, by the pool.

Hunter goes back down the steps. As he crosses the drive, he's almost hit by a red Ferrari.

One door scissors open, revealing TONY PALERMO (25). Track suit, Oakleys, gold jewelry.

TONY

What are you doing here?

HUNTER

Your dad called.

TONY

He called you?

HUNTER

Yeah, Tony. He called me.

Tony walks to the garage and enters a code on a keypad. The door lifts.

GARAGE

They walk past a collection of exotic cars, ATVs, and motor bikes.

TONY

You were there right? You saw it?

HUNTER

I saw the aftermath.

TONY

Was it bad? I heard it was pretty bad.

HUNTER

As opposed to what? Good?

TONY

Well, messier than the usual.

HUNTER

What's going on with the investors?

TONY

Oh, you don't understand. Ever since we raised the budget, they've had a huge dildo pointed at my ass, and now it's lubed with tragedy!

HUNTER

Thanks for clearing that up.

They exit into the backyard, heading for the

POOL AREA

A huge swimming pool just feet from the ocean. ANGELO PALERMO and Darlene, his wife, lie on chaise longues beside it.

He is an old school Italian patriarch, in his sixties. His gut hangs out of a silk shirt.

She is his southern belle trophy wife.

They are so tan, they look like they're made of braised pork.

ANGELO

There he is! What a morning, huh?

Getting up, he grabs Hunter in a bear hug. Tony watches jealously.

HUNTER

The worst.

DARLENE

You poor dear. What a terrible thing to see.

HUNTER

I'm alright, Mrs. P. How are you?

DARLENE

Just fine, hon, just fine.

HUNTER

How's the kitchen reno going?

DARLENE

Beautifully. You have to see it.

ANGELO

She's going to put me in the poor house, this one.

DARLENE

Is that all you think about,  
Angelo? This is for our children!

ANGELO

You think they give a shit about  
the window treatments? They're  
after the money sweetheart, that's  
all!

TONY

Good to see you too, dad.

ANGELO

He finally speaks! Why don't you  
get a job and be a real man?

Darlene goes to Tony, kisses his cheek.

DARLENE

Don't listen to him, pumpkin. This  
awful business has him all  
flustered.

TONY

He seems normal to me.

ANGELO

Oh yeah, keep babying him, that'll  
get him off his ass.

Angelo takes Hunter aside.

ANGELO

These kids of mine, I give them  
everything and they spit in my  
face!

HUNTER

So, what's the damage from this  
morning?

ANGELO

We're square with OSHA, but the  
investors are breaking my balls.  
They think we're putting it up too  
fast.

HUNTER

Are we?

ANGELO

Don't worry about it. You just need to figure out how we're going to make good with the slants.

HUNTER

Well, the entryway to the first floor, with the mezzanine, that was supposed to be our show-stopper, but now your guy doesn't want to do it. I know you want to save money but...

ANGELO

Alright, alright, we'll do all the bells and whistles. But that's going to take months, we need something now.

HUNTER

We could do a ground breaking.

ANGELO

We already did. Three months ago, remember?

HUNTER

Yeah, but we didn't advertise it. We can start digging for the east tower. Get the mayor and the local news out there. Make it seem like a big deal.

Angelo considers it.

ANGELO

Throw a party on the company dime, huh?

(to Darlene and Tony)

You see? Worth his weight in gold, this one.

He picks up a bottle of clear alcohol from the grill counter, pours two shots.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Here. You drink this, you will never have to prove your bravery in any other way.

HUNTER

What is it?

ANGELO  
Grappa. *Salut.*

They drink. Hunter coughs.

HUNTER  
(weakly)  
Not bad.

ANGELO  
Hah! Not bad, he says. You eaten yet? We're having Ruebella's manigott.

HUNTER  
Thanks, but I can't. I told my dad I'd see him.

ANGELO  
So bring him over! We've got tons of food. Darlene, she lives to cook.

HUNTER  
He'd love to, I'm sure, but uh, you know. The trach.

He gestures to his throat. Angelo slaps his forehead.

ANGELO  
Ah, I always forget!

HUNTER  
That's alright. Maybe this weekend.

ANGELO  
I'm holding you to that.

He waves to Darlene.

HUNTER  
See you later, Mrs. P!

He turns to leave. Angelo grabs him and brings their faces close.

ANGELO  
We couldn't have done this without you. I mean it. You're my heart.

Hunter smiles -- he doesn't know what to say.

Tony watches, glaring.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

As Celeste showers, a centrifuge rattles on the edge of the sink.

She towels off and removes a vial from the centrifuge.

Sitting on the closed toilet lid, she tourniquets her left arm and preps a syringe.

She injects herself, betraying no pain.

She grabs the sink -- stares fiercely into the mirror. Bracing herself. She convulses once. A mini-seizure. A thick vein appears like a knot in her forehead.

FLASH TO: A WOMAN'S BODY ON FIRE IN A SHALLOW GRAVE.

The vision hits her like a punch to the stomach. She drops her head into the sink and VOMITS.

EXT. HUNTER'S FATHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A single story home in a bad neighborhood. Two rottweilers pace behind chain link.

Hunter parks his Lexus and approaches them. They JUMP and BARK.

He sticks his hand into a gap in the fence. They cover it with slobber.

At the front door, he rings the bell and waits. He has a bag from the local pharmacy in hand.

After a long pause, his father, CHARLES EDWARDS (late 50s), opens up.

Charles recently underwent a tracheotomy -- he now breathes through a stoma, a hole in his throat.

HUNTER

Hey, dad.

Charles puts a hand on his shoulder, leads him in.

INT. CHARLES' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Charles' living room. Depressing, cluttered and dirty.

Charles covers the stoma with two fingers when speaking. His voice is a raspy whisper.

CHARLES  
You look good.

HUNTER  
So do you.

CHARLES  
Bull--shit.

Hunter holds up the pharmacy bag.

HUNTER  
Meds.

Charles gestures to a table by the door.

CHARLES  
Put them there.

Hunter drops the bag next to framed photos of his mother,  
REBECCA EDWARDS -- a vivacious red head.

HUNTER  
How'd the swallowing test go?

CHARLES  
Good news. I failed it so bad... I  
don't have to take it again.

HUNTER  
Goddamn it. That's it. We're going  
to someone else.

CHARLES  
No.

HUNTER  
Dad, they're incompetent!

CHARLES  
Stop. I've had enough.

HUNTER  
Dad...

CHARLES  
Cheer up. It's good news.

He goes to the liquor cabinet, gets a bottle of Scotch and a  
glass.

CHARLES  
You want ice?

HUNTER

Dad, you've been saving that for --

Charles interrupts him by popping the cork.

CHARLES

Right now.

They sit on a threadbare couch. Charles waits for him to drink.

CHARLES

Come on.

Hunter hesitates, swallows.

HUNTER

It's good.

CHARLES

Smooth?

HUNTER

Very.

Charles pours him another.

HUNTER

You're going to get me wasted.

CHARLES

So?

HUNTER

I have to drive. I've got a ton of work.

CHARLES

Stay here.

Hunter sighs.

HUNTER

Fine. I'll be gone before you wake up, though.

CHARLES

Great! I'll make up the spare room.

HUNTER

Don't go to any trouble. Really. I'll take the couch.

CHARLES  
You sure?

HUNTER  
I love this couch.

He finishes his second glass.

HUNTER  
And I love this scotch.

CHARLES  
Your mother got this for me. Right  
before we had you.

HUNTER  
Yeah?

CHARLES  
I think about her all the time now.

HUNTER  
Dad... what happened?

CHARLES  
We've been over this.

HUNTER  
Yeah, and it never makes sense.

CHARLES  
We had a fight. She was drunk. She  
stormed off... wrapped her car  
around a tree.

HUNTER  
We don't know that. They never  
found a body.

Charles lets out a sigh -- long and terrible, like a death  
rattle.

HUNTER (CONT'D)  
I'm just saying, maybe she ran off  
with some guy, changed her name.

CHARLES  
Hunter... leave it alone.

HUNTER  
I can't. I'm sorry dad, I just... I  
hired a private investigator.

CHARLES  
Waste of money.

HUNTER  
Well, it's my money to waste.

CHARLES  
Your money. Right.

HUNTER  
Let's not get into all that, ok?

A moment of uncomfortable silence.

CHARLES  
Another round?

HUNTER  
Yeah, why not?

Charles pours.

INT. CELESTE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Celeste sits on the bed naked, hugging her knees. She looks small and frightened.

Hundreds of candles flicker around her, dripping wax on the furniture and carpet.

She gets up and dresses, carefully tying the laces of her corset. This is her armor.

She combs her hair, applies heavy eyeliner and the final touch: blood red lipstick.

She picks up her shovel and strides to the door. Ready for battle.

INT. CHARLES'S HOUSE - DAY

BZZZZ! A phone VIBRATES.

Hunter's eyes snap open.

He's in a fetal position on his dad's couch. He sits up, massaging his temples.

BZZZZ!

HUNTER  
Goddamn it.

He fumbles through his pockets, pulls the phone out and answers.

INTERCUT PHONE SEQUENCE.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Angelo in a bathing suit, the tide lapping at his feet. His house towers in the background.

Tony and his brother DAVID race ATVs over the dunes.

Angelo has to cover one ear as he shouts into a cell phone.

ANGELO

Hey! I just talked to the investors! The ground breaking's all set for Saturday!

HUNTER

You mean this weekend?

ANGELO

What??

HUNTER

*This* Saturday? This coming Saturday?

(re: the noise)

Where are you?

ANGELO

Just make it presentable!

HUNTER

Alright, I'll get over there.

ANGELO

What?

HUNTER

Goodbye, Angelo!

ANGELO

Alright, bye.

Hunter hangs up.

END PHONE SEQUENCE.

HUNTER

Fuck me.

He peels himself off the couch.

INT. ANGELO'S GARAGE - DAY

Tony and David park their ATVs and take off their helmets.

David is older and sports a wedding band, but he's definitely cut from the same cloth as his brother.

TONY  
That last jump was sick, right?

DAVID  
I'm gonna piss blood for a week.

Tony goes to a mini-fridge and grabs two cans of beer. They admire Angelo's car collection while drinking.

DAVID  
How's it going with dad?

TONY  
He's really been up my ass lately.  
You know how it is.

DAVID  
It won't last. One of these days  
golden boy's going to slip up. Then  
it'll be his nuts on the chopping  
block.

TONY  
Yeah, I know.

DAVID  
Hey, thanks for letting Sarah and  
the kids stay at your place.

TONY  
No problem, bro. So, I gotta ask,  
is she pregnant again or what?

David covers his face with a hand.

DAVID  
I don't want to talk about it.

TONY  
Damn, dude! That bitch is a  
factory!

DAVID  
She loves it. It's pretty  
disturbing.

TONY  
You've heard of rubbers, right? I  
mean, you're aware of their  
existence.

