

MIDNIGHT TEXAS

Written by

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Based on The Midnight Texas Trilogy by Charlaine Harris

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ACT ONE

INT. DALLAS HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Swank. Wrap around windows with a skyline view.

Find MANFRED BERNARDO, late 20s, grabs a black shirt. He's got a hint of a punk vibe, a few tats, tasteful piercing or two. A round scar on his shoulder. A bullet wound, not old. He throws on his shirt as --

Knock. Knock. Manfred crosses to the door. Opens it. Meet RACHEL, 50s, smart Kris Kardashian haircut. Jewelry, purse, clothing reeks of wealth.

MANFRED

Rachel, my god. You get younger every time I see you.

RACHEL

(loving it)
Oh, shut up.

He kisses both cheeks. He leads her inside, his hand on the small of her back. He's warm, charming.

MANFRED

How's everything? Your house almost done?

RACHEL

Going on a year, and I still don't have my master bath --

MANFRED

Still planning on going all out, I hope?

RACHEL

Steam, whirlpool, 12 body massage jets, rain forest shower head...

MANFRED

You'll be happy you splurged. Trust me.

(stops, remembers)

I'm sorry, I should have told you on the phone, when we set up the appointment, my fee has gone up.

She steps close to him, puts her hand on his chest.

RACHEL
 After all this time, you should
 know, you're worth every dime.

MANFRED
 (takes her hand in his)
 Then let's get started.

He leads her inside. He's seductive, she's eager. We know
 where this is going. TIMECUT TO:

Curtains drawn, candles lit. CAMERA DRIFTS through the
 romantic hotel suite. We hear...

MANFRED (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 I wanna see you. Show yourself.

Finally, CAMERA FINDS Manfred and Rachel. And no, we didn't
 know where it was going. Not to bed. But a table. They sit
 across from one another. He holds something in his hand.

MANFRED (CONT'D)
 (calls out)
 Harold, if you're here, make
 yourself known.

REVEAL a man's gold Wedding Band in his hand.

MANFRED (CONT'D)
 Rachel's here. She wants to talk.

With a dramatic shiver, Manfred's eyes POP open. Leans in:

MANFRED (CONT'D)
 He's here. Harold wants you to
 know...

Rachel looks at Manfred expectantly.

MANFRED (CONT'D)
 ... he thinks the new haircut is
 hot.

RACHEL
 (laughs)
 32 years we're married...now that
 you're dead, you like it short.
 You know how much time it would've
 saved when the kids were little?

MANFRED
 ...Harold says he was stupid... And
 he hated change.

RACHEL
 God, Harold. Not a day goes by I
 don't miss you something awful.

MANFRED
 He knows. But he doesn't want you
 to grieve him forever. He wants you
 to be happy.

We think he's telling her what she needs to hear. She
 appreciates what he's saying. She gathers her courage and --

RACHEL
 That's why I'm here Harold. I want
 you to know -- I'm seeing someone --

The candles flicker. A beat.

MANFRED
 He's listening. Go on --

RACHEL
 We're taking it slow. But, I'm
 happy. We're happy --

MANFRED
 He wants to know who it is.

RACHEL
 It's Kevin.

Flames on the candles move wildly, as if wind in the room.
 The temperature in the room drops. Their breath now visible.

MANFRED
 Perhaps we should take a break --

Fog-like condensation mushrooms behind them.

MANFRED (CONT'D)
 -- or stop altogether --

CRASH! The MIRRORS, GLASS TABLE TOP SHATTER. Rachel screams.

Manfred's POV: A SHADOW approaches from the condensation.
 Slowly comes into focus. We see: The horrifying ghost of
 HAROLD, 60s, overweight, split open, chest to stomach.

RACHEL'S POV -- broken glass. No Harold.

MANFRED (CONT'D)	RACHEL
(stands, orders Harold)	(confused, scared)
No! You are not to cross --	What's wrong?

Harold's ghost violently lunges at Manfred. Instead of knocking him down, it disappears into his body.

CLOSE ON MANFRED, eyes go black. Face contorts, grotesque, Harold's face overlaid on Manfred. In a baritone smoker's voice, HAROLD/MANFRED lays into Rachel:

<p>HAROLD/MANFRED My partner? My <u>friend</u>? You had to go there?! (pissed, wonders) Since when? Did you wait till I --</p>	<p>RACHEL (CONT'D) (fucking stunned to hear) <u>Harold?!?</u> (defends herself) No. No, it's nothing <u>like</u> that --</p>
--	--

Harold/Manfred throws the wedding band at her face. Bitterly:

HAROLD/MANFRED (CONT'D)
Tell me, then... what's it like?

Harold/Manfred grabs Rachel, yanks her close. With rage --

HAROLD/MANFRED (CONT'D)
Does he like your hair like that?

Manfred hurls himself back, away from Rachel. Wrests control of his body back. Sees his reflection in a large shard of the shattered mirror. Face, voice, eyes go back to normal.

MANFRED
Get out of my body Harold.

Harold's not done. Eyes go black, face contorts. Harold grabs the mirror shard, lunges at Rachel.

HAROLD
You can be with me. We can be
together again...

Rachel cowers, terrified. Harold/Manfred is about to stab his cowering wife when --

Manfred's eyes flash back to normal, he takes the shard, puts it to his own throat. Meaning every word:

MANFRED
I'm NOT going to let you hurt her.
I'd rather end it. You don't get
another go around Harold. Get. The
hell. OUT! NOW!

Harold's ghost flies out of Manfred. In an instant, Harold and mist are gone. The room back to normal. Except the broken glass, Rachel's horror. Professional, he explains:

MANFRED (CONT'D)
 Guess Harold still hates change.

TIMECUT TO:

Manfred at the door, warm smile:

MANFRED (CONT'D)
 Good luck Rachel.

He shuts the door. Drops the professional smile. He's in pain. Crosses to the mini-bar, grabs a mini-vodka.

INT. DALLAS HOTEL SUITE - BATHROOM - DAY

Manfred takes two pills from a prescription bottle. Tosses them back with vodka. Runs cold water over his face. Looks in the mirror. That took a toll. But all in a day's work. He shakes it off. MUSIC UP takes us to --

INT. DALLAS HOTEL SUITE - DAY

QUICK STYLIZED POPS. Fast, energetic. Manfred working. Laptop open. His websites: Incredible Manfredo, photo-shopped older, professorial. Deadspeak Blog, uptight look. Bernardo: Psychic & Seer, in all black (like now). Connect with loved ones in the Spirit World. By Phone. E-mail. Skype. For entertainment purposes only. \$375/hour. PayPal, Visa, MasterCard. Manfred, on the phone, typing, Skyping.

END MONTAGE with Manfred typing a message to his followers --
I will be out of touch for a few days. I need to meditate, tune my psychic energies. HARDCUT TO:

EXT. DALLAS HOTEL - VALET STAND - DAY

On Manfred as a "vintage" aka, rust-bucket Dodge Travco RV pulls up. A VALET climbs out, gives him a look. Explains:

MANFRED
 Relocating.

EXT. FREEWAY - I-40 - DAY

AERIAL SHOT. The RV, a sore thumb in city traffic.

INT. RV - DAY

MANFRED'S POV: side mirror. Dallas skyline gets smaller in the BG as he drives away.

Manfred looks behind him. Everything he owns, stacked in boxes. He's tense. Takes a deep breath. Out of nowhere --

VOICE
(dry, jagged voice)
What's with the cleansing breaths?

CAMERA WHIPS to REVEAL a ghostly apparition sitting in the passenger's seat. An emaciated, elderly woman. A jump in your seat moment for the audience. Not for Manfred.

MANFRED
I'm fine Xylida.

Meet XYLDA, Manfred's grandmother. Raised him. Died of cancer a year back. She still worries about him.

XYLDA
A bad reading?
(off his silence)
Jeez, not another hijack?

MANFRED
Only a second, I ended it quick.

XYLDA
Still... and the headaches?

MANFRED
(lies)
Barely there.

XYLDA
This move will do you good. You need to settle down.

MANFRED
No. I need to disappear. Unless I want to join you.

He's joking but Xylida feels bad. Guilty even.

XYLDA
Well, he won't find you where you're going. Can't think of a place safer than Midnight.

MANFRED
(light)
That'd mean a whole lot more coming from someone who wasn't dead.

Off her heartfelt, ghostly cackle SMASH TO:

TITLE CARD: MIDNIGHT TEXAS

EXT. TEXAS - DAY

HIGH AND WIDE on the RV among semi's and pick ups on a four lane West Texas Highway. DISSOLVE TO:

RV on a barren, jagged, two lane road. WIDE Texan skies overhead. INTERCUT with --

INT. RV - DAY

Manfred, now alone, takes in how remote this is. Smiles at a Tumbleweed tumbling across the road. Finally spotting --

A tin sign, dented, dinged, even a few bullet holes. But you can still make out: WELCOME TO MIDNIGHT.

