

BRUDER
GEGEN
BRUDER
2

Written by Andrew Bean
Based on a story by Bryan Blum

Working Script
Draft #1

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SCENE ONE
ABANDONED WAREHOUSE

ABEL stands in the middle of the floor, his back to the camera. Through windows high on the walls, moonlight can be seen. ABEL slowly looks around the room. He has not been here before.

BRYAN enters from a door behind ABEL. ABEL turns around to greet him.

ABEL

Hey man, I was wondering where you were.

BRYAN

What, did you think I would forget?

ABEL

I was seriously surprised when you called me. I haven't seen much of you for over a month. You pick up a new hobby or something?

BRYAN

What? No, not really. I've just been busy, you know. I just thought you might want to get together and spar like old times.

ABEL

Of course. Isn't this kind of a funny place to practice, though?

BRYAN

Yeah... I guess so. One place is as good as another, though, right? (pause) Did you bring your sword?

ABEL(BEKONING WITH HAND)

Of course.

BRYAN

Perfect.

BRYAN rushes at ABEL, the screen goes black.

CREDITS FLASH ON SCREEN.

SOUNDS OF FURIOUS SWORD PLAY.

BRYAN and ABLE stand facing one another. Each is breathing heavily.

ABLE

Man, you are really intense tonight. You angry about something? Whatever it is, you know you can tell me.

BRYAN

No. Not really.

Ready to give up yet?

ABEL

Yeah, right.

ABEL rushes at BRYAN, screen goes dark.

CREDITS CONTINUE

SWORDPLAY CONTINUES- OCCASIONAL GRUNTS FROM EACH COMBATANT ENDING WITH THE SOUND OF A SINGLE SWORD STROKE, THEN SILENCE.

ABEL lies dead on the floor, blood pooling on the ground from a wound in his chest.

BRYAN walks up to the ABEL's body, and pulls out a photograph.

BRYAN

There, I've done it. (pause) I'm sorry, Abel. You've been a good friend to me, and I hate that it had to end like this. But it had to be this way, and now it's far too late to turn back now.

BRYAN walks away as the photograph drifts to the ground.

FADE TO BLACK

BRUDER GEGEN BRUDER 2

SUBTITLE (Brother vs Brother 2)

SCENE TWO
INTERIOR SACRIFICE CHAMBER - DARK

BRYAN leans on the altar, looking off into the distance as though recalling a painful memory.

FEMALE VOICE OVER – OVERLAPPING, ECHOING
I missed you so much... I love the gift... I thought you'd never get here... I'll love you forever.

As the voice fades out, he looks up with a scowl on his face. We see THE GIRL standing perfectly still in the middle of the room, staring blankly ahead.

BRYAN straightens up.

BRYAN
(introspectively) It shouldn't have been this way. I've done some pretty terrible things in my day but still... I don't deserve this. I shouldn't have had to suffer for all these years.

He walks up to THE GIRL, right in her face. She doesn't even blink.

BRYAN
(almost wistfully) But then again life ain't fair, is it?

He turns his back to her and lowers his head.

BRYAN
(commanding) I have work to do. Get up there and see what you can find. Return in two hours.

THE GIRL nods slightly, turns and walk from the room. BRYAN takes her place in the center.

BRYAN
Soon enough... they'll all get what's coming to them.

He bows his heads and lowers his arms. He is consumed in a

vortex of fire and energy that fills the room with a deafening wind. With a loud <CRACK> everything goes black. We pull back and are suddenly in an immense cave filled with a river of blood. He walks toward a great stone dias, at the top of which stands the colossal figure of SATAN himself. SATAN is flanked, two steps down, by MALITOS and MATCHHEAD, who look upon BRYAN contemptuously but silently. BRYAN kneels at the foot of the steps.

SATAN

Welcome, my Accolyte! Hell opens its arms to you once again! Long has it been since we last heard news from you. I trust all is going according to our plans?

BRYAN

All has been done flawlessly, sire- just as you have commanded. Preparations are nearly complete for the ceremony on the night of Walpurgis.

SATAN

I am pleased to hear this. The slaying of Abel has placed us another step closer to our long awaited destiny. Your willingness to do this deed has earned you a certain amount of respect among my host. I know it was not easy for you.

BRYAN

I knew his death was neccessary. He is damned forever now, that is all that matters.

SATAN

Is that so? Then you would be surprised to learn that he is not here.

BRYAN

What?

SATAN

Abel is not among my subjects.

BRYAN

(Nervously) *That... that can't be true!*

SATAN

I assure you, it is. He is not on the other side either. And these facts cause me a great deal of concern.

BRYAN

Able is dead and buried- I made certain of that. What more can I do besides kill him- and what difference can it make? He is dead, and he cannot oppose us further.

SATAN

He was and is dangerous to us. Abel saw and heard things he should not have. The ceremony is delicate, Accolyte. There can be no errors, compromises, or oversights. If he is in neither heaven nor hell, he may still have some influence over the mortal world.

BRYAN

But where else could he be?

SATAN

I think it would be wise for you to find that out, before things become, shall we say, complicated.

As SATAN speaks, BRYAN turns his head to see one of the skeletons floating in the river of blood next to him turn and look directly at him, letting out a shrill howl.

BRYAN

At once, sire! This will not affect the plan, I assure you!

SATAN

I sincerely hope not, for your sake. I need not point out the dire consequences of such an occurrence.

BRYAN

(confidently) I shall not fail. There is

no one on Earth who can stop me.

Cut to SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE
JOHN'S APARTMENT-LIVING ROOM

JOHN is watching cartoons. He laughs occasionally.

The TV image shifts suddenly to a news report.

NEWSCASTER

*We interrupt this broadcast to bring you
breaking news.*

*In the latest development in a case
which has stunned the Baltimore
metropolitan area, the body of Abel
McGovern was discovered this morning in
a warehouse near the former Domino Sugar
factory off of Interstate 95.*

Television displays picture of ABEL.