DAVID  
Yeah, yeah, go fuck yourself.

They crush their empty cans and toss them on the floor.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Hunter gets out of his car with a portfolio. Construction is  
in full swing again.

As he looks around, completed buildings assemble themselves  
out of his imagination. They are complex and whimsical,  
reminiscent of Frank Gehry. Hunter soaks in the dream.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Watch it motherfucker!

Snapping back to reality, he finds a backhoe towering over  
him. He hustles out of the way.

Denton speaks with his FOREMAN by the trailer. Hunter spots  
them and heads over.

HUNTER  
Mr. Lewis!

Denton sees him and scowls.

DENTON  
(to foreman)  
I'll get up with you later, Bobby.

FOREMAN  
Alright. You stay strong, Dent.

The foreman exits as Hunter walks up.

HUNTER  
So, how's the mezzanine?

DENTON  
Should be framed within the week.

HUNTER

I knew you'd see it my way.

Denton grits his teeth.

HUNTER

So I don't know if you heard about  
this ground-breaking ceremony...

DENTON

I heard a little bit. Sounds  
ambitious.

HUNTER

Yeah, well, Angelo wants to have it  
this Saturday.

DENTON

Are you fucking with me?

HUNTER

'fraid not.

Denton kneads his brow.

HUNTER

Just clean up for the east tower.  
And make sure we have room for  
chairs, there's going to be a  
shitload of people in here.

DENTON

My crew's already working double  
shifts.

Hunter opens his portfolio, hands him a stack of papers.

HUNTER

I made you an itinerary.

Denton through it with a hopeless expression. Hunter reads  
over his shoulder until distracted by a STRANGE SCRAPING  
NOISE.

He looks around, can't locate it. Finally he sees:

A shovel dragging over concrete.

It's Celeste. She's circling the unfinished building. She  
notices him watching, then plants her shovel and digs.

HUNTER  
'the fuck?  
(to Denton)  
I'll handle this.

Denton looks up, confused. Hunter's already taken off.

He walks right up to Celeste and clears his throat. She ignores him.

HUNTER  
Excuse me.

She looks up suddenly. Hunter is struck by her eyes -- intense, haunting. Unforgettable.

CELESTE  
Hi.

HUNTER  
Who the hell are you?

CELESTE  
I'm Celeste.

HUNTER  
Nice to meet you Celeste, I'm  
Hunter. So, if you don't mind me  
asking, what the fuck are you doing  
here?

CELESTE  
What's it look like?

HUNTER  
It looks like you're making a hole.

CELESTE  
Oh. Good.

She goes back to digging.

HUNTER  
Ok, you need to leave.

CELESTE  
Why?

HUNTER  
Well for starters, you could get  
killed. You don't have a hard hat.

CELESTE  
Neither do you.

HUNTER

I'm the designer. I'm allowed to be here.

CELESTE

You're allowed to get killed?

HUNTER

No, I mean, it's not the same thing. Ok, you're right, I probably should have a hard hat too. But I wasn't kidding, this place really is dangerous. Just the other day--

Hunter trails off, hit by a sudden migraine. Celeste watches intently.

CELESTE

Headache?

HUNTER

Yeah, sorry. I get these all the time, but--

CELESTE

Now they're getting worse?

HUNTER

Yeah.

She puts a hand on his cheek. Hunter, though bewildered, can't help but enjoy the contact.

HUNTER

What are you--

CELESTE

When you see the tank, take two steps to the left.

HUNTER

What?

DENTON (O.S.)

Hey, Hunter!

Hunter whips around, startled. Denton approaches with the itinerary.

DENTON

It doesn't say anything about the mezzanine. Are we supposed to finish that too?

Hunter is caught off-guard.

HUNTER

Um, I guess not. Wait, shit.

Hunter turns back, looks around. Celeste has vanished.

HUNTER

Did you see a girl here?

DENTON

A girl?

HUNTER

Yeah, just now. She was standing right here.

DENTON

I must have missed her.

Hunter shakes it off.

HUNTER

Sorry, what were you saying?

DENTON

I was asking if you really expect us to frame the mezzanine along with all this ground-breaking stuff.

HUNTER

No. No, that's okay. Just do what you need to do.

Denton sighs gratefully, makes a note on the sheet.

DENTON

All right.

He heads back for the trailer.

As Hunter continues looking for Celeste, something in the air catches his eye: a glint of metal.

An acetylene tank falls out of the sky like a bomb. It lands at Hunter's feet.

He stares at it in shock.

The tank's owner, a WELDER on the second story, looks down at him, also in shock. The I-beam he's standing on GROANS, about to give way. He jumps to a stable platform.

Hunter hears the SHRIEK OF GRINDING METAL and remembers what Celeste said. He takes two steps to the left.

THE BEAM GIVES WAY, SWINGING DOWN FROM THE BUILDING. It whooshes past Hunter, missing him by inches, and bats the acetylene tank across the site. It hits a dump trunk and EXPLODES.

Denton runs over, frantic.

DENTON  
Anybody hurt? Anybody hurt?

The workers all look at each other, shake their heads.

DENTON  
Oh, thank god.

He gestures to the burning truck.

DENTON  
Will somebody put that out?!

Half the crew runs over with fire extinguishers.

Denton turns to Hunter.

DENTON  
I swear, you're like the angel of death!

HUNTER  
Oh yeah, blame me!

Denton throws up his hands and exits. Hunter looks at the fire, then at the hole Celeste was digging.

HUNTER  
Huh.

INT. HUNTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A slick studio apartment. Ultra-modern.

Hunter is in the kitchen area, on the phone with his private investigator.

HUNTER  
No, I don't understand. How can there be nothing?

He paces back and forth, the last thread of his patience unravelling.

HUNTER

What have you been investigating then? Uh-huh. No, I was nine when she left. You're supposed to know more about this than me.

He grits his teeth, ready to throw the phone.

HUNTER

No. Absolutely not. Because, my father's in very fragile condition, I don't want you turning his house upside-down. You know what? Don't bother. Yeah, that means you're fired.

He ends the call, angrily tosses the phone aside.

LIVING ROOM/STUDIO

Still pissed, he takes a seat on the couch, sipping coffee from a PALERMO&SONS mug.

On a drafting table in front of him: A crumpled sketch -- the one he started in Denton's trailer. He starts re-drawing the design on graph paper.

Halfway through, he frowns, tears them both down and throws them away.

Ripping off a new sheet, he begins drawing in charcoal. He bends over the table, scribbling madly. After a few seconds, he backs up, revealing:

CELESTE -- a portrait from the neck up. Her eyes have that same haunting intensity.

He spins it fully around, cocks his head. Smiles. It's good.

INT. HUNTER'S CAR - NIGHT

Hunter driving, groceries on the passenger seat.

The highway floats around him, its lights and exit signs yawning out of a dark eternity.

He slaps his cheeks to wake up, hits play on his iPod dock. VINTAGE BLUES ROCK fills the cabin.

He drives past the construction site. Through the windshield, he glimpses a figure slipping through the gate --

It's Celeste, dragging her shovel.

He hits the brakes, hard.

EXT. HIGHWAY BESIDE CONSTRUCTION SITE - CONTINUOUS

His Lexus SCREECHES to a stop, tires smoking. He jumps out, leaves the motor running.

He crosses four lanes to the padlocked gate. He tries to squeeze through like Celeste, but he's too big. He looks back at his car, sees:

THE KEYS, still in the ignition.

He runs onto the highway without looking.

A semi truck THUNDERS BY, just inches in front of him.

He falls back on his ass. For a moment he sits there, catching his breath.

Now compulsively checking both ways, he goes to his car and gets the keys.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - CONTINUOUS

Gloomy and dark. Empty. Silent.

The framework building towers menacingly. Its upper floors fade into the night.

Hunter keeps his head on a swivel. No sign of the girl.

HUNTER

Hello?

He approaches the building, passing the rock crusher. As he enters what will become the first floor, he finds:

THE SHOVEL, leaned against the frame of an elevator.

HUNTER

Celeste? You in here?

He peers into the elevator shaft. Did she fall in? He can't tell. It's too dark.

Hunter kneels and shines his cell phone into the pit. It's just a few feet to the bottom.

As he searches, SOMETHING approaches his back. It moves exactly like the unseen force that killed Joe the construction worker.

Hunter sees that the well is empty. He sighs in relief.

IT creeps closer, nearly upon him.

As Hunter gets up, he suddenly cringes. A massive headache. A vein stands out on his forehead. The phone slips from his hand--

HUNTER

Shit!

--and falls into the well. Its light goes out.

Weary, still in pain, he gets down flat on his stomach and reaches for it.

A WOMAN appears behind him, less than a foot away. He's oblivious to her presence.

She wears a yellow sundress. It is old and tattered, crusted with dirt. Shadows obscure her face.

She raises a hand, reaching for him. Her skin is gelatinous, dripping.

As she reaches, THE SKIN MELTS AWAY FROM HER KNUCKLES, exposing raw flesh and glistening bone.

There can be no doubt: she is dead.

As her fingertips draw within inches of Hunter's shoulder, he realizes something is behind him.

He whips around to find --

Nothing. Just the wind passing through the beams. He's alone.

He grabs his phone and stands up. As he brushes dirt off his front, he notices black slime sticking to his hands. He wipes it away.

INT. CELESTE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Celeste staggers in. Her clothes are on crooked. Her legs shake.

She drops her shovel on the carpet. The blade is caked with dirt.

## BATHROOM

She turns the shower on and gets in with all her clothes on.

Sliding into a seated position, she begins to cry. Mascara spills down her face.

Her face dissolves into a charcoal sketch in:

## INT. HUNTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hunter puts the finishing touches on Celeste's weeping face. He sits back and wonders at it, confused and a little disturbed.

## EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Just after dawn. Hunter, Denton and the crew huddle by the trailer.

## HUNTER

At noon, there are going to be two hundred people in here. We need to get these vehicles out and get this shit cleaned up. No mistakes, this is do or die!

## DENTON

You heard the boss! Assholes and elbows! Let's get it!

## INT. ANGELO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Darlene presides over an army of caterers, all cooking their hearts out. She jabs a finger at a hapless MALE CATERER.

## DARLENE

If that quail doesn't look presentable in the next thirty seconds, you're going to be wearing it as a hat!

## MALE CATERER

I'm sorry, Mrs. Palermo!

## DARLENE

Don't be sorry, just do it right!

Angelo storms in. A tuxedo somehow obscures his girth.

ANGELO  
Darlene, have you seen Hunter?

DARLENE  
This is not a good time, Angelo!

ANGELO  
I'm just asking if you've seen him!

DARLENE  
He's not hiding in the fridge or  
the pantry, so no, I haven't seen  
him lately.

ANGELO  
We can't do the toast without him!

DARLENE  
I told him to be here at nine, just  
like everybody else.

Angelo scowls, looks to a pretty FEMALE CATERER. She's wheeling a cart of drinks on ice, including bottles of Dom Perignon.