EXT. MIDNIGHT TEXAS - DAY

Two intersecting roads and a single traffic light. Some would describe this a sleepy town. Others would say ghost town. It's isolated, half-abandoned, oddly beautiful.

Manfred spots a buffed, handsome man walk out of the Rising Angel Tattoo & Nails Salon. Fits his name: JOE STRONG. Dressed for a run. Stops to clock the RV's arrival.

The RV passes a church. Changeable letter sign: Wedding Chapel & Pet Cemetery. A grizzled Mexican cowboy, in black, REVEREND EMILIO SHEEHAN, 50s, eyes the RV with suspicion.

Manfred stops at a red light. The RV in the shadow of the long boarded-up Hotel. Manfred glances up. Immediately sees condensation on a window. SHADOWS crossing between boards.

MANFRED

(turns, looks forward)

Not on the clock.

Light goes green. He drives past a cottage. Sign out front: The Inquiring Mind. FIJI CAVANAUGH, hands in the dirt, replanting herbs, in her lush, flower filled garden. She talks to her Marmalade Cat, Mr. Snuggly.

Manfred's not sure what he expected. But it wasn't this. Though the RV fits in a lot more here than in Dallas.

Manfred pulls into the driveway of a small blue house.

EXT. MANFRED'S HOUSE - DAY

Manfred steps out, looks at the large building next door.
MIDNIGHT PAWN SHOP: 6 DAYS A WEEK, 24 HOURS A DAY. Manfred's
 not thrilled about that. Heads over -

EXT. MIDNIGHT PAWN SHOP - CONTINUOUS

He hears tires *screech*, turns to see a car swerve into the
 parking lot and slam to a stop. Driver's side opens. Out
 come, thigh-high boots, barely there mini-skirt, a bombshell
 with a bright red bob and sunglasses. OLIVIA CHARITY. 30s.
 Pulls two long cases from her car, heads to the pawn shop.

Manfred picks up his pace. Soon moving with the red-head. She
 keeps her eyes forward. He eyes her cases. Takes a guess:

MANFRED

So... a musician? Pawning a...
 trumpet?

OLIVIA

Not even close.

She peels off, down to basement apartments. Manfred goes in -

INT. MIDNIGHT PAWN - DAY

A large, crowded pawn shop/antique store. Stacked floor to
 ceiling. Kitchy vintage pieces mix with exquisite antiques.
 Taxidermy animals, and all manner of weapons.

Manfred moves through the store carefully, avoids touching
 things. Doesn't want to encounter any unwanted spirits.

He passes a cordoned-off section. Old books, occult items,
 oddities. Manfred glances at an ornamental sword, *hears a far
 away scream*. An old rag doll, Manfred hears a *baby cry*. The
 longer he stands there, the louder the cacophony becomes -
whispers, cries, screams, different languages.

Manfred turns away, quickly moves off, toward the counter.
 From the back, he hears a man's voice. A pissed off man --

BOBO (O.S.)

Least you can do is give me my ring
 back. You can't take off ...

Manfred clears his throat. Loud.

BOBO (CONT'D)

Call me back Aubrey.

A beat. BOBO WINTHROP 30s, emerges from a back office. Looks like a guy who played college ball. Smiles like a quarterback. Everyone likes Bobo.

BOBO (CONT'D)
 You must be Manfred...?
 (off his nod)
 ...made good time from Dallas --

MANFRED
 Didn't feel like stopping off.

BOBO
 (searches a drawer)
 Lemme get the keys...

INT. MANFRED'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Manfred looks around. Clean, Ikea furnished apartment.

BOBO
 Last tenant left the furniture.
 Particle board bothers you, you're
 welcome to come by the shop --

MANFRED
 -- it's fine. I like newer things.

BOBO
 RV in the driveway suggests
 otherwise...
 (then, admits)
 I gotta come clean. I checked you
 out, before renting the house. My
 due diligence...

MANFRED
 I hope it's not a problem.

BOBO
 That you're a psychic? Just the
 opposite. I was gonna offer you a
 month's rent if you could help --
 (explains)
 My fiance, she walked out, won't
 return my calls --

MANFRED
 -- Let me stop you.
 (lies)
 It's not real. I tell people what
 they want to hear. I'm just good at
 reading people. That's all it is.

BOBO
 (disappointed)
 No harm in asking. I should get
 back. You need something --

MANFRED
 I know where to find you. Thanks.

Bobo exits. Manfred looks around at his new digs. Sees something on the kitchen counter. A plate of cookies with a note: "*Welcome to the Neighborhood. Fiji from across the street.*" Manfred pops one into his mouth.

EXT. WITCH LIGHT ROAD - DAY TO NIGHT

HIGH AND WIDE, TIME LAPSE. As the sleepy town moves from DAY TO NIGHT. First bleached yellow-hued, dusty. As the sun sets, the skies go reds, pinks, purples. Speckled with bats waking for the night.

CRANE DOWN to find Manfred, heading to the one hopping place in town.

INT. HOME COOKIN' RESTAURANT - DUSK

Manfred enters a surprisingly full restaurant. Dinner rush. The crowd. Mostly locals from neighboring towns, ranchers.

CAMERA MOVES with Manfred, moving inside, scanning the crowd. Taking notice of --

The same creepy cowboy ("The Rev") who stared at his RV. Black Stetson hat, salad and open Bible on the table. Manfred also clocks:

Two BIKERS, hostile expressions. Skinhead haircuts. Jackboot font on Jacket: Sons of Liberty. Racist. Not trying to hide that. Alarming as they are watching --

A black woman, long braids. MADONNA REED, 30s, chef and owner. Dressing down the parents of unruly kids --

MADONNA
 Does this look like a Walmart? No.
 I don't provide crayons.

CAMERA FOLLOWS Manfred as he passes her. Heads to a counter. The Waitress has her back to Manfred, and the camera.

MANFRED
 I'd like to place an order. To go.

She turns. Manfred didn't know he had a type till now. CREEK LOVELL, 20's. She looks at him, smiles wide --

CREEK

You're Manfred. Bobo said he had a new tenant. Saw your RV... Nice ride.

MANFRED

I know. A real chick magnet.

She laughs, moves out from behind the counter --

CREEK

Creek. I live behind the Gas & Go with my dad, my little brother.
(then walking)
Follow me --

MANFRED

I'll follow a beautiful woman anywhere but, where are we going?

CREEK

Midnighter's table. It's where we sit. Except the Rev.
(points to the cowboy)
He eats alone. But now that you live here, you eat with us. Just how we do things --

She's leading him to a large table in a back, dark alcove. A long brown haired woman sits with a grey haired man.

CREEK (CONT'D)

Usually there are more people, but folks are getting ready for tomorrow, the Annual Fall Picnic. You should come.

MANFRED

If you'll be there...

She smiles as they reach the table.

CREEK

You meet your new neighbor yet?

Manfred recognizes the woman. Olivia, sans-red wig.

MANFRED

Sort of, you're the non-musician.

He extends his hand. She doesn't take it, doesn't respond.

LEMUEL
(back to us)
That's Olivia.

CAMERA SPINS AROUND as the Grey Haired man turns to face them. Manfred tries not to gasp as he meets:

LEMUEL (CONT'D)
Lemuel Bridger.

50s, pale, bluish skin. Gray-blue eyes seem to bore through Manfred. Lem would be distinguished if he didn't look dead.

CREEK
(to Manfred)
You eat beef?

MANFRED
Wouldn't have moved to Texas if I didn't.

CREEK
You trust me?

MANFRED
No, but I'll let you pick out my dinner.

There's chemistry here. As she moves off:

CREEK
Promise. You'll like it.

Manfred turns to his dinner companions.

MANFRED
Hope I'm not disturbing...

OLIVIA
(stands)
Not anymore.

Olivia walks out. Lemuel smiles at that. Then:

LEMUEL
We're right next door to one another. I live under the pawn shop. Work the night shift.

MANFRED
Must be interesting. Not busy, I hope.

LEMUEL
 Rarely... Mostly, I see specialty
 clients. Collectors.
 (sinister grin)
 Hope you don't scare easy --

On Manfred, maybe a tad scared.

INT. HOME COOKING - RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - DAY

Busy kitchen. Madonna oversees cooks as Creek goes on --

CREEK
 He's hot, funny. Seems interesting.

MADONNA
 He's interesting because he's here.