JOHN

Oh. Oh, no.

JOHN sits with a stunned expression on his face while the newscaster continues.

NEWSCASTER

*The twenty-eight year old Bel-Air
resident disappeared two weeks ago, on
April 11th, but police are not revealing
any further information and no suspects
have been named.*

*Police are still looking for a friend of
McGovern's, twenty-six year old Bryan
Blum-*

Television displays picture of BRYAN.

NEWSCASTER(continuing)

*-who disappeared at the same time.
Anyone with information on his
whereabouts is encouraged to contact...*

JOHN clicks off television.

JOHN picks up cellphone and dials a number.

JOHN

Hey, Tom. I wanted to let you know that they found Abel. Yeah. (pauses a second while other party speaks)

JOHN (continuing)

I know, I can't believe it either. I mean, I know he's been missing for two weeks... but damn. I guess I thought he'd just walk in the door one day with some crazy story about where he'd been.

(pauses a second while other party speaks)

JOHN(continuing)

No, they're still looking for Bryan. They are saying he could still turn up alive, but I don't buy it. Bryan and Abel disappeared on the same night. There is no way that's a coincidence.

(pauses a second while other party speaks)

JOHN(continuing)

I know. But, (shrugs) what can you do about it? We just have to hope that at least one of them is still alive.

(pauses a second while other party speaks)

JOHN

Thanks. Keep in touch.

JOHN closes cell phone and slumps back on couch. JOHN pulls from his wallet a picture of himself, ABEL and BRYAN in an informal pose.

JOHN

Crap. That's the perfect thing to come up right before I hit the hay. I just hope Bryan turns up ok.

FADE TO BLACK

JOHN lies in his bed, asleep. The camera zooms in on JOHN's head and then fades again.

We see JOHN standing in a foggy space- this is JOHN's dream. On one end of a vast field we see the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, represented by a beautiful white chapel. At the other end stands the black battlements of the CITADEL OF HELL. We hear strange voices from all sides- we can't understand anything they are saying.

JOHN

Who's there?

Slowly ABEL begins to fade in. He is slightly transparent, and his motion is blurry.

JOHN

Abel? What the hell? What's going on?

ABEL

You're dreaming, that's what's going on. Look, I don't have a lot of time here. This is the only place I can talk to you now.

JOHN

But you're...?

ABEL

(amused) Dead? I know. I didn't contact you before because as long as you thought I was still alive you wouldn't listen to me.

JOHN

Up until today I still had hope. But what happened to you? Who... who killed you? And do you know what happened to Bryan? He disappeared on the same night.

ABEL

(irritated) Yes, I know exactly what happened to Bryan. He's the one who killed me.

JOHN

(shocked) *WHAT? But, how? Why? That doesn't make any sense at all!*

ABEL

(smiles weakly) *Yeah, it surprised me too. He called me up that night, and he wanted to spar. He seemed more intense than usual, but I figured he just wanted to burn off some energy. But then, when I dropped my guard... Wham, I was dead.*

JOHN

I don't believe it. I just can't imagine...

ABEL

Believe it. You've got to. I don't really know why Bryan killed me, but I think I stood in his way. Something big is going down, but I don't know what. I'm stuck in some kind of limbo and I can't really see what is happening. You are the only one now who can find out what Bryan is after.

JOHN

But how? I don't even know where he is!

ABEL

Now you know that he's alive, right? While the cops are busy looking through dumpsters, he's busy planning something. He's darker than you know, John. Darker than I ever would have thought.

ABEL begins to fade out.

If I were you, I'd start with some research on the occult. There's a used bookstore downtown you might visit called The Oculus. I'd help you more, but I'm weakening fast. I'll try to contact you again, but I can't make any promises. Good luck, and watch your

back.

Abel! Wait!

JOHN

Sorry, man.

ABEL

ABEL vanishes.

ABEL!

JOHN

JOHN sits up straight up in his bed, sweating and breathing heavily.

FADE TO BLACK

SCENE FOUR
INTERIOR SACRIFICE CHAMBER - DARK

BRYAN sits crosslegged upon the altar, face in his hands, looking dejected. THE GIRL is nowhere to be seen.

BRYAN
(thoughtfully) *I don't understand it...
Abel... where could you be?*

There is a strange visual distortion like heat off of pavement throughout in the room, with some appropriate sound effects. BRYAN is surprised by it as well, and looks up. The distortion disappears, but first one, and then the second torch lights with a loud <FWOOMP> of ignition, and Bryan scrambles off the altar to get a bit farther away from them.

An orange pentagram symbol appears on the floor, glowing more and more brightly, and a rift similar to the one that BRYAN used earlier appears about three feet off the ground, growing steadily larger until it is nearly six feet in diameter. Flames and the distant shrieks of the damned can be heard.

BRYAN stares at the apparition uneasily, not certain what is happening.

As quickly as it appeared, the rift suddenly shrinks away revealing the kneeling form of MALITOS. The rift then vanishes along with the pentagram, and the torches are abruptly snuffed.

BRYAN (recognizing Malitos)
What in hell's name are you doing here?

MALITOS
*I am Malitos. My master sent me to
accompany you. He wants assurance that
the task is completed correctly.*

BRYAN
*Does he doubt my commitment? I think
I've already proven myself several
times.*

MALITOS
*We have no doubt that your spirit is
willing, but let's say we're not so sure*

about the flesh.

MALITOS snaps his fingers, and a small flame appears hovering over his hand.

MALITOS (continuing)
(dryly) *Ah, the mortal world. Until the ceremony is complete, my own powers will remain limited here. (More seriously) You are the only one who can do this task, Accolyte. The master has placed a great deal of trust in you already. I am only here to assist.*

BRYAN
I don't need your help.