ANGELO  
The Dom! Over here!

She rushes over with the cart. As they exit together, Darlene yells:

DARLENE  
Thirty minutes, people! You do not  
want to disappoint me!

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A BOBCAT SKID LOADER is stuck in the mud. Five workers are trying to push it out. Denton watches them, furious.

DENTON  
We don't have time for this shit!  
You hear me?!

The skid loader starts to roll. A worker yells to the driver:

WORKER  
Give it some gas!

The driver stomps it. The wheels spin, kicking up huge sprays of mud. Denton gets splattered.

DENTON  
Hey, hey, hey!

He backs up and looks at his ruined clothes.

DENTON  
Motherfucker!

The workers push the skid loader again. It's almost out. They heave their weight against it.

INT. ANGELO'S HOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

The beverage cart rocks back and forth with the same movement as the skid loader. Bottles and glasses clink together.

Angelo fucks the caterer doggy-style, slamming her against the cart. She moans.

ANGELO  
Keep it down.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Denton stands in the shade of the building, brushing mud off his clothes.

His fingers come back covered in black slime. He looks at it up close, sniffs it, then wipes it away.

INT. ANGELO'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Mass hysteria. A packed table of rowdy guests.

Tony and David argue in Italian with their aunts and uncles. Lots of hand gestures.

DAVID'S THREE KIDS, ages 4-8, run laps around the table, screaming.

ANGELO enters with a bottle of Dom. The female caterer is a few steps behind, adjusting her dress.

All eyes turn to Angelo. With a flourish, he POPS the cork.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

1) Workers shovel dirt into ruts on the ground, pat it smooth.

2) Champagne fills a glass.

- 3) Backhoes and bulldozers park in a corner.
- 4) Darlene enters the dining room, flanked by caterers with trays.
- 5) Workers set out hundreds of plastic folding chairs.
- 6) Entrees are delivered onto plates.
- 7) Denton watches the work, sweating. It's going to be a photo finish.
- 8) Angelo looks to the empty chair next to him -- Hunter's place.
- 9) A podium is assembled near the framework building.
- 10) David's kids tumble over each other, laughing and shrieking.
- 11) Hunter enters the dining room.

END MONTAGE.

Everyone stops eating and looks up. Angelo stands, a huge smile on his face.

Tony, David, and Darlene sit with arms crossed, pissed.

Angelo and Hunter embrace. Hunter takes the seat beside him.

ANGELO

I heard this morning, the governor might be making an appearance.

HUNTER

No shit.

ANGELO

I tripled the budget. It's going to be huge.

HUNTER

Isn't that stretching us a little thin?

Angelo nods while chewing.

ANGELO

The Koreans are ready to pull the plug. I put everything we have in this.

HUNTER

Jesus. All our eggs -- one basket.

ANGELO

Hey, no blasphemy at my table. I need all the help I can get.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - LATER

The ground-breaking ceremony.

A CROWD OF INVESTORS AND POLITICIANS sit facing the podium. Darlene, Tony and David are in the front row, Hunter and Charles sit behind them.

CAMERA CREWS from the local news document the event. The news chopper does a flyby.

Everything, from the podium to the chairs to the complimentary bottled water, has a PALERMO & SONS label.

Angelo, MAYOR WILKINS and GOVERNOR McDONNELL stand together, equipped with hard hats and gold-painted shovels. They plant the shovels in the dirt.

The crowd APPLAUDS.

The men shake hands. Angelo approaches the podium.

ANGELO

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Mayor, Governor McDonnell, I want you to give yourselves a hand!

More APPLAUSE.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

This project would not be possible without your vision, your passion, and your tireless efforts.

Hunter's eyes widen. He kneads his brow, feeling another headache coming on. Suddenly, he doubles over in pain. Charles looks to him with concern, but he's drawn away to something in the distance. A horrible recognition dawns on his face.

EXT. FOURTH FLOOR OF THE UNFINISHED BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Denton climbs a ladder up through a hole in the floor. Wrapped around his shoulder: a giant chain with hooks on both ends.

ANGELO (O.S., CONT'D)  
 Recent years have not been kind to  
 this city, but I believe that we  
 are witnessing the dawn of a new  
 day...

Denton drops the chain and stretches it out. He hooks one end  
 to an exposed beam. Sweat pours down his face.

ANGELO (O.S., CONT'D)  
 As I stand here, I feel like a man  
 caught up in a dream.

Denton picks up the slack and wraps it around his neck,  
 making a NOOSE. He clamps it shut with the hook.

ANGELO (O.S., CONT'D)  
 I want to slap myself and say  
 "Angelo, wake up. This isn't really  
 happening!"

He looks physically ill. He's trying to stop, trying to hold  
 himself back.

ANGELO (O.S., CONT'D)  
 But it is happening, and all thanks  
 to the love of my family...

Dark veins ripple across his face. His eyes roll back.

ANGELO (O.S., CONT'D)  
 ...and the generosity of my  
 friends.

He turns and SPRINTS TO THE EDGE.

He runs off the side, his legs cycling wildly as he falls.

The chain spools out behind him, the loops unravelling with  
 incredible speed.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - GROUND LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

The crowd gasps as Denton drops off the building. He's  
 falling just behind the podium, in front of everyone.

The chain snaps to a halt. Denton falls straight through it.

The empty noose remains, swaying in the breeze.

Blood mists down onto the crowd. They react with a collective  
 shudder. An instant later --

SPLAT!

Denton's body lands, headless, at their feet. Blood shoots from the neck.

His head comes down a second after, bouncing up beside the rest of him.

Time stops.

THE FACES OF THE AUDIENCE: speckled with blood, frozen in horror.

ANGELO, behind his podium, shocked and disbelieving.

HUNTER, grimacing, still in the throes of his migraine.

CHARLES, terrified, clutching his chest. Not looking where Denton fell, but still out into the distance.

THE NOOSE, dripping blood as it sways.

A woman in the crowd SCREAMS, her shrill cry unfreezing time.

Charles gasps for breath. His knees buckle.

Hunter catches him, propping his head up. Tony appears behind them, frantic.

HUNTER

Call an ambulance!

TONY

What the fuck are *they* gonna do?  
Sew his head back on?

Hunter gestures furiously to his father.

HUNTER

He's having a heart attack!

TONY

Oh shit!

HUNTER

Call an ambulance!!!

Tony fumbles for his phone, dials 9-1-1.

Hunter tries to comfort his father, but his voice is trembling.

HUNTER

It's going to be okay, dad. It's  
all going to be okay...

Around them, the crowd flees in a panic.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - DAY

Hunter sits next to the reception desk, his left leg shaking.

A NURSE walks by and he nearly attacks her for information.

HUNTER

How is he?

NURSE

Mr. Edwards, your father suffered a  
minor coronary event. He's stable  
and resting comfortably. We'd like  
to keep him for a few days, just to  
run some routine--

HUNTER

Can I see him?

NURSE

He's resting.

Hunter pushes past her into the room.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charles lies in bed, hooked up to a heart monitor. An IV  
pumps medication into his arm.

Hunter tiptoes up to the bed.

HUNTER

Dad?

Charles opens his eyes a crack. He tries to speak, forgetting  
the trach. Nothing comes out.

Hunter understands right away. He puts two fingers over his  
father's stoma.

Charles's voice is barely audible.

CHARLES

I saw your mother.

HUNTER  
You had a dream?

CHARLES  
No. At the site. She was so angry.

HUNTER  
Dad. You're confused.

CHARLES  
I made her leave.

Hunter's eyes fill with tears.

HUNTER  
We don't know why she left.

CHARLES  
I pushed her away.

HUNTER  
No, dad. It was her. She didn't  
want us anymore.

CHARLES  
I couldn't love her... the way she  
needed.

Hunter takes his fingers off the track, squeezes his father's hand.

HUNTER  
Just... try and get some rest. I  
love you, dad.

His father mouths "I love you." Hunter has to leave the room.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

TWO POLICE CARS drive out through the main gate. Broken caution tape flaps in the wind.

Workers hose off the spot where Denton landed.

Angelo sits in a front row chair facing the podium, his head in his hands. The other chairs are empty. Water bottles and programs litter the ground.

David, and Tony wait by the entrance.

Hunter joins them, shell-shocked.

DAVID  
Your old man alright?

HUNTER  
Not exactly. But, not much worse  
either.

DAVID  
Yeah.

HUNTER  
How's Angelo?

DAVID  
He just got done with the cops. I'd  
leave him alone if I were you.

TONY  
That was some shit with Denton,  
huh?

DAVID  
He seemed fine yesterday. Who goes  
to bed normal and wakes up a  
suicidal maniac?

TONY  
Oh, he was pushed. No doubt.

HUNTER  
I don't think so.

TONY  
Did he say something to you?

HUNTER  
No.

Hunter looks up and sees Celeste -- once again digging by the unfinished building. He leaves the brothers without a word. Tony stares daggers at his back.

HUNTER  
Celeste!

She doesn't seem to notice. She's facing away from him, digging energetically.

He grabs her shoulder.

HUNTER  
Hey!

She whips around, screaming:

CELESTE  
Don't touch me!

HUNTER  
Whoa. Sorry.

Seeing him, she breathes a sigh of relief.

CELESTE  
Oh, it's you. I'm not... just,  
don't sneak up on me like that.

HUNTER  
I wanted to thank you.

CELESTE  
For what?

HUNTER  
The other day. You saved my life.

CELESTE  
Oh. Yeah. No problem.

She goes back to digging.

HUNTER  
How did you know?

CELESTE  
What?

HUNTER  
The accident. How did you know that  
would happen?

CELESTE  
Sometimes I just know things.

Hunter can't help but chuckle.

HUNTER  
Seriously?

CELESTE  
Seriously.

HUNTER  
Heh. Ok, I gotta know, what are you  
trying to accomplish here?

CELESTE  
I'm looking for something.

HUNTER  
What?

CELESTE  
You really want to know?

HUNTER  
I'm on the edge of my seat.

Celeste looks past Hunter, to the Palermo brothers.

CELESTE  
Can you trust them?

HUNTER  
Not even a little bit.

CELESTE  
Then we should talk somewhere else.

INT. ENGLISH-STYLE TAVERN - NIGHT

Hunter and Celeste sit at a table near the bar. Aside from the staff, the place is deserted.

Celeste downs a whiskey sour and blurts:

CELESTE  
It's your mother's grave.

Hunter almost spits out his beer.

HUNTER  
Excuse me?

CELESTE  
That's what I'm looking for.

HUNTER  
My mother? Rebecca Edwards?

CELESTE  
Yes.

HUNTER  
You think she's buried on a construction site?

CELESTE  
I know she is.

HUNTER  
Um. How?

CELESTE

I have a gift. Some people would call me a medium.

HUNTER

(sarcastic)

You see dead people?

CELESTE

No. I am dead people.

HUNTER

I don't know what that means.