TEACHER REED, black, 30s feeds their 6 month old son GRADY.

TEACHER
 Don't rain on her fun --

MADONNA
 No family. No friends. He's
 running from something.

A COOK hands Creek a plate. Not dissuaded:

CREEK
 Then he'll fit in just fine.

INT. HOME COOKIN' RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Creek walks out from the kitchen, hot plates, moving toward
 the table of Bikers.

ADJUST TO FIND Lem and Manfred, both watching.

Creek approach the Bikers. One of them eyes her. Touches her
 leg. Lem's expression darkens...

LEMUEL
 Apologies.

MANFRED
 For wh --

In an instant, Lemuel has Manfred's arm in a vice like grip.

Manfred gasps. PUSH IN. Color drains from his face. Pupils
 shrink to pinpricks.

Manfred's POV: Field of vision narrows to tunnel vision.
Everything sounds as if underwater.

Manfred looks up at Lemuel. Lemuel's face flushes. Veins in his neck throb.

Manfred's lids start to close, about to lose consciousness --
Lemuel drops Manfred's arm. Let's him go.

Manfred immediately sucks in a deep breath of air. Feels exhausted, sick, depleted. Lemuel hands Manfred an iced tea.

LEMUEL

Here -- You'll feel better.

Manfred drinks it down it in gulps. Looks at Lem as if to ask WTF? Lemuel turns back to the Bikers. Watches as Creek moves off. Lemuel relaxes, as he explains to Manfred --

LEMUEL (CONT'D)

It's been a while since I've eaten.
I'm weak. I was worried.

(re: the bikers)

They looked like they could become
a problem. So I leeches some energy
from you.

MANFRED

Leeched? What does that even mean?
... What are you... exactly?

LEMUEL

Vampire's one word for it.

Manfred moves back a little --

MANFRED

I didn't realize... okay, that's
real...

LEMUEL

Don't be like that. I'm a lot less
frightening than those two.

He indicates the two Bikers. Manfred's disquieted:

MANFRED

Between skinheads and vampires,
neither makes me happy about my
move.

(then, indicates his neck)

So none of this --

LEMUEL

Oh, that's always on the menu.

Lemuel gives him a look best described as hungry. Manfred moves back a little more. Looks at his arm, bruised from Lem's grip.

MANFRED

So, energy, that's all you took?

LEMUEL

I also wanted to see what kind of neighbor you'd be. If you'd run at the first sign of ... "difference."

MANFRED

(half joking)

If I had any energy, I might've.

LEMUEL

I'm protective. You need to understand, this town's special. We don't want just anyone moving in.

(not very veiled threat)

And we'll do whatever it takes, to protect it.

Before Manfred can react, a plate's put in front of him.

CREEK

Madonna's pot roast special.

Famished, he dives in.

CREEK (CONT'D)

Told you you'd like it... So, if you want, I'll drop by your place tomorrow, we can walk over to the picnic --

MANFRED

-- I'm not sure... a day of driving, moving boxes --

(glances at Lem)

... I'm spent.

Creek looks disappointed. Lemuel sees this. Tells Manfred:

LEMUEL

You'll feel better in the morning. I have to miss it. But you should go. Midnight's very different in the daylight.

EXT. COLD ROCK RIDGE - DAY

A bright fall day. A lovely, meadow overlooking the River. Midnighters enjoying the Picnic. Joe plays catch with his Lab named RASTA. Bobo and Teacher at the grill.

Find Fiji watching. Mostly she's watching Bobo toss ribs on the BBQ. Laughing. Relaxed. Sweaty.

OLIVIA (O.S.)
Why don't you jump him already?

Fiji turns to see Olivia standing behind her.

FIJI
That is not what I was thinking. I was admiring his cooking techniques and don't make that dirty...

Olivia would have, but her attention is drawn elsewhere --

OLIVIA
What do you make of the new guy?

ANGLE ON: Manfred walking up with Creek and her brother CONNOR (18, thin, socially awkward).

FIJI
I left him cookies. If he was dangerous, he'd be tossing those cookies as we speak.

OLIVIA
(amused)
Fiji Cavanaugh, did you poison our new neighbor?

In the deep BG, Rasta stands by the river. *Barking loudly, insistently.*

FIJI
Not poison, if you don't have poisonous intentions.
(then, turns)
What's that stupid dog going on about?

RACK to find Manfred and Creek. Her brother's run off to get a plate, and now they're alone --

CREEK
So what do you think? Happy you came out?

MANFRED

Yeah. You were right to get me
out. Gives me a whole new
perspective about --

A LOUD, HORRIFIED SCREAM interrupts. They spin, see Fiji and Olivia by the river. Fiji's got her hands over her mouth, horrified. They stare into the river. **HARDCUT TO:**

THE RIVERBED, among the reeds, small animal bones, skulls, feet, fur and skin. And even more disturbing -

A WOMAN'S DEAD BODY. Blonde, wet hair over her face. Bloated. Insects crawling on her. She's been here a while.

FIJI (O.S.)

I'd like to report... a body... in
the river. Yes... definitely dead --

ANGLE TO REVEAL other Midnighters, reacting. Creek shields her younger brother. Olivia seems pissed Fiji's on with 911 --

FIJI (CONT'D)

I know her. Aubrey Hamilton --

CAMERA PANS to find Bobo. On the ground, sobbing, looking at the woman he loved. CAMERA PANS from his pain to Manfred, reacting to something entirely different --

MANFRED'S POV: Fog rises from the water. In the mist, Aubrey's ghost is overlaid on the body. Then Aubrey's ghost turns, locks eyes with Manfred. Knows that he sees her.

Manfred turns away. Fuck. This town that was supposed to be quiet and safe, is anything but.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. COLD ROCK RIDGE - LATE AFTERNOON

AERIAL SHOT, low sun, long shadows. Darker vibe. Especially now that the bucolic picnic grounds are overrun with County Police Cars, a Coroner's van.

LIVINGSTON (O.S.)
Deputies will be by your homes over
the next couple of days to take
your statements.

WIDE on what's now a crime scene. Areas cordoned off with crime scene tape. Photographs taken. Evidence collected.

FIND MANFRED, a stranger in all this. Not mourning, or shocked like the others. He listens to:

SHERIFF VESTER LIVINGSTON, 40s, religious man. Midnight makes him uneasy. A dead girl makes him angry.

LIVINGSTON (CONT'D)
Don't leave town without calling
the department, getting our okay.

As folks start to pack their things, MOVE WITH Livingston, crossing to Bobo, gutted, by himself.

LIVINGSTON (CONT'D)
I need to ask you some questions.

CAMERA FINDS Manfred walking quick. Trying to catch up to Creek and Connor up ahead. An officer stops him. OFFICER TINA GOMEZ, 30s.

GOMEZ
I haven't seen you before.

MANFRED
I just moved here.

GOMEZ
To *Midnight*? Why?

MANFRED
...It's quiet. Cheap.

GOMEZ
There's a reason for that.
(off the crime scene)
(MORE)

GOMEZ (CONT'D)

I'm surprised this kind of thing
hasn't happened before.

MANFRED

What kind of thing?

GOMEZ

This *occult* kind of thing...
Kids in Dewey, they dare one
another to walk Witch Light Road on
full moons.

MANFRED

It's got a ghost town vibe. But
people seem nice.

GOMEZ

(re: Fiji)

Folks think she's a witch. Or a
lesbian.

MANFRED

(jokes)

Could be both.

Gomez is not amused. Ignores, continues.

GOMEZ

And I would not be surprised to
find a skin suit in that Pawn
shop...

ANGLE OVER TO Bobo. Sheriff Livingston, taking notes, keeping
his distrust just under the surface.

LIVINGSTON

Her next of kin?

BOBO

Me I suppose. She's got an aunt.
Don't know her name. Raised Aubrey
after her parents died. Kicked her
out when she was fifteen, and got a
little wild. They weren't in touch.

LIVINGSTON

Where'd you meet?

BOBO

Dewey. She was waiting tables. We
got to talking. She was getting
evicted, I had a house to rent.

(then)

(MORE)

BOBO (CONT'D)

Took her to dinner the night she moved in. She moved in with me three weeks later.

LIVINGSTON

That's fast.

BOBO

She said, when you know, you --

Bobo's voice cracks. Livingston doesn't give Bobo a chance to compose himself. Continues, distrust on the surface:

LIVINGSTON

She was gone for two weeks, you didn't report her missing.

BOBO

I thought she walked out.

LIVINGSTON

Without her stuff.

BOBO

She barely had stuff. Two suitcases of clothes, cheap furniture she didn't like.

LIVINGSTON

Why'd she leave?