MALITOS
(doubtfully) *Then why is this Abel person such a concern? You haven't been thorough enough, mortal.*

BRYAN
I will find Abel's soul, and when I do I will banish him for good. I am strong now, demon. In this world I am stronger than you are.

MALITOS
(angrily) *For the time being. Remember with whom you are dealing! This is the first time you have tried something like this, Accolyte, but there have been dozens before you. Each of them now burns in agony in the deepest pits, under the administration of the master himself! (more pleasantly) Even I feel sorry for them, in my weaker moments. But that is the penalty for mistakes.*

BRYAN
I knew what I was getting into. And you need me. You said so yourself. So don't think you're going to come up here to threaten me.

MALITOS, surprised and a bit pleased by Bryan's reaction, raises an eyebrow.

MALITOS

Very well, we'll see if that passion translates into success. I am at your disposal.

BRYAN

(coldly) Just try to stay out of my way.

Cut to SCENE FIVE.

SCENE FIVE
USED BOOKSTORE "THE OCULUS"

The bookstore OWNER is putting books away on shelves as JOHN walks in the door.

OWNER

Good day to you. Are you looking for anything in particular?

JOHN

Well, yeah. (a bit embarrassed) Um, I was told you had a good selection of books on the occult.

OWNER

Oh good lord, not another one. Though I suppose you don't really look like the type.

JOHN

What type?

OWNER

Neopagans, would-be witches and warlocks. That sort. Dabblers in the Art. They come out of the woodwork around this time of year.

JOHN

Why is that?

OWNER

Walpurgis, the night of April thirtieth. It's a big deal on the pagan calendar, along with Samhain and the summer and winter solstice.

JOHN

Oh, I didn't know that. That's only four nights away.

OWNER

Well, every year the goths tramp through here, pawing through my books and never buying anything. Anyway, what brings you

into my store today?

JOHN

Well... I think I've been visited by a spirit.

OWNER (SUDDENLY INTERESTED)

You don't say? What kind of spirit? Hostile, benign? Rooted to a place or an object? Poltergeist? Phantom? Wraith?

JOHN (TAKEN ABACK)

Well, I don't really know. It's the spirit of a friend of mine, actually. Do you follow the news? It's Abel McGovern, the missing guy whose body they found the other day.

OWNER

The news is depressing, but... wait a minute. Abel... McGovern, you said? He had glasses and wore a ponytail?

JOHN nods.

OWNER(continuing)

My. Oh my. That's just terrible. And he was a friend of yours?

JOHN

He's the one who told me to come in here, saying I should do "research", though I don't really know what he meant by that. Did you know him or something?

OWNER

Hmm. (Scratches chin) I suppose you might say so. I didn't know him all that well, but a month ago he started coming to my shop looking for books on the occult, just as you are.

JOHN

I had no idea that he was into this stuff. What was he looking for?

OWNER

I don't know exactly. He did ask me questions about Walpurgis and the other holidays. He was in here almost every day for a while. What happened to him, if I might ask?

JOHN

Well... that's one of the things I'm trying to understand, actually. He said he knew about something bad that was going to happen soon, but he wasn't sure what it was. I didn't get a chance to talk to him long enough to find out any more. I wish I had a chance to see him again.

OWNER

I see. (pauses) Hold on one moment, I have something to show you.

OWNER disappears briefly into a back room while JOHN looks around the room. After a few seconds, the OWNER reemerges with a large book. It has a blue leather binding and runes upon the cover.

OWNER blows dust off of it.

OWNER

This is an old journal of mine, from when I was a bit more involved with such things. (Laughs) It's been so long since I've looked at it. It's gotten a bit dusty, you know? (flips through book) Read it carefully and it should give you a great deal of insight about the spirit world. Communicating with the dead is simple, given the correct approach. Use the knowledge to find your friend. Please, take it.

(hands book over to JOHN, who handles it gingerly)

JOHN

Seriously? How much do you want for it?

OWNER

I'm not selling you the book. I'm lending it to you. The fee will be to keep me informed as to what you find.

JOHN

Really? Is that it?

OWNER

More or less. Under no circumstances should you attempt to use any of the other spells I have written within this book unless you have training from a competent master.

JOHN

You mean magic tricks?

OWNER

(slightly offended) Magic tricks? Mere prestidigitation, practiced by flamboyant men at fairs! This is the Art of the Unseen! It is powerful, and not to be trifled with. (calms down) Nevertheless, I've a feeling that I can trust you with it. Please don't disappoint me.

JOHN

(taken aback) Uh, right. Don't worry, I'll return it as soon as I'm done with it.

OWNER

I am glad to hear it. I'll be waiting for your news.

JOHN leaves store.

FADE TO BLACK

SCENE SIX
JOHN'S APARTMENT-FOYER

It is dark. JOHN is sitting crosslegged in the middle of the floor, with the JOURNAL sitting open on his legs.

JOHN

I can't believe I'm doing this. That old man was a crackpot if I've ever met one. (reads from book) "To summon a willing spirit, simply light the incense, and repeat, 'Auctoritatus Dominus, Voco Spiritus' and say your spirit's name, and then repeat 'Voco Spiritus' twice more. For an unwilling spirit..." (looks up from book.) There is no way this is going to work. But I guess I have to give it a shot, if I want to see Abel again.

JOHN lights a stick of incense. The smoke rises lazily into the air.

JOHN

*Auctoritatus Dominus, Voco Spiritus
Abel! Voco Spiritus! Voco Spiritus!*

Nothing happens.

JOHN

That old man is laughing his ass off right now, I bet. Damn it.

Abruptly the smoke is scattered as though there is a wind blowing through the room, and indeed we hear the sound of a door being blown shut in the distance.

ABEL appears in the middle of the room. His form is slightly transparent, but without the blurry motion from the dream.

JOHN

Holy... (pause) Abel! I can't believe it worked.