CELESTE

They're inside me.

HUNTER

Ok, um, I'm very sorry about your mental illness, but I don't think I can help.

CELESTE

It feels like being crazy. Sharing your mind with a dead person.

Hunter starts to get up.

HUNTER

Yeah, uh, that's gotta be rough. Look, I gotta go--

Celeste grabs his wrist.

CELESTE

Why do you think you get a migraine ever time some horrible shit is about to happen?

HUNTER

What, I'm a psychic too?

CELESTE

You know something's wrong. You can feel it, but I can show you.

HUNTER

Show me what?

CELESTE

Your mother. She's there, at the site. She was murdered.

HUNTER  
Who told you that?

CELESTE  
She did.

He turns his back on her, heads for the door. She follows.

CELESTE  
She can't pass on. It's why people  
keep dying!

HUNTER  
Construction is inherently  
dangerous, it's not supernatural.

CELESTE  
You really think today was an  
accident?

That slows his tracks. She smirks.

CELESTE  
You don't. You saw something.

HUNTER  
I didn't see anything.

Reaching the door, he stops and jabs a finger in her face.

HUNTER  
That site is private property, you  
understand? I don't want to see you  
there again.

He goes out and slams the door.

EXT. TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Celeste runs after Hunter, who's made it halfway down the  
block.

CELESTE  
I'm just trying to help, asshole!

He whips around.

HUNTER  
You think *this* is helping? I just  
saw five years of work evaporate in  
an afternoon. My boss is bankrupt.  
I don't even know if I have a job  
anymore.

(MORE)

HUNTER (CONT'D)

And now you want me to worry about ghosts fucking things up.

CELESTE

Ignoring this is not going to make it go away.

HUNTER

Look, I get it. You help people cross over. It's a big hit with the grieving relatives, but you're barking up the wrong tree here. I don't believe in anything. As far as I'm concerned, when you're dead, you're dead. Anything is a fairy tale. You just stop working. That's it.

CELESTE

God, I wish that were true.

HUNTER

Really?

CELESTE

Yeah, I do. The truth is so much worse.

An awkward silence.

HUNTER

What do you want from me?

CELESTE

I can't find her on my own. You have a connection, one that death can't break.

HUNTER

I didn't even know she was dead.

CELESTE

But you felt her. And she feels you. Something about your presence makes her very, very angry. I don't understand, I mean, it's the opposite of the typical mother and child dynamic.

HUNTER

Well, she wasn't much of a mother.

CELESTE

And yet, you still wanted to find her.

HUNTER

What? How did you know that?

CELESTE

It's all over your face. You've been searching for her. You need this as much as I do.

HUNTER

What I need is to get on with my life.

CELESTE

Then you need to come with me.

He considers it, gives in.

HUNTER

Fuck it. I'll drive.

INT. HUNTER'S CAR - NIGHT

Hunter drives back to the construction site. Celeste is in the passenger seat.

HUNTER

So, how do you know where to go? Are there like, voices in your head?

CELESTE

It's more like being infected with something. The sicker you get, the closer you are. You know.

HUNTER

The headaches?

CELESTE

Your mom is one of the worst I've ever had. She got me from three states away. Feels like being hung over on red wine.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Hunter's Lexus parks beside Celeste's Mustang. The lot is otherwise empty. She goes to her car and opens the trunk.

HUNTER

Nice car.

CELESTE

I call it the corpse of the  
American dream.

She takes out a medical kit, unzips it, and hands Hunter a plastic tube.

HUNTER

What's this?

CELESTE

It's an epi-pen. You need to inject  
me if something goes wrong.

HUNTER

Are you serious?

CELESTE

Yeah. I'll slap my leg twice.  
That's the signal.

HUNTER

What if you can't? If you're  
incapacitated, what do I do then?

CELESTE

Hit me with it anyway. I should be  
able to warn you though. I know  
what anaphylactic shock feels like.

She heads for the front gate. Hunter follows.

HUNTER

(under his breath)  
Great.

The gate is padlocked, as usual. Celeste ducks the chain.

HUNTER

I have a key, you know.

CELESTE

It works better if I'm uninvited.

Hunter unlocks the gate, opens it.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - CONTINUOUS

He follows her into the vacant site.

CELESTE (CONT'D)  
It's also more fun.

HUNTER  
You're a little hellion, aren't  
you?

CELESTE  
Ugh. That makes me sound like one  
of those ash-covered children out  
of a Dickens novel.

She stops in front of a large hole, at least six feet deep.  
Her shovel is down inside.

HUNTER  
Wow. Is she in there?

CELESTE  
No, but I'm getting close.

She steps to the very edge and closes her eyes.

CELESTE  
Alright, I need to concentrate. I'm  
going to call to her.

HUNTER  
You're going to call to her?

CELESTE  
Shh.

He shuts his mouth.

She stands very still for a long time. The world seems to  
grow still around her. Suddenly,

SHE CONVULSES! It looks excruciating.

HUNTER  
Whoa!

She gasps for breath. Then,

ANOTHER CONVULSION! Even worse than the last one.

GRAY, VISCOUS FLUID drips out of her nostrils. This is  
ECTOPLASM, the substance of the spirit world.

HUNTER  
Holy shit. Is that normal?

She opens her eyes -- shimmering, bright with ectoplasm. It oozes down her cheeks, thicker than tears.

Her stomach GURGLES. She clutches it, falling to her knees.

HUNTER

Hey! Can you hear me?

She doesn't respond. He takes out the epi-pen.

HUNTER

Ah, fuck. I'm going to give you the shot, okay?

Her head down, shivering in pain. She whispers, too low for him to hear:

CELESTE

No.

She flops down on her side, writhing. Fluid drips from her eyes and nose.

Kneeling beside her, he pops the cap off. Raises the pen.

She holds out a hand -- "WAIT!"

He stops himself, just in time.

CELESTE

(louder, but still weak)

It's under control.

She closes her eyes, focusing all her strength. She WRETCHES - - three violent hiccups -- then VOMITS up a huge stream of ECTOPLASM.

THE ECTOPLASM pours over the edge of crater, surging toward the bottom -- as if it has a mind of its own.

CELESTE -- still vomiting, her stomach sucking in. She's emptying herself entirely.

Hunter looks on in horror.

The last of the ectoplasm does not trickle out. Rather, it unhooks from her lip, nostril, and eyelid like a stubborn, dangling creature.

In the pit, it forms a large puddle.

The puddle SHUDDERS. Hints of black gossamer appear on its surface.

The ectoplasm SIZZLES and exudes DARK VAPOR. The vapor fills the pit and reaches into the night sky. The sizzling gets louder.

Hunter watches the crater, transfixed.

The vapor parts.

A WOMAN has appeared in the pit, ankle-deep in the puddle. Her back is turned.

This is the woman who reached out to Hunter two nights earlier. She wears the same tattered sundress.

HUNTER

Who is that?

No answer.

HUNTER

Celeste!

He turns, finds her unconscious.

With no other recourse, he walks to the edge of the pit.

The woman does not move.

Hunter descends the muddy slope to the bottom. He stops just a few paces from the figure.

Here, the SIZZLING is so loud, it's nearly unbearable.

Hunter's voice jumps high like a young boy's as he says one tiny, uncertain word:

HUNTER

Mom?

THE WOMAN turns at the sound of his voice, a slow, agonizing reveal of

HER SLACK, DEAD FACE. Eyes closed. Her skin is gelatinous, sliding off the bones.

Hunter is utterly terrified.

HER EYELIDS SNAP OPEN, REVEALING EMPTY BLACK SOCKETS.

The SIZZLING noise stops. A moment of awful silence.

Her cheeks suck in and her mouth opens, unleashing A TORMENTED MOAN.

Her mouth opens so wide that her lower jaw, being the consistency of gelatin, STRETCHES AND SPLITS APART. The two halves hang down like strings of mucous.

Hunter falls back, crawling away through the muck.

HER NECK SPLITS OPEN as well, making a yawning chasm of her throat. Her moan GROWS INTO A ROAR.

She takes one lurching step toward him and EXPLODES -- splashing back to earth as a viscous rain.

She is gone.

Hunter, suddenly alone. His eyes dead like static television. The shock wears off and he scrambles out of the pit.

Celeste is just coming around. He kneels in front of her, lifting her chin.

HUNTER

Was that her?

She averts her eyes. She doesn't want to say.

HUNTER

*Celeste.* Was that my mom?

CELESTE

I'm sorry you had to see her like that. She's... unstable. She doesn't like it when I call her.

HUNTER

She wants to be left alone.

CELESTE

No. She wants to do it herself. She wants to be alive again.

He gets up, leans her on his shoulder, almost carrying her.

HUNTER

Everything you said... it's true?

CELESTE

Yeah.

HUNTER

Fuck.

They head out of the site together, weaving a crooked path, like a pair of drunks stumbling home from the bar.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

They walk to the cars, Celeste still leaning against Hunter.

CELESTE  
I need to eat. Can you drive me?

HUNTER  
Yeah. Of course.

They get in the Lexus.

INT. HUNTER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Hunter starts the engine. Celeste puts the A/C on high, directs all the vents at her face.

Hunter presses his forehead against the steering wheel.

CELESTE  
You alright?

HUNTER  
Not really.

She puts a hand on his shoulder.

CELESTE  
Sorry. That was selfish. I just...  
it gets so lonely when no one  
believes you.

He looks up at her and smiles.

HUNTER  
I know.

INT. WAFFLE HOUSE - NIGHT

Hunter and Celeste sit in a booth by a window, drinking black coffee.

Celeste takes out a cigarette, lights it.

HUNTER  
You can't smoke in these places  
anymore.

Celeste looks at him like "really?" Stubs the cig out on the tabletop.

CELESTE

That is some bullshit.

A WAITRESS arrives with a stack of pancakes for Celeste. The moment it's set down she attacks it.

Hunter watches her eat in disbelief.

Celeste devours half the stack before looking up. She swallows the last mouthful with a guilty look.

CELESTE

Sorry. I get really hungry after.

HUNTER

It's all good.

She keeps eating. With her mouth full:

CELESTE

So, you're an architect, huh?  
That's cool.

HUNTER

I guess. I don't think I have the  
temperament for it. I'm not very  
patient.

CELESTE

Mm. Clearly.

The waitress comes by and re-fills their coffee.

WAITRESS

(to Celeste)

You must've been hungry! Can I get  
you anything else?

Celeste glares at her.

CELESTE

Bacon. All of your bacon. I'm not  
leaving here until my arteries are  
irreversibly clogged.

WAITRESS

Ooh-kay.

(to Hunter)

How about you, sweetheart?

HUNTER

Just the check, thanks.

The waitress exits, giving Hunter a look of pity.

HUNTER

So, death by breakfast food?

CELESTE

We all gotta go somehow. I'd rather it be memorable than pleasant.

HUNTER

I think you're in the minority there.