BOBO

(hates himself for it)
We fought. I got mean. Told her to get out... I didn't intend...

He drops his head into his hands, can't keep talking.

FIJI (O.S.)

Poor thing...

CAMERA FINDS Fiji and Olivia moving off. Both watching Bobo.

OLIVIA

He needs to shut up. Before he says something he can't take back.

They pass the Coroner's van. Aubrey's body loaded inside.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Even dead, the bitch is trouble.

As the CORONER'S VAN DOOR SHUTS -

EXT. LOVELL HOUSE - NIGHT

Manfred walks behind the brightly lit convenience store, to a SMALL HOUSE. Knocks on the front door. Connor opens the door:

MANFRED

I was checking to see how you guys
are doing?

CONNOR

Creek wanted to leave right away.
She was freaked out.

MANFRED

She around?

CONNOR

She's asleep. But I'll tell her --

A voice bellows from inside. A pissed off voice, maybe drunk.

SHAWN (O.S.)

Who are you talking to?

CONNOR

(calls)

Madonna. She's checking to see that
Creek's okay.

(then, mouths)

Go.

Connor shuts the door. Manfred moves off wondering what that was about. Like everything since he got here.

EXT. WITCH LIGHT ROAD - NIGHT TO DAY

With Manfred, passing the Chapel. Lights on. Someone inside. As he crosses to the house. CRANE UP. HIGH AND WIDE. TIME LAPSE town, as it goes from NIGHT TO DAY. Black sky lightens to blue. Until yellow, orange, and red seep over the horizon, as the sun rises. Silence replaced by chirping birds.

INT. MANFRED'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

ON MANFRED, in bed. Asleep. Arm outside of the covers. Goosebumps appear. Manfred stirs, pulls the covers up. He starts to wake, sensing something's not right. He looks at the window. Condensation. Then he notices something behind him. He's not alone. He turns, finds himself --

Face to face with Aubrey's ghostly corpse, lying with him. Her neck, shoulders, face crawling with bugs.

Manfred jolts back, falls out of bed. She tries to talk but --
 Water gurgles from her mouth, from a hole in her throat.
 Manfred backs up. Terrified of having his body hijacked
 again. Aubrey gets up, moves to him --

MANFRED

Nonono, you stay back. I did not
 give you permission...

She keeps approaching. He keeps backing up until he's against
 the wall. CLOSE ON MANFRED, eyes closed, hands over temples --

MANFRED (CONT'D)

Get out!

A beat. Nothing. Slowly Manfred opens his eyes --

Aubrey's at the window, written in condensation:

HELP ME.

MANFRED (CONT'D)

(considers, then)

If it means you go away...fine.

(as he gets up)

But my way. Precautions in place.

Manfred exits. CAMERA STAYS on the words written in
 condensation. PRELAP:

AUBREY (O.S.)

"I love you more than anything."

INT. BOBO'S APARTMENT - EARLY AM

A video plays on an iPhone. AUBREY, lying on the grass,
 looking at camera. Off camera, a familiar voice comments:

BOBO (O.S.)

You're drunk.

AUBREY

Wasted actually --

(moves closer to camera)

-- doesn't mean it's not true. You,
 Bobo Winthrop, are the only thing
 that matters to me...

She leans in, disappears out of frame to kiss him. REWIND:

FIND Bobo, watching. Empty bottle next to him. Lost in grief.
 Doesn't react to a knock at his door. The sound of keys in
 the lock. Or Fiji walking in with bags.

FIJI
Used my "in-case-of-emergency"
neighbor keys. This qualifies.

She walks past him, to the kitchen:

FIJI (CONT'D)
I have food.

BOBO
I'm not hungry.

FIJI
Of course you're not. But you still
need to eat...

INT. CHAPEL - EARLY MORNING

Manfred enters the small chapel. Paintings of biblical
tableaus line the wall: *Jonah and the Whale*, *Baby Jesus in
the Manger*, *Noah's Arc*. Animal-themed. Manfred goes to a holy
water font, dips a bottle inside. As he fills it --

A hand grabs his shoulder. Manfred spins, startled. Is face
to face with the surly cowboy who has been watching him.

REVEREND SHEEHAN
Taking holy water?

MANFRED
(beat, then)
Yes. I am. Reverend, I'm --

REVEREND SHEEHAN
Manfred. I know who you are.

And then, his demeanor shifts. Satisfied by Manfred's
honesty, the Reverend nods, offers a small smile, moves off.

REVEREND SHEEHAN (CONT'D)
Sunday service starts at 8, if
you're interested.

Off Manfred, getting holy water.

INT. BOBO'S APARTMENT - DAY

A lovingly prepared plate of food. Bobo half-heartedly pushes
food around his plate.

FIJI
Hope it's okay.

BOBO

It's good...
 (admits quietly)
 I know why this happened.
 It's me... my fault --
 (then)
 We don't talk much about who we
 were before coming to Midnight...
 But I wasn't a good man.
 I didn't deserve her, didn't
 deserve to be so happy. I knew
 something would go wrong.

Fiji takes his hand --

FIJI

I don't care who you were. I know
 who you are. Now. And that is the
 kindest man I know. And I --

KNOCK, KNOCK. Fiji stops, crosses to the door --

FIJI (CONT'D)

I'll get rid of --
 (opens it, surprised)
 Sheriff Livingston.

He's even more surprised to see her there. Looks past her --

LIVINGSTON

I need to talk to Bobo.

He doesn't wait for an invitation, enters. Fiji follows.

FIJI

I'll get going --

BOBO

Please, stay.

Fiji stands by Bobo's side. Livingston gets right to it.

LIVINGSTON

Coroner's preliminary report is
 victim was beaten, shot. Gunshot
 assumed to be the cause of death.

ON BOBO, a gut punch.

LIVINGSTON (CONT'D)

That's not why I'm here... Aubrey
 Hamilton wasn't the girl you
 thought she was.

PUSH IN on BOBO as he listens...

LIVINGSTON (CONT'D)

Her real name, Aubrey Hamilton-Lowry. Married to Peter Lowry, three years into a fifteen year sentence at Beaumont Federal.

FIJI

(shit)
Sugarcornpops.

LIVINGSTON

She's got family. Mother, father, two brothers, outside of Dallas. Very much alive. Aubrey talked to her mother every Sunday up until the week she went missing.

BOBO

That can't be. You're wrong.

Livingston pulls out photographs. Hands them to Bobo. A SEARS family portrait: Aubrey, brothers, parents in Christmas sweaters. And a Wedding photo, Aubrey in a poufy, white dress, a BIKER with a bad-ass expression is the groom.

Bobo stares at them, tries to process.

LIVINGSTON

I notified her parents. They're upset. Understandably. Looking for someone to blame. Her husband, he's Sons of Liberty, he's got reach.

FIJI

What are you saying?

LIVINGSTON

I know this town. Know you like to handle things yourselves. But in this case, don't. You see something, you call us. I don't want this situation escalating.

FIJI

We will definitely call.

LIVINGSTON

(then to Bobo)
So you didn't suspect?

BOBO
 (seething)
 Did I suspect that everything she
 said was a lie. No. I didn't --

INT. MANFRED'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Furniture taken apart, stacked against the wall. Center of the room is empty. Candles lit throughout.

ON Manfred, pours a bottle of a dark sand in a straight line. He's intense, focused. TIMECUT:

CAMERA OVERHEAD. Manfred in the center of the room. On the intersection of two lines he made in black sand. He's got an old wooden case at his feet. He takes the bottle of holy water, sprinkles it in a circle around himself. Now ready:

MANFRED
 Aubrey, it's show time. I know
 you're here.

The room gets cold, condensation, mist start to form. Slowly.

MANFRED (CONT'D)
 Don't be coy.

A ghostly apparition emerges from the fog. Aubrey. She moves closer to him --

MANFRED (CONT'D)
 You stay on that side.

Aubrey stops. She opens her mouth, water gurgles out of it. It's horrifying. Manfred opens up the old case. Inside:

An antique, beautiful SPIRIT BOARD (Old school Ouija board).

MANFRED (CONT'D)
 What do you need to tell me?

MANFRED puts his hands on the planchette (heart-shaped piece of wood that moves on the board.)

CLOSE ON the planchette as Aubrey's ghostly hands touch Manfred's.

QUICK CUTS. Their hands on the board. Her hands guide his. Land on letters. Manfred jots the letters down on a pad. A word forms. PECADOS.

As she starts to spell the next word, Manfred hears a *scream*. He spins, horrified to see -- the ghost of a Comanche BOY, 10, screaming. Partially obscured by the heavy fog in the room. Manfred, with dread, asks Aubrey:

MANFRED (CONT'D)
A friend of yours?