ABEL

I take it you found that bookstore. It's much easier for me to talk to you like this.

JOHN

You never told me that you were into this stuff.

ABEL

I wasn't. It was because of Bryan.

JOHN

What do you mean?

ABEL

I should explain. It was about a month and a half ago now, I guess, when you and I both stopped hearing from Bryan, right? He hasn't been the same since the breakup, you know.

JOHN

Yeah, no kidding. So what happened?

ABEL

I went over to his place one day, because I figured he was just depressed or something, and I wanted to cheer him up. He wasn't there, so I let myself in with the key under the brick. The whole apartment was just littered with books on the occult. I didn't want to snoop, but you couldn't help seeing it. It was really nuts. I found an open notebook, and on the page he had written "Walpurgis is the night. Walpurgis is the night when vengeance will finally be mine!" I got the hell out of there before he came back.

JOHN

I had no idea. He must really have changed. But what does that stuff about Walpurgis mean?

ABEL

I didn't know, so I asked around, and somebody told me where to find that bookstore, the Oculus. You met the old guy, right?

JOHN

Yeah, I thought he was a crackpot, actually.

ABEL

It turns out that he was some kind of warlock when he was younger, but now he just sells books. He told me all about Walpurgis.

JOHN

He said it was some kind of holiday on the pagan calendar.

ABEL

That's right. Walpurgis is one of the times of the year when the boundaries between our world and the next are weakened. The other time is at Samhain-Halloween. If someone was to apply enough pressure, those barriers could very well snap. Mankind long ago developed rituals to hold the gap against the supernatural. That's what Halloween is, and there used to be a feast of Walpurga, but modern man doesn't celebrate it anymore... and I suspect the conditions are now ripe.

JOHN

Ripe for what?

ABEL

I think Bryan might have contacted something he shouldn't have, and everyone on earth will be in danger if he isn't stopped.

JOHN

OK, you said that earlier. I'm willing

to go talk to him, but I don't know where to find him. He hasn't come back to his apartment since the night you both disappeared.

ABEL

I'm not sure where he spends most of his time anymore- but the night he and I fought, he asked me to come out to this warehouse on the far side of town. It's a big abandoned place, not too hard to find. I'll bet you anything he's somewhere near there.

(pauses)

I think you'll have to do more than talk to him, though. I should point out again that we're speaking like this because he killed me. You'd better be prepared for anything. He's already a good sword fighter, and I'm sure now that he has some command of the Art- what you would call magic. If you are going to stand a chance, you'd better find a way to counter some of his powers.

JOHN

But how am I supposed to do that?

ABEL

You've got the old man's journal now, right? There's an awful lot of stuff in that book. I read a good bit of it before Bryan caught up to me. Walpurgis is just three days away now, so you won't have time to learn anything really powerful, but you might be able to at least do some counterspells. That will give you a shot.

JOHN

What about his sword?

ABEL

I'm afraid you're on your own there. Just keep in mind that he IS beatable. Any ceremony like the one he must be

planning is an extremely delicate thing- anything goes wrong and kablam! The whole thing fails. But whatever you do, you've gotta do something.

JOHN nods.

ABEL

Be careful calling me up in the next few days. You might end up calling other things through instead of me. If that's all, then I think I'll go back for a little while. It's kind of uncomfortable for me to be in the mortal world without a body.

JOHN

What's it like to be dead?

ABEL

I don't think I can really describe it. In the void I can see heaven's light and feel hell's flames at the same time. But being this close to the world I knew and not being able to touch it hurts me a lot more.

(pauses)

Be careful, John, and good luck.

JOHN

Thanks. I will.

ABEL vanishes, and the room abruptly brightens. Smoke continues to rise from the stick of incense.

JOHN stands up slowly, not quite sure if what he just saw was real.

We hear Abel's voice coming from far offscreen.

ABEL

No matter what- remember that Bryan may look like our old friend, but he's different inside now. Be prepared for what you might have to do.

Cut to Scene Seven.

SCENE SEVEN

ATOP A BUILDING IN THE CITY

BRYAN and MALITOS lean up against the edge of the rooftop. THE GIRL stands a few paces behind them, staring straight ahead. It is night and the city beyond is lit brilliantly. There is a light breeze.

MALITOS

(gazing out over the cityscape) It is a beautiful world, isn't it. Just waiting to fall to us.

BRYAN

I don't want any part of it.

MALITOS

But isn't that the reason you made this pact with my master? To control the world?

BRYAN

Don't think you can fool me, demon. You're not coming to rule the world, you're coming to destroy it. And that's exactly what I'm after.

MALITOS

(dryly) Mortals can be so nihilistic.

BRYAN

(annoyed) And demons aren't?

MALITOS

No, Accolyte. We live for the day when we will once again walk the corridors of Heaven- under our own terms. The world of men means little to us ultimately.

BRYAN

(genuinely puzzled) Then why do you even want to destroy it?

MALITOS

Don't you know? In the garden, the Father created the man Adam in His

image, and He asked all other beings to bow down before Him as His most important creation. Our master did not accept this, among other things. Taking a third of the angels, he rebelled against the Father. Ever since, man has been an irritant to us. But that doesn't tell me why you want to destroy your own race.

BRYAN

(wistfully) I used to be happy, once. I had a good life- a good job, friends who supported me, and I was engaged to a beautiful... (pauses) But that all ended the day she walked out the door.

MALITOS

(doubtfully) So it's because your girlfriend left you.

BRYAN

(angrily) No! (more calmly) But that was the beginning. Then the cracks appeared, and I saw the emptiness that was under my life. It had always been there, but I was always able to hide from it. On the outside, nothing changed. My friends told me how well I was taking things. But I knew I could never go back. This world is merely pain, demon. Once I realized that, I knew I would never be able to live normally.

MALITOS

Most mortals in your situation would have simply ended their life- I know, I've spoken to most of them.