CELESTE

Yeah. Studies say most Americans want to die in their sleep. I don't get that. I mean, dying is one of the most important things that ever happens to you, and you're going to sleep through it? Seems like a bitch move.

HUNTER

You are so weird.

CELESTE

Yeah, I know. I take it as a compliment.

HUNTER

That's how I meant it.

They share a brief smile.

CELESTE

Well, I should probably be getting back...

HUNTER

Right, sure.

INT./EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Hunter's car pulls up. He stares at the building in disbelief.

HUNTER

This is the place?

CELESTE

Yeah.

HUNTER

It's a fucking crack den.

CELESTE  
It's alright.

HUNTER  
You sure? Look, I've got a spare  
bedroom--

CELESTE  
That's okay.

HUNTER  
It's got clean sheets, a distinct  
lack of giant mutant cockroaches...

CELESTE  
I like my giant mutant cockroach.  
His name is Earl and he makes a  
damn fine Vodka tonic.

HUNTER  
Come on. You almost died back  
there. It's the least I can do.

She looks at him with a raised eyebrow.

CELESTE  
Spare bedroom, huh?

HUNTER  
I'm like, way across the hall.  
Practically in another state.

EXT. HUNTER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

They pull up to a squat, ugly building. 70's architecture at  
its finest.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The lobby, on the other hand, is sleek, modern,  
deconstructionist. Water drips down a wavy sheet of aluminum  
inside a spiral staircase.

CELESTE  
Holy crap. This is awesome.

HUNTER  
Glad you like it.

CELESTE  
Whoa. This is you?

HUNTER

It was my first. I was trying to pull a Gehry, but it kind of got away from me.

CELESTE

No, I like it. It's got chutzpah.

HUNTER

Thanks.

INT. HUNTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hunter enters first, turning the lights on. Celeste is still a bit shaky.

He shows her to the spare bedroom.

HUNTER

So, this is the guest room. Sheets are brand new. Bathroom's on your right.

Celeste gives it a cursory glance.

HUNTER

Ok. Well, good night.

HUNTER'S BEDROOM - LATER

Hunter in bed. He shifts non-stop, trying to get comfortable. Sleep is the last thing on his mind.

KITCHEN AREA - MOMENTS LATER

He makes a cup of coffee with the instant-hot. Walking into the

LIVING ROOM AREA

He finds Celeste sitting on his couch, her back to him, perfectly still.

HUNTER

Whoa. Didn't see you there.

She turns.

CELESTE

Couldn't sleep?

HUNTER

Nope.

CELESTE

Me neither.

He sits down across from her.

HUNTER

Are you alright now?

CELESTE

Yeah. Back to what I call normal.

HUNTER

How long have you been doing this?

CELESTE

Um. My whole life, I guess. People started dying around me when I was a baby.

HUNTER

Jesus.

CELESTE

He didn't help much, despite what my parents thought.

HUNTER

Your parents, are they... ?

CELESTE

Yeah. They're gone. I tried to protect them, but I guess it wasn't enough. Do you mind if I smoke?

HUNTER

No.

She takes out a pack of Marlboro Reds, lights up.

CELESTE

These are really bad for you.

HUNTER

I heard that.

CELESTE

After they died I just started driving. I thought if I could get away from that place I'd be alright.

She laughs ruefully.

CELESTE

Turns out there are graves  
everywhere.

HUNTER

There was nobody else like you?  
Nobody who could help?

CELESTE

You're helping.

HUNTER

Yeah, but...

CELESTE

You're the first to even come  
close. You have a little bit of  
what I have. Most people, even the  
ones who believe in ghosts, just  
think I'm crazy.

HUNTER

I thought you were crazy.

CELESTE

You didn't want to believe. That's  
different.

HUNTER

I still don't.

CELESTE

Yeah, well,

She exhales smoke.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

I kind of forced you into it.

HUNTER

I'm glad.

CELESTE

You say that now...

HUNTER

Yeah I mean, it's fucking horrible,  
but I'm glad I know. You must think  
people are so stupid.

CELESTE

No. No, I'm happy for them.

HUNTER

Yeah? That's really cool of you.

She smiles, shrugs.

HUNTER

Well, uh, I'm going to try and get some sleep.

CELESTE

Ok.

He walks back to his bedroom, opens the door. As he fumbles for the light switch, he notices --

Celeste, right behind him.

HUNTER

Hey.

CELESTE

Hey.

She steps closer, almost touching.

HUNTER

What about the guest room?

CELESTE

What about it?

She grabs his shirt, pulls him into a kiss.

His hands twitch at his sides, useless, then find her neck, her shoulders, and work their way down until --

He lifts her up, her legs wrapping his waist as he carries her to the bed.

He lays her down and tears open her corset. She rolls him over, pins him, and unzips his pants.

Unbeknownst to him, a small stream of ECTOPLASM trickles out of her nose. Casually, she brings a hand up and wipes it away.

INT. HUNTER'S BEDROOM - DAY

The next morning. Hunter and Celeste lie in bed, facing each other. Hunter is just waking up. Celeste snores gently.

He watches her sleep. Smiles.

She furrows her brow, about to wake up, and mumbles something like...

CELESTE

You can't wait to get your hands on me.

Hunter looks at her with questioning amusement.

HUNTER

What did you say?

Her eyes snap open -- except they aren't eyes, they're HOLLOW SOCKETS, JUST LIKE THE EYES OF HIS MOTHER.

HUNTER WAKES UP A SECOND TIME, bathed in sweat.

Celeste is still lying next to him. Her eyes are normal.

CELESTE

You alright?

After a few breaths:

HUNTER

Yeah. Nightmare.

INT. HUNTER'S KITCHEN - DAY

Hunter makes two cups of coffee. He's nervous -- his left leg shakes.

Celeste walks in, wearing one of his button-up shirts.

CELESTE

Hey, you.

HUNTER

Hey.

He hands her a mug.

CELESTE

Thanks.

HUNTER

It's just instant.

CELESTE

That's cool. I like my coffee like I like my men.

He raises an eyebrow.

CELESTE

Ground up and left in the freezer.

She giggles at her own joke. He isn't sure how to take it.

HUNTER

Listen, Celeste...

CELESTE

Yes?

HUNTER

I had a great time last night.

CELESTE

Me too.

HUNTER

But, I guess what I'm trying to say is...

CELESTE

Let me stop you right there. I had fun. You had fun. We all had fun. It doesn't have to be any more complicated than that. I think we have enough shit to deal with, don't you?

HUNTER

Yeah. You're totally right.

CELESTE

Cool. So I'm gonna go take a shower. Why don't you make breakfast?

HUNTER

Uh, sure. Coming right up.

She exits. Hunter stares into his coffee. Not sure if he's relieved or disappointed.

INT. ANGELO'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Angelo sits at an imposing, lion footed desk. David paces in front of a fireplace.

DAVID

Dad, you're not listening. Our flight is at seven. Sarah is taking the kids back to Phoenix with or without me.

ANGELO

Always with the drama, that one.

DAVID

Even if I could stay, I don't know what good it would do. I've been out of the loop for this whole thing.

ANGELO

You're a bright kid, you'll figure it out.

DAVID

What about Tony? Why don't you have him do it?

ANGELO

You want me to put that knucklehead in charge? He couldn't hold a job flipping burgers.

DAVID

He's doing his best, dad.

ANGELO

His best? I wipe my ass with his best!

DAVID

Look, you two are going to have to work it out, because I'm done. You hear me? I am done with this family.

ANGELO

You're just going to walk away? Huh? I gave you everything, and this is how you repay me?

David storms out, slamming the door.

Angelo kneads his brow, trying to control his fury. Suddenly, he picks up his desk lamp and smashes it against the wall.

INT. TONY'S APARTMENT - DAY

The aftermath of an epic party. COLLEGE STUDENTS are strewn across the carpet in various states of undress. Solo cups are everywhere.

Tony is passed out on a leather sofa. His iPhone jolts him awake with a Top 40s track. He picks up, groggy and confused.

TONY  
Hello?

We only hear his side of the conversation.

TONY (CONT'D)  
Dad? Yeah, I'm awake.  
(pause)  
What? Dad, this is Tony. I think  
you've got the wrong number.  
(pause)  
Are you sure? No, I'll do it. I'll  
definitely do it. Uh, today?

He looks around the room.

TONY (CONT'D)  
I don't really have any plans. Ok.  
Thanks dad. Seriously, you won't  
regret it.

He hangs up. Standing on the couch, he addresses the room  
with megalomaniacal glee.

TONY  
Everyone, grab your shit and get  
the fuck out!

His guests lift their heads slowly, wondering if he's joking.

INT./EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Hunter parks next to Celeste's mustang. He waits while she  
goes to her car and gets the shovel.

CELESTE  
So, I'm just going to keep digging.

HUNTER  
That's fine.

CELESTE  
Do you want to help?

HUNTER  
Yeah, let's get it over with.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - MOMENTS LATER

Hunter and Celeste are digging holes by the building.

Hunter pauses, wipes sweat from his brow.

HUNTER  
Are we getting close?

CELESTE  
Yeah.

HUNTER  
But you still don't know where she  
is?

CELESTE  
Nope.

HUNTER  
So how do you know we're getting  
close?

CELESTE  
I just know, alright?

He scowls, pushes some dirt around like it's peas on a plate.

HUNTER  
(to himself)  
This is bullshit.

Black fluid spurts out of his dirt pile. He cocks his head at it. The substance retreats back underground, frightened of the light. He digs after it.

Celeste glances over, sees him digging energetically now. She smiles.

Hunter digs faster. It's compulsive -- he can't stop.

Celeste stops digging, snaps her head up in alarm. She drops her shovel.

Hunter digs furiously, gasping for breath. His shovel hits something solid, and we

FLASH TO: HIS MOTHER, EYELESS IN THE PIT.

Hunter shudders, stops digging.

HUNTER  
Oh fuck. Was that...?

He realizes he's talking to himself. Celeste has vanished.

As he looks around, a pickup rolls through the front gate and parks in front of the building. Tony gets out with FIVE MEXICAN WORKERS. They move slow, terrified. Clutching rosaries.

Tony storms up to him.

TONY

What the fuck are you doing here?

HUNTER

I could ask you the same thing.

TONY

Clean-up. We're auctioning this place off.

HUNTER

Where's Angelo?

TONY

Don't worry about him, he's gotta deal with the mayor's office.

HUNTER

So... you're in charge?

TONY

Until further notice.

HUNTER

He can't afford to hire anyone else, huh?

TONY

No, it was my idea. I wanted in on this thing from the start.

HUNTER

Well, you've got some devout followers here.

TONY

You know, dad doesn't need you now. I don't know what the fuck you're doing.

HUNTER

He doesn't need me, huh? So what, I'm fired?

TONY

Take it up with him. I've got shit to do.

HUNTER

Fine, whatever.

Hunter starts to walk out, then turns back.

HUNTER  
Actually, you know what? Fuck it.  
He's all yours. I hope you two are  
very happy together.