BAM. Manfred turns. Against the wall, a barrel chested MAN, gun in his mouth. Blood drips from the wall behind him. Manfred feels something on his head, touches his hair --

It's wet. He looks up --

A woman in a white nightgown, floats over him. Dark emptiness where eyes should be, lips black, crying...

MANFRED (CONT'D)
I called for Aubrey. You are all
unwelcome in my --

Just then, he feels the floor underneath him start to rumble. He looks down. The boards move up and down beneath him. As if there's something underneath the wood floor, breathing. As the planks strain, spread apart, Manfred sees under the planks, a dark, red, roiling light. And then a deep, sinister, unearthly growl coming from under the floor.

OFF MANFRED, terrified wondering what the fuck is that!?!?

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. MANFRED'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

BACK with Manfred, on a floor that seems to be breathing. Around him, hidden in the mist, ghosts, all around him. Camera WHIPS Manfred. It's chaotic. Sinister. Manfred tries to get control --

MANFRED

This is my home! You have no --

SLAM! The floor violently rises up, slams Manfred into the ceiling. The floor drops back down. Manfred falls, slams on the floor hard.

Manfred scrambles, leaves the protective circle and bolts for the door. Just as Manfred opens the door -- The ghostly Barrel Chested Man rushes Manfred, dives into his body.

CLOSE ON Barrel Chested/Manfred, as his eyes go black...

BARREL CHESTED/MANFRED

I made a mistake. I didn't know --

Manfred takes back control of his body. His eyes go back to normal. He looks at his reflection in the window. Orders:

MANFRED

Get out! You are not welcome here!

Barrel Chested's ghost flies out from his body. WINDOWS SHATTER as Manfred hauls ass and out to --

INT. MANFRED'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Manfred slams the door shut behind him. ON MANFRED wondering what the fuck he unleashed in there --

EXT. WITCH LIGHT ROAD - DAY

HIGH AND WIDE - Police Cars descend on the sleepy town.

LOW AND WIDE - with Sheriff Livingston, Officer Gomez, and other Officers, stride down dusty streets. Officer Gomez is ready to bring it. They split up --

EXT. PET CEMETERY - DAY

The Reverend moves through the small cemetery, picking up old flowers. He sees the Sheriff behind him, approaching.

LIVINGSTON
Didn't see you at the picnic.

REVEREND SHEEHAN
I don't eat BBQ.

LIVINGSTON
You know Aubrey Hamilton?

REVEREND SHEEHAN
I know who she was. Came in, prayed from time to time. But she wanted to talk to God, not me.

LIVINGSTON
(beat, then fishing)
Crime scene was ritualistic.
Animal remains, bones... Thought it was curious.

REVEREND SHEEHAN
I think it's sad.

INT. INQUIRING MIND - DAY

On Fiji, watching Detective Gomez, wanders her New Age store.

FIJI
She was a sweet girl.

GOMEZ
Even through she pretty much lied to you about everything?

FIJI
Well... what I meant was, I thought she was sweet, before I knew she was duplicitous.

GOMEZ
You and Bobo, close?

FIJI
Very. Best friends.

GOMEZ
Must have been hard. Your bestie, bringing home this hot young thing.
(MORE)

GOMEZ (CONT'D)
 (goads her)
 You must have known something was
 up with her.

FIJI
 I didn't.

Detective Gomez holds up a book. "A Wiccan Bible."

GOMEZ
 Witchcraft is your thing, right?

FIJI
 (corrects her)
 Wicca, and I'm not exclusive,
 spiritually speaking.

GOMEZ
 Lot of animal sacrifices, blood
 rituals in this stuff... right?
 Just like we found near the body.

FIJI
 You know, Bundy, Dahmer, Son of
 Sam, all started on critters before
 killing people. And not a wiccan in
 the bunch.

INT. RISING ANGEL TATTOO & NAILS SALON - DAY

ON CHUY VILLEGAS, Latino, 30s, dapper dresser, Joe's husband.
 One of the Midnighters at the picnic. Talking to Sheriff
 Livingston, out of place in the bright nail salon.

CHUY
 She'd always come in with some
 pinterest board. Stripper trendy
 was her aesthetic.

Livingston's not sure what it means, writes it down anyway.

LIVINGSTON
 When she was here, did she ever
 confide in you? Talk about
 boyfriend problems --

JOE
 Like girl talk?

ANGLE TO REVEAL: JOE in a separate area in the back. Darker,
 no windows, Tattoo Flash Art line the walls. Rasta, by his
 side.

CHUY

Aubrey didn't talk. She liked how I did her nails. She didn't like our life style.

JOE

Also didn't love you being Mexican.

CHUY

But she *was* a good tipper. Folks are such bundles of contradictions, aren't they?

INT. OLIVIA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Find Olivia in her very well furnished basement apartment. Aggravated as fuck that Officer Gomez is in it.

OLIVIA

Didn't talk to her.

GOMEZ

She lived upstairs.

OLIVIA

She wasn't interested in making friends. Neither was I.

GOMEZ

(looking around)
What do you do? Work-wise.

OLIVIA

I don't. I'm independently wealthy.

GOMEZ

Yet you live *here*. In Midnight.

OLIVIA

(deadpan)
I'm eccentric.

INT. MANFRED'S HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - DAY

ON MANFRED, hanging an EVIL EYE AMULET to the bedroom door. Hears *buzzing*. Sees flies, around the door, trying to get in.

MANFRED

Not good.

Out a window, he spots Officer Gomez approaching his house --

MANFRED (CONT'D)

And worse.

He moves to the door. Opens it as she's about to knock.

MANFRED (CONT'D)

(putting on a polite
smile)

Hello again.

GOMEZ

Yeah, I need to take your
statement, Mr. Bernardo.

She pushes her way inside. Manfred follows.

MANFRED

I don't know much since I just got
here. But I'll answer any
questions.

She meets his politeness with hostility.

GOMEZ

Not that I'll believe a word.
I know who you are.

MANFRED

...Who am I?

As she looks around the room. Spots his prescription bottle.

GOMEZ

I did some digging. I know you're a
scam artist.

MANFRED

Not exactly how I'd describe --

Takes out her note pad, cuts him off:

GOMEZ

Where were you before arriving in
Midnight?

MANFRED

On the road. Doing in person
consultations with clients --

She takes no notes. Just locks her eyes on him --

<p>GOMEZ</p> <p>Where do you stay. When you're on the "road"?</p> <p>You got receipts for those hotels?</p> <p>Afraid to leave a paper trail?</p> <p>Or I could argue, you just moved here and <u>now</u> a body turns up.</p>	<p>MANFRED (CONT'D)</p> <p>Mostly my RV. Hotels from time to time.</p> <p>I pay cash --</p> <p>(gets defensive)</p> <p>I just moved here. I have nothing to do with any of this --</p>
--	--

Manfred breaks their look first. Gomez looks around. Sees the Evil Eye amulet on the door. Senses something's not right:

GOMEZ (CONT'D)

I'd like to take a look around. If you don't mind.

MANFRED

Actually I do mind. I mind a lot. Why?

GOMEZ

Because you're acting weird. You're on some serious antipsychotic medication.

(approaches bedroom)

And because you lie to people for a living --

She's just outside of the bedroom. Not wanting her to go in:

MANFRED

I don't and I can prove it.

(then)

Does Pecados mean anything to you?

Off Gomez. It does.

EXT. PECADOS BRIDGE - DAY

An old abandoned Truss bridge over the river on an empty stretch of land.

Manfred's flanked by Sheriff Livingston and Detective Gomez.

LIVINGSTON

I've heard of departments consulting with psychics --

REVEAL County POLICE OFFICERS searching the riverbed.

LIVINGSTON (CONT'D)
Never put much stock in it.

MANFRED
My grandmother did it all the time.

GOMEZ
I got a magic 8 ball. Maybe I
should shake it, figure out who
stole Levi's Subaru.

OFFICER (O.S.)
They got something!

They head over to an Officer, holding a Semi-Automatic Pistol
with a carved wooden grip. Ornate and vintage.

MANFRED
Could your 8 ball do that?

EXT. WITCH LIGHT ROAD - DAY

A police car pulls up in front of Manfred's house. Gomez lets
Manfred out of the car. They drive off.

ON MANFRED as he faces his house. Knows what waits for him
back in the bedroom. He goes up to the RV. Not noticing that
Olivia and Fiji are watching him. PRELAP --

MANFRED (O.S.)
I've never seen anything like this!

INT. RV - DAY

Without boxes, it's looks like an old lady's living room --
Gypsy Caravan meets QVC. XylDA's spirit there with Manfred.