BRYAN

I thought about it, long and hard. But in the end, I always knew that simply leaving the world wouldn't accomplish anything- I wanted to end the system that allowed a flawed mankind to exist in the first place.

MALITOS

So you entered into the pact with my master.

BRYAN

That wasn't my goal at first. I had begun to investigate the occult, searching for a way to get the things I wanted. The Art of the Unseen is the only way for a mortal to bend the rules of the world. But soon I realized what the limits were, and I was forced to appeal to a higher authority. Satan offered me what I sought, in exchange for my help.

BRYAN is silent for a moment, and there is no sound but the light wind.

BRYAN

I'm tired of this. Let's return. There's more to be done before my work is finished.

MALITOS

Very well. Lead on.

The camera looks out onto the bright lights of the city again, and then quickly fades away. Cut to BRYAN, MALITOS, and THE GIRL walking through the city streets. It is very late and the city is eerily deserted, though none of the principals seem to notice it. After a few steps, THE GIRL pulls up between BRYAN and MALITOS as if to separate them. MALITOS looks upon the girl with a sour expression on his face.

MALITOS

You do not need the girl anymore, Accolyte. I am far more powerful. Why not dispose of her?

BRYAN

(irritated) She is useful to me, in ways that you would not be. I am well aware

*that your first allegiance is to Satan-
if it isn't to yourself.*

MALITOS

*Hmph. If I was mortal I would be hurt by
your distrust. Still, she has no
indwelling spirit. She is like a
puppet... an empty shell.*

BRYAN

*She was a runaway. I came across her at
a bus stop not far from here. We sat and
talked. She told me she was looking for
an escape from her life. All I did was
give it to her.*

MALITOS

*(amused) I have wondered what it was the
master saw in you, Accolyte. Perhaps you
really will be able to do this task.*

BRYAN

*Of course I will. I have been deprived
of everything else, and I have nothing
left to lose. Revenge is the only thing
I can have now. If I must suffer, so
shall all the world.*

FADE TO BLACK

SCENE EIGHT
JOHN'S APARTMENT-LIVING ROOM

JOHN sits on the couch in the living room with the JOURNAL open in his lap. JOHN, however, is not actually looking at the book, but instead is staring at the ceiling with a somewhat perplexed expression upon his face. His slumped body posture indicates long (and fruitless) study.

JOHN

This is just impossible. I don't understand any of this.

JOHN stretches and sits back up again.

JOHN

(mimicking Abel's voice) "Learn some counterspells." Easy for him to say, he's friggin dead! (pauses a moment) Still, if he was right, there's no one else that can do this. I've gotta try it again.

JOHN looks back down at the book and moves his finger along the page.

Sed numquam vocas hic nomen! Mones Es!
(aside) Jeez, I really wish I knew some Latin. Is that the beginning of the spell, or a title, or what? (continues)
Voco Diabolis Minimus- Scelesta Perniciosa Sapientiae!

JOHN looks around the room swiftly, but nothing happens immediately, and he shrugs and looks back down at the book.

JOHN

Well, that was a whole lotta nothin'. Let's see what else is in here.

There is a quiet sound like guttural laughter heard all about- is seems to be coming from all directions. A tiny red dot appears in midair right above the table. A small portal appears, much like the one used for Malitos, but appropriately scaled for the IMP which appears within it.

The IMP is facing away from JOHN and does not see him at first. The IMP makes more guttural noises, which almost sound like some kind of demonic language, but which are unintelligible to us. It looks around the room curiously, as though not sure where it is.

JOHN
(truly alarmed) *Whoah, whoah, whoah!*

The IMP, realizing that JOHN is right behind it, whirls around to face him. The IMP narrows its eyes and screams angrily, realizing who is responsible for its dislocation. JOHN backs up in a hurry, knocking over the couch in his haste.

JOHN
Holy hell, what is that thing! I don't know what's going on, but I don't like the way you're looking at me.

The IMP jumps at JOHN, and JOHN ducks out of the way, causing the IMP to miss and crash somewhat comically against the far wall. However, it quickly recovers, and lunges again at JOHN, who rolls to escape it, and then stands up, grabs the JOURNAL and runs into the bedroom.

JOHN looks around quickly as though searching for an escape.

JOHN
(breathlessly) *I think I went the wrong way.*

The IMP is walking slowly across the floor, while making its noises, its eyes intent upon JOHN, as though it is waiting to see what he will do. Apparently deciding that JOHN is not really a wizard after all, the IMP crouches for another jump. JOHN, anticipating this, runs into the bathroom, slamming the door behind him.

Camera moves to the inside of the bathroom just as we hear the <THUD> of the IMP's body colliding with the door. JOHN slides to the floor in front of the toilet.

JOHN
(trying not to panic) *There's no way out*

of here. Not even a window.

The IMP's gurgling is heard through the door. JOHN props himself back up again.

JOHN

Ok, think, John. I brought it here, I can send it away. What does the book say?

JOHN flips open the book and quickly goes page by page looking for an answer. The IMP's assault on the door picks up, as we hear first some scrabbling, scratching sounds, and then a surprisingly strong pounding. Luckily imps do not understand doorknobs.

JOHN

(with relief) Finally! Something written in English! (follows along with finger) "Dispelling a minor demon is simplest. While facing the demon, repeat 'Dimmito diablos'. For an archdemon or devil say, 'In nomine deus patre, dimmito diablos.' Combination with a religious artifact such as a cross yields the best results." I hope this is the weaker kind of demon, because I don't have a cross right now.

The IMP's pounding on the door becomes louder and more frequent, interspersed with more gibbering.

JOHN

Now or never. (calling out) Dimmito diablos!

The IMP shrieks loudly. With a crashing sound, the door swings open with its lock broken, revealing the IMP, posing menacingly.

JOHN

(to IMP) Would you believe me if I said I was sorry? (aside) One last chance. Dimmito diablos!