As he exits, Tony yells after him:

TONY  
I'm going to tell him you said  
that!

HUNTER  
Go ahead.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Hunter finds Celeste waiting by her Mustang.

HUNTER  
Hey. How'd you disappear like that?

CELESTE  
Practice. Everything go alright in  
there?

HUNTER  
Angelo's shutting it down. I think  
he's out of money.

CELESTE  
We don't have much time then.

HUNTER  
No, and we can't be out during the  
day either.

CELESTE  
Shit. For what it's worth, I'm  
really sorry about your building.

HUNTER  
I guess it was doomed from the  
start, huh?

CELESTE  
You'll find something else.

HUNTER  
Right, right. Anyway, I gotta go, I  
told my dad I'd see him. He's laid  
up at Norfolk General.

CELESTE

Is he ok?

HUNTER

He's hanging in.

CELESTE

Oh. Well, hope he gets better. See you tonight?

HUNTER

Yeah. Definitely.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Charles is sitting up in bed, watching TV. He looks much better.

Hunter enters, pulls up a chair.

HUNTER

Hey dad. You look good.

Charles puts two fingers over the trach.

CHARLES

Bull-shit.

HUNTER

Heh. So when are they kicking you out of here?

Charles holds up two fingers.

HUNTER

Two days? That's awesome. Can I bring you anything?

CHARLES

A movie.

HUNTER

Let me guess, something with Lee Marvin.

Charles points at him like "you got it."

Hunter smiles, squeezes his dad's hand.

HUNTER

It's going to be alright, dad. I promise.

Charles smiles too, then begins to cough. He can't stop. He's choking.

HUNTER

Dad?

Charles pushes away, terrified.

HUNTER

Dad, what's wrong?

He lets go of his father's hand. DARK VEINS swarm under the skin where Hunter touched him.

Charles WHEEZES. Blood leaks out of his stoma.

Hunter hits the nurse call button about a dozen times. He yells at the closed door:

HUNTER

Hey! We need some help in here!

His father's head nods. The heart monitor FLATLINES.

HUNTER

DAD!!

EXT. WOODED ROAD - DAY

Celeste's car swerves across two narrow lanes. She tries to straighten out, fishtails into a ditch.

INT. CELESTE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

She's shaking violently, sprawled across the passenger seat. Her eyes wide and tearful, she whispers:

CELESTE

No.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

A funeral for Charles. About a dozen people in attendance. The priest gives his sermon - no audio. Hunter sits in the front row with the Palermos. Lost. Numb.

As the coffin is being lowered, Hunter gets up and leaves.

He heads for the cars. Celeste waits there, leaning against her Mustang. The front end is a bit crumpled, one headlight is out.

HUNTER

You were welcome, you know.

She nods her head toward the graveyard.

CELESTE

I can't go in those places.

An awkward pause.

HUNTER

You want to get out of here?

CELESTE

Sure.

INT. HUNTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hunter and Celeste have vigorous, sorrowful sex. As they climax together, ectoplasm runs out of her nose and lands on his chest.

Hunter sees it and, after a moment of panting:

HUNTER

What... what is that?

Celeste covers her mouth, gets off him quick.

CELESTE

It's nothing.

Hunter dabs it with a finger.

HUNTER

Is that...

Before he can finish, he is hit by the worst migraine of his life. A large vein appears on his forehead.

HUNTER

Fuck!

He writhes against his pillow. Celeste takes his face in her hands.

CELESTE

Hunter! Stay with me! Stay!

The throb in his head subsides. He looks up at her, confused, terrified.

HUNTER  
What's happening to me?

She can't answer.

INT. HUNTER'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hunter gets out of the shower, towels off.

As he combs his hair in the mirror, ectoplasm trickles out of his nose. He nearly chokes, but manages to catch some in his palm. He looks close and sees:

TINY BLACK VEINS -- pulsing in every drop.

Celeste appears in the doorway.

CELESTE  
This never happened before.

HUNTER  
This is you?

She looks away.

HUNTER  
Celeste!

CELESTE  
It wasn't on purpose. I guess I rubbed off on you.

HUNTER  
Will it go away?

CELESTE  
I'm not sure.

HUNTER  
Give me your best guess.

CELESTE  
Probably not. No.

Hunter closes his eyes. He doesn't speak for a long moment.

HUNTER  
I guess I should be grateful. My dad didn't know about any of this. He thought mom hated his guts. He died thinking that.

CELESTE

She didn't mean to disappear. She was full of regret.

HUNTER

God, he didn't know shit. And you know, not knowing was the worst part. It was worse than the cancer.

CELESTE

I'm sorry.

HUNTER

What are you sorry for? You're just doing your thing!

CELESTE

That's right.

HUNTER

So tell me, how many lives have you completely fucked up?

CELESTE

Hunter, I know you're in a bad place right now, but remember, I'm the only one who can help you.

HUNTER

Then fucking help me!

CELESTE

I will, I promise. I'm going to find your mother as fast as I can.

HUNTER

So, what do you need? You want more shovels? A fucking bulldozer? What do you need?

CELESTE

I need to learn more about her. She's slipping away from me. I need to re-infect myself.

HUNTER

How do we do that?

CELESTE

I need something she touched.

HUNTER

There's nothing like that here.

CELESTE  
Ok. Where?

HUNTER  
My dad's place.

CELESTE  
Let's go.

INT. CHARLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Hunter unlocks the door. He's looking pale. Celeste follows him. He directs her to the table by the door.

HUNTER  
Photos.

She knocks all the framed pictures off the tabletop. They shatter on the floor.

She kneels, pushes the broken glass away and touches each image of Rebecca's face. After a moment, she shakes her head.

CELESTE  
What else you got?

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

They climb a ladder into the cobwebbed space. A trunk sits in the corner.

He tries several keys on it. None works.

Celeste crowbars it with her shovel, breaking the lock.

HUNTER  
That works too.

Inside the trunk -- a mess of old photographs, jewelry, a tattered wedding dress. Celeste runs her hands through all of it, pawing at objects like a blind person.

A FLASH OF REBECCA -- vibrant, beautiful, alive.

Celeste shudders.

HUNTER  
Is it working?

CELESTE  
Shh.

She sifts through the items, picks out a silver cufflink.

CELESTE

This was very special to her.

HUNTER

It's got to be my dad's.

CELESTE

No. It's not. That's why she kept it.

Hunter takes this in, at once hurt and glad to know.

HUNTER

Whose was it?

She brings it close to her face and concentrates.

FLASHES OF AN ARGUMENT -- Rebecca screaming, clawing at a man's face.

Celeste looks like she's about to be sick. She puts a hand on the floor to steady herself.

CELESTE

I don't know. She's so angry. It's like her mind's just... gone.

HUNTER

She's angry?

CELESTE

She's the angriest spirit I've ever known.

HUNTER

Huh. My dad said something just like that. It was after the ground breaking. I think he saw her.

CELESTE

I wouldn't doubt it.

She looks at him and gasps.

HUNTER

What's wrong?

Ectoplasm is leaking out of his eyes.

Suddenly, he chokes. The gray fluid spills out of his mouth. He holds out his hands -- it fills them up. He's running like a faucet.

CELESTE  
(breathes)  
Fuck.

HUNTER  
Celeste... I can't stop.

He collapses, gurgling and shaking. She rushes over, grabs him by the collar and drags him to the ladder. He takes two steps and tumbles, landing in the

SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

She bolts down after, picking him up and leaning him on her shoulder.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

She's nearly carrying him. Panting. She throws him in the passenger seat of the Lexus, gets in and guns it.

INT. HUNTER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

She drives. Needle pushing 100.

Hunter's head nods. She slaps his face.

CELESTE  
Stay. Awake.

EXT. HUNTER'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The Lexus SCREECHES to a halt beside her Mustang. She runs to her car, throws open the trunk, empties it onto the pavement.

She pulls out her medical kit, unzips it, tears through the contents.

CELESTE  
Where is it?!

Hunter gestures weakly to her. She rushes over.

CELESTE  
The epi-pen! Where'd you put it?

HUNTER  
(barely audible)  
Bedside... table.

CELESTE

Fuck!

She yanks him out of the car and heads for the building.

INT. HUNTER'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

She tosses him down on the bed. He's convulsing, eyes rolled back.

She grabs the epi-pen off the night stand, plunges it into his neck.

He YELLS, SPASMS, COUGHS. Color returns to his face.

HUNTER

(croaking)

I'm gonna be sick.

He pushes her aside, hobbles to the

BATHROOM

He kneels in front of the tub and VOMITS ECTOPLASM.

He turns away wiping his mouth, sits on the bath mat.

Celeste comes to the door, still very much freaked out.

HUNTER

It's ok. I'm ok.

He manages a weak smile.

HUNTER

Thanks.

A HORRID, MEWLING CRY. It's coming from the tub.

They look at each other, both shake their heads. Wide-eyed, they approach the tub. Together, they peek over the rim.

A SKINLESS VISCERA -- organs rising and falling with each labored breath.

A GLISTENING, FETAL HEAD. It turns to them. ONE SCLEROTIC EYE SNAPS OPEN -- milky white with three pupils.

Together, they SCREAM.

BLACK OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The shower is on, rinsing traces of BLOODY AFTERBIRTH down the drain.

MASTER BEDROOM

Hunter and Celeste sit on the edge of the bed. Both look traumatized.

HUNTER  
It wasn't human.

CELESTE  
No.

HUNTER  
What was it?

CELESTE  
Your first attempt.

He lies back, closes his eyes.

HUNTER  
Well, I think I'm going to die now.

CELESTE  
You need to eat something.

The apartment doorbell CHIMES.

CELESTE  
Expecting someone?

HUNTER  
Fuck no.

She gets up, exits into the

LIVING ROOM

And crosses to the front door. Opening it, she finds

Angelo, Darlene and Tony. Angelo has a bottle of Scotch, Darlene has a huge bundle of flowers. They're doing their best to look somber.

CELESTE  
Oh.

Angelo extends his hand right away.

ANGELO

I don't think we've met before. I'm Angelo, and this is my wife Darlene.

CELESTE

Hi.

ANGELO

We were very dear friends of Charles, and we just wanted to tell Hunter again how sorry we were.

DARLENE

I don't think we saw you at the service...

ANGELO

Honey.

CELESTE

I was in the back.

ANGELO

Anyway, if this is a bad time...

CELESTE

Oh. Yeah, he's not feeling very well.

ANGELO

Sure. Of course.

He hands over the flowers and scotch.

ANGELO

Just let him know we stopped by, won't you?

CELESTE

Yeah. Thanks for the flowers and alcohol.

She slams the door in their faces.

Dropping the gifts on a coffee table, she reaches into her pocket and takes out the cufflink. She rolls it against her palm, wondering.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Palermos shuffle toward the elevator. Celeste bursts out of the apartment and chases after.

CELESTE  
Hey, wait!