XYLDA
You conjured one spirit --

MANFRED
-- And they kept coming...
(freaking out)
I'm not even sure they were all
spirits. Not that I have any idea
what it is... what the hell am I
doing here?

XYLDA
I thought Midnight would be safe.

MANFRED

Safe? There's a vampire next door!

XYLDA

(tries to calm him down)
They tend to keep a place safe.

MANFRED

This whole move was a colossal
mistake!

XYLDA

I'm sorry. I thought you'd like it.
You could settle. Not always be
alone all the --

Just then, a TAPPING at the door.

EXT. RV - DAY

Manfred opens the door. Surprised to see Olivia there.
Peering inside.

MANFRED

Olivia.

OLIVIA

Thought I heard voices --

MANFRED

You did. Me. On the phone.
(then)
So, I'm surprised. Thought you were
avoiding me.

OLIVIA

I was. Till now.

Without warning, Olivia slams her brass-knuckled fist hard at his face. Crunch. Manfred's knocked unconscious.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. INQUIRING MINDS - DUSK

"Gypsy," Fleetwood Mac ringtone. Fiji picks up her cell.

OLIVIA (O.C.)
(with urgency)
It's me. Look outside.

Fiji goes to the window. A WOMAN, 40's, smart pantsuit knocks at Manfred's door. When he doesn't answer, she peers through his windows, takes pictures.

FIJI
Who the heck is that?

OLIVIA
Don't know. Don't care. Get rid of her.

FIJI
Wait, what? How do I --

OLIVIA
-- You'll figure it out.

She hangs up. Fiji looks down at Mr. Snuggly.

FIJI
Don't look at me like that.

She heads out. Mr. Snuggly follows --

EXT. INQUIRING MINDS - DUSK

Fiji walks out. The Woman spots her, rushes over.

WHITLOCK
Excuse me...Shoshana Whitlock, I'm doing a story for the Dewey Tribune about the murder.

She holds out her phone to record Fiji:

FIJI
No comment.

WHITLOCK
The man she lived with --

FIJI

What part of no comment didn't you hear?

WHITLOCK

You know about his criminal record?
His history of violence --

FIJI

(intense, sharp)
You don't know the first thing about him.

Whitlock holds out her phone, starts recording:

WHITLOCK

Then, tell me.

PUSH ON FIJI, eyes hard and focused on Whitlock. Looks like she's in a trance. Whispers quietly, almost like praying.

WHITLOCK (CONT'D)

Speak up. Anything you say to me -

Whitlock's eyes roll back, only whites visible. Her skin goes gray. Completely immobile. There it is. Fiji is a witch.

Fiji takes the phone out of her hand. Erases the recording. The photos she took around town.

At her feet, Mr. Snuggly stares at her, *hisses*.

FIJI

Don't judge me.

Fiji puts the phone back in her hand. Crosses as we PRELAP:

OLIVIA (O.C.)

How long will she stay like that?

INT. OLIVIA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Olivia and Fiji peer out the basement apartment window.

POV: Whitlock exactly as Fiji left her.

FIJI

Shouldn't be much ...there we go.

EXT. INQUIRING MINDS - NIGHT

Ms. Whitlock unfreezes, picks up right where she left off --

WHITLOCK
 -- is confi...where'd she go?

She looks around. Stunned to be alone, in the dark. No Fiji, no Cat. As if she lost time. Scared, she rushes to her car, gets in, peels out.

FIJI (O.S.)
 Oh goddess, if she says anything...

INT. OLIVIA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

OLIVIA
 And risk people thinking she's
 crazy? At most, she'll get an MRI.
 (then)
 Thanks. You can go.

FIJI
 I can go? You know, I don't like to
 use *extreme measures*, if I don't
 have to. I'm owed a why.

OLIVIA
 I didn't want her interrupting.

FIJI
 Interrupting what?

A loud THUD from the bedroom.

OLIVIA
 It's under control.

INT. OLIVIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

LOW and WIDE, the door flies open. Olivia, Fiji look inside.

FIJI
 Olivia. This is not what under
 control looks like.

THEIR POV: Inside the bedroom with a distinctly BDSM vibe, we see Manfred, in only his underwear, gagged, and tied to a chair that is tipped on its side. He pulls at the restraints, trying to free himself.

OLIVIA
 Just help me get him up.

They hoist him up. Talk over Manfred's angry grunts.

FIJI
Why exactly, is he naked?

OLIVIA
Checked him for wires, GPS
trackers...

Fiji stares at Olivia a beat.

FIJI
We live such different lives.

LEMUEL (O.S.)
This is unexpected --

They turn. Lemuel's behind them.

OLIVIA
Now that you're done sleeping in,
how about some help --

LEMUEL
(moves toward Manfred)
Looks like I'm just in time for the
fun.

Manfred's grunts turn to whimpers. TIMECUT TO:

A little bit later. Manfred upright, still tied to a chair.
Un-gagged. Surrounded by a witch, a vampire and a woman more
menacing than either.

OLIVIA
Hundreds of podunk towns in Texas.
Why ours?

MANFRED
Luck I suppose.

Olivia gets in his face. Scary --

OLIVIA	MANFRED (CONT'D)
Do you work for the police or any law enforcement agency?	No.
Were you sent to find someone?	No.
Did my dad send you?	<u>NO</u> .

LEMUEL
I'm getting bored and hungry.

Manfred's eyes widen. Fiji goes to Manfred:

FIJI

Okeydoke this could go sideways
real fast. I don't want that. You
don't want that.

OLIVIA

I'm good either way.

Beat, then what the fuck does he have to lose:

MANFRED

I'm here because my grandmother got
a feeling. A psychic feeling, that
I'd be safe here. Her reads are
usually spot on, but Xylde's also a
pathological liar so there's that.

LEMUEL

Xylde... "Gypsy Xylde"?

MANFRED

Wait, you know my grandma?

Lemuel grins, there's a story there. But, not now.

LEMUEL

How's she doing?

MANFRED

Dead. Throat cancer. A year ago.
A month ago, after a run in with
someone who wants me dead, Xylde
said I should hide here.

FIJI

So you're a real psych --

Olivia gives her a look. Not important.

OLIVIA

Who are you hiding from and why do
they want you dead?

MANFRED

Really he wants Xylde dead, but too
late for that. I'm the only one
left so close enough...

LEMUEL

Who would want to hurt Xylde?

MANFRED

Everyone she stole from. She ran
scams, removed fake curses.

(MORE)

MANFRED (CONT'D)

Stole and spent more than a million dollars.

OLIVIA

Explains why you are here. Doesn't explain why you're chummy with the Sheriff.

MANFRED

(losing patience)

They showed up at my door. Wanting to look through my things. I didn't want them to find my secrets so I gave them Aubrey's.

ON MANFRED, fed up after the day he's had. Patience lost.

MANFRED (CONT'D)

I'm done with the questions, and the threats, and being punched in the face. So --

He glares up at his three captors. Defiant.

MANFRED (CONT'D)

-- either end it already, or let me get dressed.

INT. OLIVIA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Manfred dressed, out of restrains. Ice Pack on his eye.

MANFRED

What the hell is this place?

LEMUEL

Midnight's been a haven for people like us for centuries. We're drawn to it... Some, like Xylde, stop for a bit, move on. Some of us make this home.

OLIVIA

Those who can stand the heat and the neighbors.

MANFRED

Which ones, skinheads or police?

FIJI

All the above. They don't like us.

LEMUEL

So long as we're quiet, we're ignored, tolerated.

OLIVIA

That bitch getting herself killed isn't quiet. And now we've got cops and reporters looking around...

Lemuel moves over to Manfred --

LEMUEL

Like you, we have our pasts, our secrets, reasons that brought us here. We all just want to be safe. Live and be left alone to do that.

MANFRED

(beat, then)

You said, people like us are drawn here? Why?

FIJI

The crossroads of Midnight, it's where the veil between living and dead is its thinnest. A powerful energy...

MANFRED

(beat, then)

That explains it.

LEMUEL

Explains what?

INT. MANFRED'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Door opens and Lem, Fiji and Manfred stare from inside the living room. Hear a low groan. The buzzing of flies.

FIJI

(shit)

Shutthefrontdoor.

FIJI AND LEM'S POV: Manfred's room, strewn with sand, broken glass, floorboards move up and down, as if something underneath is breathing. Flies everywhere.

LEMUEL

What the hell did you conjure?

MANFRED'S POV: same as Fiji and Lem's, except with ghosts.

MANFRED

I wish I knew.