The IMP jumps directly at JOHN just as he says this, and

JOHN raises his arms to protect his face, but the IMP abruptly vanishes in a puff of smoke, which drifts into JOHN's upraised arms and disperses. JOHN slowly lowers his arms again as though amazed to be still alive.

Cut to Scene Nine.

SCENE NINE

A SMALL UNDERGROUND ROOM ADJACENT TO THE SACRIFICE CHAMBER

BRYAN stands in front of some kind of portal or mirror, the surface of which we cannot yet see. Very close to him stands MALITOS, with a bored expression on his face. THE GIRL stands a few feet behind BRYAN, expressionless as always. A flickering light plays over their faces.

MALITOS

I'm impressed by your dedication in searching for Abel's soul. I seem to recall that you were very reluctant to kill him in the first place.

BRYAN

Was I ever that weak? Whatever friendship I might have had is gone now, and Abel is little more than an obstacle to me.

The camera pans around to show the surface of the portal- upon it are abstract shapes and blue and green and yellow lights- nothing that we recognize as earthly.

MALITOS

You are running out of time. Walpurgis is in two more nights. If you haven't eliminated the danger by then, we must go through with the ceremony anyway. We've been waiting a long time for this.

BRYAN

As if I would let something so minor get in the way of my revenge. Even if I somehow fail to find Abel, it has no bearing on the ceremony. He is dead, he cannot harm us.

There is a bright red flash, and the image on the portal changes abruptly from the earlier soothing tones to crimson streaked swirls and black spots. The horrible visage of SATAN appears in the midst of all this, wreathed in flames. BRYAN instinctively steps back, MALITOS drops to one knee without hesitation.

SATAN

Accolyte! Your shortsightedness will cost you everything!

MALITOS

My lord! To what do we owe the honor?

BRYAN

(alarmed) My lord, what is it? What is wrong?

SATAN

Just as I had suspected, Abel has been working against us even from his state of limbo. There is now another one who is dangerous to us.

BRYAN

Who could possibly stand against me now? Abel was the only person who knew anything about what I was planning.

SATAN

There is now another- his name is John Adams. I believe he was a friend of yours.

BRYAN

John?! That can't be right. He had no interest in the Art, didn't believe in it.

SATAN

Then something has changed. Not ten minutes ago he summoned one of my lesser servants to the mortal plane and dispelled it.

BRYAN

And you are sure it was John?

SATAN

I do not make such mistakes. But now you must counter this threat.

BRYAN

But there is little time left. These last forty-eight hours require my constant supervision.

SATAN

I care not how you accomplish this. But it must be done. I remind you again—there is no mercy for one who fails in the service of hell!

With a last clamorous <BOOM> Satan's image disappears, with only curls of smoke coming from the portal to show that he was ever there at all.

MALITOS

I warned you. He isn't happy, Accolyte.

BRYAN

That is why you are going to find and destroy John before he gets anywhere near here.

MALITOS

I am?

BRYAN

Yes. This ceremony is very delicate, you know that. I am balancing five things at once, and if I leave any of them could topple. And what did the master send you here for if not to help me? I don't care how you do it, but kill him!

MALITOS

Very well. I shall return with his head by Walpurgis.

BRYAN

Good. I shall expect you then.

MALITOS turns swiftly and leaves the room.

Fade to black.

SCENE TEN
CITY STREETS

It is night, and JOHN walks through the streets, JOURNAL in hand. We recognize a few buildings from SCENE SEVEN, telling us that JOHN is in the same area. It is cold out, and the streets are empty. JOHN shivers occasionally.

John stops near a roll-up loading door- the front of the warehouse from SCENE ONE.

JOHN

This seems like as good a place as any to start looking.

JOHN goes a short ways down an alley to a smaller door on the side of the building. JOHN twists the knob, but it is apparently locked. JOHN glances around quickly, and then kicks the door hard twice. On the second kick, the door swings open, and JOHN steps through it.

The camera moves to the inside of the Abandoned Warehouse. Just like scene one, it is moonlit, and it seems little different. JOHN walks over to a particular spot on the floor that is slightly discolored red, and he kneels down.

JOHN

I guess that's where... (pauses). I thought they would have cleaned it up more. (pauses) Hmm? What's that?

JOHN stands up and walks over to the nearby corner and picks up a small object. The camera goes to a closeup shot, revealing it to be the photograph of Bryan and Abel dropped by Bryan in SCENE ONE.

JOHN

Abel gave this to Bryan years ago. It proves he was here.

MALITOS

(from far left) Yes, but what good does that do you?

JOHN pockets the picture and turns quickly to see MALITOS standing in the doorway. MALITOS steps inside and closes

the door behind him with a slam.

JOHN

(nervously) I swear I wasn't trespassing. I was just, uh, looking around.

MALITOS

(dismissively) I don't care about that. But you are an obstacle to me, mortal. Every second you are alive is a second I cannot bear.

JOHN

What... who are you?

MALITOS

I am Malitos, if that means anything to you, and I am here to kill you.

JOHN

(understandably upset) Shoot, man, what did I ever do to you? I don't even know who you are!

MALITOS

You have been contacted by Abel, and he has told you things you should not have heard. For that, you must die.

JOHN

(making the connection) This is about Bryan, isn't it?

MALITOS

Ah, I see you mortal monkeys aren't all fools. But the time has come for you, and all your race. You have the honor of being first to fall.

JOHN

Not if I have anything to say about it!

JOHN rushes at Malitos with clenched fists. MALITOS raises his palm and JOHN stops midstride as though he has hit a wall.

MALITOS

*You'll have to do better than that,
mortal.*

JOHN struggles against the force that holds him, and seems to shake free.