ANGELO  
Yes?

CELESTE  
Um. I just, have something for you.

She holds out the cufflink.

CELESTE  
This is yours right?

Angelo looks at the cufflink, stunned. He snatches it out of her hand, looks it over. She's struck by a sudden vision:

A STRUGGLE. Angelo bleeds from long cuts on his face.

She shudders.

ANGELO  
No, sorry.

He hands it back to her.

CELESTE  
This... this isn't yours?

ANGELO  
Never seen it before.

He turns and joins his family at the elevator.

Celeste watches him go, perplexed.

INT. HUNTER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Celeste closes the door and locks it. She's sweating, gripping the cufflink in shaky hands. A dark vein has appeared where Angelo touched her.

CELESTE  
Hunter!

She staggers toward the bedroom. On the threshold, she doubles over in pain.

FLASH TO: Angelo and REBECCA EDWARDS -- alive this time. He has his hands around her throat. She's laughing scornfully.

Celeste falls to her knees, convulsing. She CRIES ECTOPLASM, SLIPPING INTO A VISION OF THE PAST:

INT. ANGELO'S STUDY - NIGHT - FIFTEEN YEARS AGO

A younger, skinnier Angelo argues with Rebecca. She is beautiful and fierce in her flower print dress.

REBECCA

Jesus Christ, Angelo! Next you're going to tell me you take it up the ass!

ANGELO

Watch your fucking mouth.

REBECCA

Or what? What are you going to do, you big pussy?

ANGELO

I'll knock every tooth out your goddamn head. Don't think I won't.

REBECCA

You'd like that, wouldn't you? You can't wait to get your hands on me.

ANGELO

You filthy slut.

They kiss -- passionately. Fighting each other with their faces.

Angelo grabs the back of her head.

REBECCA

Watch the hair.

OFF FLASHES OF HOT, ANGRY SEX, WE

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAME - HOURS LATER

The place is wrecked. Chairs overturned, drapes torn down, clothing strewn across the floor.

Angelo and Rebecca lie naked in a post-coital stupor. Angelo smokes a cigar.

ANGELO  
You are a cold, hard bitch.

REBECCA  
And you are an asshole.

ANGELO  
I know.

She gets up. He slaps her ass.

REBECCA  
Hey, now.

She puts on his shirt, buttons it, and takes off one of the cufflinks.

ANGELO  
Would you stop with that? It's my last pair.

REBECCA  
Can't I have a little souvenir? You never buy me anything.

ANGELO  
Yeah, yeah. You better hope Charles doesn't find them.

REBECCA  
You know what that prick said to me today?

ANGELO  
I don't want to talk about him.

REBECCA  
Oh, I forgot. He's still your boyfriend. You are such a faggot.

ANGELO  
He's a good guy. You don't give him a chance.

REBECCA  
I married him, didn't I? And then today he says to me, "I don't think you're capable of loving anyone." Do you believe that? Right in front of the kid, too.

ANGELO  
I don't know how you fight like  
that every night.

REBECCA  
It's been getting worse. Ever since  
Hunter was born.

ANGELO  
So what are you going to do about  
it?

REBECCA  
Hmm?

ANGELO  
I'm just saying, we've got a good  
thing going here. Don't you ever  
wonder...

REBECCA  
What, this isn't enough for you?

ANGELO  
Goddamn it, Becca.

REBECCA  
What do you want from me? Huh?

ANGELO  
You know what I want.

REBECCA  
That's never going to happen.

A TINY BOY -- age 5 -- walks into the room rubbing sleep from  
his eyes. This is YOUNG TONY.

YOUNG TONY  
Are you fighting?

ANGELO  
Get your ass in bed, Anthony!

Young Tony runs off, socks squeaking on the floor.

She gathers her clothes.

REBECCA  
Well, this has been a pleasure, as  
always.

ANGELO

Where are you going? It's the middle of the night.

She leans over the back of a leather chair.

REBECCA

Oh, you want me to stay?

Angelo gets up with a sigh.

ANGELO

Well, when you put it like that...

As he lumbers toward her, he slips on a SILK PILLOW -- and falls FLAT ON HIS FACE.

Rebecca bursts out laughing.

Angelo lifts his head, genuinely hurt, and hurt more by her laughter. He's waiting for her to help him up.

She keeps laughing, covering her mouth and shaking her head. She can't stop.

Angelo picks himself up off the floor.

REBECCA

Oh my God, I'm gonna pee!

ANGELO

Are you laughing at me? Huh? Are you laughing at me??

He grabs her by the throat. She chokes, gasps. She can't breathe.

ANGELO

Who's laughing now, you cunt?

She claws his face, cutting long gashes down his cheeks.

He HOWLS IN PAIN and throws her over the chair. She falls into an end table, landing on a lamp with a sharp, fleur-de-lis finial. The finial stabs through her left breast.

She slides off the table and crashes to the floor.

Angelo approaches her, slowly. She lies face down on the lamp, not moving, but with no apparent injury.

ANGELO

Get up, Becca.

No response.

                          ANGELO  
          Don't play with me! I'm sorry,  
          alright?

He puts his hand on her shoulder.

                          ANGELO  
          Becca?

He pulls her off the lamp --

-- RELEASING A GEYSER OF BLOOD. It splatters all over him.

                          ANGELO  
          JESUS CHRIST ON A CROSS!

She slips out of his hands, hitting the floor like a wet sack.

ANGELO -- covered in blood, wide-eyed in shock. He doesn't move for a long time.

                          ANGELO  
          Oh Jesus. Oh Jesus, Mary, mother of  
          God!

Rebecca's dead face, scowling, one eye open.

His hands, soaked in blood. He swallows hard. He's made a decision.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Angelo parks his 80's Range Rover in the deep woods.

He digs a shallow grave.

He carries a rolled-up rug to its edge and unfurls it. Rebecca's body spills out. She lands face down in the dirt.

He gets an EMERGENCY KIT and a GAS CAN from the car.

He pours gasoline into the grave, splashing her bloody, half-naked corpse.

FWISSH! A ROAD FLARE from the kit ignites, a burst of violet. He drops it in --

WUMP! A HUGE FLAME RISES OUT.

He watches her burn. Numb.

INT. HUNTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - PRESENT

CELESTE

Writhing on the floor as the vision subsides. Her hands are bloody, she pushed the cufflink straight through her palm.

She holds it tight to her chest and goes still. After a long pause, she blinks.

CELESTE

Holy shit.

She pulls the cufflink out of her hand and gets up.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Celeste walks in. Hunter is still lying down.

HUNTER

Who was that?

CELESTE

Angelo.

Hunter lifts his head, gets a better look at her.

HUNTER

What happened to you?

CELESTE

He killed her.

HUNTER

What?

CELESTE

Angelo was having an affair with your mother. Hunter, he killed her.

HUNTER

What -- what did he say to you?

CELESTE

He didn't say anything. I saw it.

HUNTER

You saw it? Like in a dream?

CELESTE

No, like his life -- in my eyes -- happening.

HUNTER  
He wouldn't do that.

CELESTE  
I don't think he meant to. But he definitely got rid of the body and never told anyone about it.

Hunter is crestfallen, close to tears.

HUNTER  
Are you sure?

CELESTE  
Yes.

HUNTER  
You know, if this isn't true, it's going to ruin my life. You understand? He gave me everything. My job, my car, this place...

CELESTE  
I don't know how to say this, but, there's nothing here for you to save. You should probably just leave.

HUNTER  
You want me to walk away? This is my whole life!

CELESTE  
You can come with me, if you want.

HUNTER  
Oh yeah? Dig up some more graves?

CELESTE  
I can't offer you more than that, but, you can help people. You have the gift now.

HUNTER  
This is so fucked up.

Celeste sits next to him.

CELESTE  
Yeah. Exactly.

She lies down. They stare at the ceiling for a long moment.

HUNTER  
Let's get out of here.

CELESTE  
You sure?

HUNTER  
Yeah. You're right. There's nothing here for me now. I need to be in a different state, maybe a different country. I don't know.

CELESTE  
We still have to deal with your mom.

HUNTER  
You think you can find her?

Celeste holds up the bloody cufflink.

CELESTE  
I know exactly where she is.

INT. HUNTER'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Hunter drives. Celeste is somber, almost resigned.

HUNTER  
So how does this work?

CELESTE  
When I find her remains, I can make contact. Depending on how she reacts, I'll either bargain with her or try to force her out.

HUNTER  
Does that work?

CELESTE  
Well, it doesn't always go according to plan. Sometimes they just say "fuck you" and disappear, but I think they all move on in their own way.

HUNTER  
What can I do?

CELESTE  
I don't know.

She kisses him.

CELESTE  
But I'm glad you're here.

EXT. HIGHWAY BY CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

They park by the gate. Hunter opens it as Celeste grabs two shovels.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - CONTINUOUS

Celeste heads straight for the unfinished building. They enter the ground floor, walk past the elevator shaft and stop at an innocuous patch of concrete. She gives it a cautious tap with her shovel.

FLASH TO: REBECCA'S BODY, BURNING IN A SHALLOW GRAVE.

The vision nearly overwhelms her.

CELESTE  
It's here! She's here!

She slams her shovel down on the concrete. It barely leaves a mark.

HUNTER  
You can't dig through concrete.

CELESTE  
That's very helpful Hunter, thank you.

Hunter walks away, returns with a sledgehammer.

HUNTER  
Move.

She barely steps aside before he brings the hammer down. The concrete cracks. After a second hit, it splinters.

He clears the pieces away and hits it again. He keeps at it until he reaches dirt, then gives her a broad gesture of "go ahead."

She digs in with her shovel. THE SIZZLING NOISE rises out of the hole.

She backs away, worried. The noise stops.

CELESTE  
Did you hear that?

HUNTER  
Yeah. Are we on the right spot?

CELESTE  
Oh yeah. That just happened way too soon.

She hands Hunter the second shovel. He digs in. The ground is silent. Together, they begin widening the hole -- wary at first, but soon growing reckless.

THE SIZZLING COMES BACK, LOUDER. Hunter pauses, but Celeste motions for him to keep digging.

They make a small ditch, about 3x3. They get down in it, hacking away. This is not a delicate exhumation.

THUNK! Celeste's shovel strikes something hard.

AN UNEARTHLY GROAN -- distinctly female.

CELESTE  
Get back.

He jumps out of the hole.

She pulls up her shovel. BLACK ECTOPLASM gushes out. Rebecca's bones rise to the surface.

The ectoplasm cascades toward her, BUBBLING and WHISPERING.

She barely has time to take her shoes off before it reaches her. The liquid sprouts BLACK TENDRILS, LIKE HUGE VEINS. They lash around her ankles.

HUNTER  
Jesus Christ!

CELESTE  
This is it.

Suddenly, the flow of black ectoplasm becomes a ROARING GEYSER. Celeste's jaw drops. She backs up.

CELESTE  
No, no, no...