Lem moves into the room. Goes to the center of the floor boards. He bends down, looks between the floorboards. Looks underneath --

FIJI

You poked a hole in the veil... The spirits we can get rid of ... but whatever else you let out, I don't know.

Lem hears the low, guttural growl getting louder. Alarmed, he exits the room to --

INT. MANFRED'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

FIJI

So what do you think?

LEMUEL

I have some suspicions as to what that... *thing* is. I hope I'm wrong.

As he moves off, troubled as fuck --

MANFRED

Where are you going?

LEMUEL

I need to consult some sources.

(then)

Till then, do not open that door and don't cross the threshold.

INT. MIDNIGHT PAWN - NIGHT

DING DING. TWO BIKERS framed in the doorway. All testosterone, rage and hate. CAMERA LEADS them through the store. The Taller one kicks aside anything in his way. Maliciously knocks down breakable items. The Shorter One has his head on a swivel, his hand on his holstered pistol.

A DOME SURVEILLANCE MIRROR. Distorted image of the Bikers approaching the counter.

TILT DOWN to see Bobo, behind the counter watching. Bobo looks under the counter. A phone and pistol right there. Bobo walks out from behind the counter, leaving both behind.

WITH BOBO as he walks up to The Bikers.

BOBO
 (matter of fact)
 You're not welcome here.

The Shorter Biker pulls his pistol out from his holster.
 Trains it on Bobo. The Taller Biker gets right up on him.

TALL BIKER
 What I want to know is, you kill
 Aubrey because she knew the truth
 about you?

BOBO
 I wouldn't hurt her.

TALL BIKER
 And I don't take the word of a
 traitor and a coward.

The Tall Biker pulls out a hunting knife.

TALL BIKER (CONT'D)
 I want so bad to end you, right
 here. Lucky for you, I need
 something.
 (whispers)
 Where'd you stash them? You know,
 those weapons ain't yours. You tell
 me, where you put the cache and
 I'll let you live to see the
 sunrise.

BOBO
 You've misjudged the situation.

Bobo lifts his head, as if to offer his neck.

BOBO (CONT'D)
 I don't care either way.

TALL BIKER
 Suit yourself --

He's about to slice Bobo's throat when --

THWAP. Out of fucking nowhere -- a long metal arrow flies
 across the room, impales the Tall Biker in the back.

The Tall Biker screams, crumbles to the ground.

CAMERA WHIPS to REVEAL: Olivia, black bra and panties,
 longbow in hand.

Freaked out, the Shorter Biker spins, fires. BAMBAMBAM. But Olivia dives, disappears behind some furniture.

The Shorter Biker spins his pistol on Bobo. Before he gets off a shot --

A quick white blur whips across the room, appears next to the Shorter Biker. Two pale hands reach out and grab his head, twist. A meaty snap --

He falls dead, next to his bleeding friend.

TILT UP to REVEAL Lemuel, in a bathrobe, over him. The Taller Biker starts to scream. Lem bends down, puts a hand over the man's mouth.

BOBO

I didn't ask for help.

OLIVIA

This isn't just about you anymore.

LEMUEL

Aubrey is not worth dying for.

With supernatural strength Lem hoists the Tall Biker up by the head.

LEMUEL (CONT'D)

I'll question him in my place.

HARDCUT TO:

INT. LEM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

SLAM. The Tall Biker's head hits the wall. Lem behind him tugs the arrow still embedded in his shoulder.

LEMUEL

I'll make you the same offer you made my friend. Tell me who sent you, you might live to sunrise.

TALL BIKER

You want a war old man -- you got one. God forgives. Sons of Liberty don't. My brothers will burn this cursed place to the --

Lem glances at an old clock in his room. Reads 6:45AM.

LEMUEL

Getting late. No sunrise for you.

Lem SNAPS his neck. Beat. Small smile.

LEMUEL (CONT'D)
A warm dinner at least.

As he bends down to feed we:

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. GAS & GO - DAY

Manfred at a back fridge. A nasty bruise on his face, smaller bruise on his arm. He grabs a couple of six packs, milk. Creek's behind the register working. She reacts to his face --

CREEK

What in the world --

MANFRED

I wish there was some sexy story to tell. I put a box on a high shelf --

CREEK

A heavy box apparently.

MANFRED

Very.

(changes the subject)

Haven't seen you since the picnic.
How are you?

CREEK

I can't stop thinking about her.
About --

Her eyes look past Manfred. Immediately stops talking, starts ringing him up. Polite, but all business:

CREEK (CONT'D)

Is that going to be all today?

MANFRED

That's it.

He glances over his shoulder. Spots a man approach. 50s, tight slit for a mouth, eyes menacing, a rifle tossed over his shoulder. SHAWN LOVELL. Creek's dad. Approaching --

SHAWN

Here, honey. Take a break.

It's not a request.

CREEK

Great, thanks dad.

She moves off. His expression turns icy when he asks Manfred.

SHAWN

What were you talking to her about?

MANFRED

Being neighborly. Pleasantries.

SHAWN

That'd better be all you're doing.

(then)

That'll be 12.50.

EXT. WITCH LIGHT ROAD - DAY

Manfred walks home, unsettled by Creek's creepy dad. As he passes the Chapel, he sees a truck in the driveway. Something HUGE under a tarp on the truck bed. Liquid drips from the truck bed, dark brownish red, thick. Could it be blood? Manfred considers approaching but --

The Rev walks out from the Cemetery Gates behind the Chapel. Dirt on his boots. Shovel in his hand. Manfred looks away. Not wanting to think about him digging a grave for whatever was under that tarp.

INT. MANFRED'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

ON A LAPTOP SCREEN -- words being typed out. *"The spirits are telling you to stay with him for a reason..."*

REVEAL MANFRED, typing on his LAPTOP. Answering a client's question. Just then, his CELL BUZZES.

Manfred looks at the caller ID: Just a row of pound signs. Apprehensive, he picks up.

MALE VOICE

Hey Psychic. Do you know what I'm thinking about?

Manfred recognizes that voice. Fuck.

MANFRED

No.

MALE VOICE

How good it will feel when your body is six feet under, and your soul is in hell.

Dial tone. ON Manfred, filled with dread when --

BANGBANGBANG! Manfred startles. Turns to the bedroom door. But the noise isn't coming from there. It's coming from --

A back door. He throws it open and there in his backyard --

CREEK

Hope I didn't scare you.

MANFRED

(lies)

No you didn't scare me.

CREEK

I wanted to apologize for before.
My dad's protective. If I got cold,
it was just to not get into a thing
with him. It's not you.

MANFRED

No apology necessary. We're good.

CREEK

Good.

MANFRED

Since you came all this way. Want
to stay for a beer?

INT. MANFRED'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

TWO beers on the table. Creek and Manfred, mid conversation.

MANFRED

Got to admit, this place is nothing
like I thought --

CREEK

Yeah, it's its own thing. It makes
for good stories.

MANFRED

You a writer?

CREEK

I write but no, not a writer.
Someday I'll go back to school.
Once Connor's out of the house.
Dad would be real tough solo.

MANFRED

Makes it tough for you.

CREEK

It's not too bad.
(then confides)
He wasn't always like that.
(MORE)

CREEK (CONT'D)

After mom died he went a little nuts. It's why we're here. He had to be somewhere that didn't remind him about her.

(then)

I went to High School in Dewey. Kids freaked when they found out I lived here, acted like I lived with monsters --

Manfred looks at her. She reads his expression. Small smile.

CREEK (CONT'D)

Maybe, I do... I think I know what Lem is. And Fiji, I figure she's more than a new age cat lady.

(then)

Doesn't matter. After all this time, they're family.

EXT. WITCH LIGHT ROAD - NIGHT

A waxing almost FULL MOON. TILT to find The Rev pulling back the tarp on the back of his pick up.

A dead Bull. Reverend Sheehan unloads the animal. Drags it to the root cellar doors. As he hoists the doors open --

EXT. COLD ROCK RIDGE - NIGHT

Joe Strong at the riverbed where the body was found. Looks to make sure he's alone. Once he's sure --

He takes off his shirt. He turns and we REVEAL:

Glistening white wings, unfolding in a majestic wingspan.

Joe, who we know now is an angel, soars into the night sky --

INT. INQUIRING MIND - NIGHT

Fiji opens a locked cabinet. Looking through labelled Zip-locks filled with hair, toothpick, a napkin, nail clippings.

Every Zip-lock labeled with the name of a different neighbor. Lem, Olivia -- even one labelled MANFRED.

Fiji pulls out a bag with blonde hair, labeled Aubrey. She pours the hair into a brass bowl filled with herbs.

MALE VOICE

You don't think it'll be that easy
do you?