MALITOS

*Ah, some willpower. But if you want to
hit me, you have to find me.*

Suddenly MALITOS vanishes and several (more than five) images of him appear standing about the room. MALITOS's figures laugh as JOHN runs about the room trying in vain to strike the images, which vanish and reappear as his fist passes through them. JOHN realizes that this is in vain and runs for the door. Abruptly all but one of MALITOS's images vanish.

MALITOS

Do you think you can escape my wrath?

MALITOS flicks his hand and JOHN is tossed several feet back, landing on his butt on the floor. The JOURNAL is tossed aside. MALITOS raises his palm again and makes a crushing gesture with it. JOHN, who has been struggling to his feet, is now pinned to the floor by an inexorable force.

MALITOS

*(conversationally) Did you know that the
average mortal can withstand five gees
before blacking out? I will show you far
more than that before you die.*

JOHN cries out in pain.

MALITOS

*The human race must bow down to the
demons. That is the only possible end to
this.*

JOHN looks up at MALITOS with great effort.

JOHN

In nomine patre... damnit! I can't

remember!

MALITOS

You watch too many movies. Just give it up, mortal. You cannot contend with the will of a demon.

JOHN

(takes a deep breath) Guess again. In nomine Deus patre, dimmito diablos!

MALITOS

What? How could you know that?!

MALITOS gives out an anguished cry as flames blast out from all sides of him. MALITOS's cry abruptly rises in pitch and is silenced just as MALITOS himself vanishes.

JOHN pulls himself up, the room swimming in front of his eyes.

JOHN

There's a lot you don't know about me, punk.

JOHN slumps to the ground, unconscious.

Cut to BRYAN, working in the Sacrifice Room with a book upon the podium. BRYAN looks up abruptly and we hear MALITOS's scream once again.

BRYAN

You've failed, Malitos. (turns to The Girl) Please prepare a welcome for John, should he find this place.

The Girl nods and walks off.

Fade to black.

SCENE ELEVEN
ABANDONED WAREHOUSE

JOHN lies upon the warehouse floor, ironically only a few feet from the discolored area where ABEL's body lay.

Camera twirls down to a closer shot on JOHN, as he slowly stirs and pulls himself to his feet. He is amazingly not much worse for wear after the battle with MALITOS. JOHN clutches his head as if it hurts.

JOHN
(woozily) *Where am I? What time is it?*

JOHN looks at his watch and the camera moves to show his point of view. The digital readout of the watch shows something to the effect of "7:05 PM, APR 31".

JOHN
(shaking himself out of it) *Oh hell!
It's already Walpurgis! I've been out a
whole day!*

JOHN picks up the JOURNAL and rushes out the warehouse door. Outside it is dark and quiet, and JOHN's posture relaxes a bit.

JOHN
*There must still be time! I have to find
Bryan quickly!*

JOHN dashes off.

Cut to SACRIFICE CHAMBER

BRYAN stands behind the podium, and reads out loud from the book.

BRYAN
Dominus umbra, dona meum potens inferno!

There is a loud <bong> in response. Bryan nods with satisfaction.

BRYAN
So close now. Only a few more hours.

Cut to CITY STREETS

JOHN is running through the streets in the area around the warehouse. JOHN looks at his watch again.

JOHN

(out of breath) It's after 8:00. I can't have much time left-- but I've gotta rest for a minute.

JOHN wearily stumbles over to a bench located across from an old cemetery. JOHN slumps down again, head in hands.

JOHN

Dammit Abel, I wish you were here. You were the one who was good at stuff like this, not me. (pause) I have no idea where Bryan is, and I've looked around all these buildings. Maybe you were wrong about him being in this area. Though if that's true, then I'm pretty much doomed.

JOHN looks up hopelessly, but his eyes focus on something in the distance. The camera swings around so we see what he is looking at. There is some odd movement inside the graveyard as a tombstone shakes and then topples over backwards. A skeletal hand reaches up through the soil, followed by an arm and then the rest of the body. All around, similar things are happening at other graves. John looks around to see if anyone else is noticing this, but the streets are deserted as always. JOHN stands up.

JOHN

That's gotta be it. (pauses) I can't believe I'm doing this.

JOHN runs across the street and into the graveyard as skeletons impotently reach for him. All around, the earth is trembling and more dead are rising. The sky has begun to take on an unpleasant orange cast as though there were an enormous fire in the distance. The camera looks around the graveyard from JOHN's POV and he sees at last a MAUSOLEUM with a stone slab ajar. JOHN walks up to the structure, which is very gothic looking and apparently of

great antiquity.

JOHN

Wish I had a flashlight.

JOHN steps inside the MAUSOLEUM. Inside there are coffins and tombs, thankfully either undisturbed or empty. At the back there is another passageway with a faint light. JOHN wordlessly continues onwards. JOHN enters the next chamber, which resembles the first. At the end of this next hall, JOHN sees the figure of THE GIRL, who is standing guard before a large door, her hands clasped behind her.

JOHN

Oh, I didn't know there was anybody else in here.

THE GIRL simply stares ahead into space, not even acknowledging JOHN's presence.

JOHN

Do you know a Bryan Blum? Is he here?

THE GIRL now looks up at JOHN, and nods slightly.

JOHN

Oh, thank God, I was beginning to think I wasn't going to find him. I need to see him, right away, or something terrible is going to happen.

THE GIRL looks steadily at JOHN, and does not move.

JOHN (taking a step towards her)

*I really need to get through here.
(pauses) Look, I don't want to hurt you,
but...*

THE GIRL cuts him off, drawing a quarterstaff from behind her back and cracking JOHN smartly against his ribs, knocking him to the side. JOHN gives out a cry that is as much surprise as pain.

JOHN

What the hell? Oh, I get it, you're just

*like that punk from the warehouse. Well,
I know how to deal with you. In nomine
Deus patre, dimmito diablos!*

Nothing happens. THE GIRL swings again, and JOHN barely gets out of the way this time as the staff smacks against a stone sarcophagus.