HUNTER  
Celeste!

She's already waist deep in the slime, and the tendrils have climbed even higher.

CELESTE  
(to the slime)  
That's too much. That's too much!

Hunter grabs her hands, starts to pull her out.

CELESTE  
No! I have to stay! You have to let  
it take me!

Hunter ignores her, keeps pulling.

CELESTE  
Wait! Wait!

She's nearly out, the tendrils stretched taught. The ectoplasm pulls back, constricting around her body, forcing her down.

He digs his heels in, but he can't hold her. She plunges into the black.

HUNTER  
No!

She's gone. The liquid only bubbles gently.

Without hesitation, he dives into the pit. The ectoplasm reacts violently, turning into a mass of churning veins. He fights through the tendrils.

As the veins coil around him, his hands find her shoulders. He lifts her up. She's entirely coated, cocooned in the sludge. No sign of life.

As he drags her out to the concrete, the tendrils snap off one by one. The last one peels away from her face and she gasps a free breath.

Hunter is overjoyed, but she is terrified.

CELESTE  
(gasping)  
Hunter! We have to go right now!

HUNTER  
What happened in there?

CELESTE  
She's not alone! Oh god!

Celeste stands up and is immediately hit with HER WORST SEIZURE EVER. Her eyes roll back in her head. Something LIFTS HER UP AND CARRIES HER --

HUNDREDS OF GHOSTS, young and old, male and female, packed shoulder to shoulder behind her. She crowd surfs on the host of dead souls.

They stare at her with a multitude of EYELESS SOCKETS. They reach for her with RAGGED, BONE-WHITE FINGERS, trying to touch her, as if she were a celebrity.

They pass her back to the edge of the crowd, where

REBECCA AWAITS.

She grabs Celeste's face. The others follow Rebecca's lead, sticking their dead fingers into her mouth and eyes.

They grip... and pull...

HER HEAD SPLITS OPEN VERTICALLY, BLOOD SPRAYING EVERYWHERE.

FLASH BACK TO: CELESTE, in one piece but convulsing wildly. Her head snaps back and she collapses.

HUNTER

Celeste! Celeste! Oh, what the fuck?!

He checks her pulse. Nothing. He attempts CPR.

HUNTER

Celeste!

Suddenly, her eyes snap open. She looks vaguely annoyed.

HUNTER

Oh, thank god!

He kisses her.

HUNTER

Did it work? Is she gone?

CELESTE

She's gone.

He breathes a huge sigh of relief.

HUNTER

Oh, thank you. Thank you so much. Now let's get the fuck out of here.

As he helps her to her feet, she pushes him aside and stands up straight.

HUNTER

Oh. Ok. I'm going to get the car.

As he turns away, she lifts her shovel and smashes it across the back of his head. He drops to the concrete.

BLACK OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. SAME - MOMENTS LATER

Hunter slowly opens his eyes. It's still dark. His hair is matted with blood.

He lifts his chin off the concrete. It takes all his strength.

His vision is blurry -- the site is a mire of boiling shadows. He sees a pickup roll through the front gate, headlights blinding him. It parks in front of the building.

Tony gets out, leaves the engine running. He stumbles and weaves, drunk off his ass. An empty bottle of Vodka in hand.

He walks right by Hunter without noticing. The bottle drops from his hand, SHATTERS.

HUNTER

(weakly)

Tony.

Tony doesn't hear. Approaching an exposed beam, he unzips and pisses on it.

As he relieves himself, a LOW SCRAPING NOISE echoes through the unfinished building. He doesn't hear that either.

Hunter strains to look around, trying to find the noise. He can't.

Tony finishes peeing and zips up. The scraping noise gets louder. Wheeling around, he finally notices Hunter.

TONY

Hunter? Holy shit, are you ok?

He stumbles over. Hunter can only moan.

TONY

Dude, we are not covered for this.  
You hear me? If you're fucked up,  
it's on you.

HUNTER

(still very weak)  
Get out of here.

Tony cocks his head, trying to understand.

TONY

What'd you say?

HUNTER

(louder)  
Run!

TONY

Huh? Dude, what's going on?

Celeste steps out from the shadows, scraping her shovel across the concrete. Her eyes are insane, possessed. Her face is covered with veins.

Tony is oblivious. Hunter nods his head, trying to direct his attention.

The scraping of Celeste's shovel becomes deafening. Tony finally understands. He turns, too late. She smashes the rusty tool across his face.

Tony falls down screaming, blood flowing from a broken nose. She hits him again while he's down.

TONY

What the fuck?!

Before he can say more, she jams the shovel into his mouth, ripping his cheeks open.

HUNTER

(weakly)  
No!

Tony lets out a pathetic, gurgling cry. She stabs the shovel deeper in his mouth, severing his tongue.

Celeste raises the shovel for a final blow. Her expression is blank. Her dress is covered with blood.

She brings the shovel down HARD -- SEVERING TONY'S HEAD AT THE JAW.

She pushes the top of the head away like trash. It skitters over to Hunter, settling upright in front of him. The dead, panicked eyes stare into his own.

Celeste approaches, raising the bloody shovel.

Hunter tries pathetically to crawl away.

She grabs him by the collar and lifts him to his feet. They lock eyes. She seems dimly fascinated. Hunter doesn't dare move.

Smiling, she drops the shovel.

HUNTER

Celeste? Are you in there?

She puts a hand on his cheek. They are poised at the edge of the ditch, over the black ectoplasm.

CELESTE

Oh baby. I'm so sorry.

She kisses his forehead.

CELESTE

I just can't lose you again.

She pushes him back, hard. He teeters briefly on the edge... then falls, splashing down in the muck. The tendrils/veins swarm over him. He SCREAMS IN AGONY.

Celeste watches from the rim. Her expression is placid, though her eyes are full of torment.

Suddenly, his screams are choked off. Consumed.

The ectoplasm goes still.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. ANGELO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

UNKNOWN POV: SOMETHING approaches the house, more floating than walking. It moves exactly like the ghost from the previous killings.

IT reaches the garage door. A DARK HAND enters the code on the keypad. The door rolls up.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

IT passes Angelo's car collection, enters the house.

FOYER

It silently climbs a staircase.

SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

Passing several open doors, it stops at a closed one. It gently turns the handle, never making a sound.

MASTER BEDROOM

A figure lies in bed, covered by sheets.

IT passes a wardrobe full of knitting supplies, picking up a large pair of scissors.

IT yanks the covers off the bed, revealing--

DARLENE, in a nightgown, startled awake. Before she can scream, it covers her mouth and CUTS HER THROAT IN THREE QUICK STROKES.

ANGELO'S STUDY

A roaring fire, snapping and crackling.

Angelo sits beside it, drinking scotch.

SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

IT heads for a closed door at the end of the hall -- the study. It can hear the CRACKLING of the fire, and sees flickering light under the door.

ITS DARK HAND reaches up and KNOCKS three times.

STUDY

Angelo looks up sharply.

ANGELO  
Who is it?

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

ANGELO  
Tony, you know what time it is?

No reply.

ANGELO  
Hello?

Black fluid creeps under the door.

Angelo stares at it in confusion, then rushes to his gun cabinet and gets a SHOTGUN.

ANGELO  
Alright, asshole! You obviously  
don't know who you're fucking with!

He loads the gun, snaps the breach closed, and aims it at the door.

The knob turns. Angelo tenses, finger on the trigger. Slowly, the door swings wide, revealing

HUNTER -- COVERED IN BLACK ECTOPLASM.

He looks like a living oil slick. All that's visible of him is the white in his eyes.

The scissors are tucked against his leg, obscured by the slime.

Angelo lowers the shotgun.

ANGELO  
Hunter? Is that you? Holy God, what  
happened?

As he walks forward, Hunter knocks his gun away and stabs him in the gut.

ANGELO  
Oh Jesus, what the fuck??

Angelo backs up. Hunter stabs him again.

ANGELO  
Wait! Wait!

Angelo catches his wrist, holding the scissors back.

ANGELO  
Hunter, please! You're my son!

HUNTER

I know.

ANGELO

What?

HUNTER smiles. Black slime fills the spaces between his teeth.

HUNTER

I always knew.

He yanks his arm free -- his slick, oily skin slipping out of Angelo's grasp -- and stabs him three more times.

Angelo reels back, falling next to the shotgun. He grabs it and aims, hands shaking.

Hunter advances, raising the scissors over his head.

ANGELO'S FINGER ON THE TRIGGER. He can't pull it. He shuts his eyes

AND FIRES ONE BARREL.

BUCKSHOT SLAMS INTO HUNTER'S CHEST. He's blown off his feet, through the open doorway.

He lands on his back. Black blood pools around his abdomen.

He's not moving.

Angelo approaches the body -- confused, terrified, wondering what he just did.

He looks at Hunter for a long time -- "is it over?"

When he gets close, HUNTER LUNGES, STABBING HIM THROUGH THE FOOT.

Angelo screams and FIRES DIRECTLY INTO HUNTER'S FACE, BLOWING OFF A HUGE CHUNK OF HIS HEAD. Black blood spatters the carpet and walls. Hunter drops like a wet rag.

Now it's over.

Angelo lowers the gun, relieved. Then it hits him. Tears pour down his face.

ANGELO

No, no, no, no...

The gun slips from his fingers, clattering to the floor.

ANGELO  
Oh Jesus Christ, Jesus fucking  
Christ!

He sobs uncontrollably, clutching his bleeding stomach.

He looks at the body again.

ANGELO  
What the fuck did you do? What the  
fuck, goddamn it!

He looks at his hands in utter despair.

Hunter bursts up -- HIS HEAD COMPLETELY HEALED!

He tackles Angelo, stabbing him many times as they fall.

HUNTER  
Are you crying for me? ARE YOU  
CRYING FOR ME??

Pulling him back to his feet, he sticks his thumbs into  
Angelo's eyes.

HUNTER  
Cry for my mother.

The black ectoplasm courses out through his thumbs, forming  
veins that wrap around Angelo's head. They tighten, CRACKING  
HIS SKULL. Blood fills his eyes. THEY TIGHTEN AGAIN AND HIS  
HEAD IMPLODES IN A CLOUD OF GORE.

Angelo's body topples. Hunter steps back, breathing hard.  
Triumphant.

Then, a wave of nausea hits him. His face twists into a mask  
of horror. He SCREAMS. The howl of a man's soul tearing  
itself apart.

EXT. ANGELO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hunter walks out the front door, shaking badly. Celeste waits  
at the top of the steps.

He kisses her. She comes away with black ectoplasm on her  
lips.

She touches his cheek -- an affectionate, motherly gesture.  
In a voice not quite her own, she says:

CELESTE  
*I'm so proud of you.*

Hunter smiles, almost against his will. His eyes swimming with unspoken terrors.

She takes his hand. As they descend the steps, Hunter's dark, dripping face wipes the frame,

LEAVING IT BLACK AND EMPTY.

CREDITS.

END.