FIJI

Stop being negative.

She lights a match, sets the hair and herbs on fire.

MALE VOICE

Fiji, you're being ignorant.

ANGLE to REVEAL the voice belongs to Mr. Snuggly, her cat.

MR. SNUGGLY

Ignorance is not bliss, it's
stupid. Aubrey left a heap of
badness in her wake and the rancid
smell of her burning hair won't
change that.

Like Rocket Raccoon, Mr. Snuggly is a mean, verbal animal.

FIJI

You can leave now.

Mr. Snuggly moves off. Fiji focuses on the flames and suddenly, they begin to rise in thin, oddly shaped spires, and they turn blue. Off Fiji, concerned we CUT TO:

INT. OLIVIA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Olivia, pissed, on the phone. She's wrapped in a towel, post shower, on the phone,

OLIVIA

I know it's a lot of money. I
still need to pass. Thanks.

She hangs up. Aggravated, she crosses to a wall. Pulls back a large pocket door.

REVEAL: a hidden closet. A large, personal armory. Firearms. Longbows. Knives. Clothing. Wigs. The cases she carried from the car when we first met her.

She notices a SHADOW behind her. Spins, not surprised to see Lemuel standing behind her.

LEMUEL

Checking in, how'd the disposal go?

OLIVIA
No one will find the bodies.

LEMUEL
Who was that on the phone?

OLIVIA
A job offer. Simple hit. Nice pay day. But since I have to ring the police every time I leave town. I had to say no.

Now we know, Olivia is a killer for hire.

LEMUEL
(approaching her)
You seem pissed.

OLIVIA
That's an understatement.

LEMUEL
(small smile)
How about I take some of that from you?

OLIVIA
I was wondering when you'd ask.

Drops the towel, walks to him. He kisses her lips, neck. And while it's been hinted at, now it's confirmed: Olivia and Lemuel are a thing.

But not your typical thing. Lemuel wraps his arms around her, clutches her in a painfully tight embrace.

ON OLIVIA, skin pales, lips go blue, eyes pin-pricking. Like Manfred. Unlike Manfred, she closes her eyes, leans her head back, enjoys the fuck out of it. PRELAP:

CREEK
It's weird. And now, it's home.

INT. MANFRED'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Creek still with Manfred. A few beers in.

CREEK
You fit in pretty well here.

MANFRED
You saying I'm weird?

CREEK

You are. Googled you, Mr. Psychic.

MANFRED

(shrugs, then shares)

Family business. Come from a long line of gypsy fortune tellers.

CREEK

You got the caravan to prove it. So are you for real?

MANFRED

(the truth)

Sometimes it's real. A lot of times, it's theatre.

CREEK

So, want to give me a reading? Tell me my future.

MANFRED

Okay. I'll go old school. Give me your hand.

Creek offers her hand. He turns it so the palm faces up. He examines it, fingers the lines on her hand gently.

MANFRED (CONT'D)

Your life line is long, varied. It'll be an interesting life, you're going to see the world --

On Creek, likes how that sounds. He caresses a small line, it's intimate. There's heat here.

MANFRED (CONT'D)

Here... you'll meet your soul mate. (eyes meet hers) You may already have. Someone who sees how special you really are.

CREEK

That's the theater part, right?

MANFRED

Busted.

MANFRED'S POV: CREEK bathed in a lovely rose halo of light. What he's telling her is more than theatre. They sit a beat, her hand in his. Manfred's about to seize the moment when --

Red and blue strobe lights flash from outside. Interrupting the mood.

EXT. MIDNIGHT PAWN - NIGHT

Bobo opens the door. Sheriff Livingston, Officer Gomez there, guns at the ready. As if already convinced of Bobo's guilt:

LIVINGSTON

Bobo Winthrop, you're under arrest
for the murder of Aubrey Hamilton
Lowrey.

BOBO

(stunned)
I didn't kill her.

Gomez looks almost chipper, her suspicions about Midnight confirmed. She pulls Bobo's arms back, and cuffs him tightly.

LIVINGSTON

You have the right to remain
silent. Anything you say can
and will be used against you
in a court of law.

BOBO (CONT'D)

I did not kill her!

Gomez and Livingston lead Bobo down to the waiting police cars. Pistols on him at all times.

LIVINGSTON (CONT'D)

You have the right to an attorney.

Midnight residents emerge from their homes, businesses.

LIVINGSTON (CONT'D)

If you can't afford one, one will
be appointed for you.

ANGLE ON MANFRED, in front of his house.

LIVINGSTON (CONT'D)

Do you understand these rights as
I've explained them to you?

BOBO

Not my first rodeo.
(quietly)
And I'm telling you, you have the
wrong man. I didn't do this.

LIVINGSTON

I've got evidence says otherwise.

ANGLE TO FIND Creek, sneaking around back. She joins her father and brother.

ON GOMEZ as she shoves Bobo in the back of the Police Car.

Livingston notices the Midnighters, blocking the road.

LIVINGSTON'S POV as he scans the faces: Fiji, cat at her feet, Lemuel, Olivia, Chuy, Joe, Madonna, Teacher, Creek, Connor and Shawn, The Reverend.

LIVINGSTON (CONT'D)

(an order)

Go back to your homes now.

ON MANFRED, watches the Midnighters. Realizing he's got more in common with this odd group than with most. He realizes he's tired of being alone. Tired of running, facing his battles by himself.

So he walks over, joins the Midnighters in blocking the road. Livingston clocks this. So do the others. Lem nods. Creek smiles.

Officer Gomez looks nervous, realizing there are more of them than there are police. She waves her pistol at the group.

GOMEZ

He said go home!

Livingston doesn't want her to escalate the situation:

LIVINGSTON

Just get in the car.

FIJI

He would never have killed her. He loved her more than she deserved --

LIVINGSTON

Hate to break it to you but this one's a slam dunk.

LEMUEL

So, you've already made up your mind.

LIVINGSTON

Get out of my way.

LEMUEL

We don't trust you with our friend.

LIVINGSTON

That's a coincidence. I don't trust you all either.

LEMUEL

You want to start a war. Go ahead.

LIVINGSTON

One last time, get out of our way.

Sheriff Livingston gets in the car. OMINOUS MUSIC BUILDS as he starts the car.

ON MIDNIGHTERS, in the headlights. ON FIJI, whispering, eyes focused intently on the front of the car. In the same trance-like state she was when she froze the reporter. Suddenly --

-- the car's engine makes violent gear grinding noise.

ON FIJI, eyes glow red. CLOSE ON her hand, making a fist.

ON THE CAR, as the steel on the hood starts to crumple in.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Livingston and Gomez react to the sound of the *steel bending, engine grinding*. Gomez watches Fiji, knows:

GOMEZ
She's doing this.

LIVINGSTON
(starts the car again)
Don't be crazy...

ANGLE ON Bobo, in the back, eyes on Fiji. Knows Gomez is right. A small smile. He's proud of her.

EXT. WITCH LIGHT ROAD - NIGHT

WITH Manfred, also watching, realizing Fiji's power. Impressed, and a little scared.

ON FIJI, eyes red. The Reverend put a hand on her shoulder.

REVEREND SHEEHAN
Not this way. This won't help him.
(then, sotto)
Tomorrow's a full moon. I'll be
unavailable for a few days.

OLIVIA
They're going to call for backup.
We need to be smart here Fiij. Not
angry.

MANFRED
(offers)
I'll help. However I can. And I
think I can.

A beat, Fiji softens, stops her whispers. The police car's engine immediately starts to sound normal again.

The Midnighters separate, create an opening in the road. Livingston hits the gas, speeds out of the dusty town.

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE OF MIDNIGHT - NIGHT

ON the police car as it drives away from Midnight. CAMERA ADJUSTS to find Four BIKERS: Sons of Liberty. On a hill. They wear black face masks. We only their eyes watch the police car, the town. Semi-automatics flung over their shoulder.

CRANE UP to see our small town, Midnight Texas, in the middle of the vast West Texas terrain. The Police Car's flashing lights. Silhouetted against the moon, the four Bikers.

EXT. WITCH LIGHT ROAD - NIGHT

HIGH AND WIDE over Witch Light Road. The last door shuts for the night, leaving the road empty, desolate.

ON an armadillo, walking across the road. It stops, right at the center of the crossroads. A deep, sinister, unearthly growl comes from under the ground. (Same growl as from under Manfred's floorboards). The ground cracks, exposes a dark, red, roiling light underneath. The armadillo, convulses, dies. The earth closes back up, returns to normal.

Hold on Midnight, danger coming from both the outside, and from deep within. Off this:

SMASH TO BLACK.

END PILOT