JOHN

What in hell are you?

THE GIRL swings again, and JOHN, unable to get out of the way, is forced to parry with his arms, crying out in pain as the staff strikes him. JOHN rolls to get out of the way, and THE GIRL kicks him and then brings her staff down for another strike, which JOHN manages to dodge. JOHN finally gets to his feet a short distance away from her. THE GIRL advances slowly, keeping the staff between her and JOHN.

Cut to BRYAN hard at work in the SACRIFICE CHAMBER. BRYAN is breathing heavily now as the ceremony gets more intense.

BRYAN

*Princeps nefas, inflammo terrae
indignus!*

There is another <boom>, and the chamber shakes. BRYAN shakes his head, trying to maintain his concentration.

BRYAN

*Inferno... no, that's not it! Infero
regnum de scelestus!*

The chamber is filled with an odd visual distortion as the spell nearly fails.

BRYAN

*I can't keep this up. I can't control
her and do this at the same time.
(pauses) The ceremony cannot be
postponed, no matter what.*

Cut to the MAUSOLEUM chamber. THE GIRL is still advancing on JOHN, who is doing his best to keep his distance but is

being driven into a corner by her repeated swings. JOHN trips over a piece of loose stone and falls over. THE GIRL raises the staff high over her head to smash JOHN, but suddenly the staff drops from her hands, sliding to the floor and bouncing on its ends.

JOHN

What the hell?

THE GIRL looks around briefly, as though suddenly aware of her surroundings, then falls to her knees and from there down to the ground, her sunglasses falling off and laying a few inches from her face. JOHN edges over carefully to look at her. Her eyes are closed, and she seems to be breathing heavily, but is not moving.

JOHN

*(unable to help himself) Are you ok?
(straightens up) I've got to do
something about Bryan first. I don't
know what's wrong with you, but I'll
come back and help you once I'm
finished.*

JOHN runs over and opens the door that THE GIRL was guarding. When it swings open, JOHN is buffeted with a hot wind, and an orange glow emanates from the chamber beyond. JOHN takes a deep breath and steps inside. The door shuts with a loud boom.

Cut to the SACRIFICE CHAMBER.

BRYAN

*Urbus homo erit tumulus hominis. Punio
stulti quod pueriliter restistere fatum.*

Sweat drips off of BRYAN, giving the impression that the room has gotten much hotter with hell's approach. The room trembles occasionally.

BRYAN

*Only a few more lines- and it will be
done. Then my suffering will be over,
and everyone else will know what hell
truly is.*

JOHN

(offscreen right) Bryan! Whatever you're planning, I can't let it happen!

BRYAN turns to see JOHN standing in the chamber- he would have easily noticed him before had he not been so intent on the spell.

BRYAN

(as though waking from a dream) John? Is that you? (shakes head) No. That is all over. I see that my servants have both failed in their tasks. It thus falls to me to finish your doom.

JOHN

Bryan? Is that really you? Why did you kill Abel? What happened to you?

BRYAN

Nothing's happened to me. I've just finally found a purpose to my life. Abel got in the way of it, that's all. The human race is a mistake, John. We're flawed creations of a God who either doesn't care or who is too incompetent to do better. The world of man must be cleansed by hellfire.

JOHN

I can't believe I'm hearing this... from you, of all people. Abel and I always envied you. Even when bad things happened, you floated through it. You saw the good side to everything and everyone. Even after the breakup...

BRYAN

You think I wasn't in pain after that? Neither you or Abel noticed, or else you didn't care.

JOHN

We did notice, but when we tried to help, you pulled away from us, and insisted you were ok. Abel and I talked

about it, but we thought that it was something you would have to come to terms with on your own. Everyone feels pain, Bryan. That's part of our lot in life. I'm sorry we couldn't do more to help you out.

BRYAN

Why should pain be necessary? Why is it our "lot in life"? I realized that the world was unfair and I tried to find ways to change it. That is why I began to study the Art of the Unseen.

JOHN

Magic?

BRYAN

Yes, the cheap magic of mortals. It can be used to bend the rules of the world. I wanted... I wanted to get her back... make her love me again- fix whatever had changed in her that made her leave me. But the Art does not have those powers. I realized I needed to do more than bend the rules- I needed to break them. For that, I needed a more divine power.

JOHN

You made a deal with the devil.

BRYAN

Don't put it like that. He and I both gained something, and I have no illusions. I am strong enough now to tear down this rotten world around us, and to fill the spheres of the world with chaos!

JOHN

So that's it then. You've totally gone over.

BRYAN

From the first step, I committed myself. There can be no turning back. Now you,

too, will fall before me.

Sparks fly around BRYAN's body, as he gives out a roar.

BRYAN

Defend yourself- if you can!

BRYAN points a finger at JOHN, and a bolt of lightning issues forth. JOHN ducks behind a column to avoid it, and the bolt strikes the column instead. JOHN runs across the room and BRYAN sends several more bolts, rapid fire, after him, slamming into walls and columns as they miss. The last one grazes JOHN lightly, but sends him spinning painfully into the wall, where he collapses to the ground. JOHN struggles to regain his footing, while clutching his side.

BRYAN

Struggling now will only increase your pain in the long run. Give up, you've lost.

BRYAN lifts off his feet slightly, levitating into the air. JOHN gets to his feet, and he pulls out the JOURNAL and flips through it quickly. BRYAN waves his hand and the JOURNAL is knocked away from JOHN and lands in a corner.

BRYAN

You can't fight against me, and neither Abel nor that old man can help you now. Oh yes, I know all about The Oculus. I serve a new master, a master who can do the things God refuses to do. The human race will be enslaved and destroyed by the demon race. Nothing can stop this now. But if you will surrender to me, I can offer you at least a quick and painless death, quite unlike what the rest of our wretched kind will suffer.

JOHN

(spitting mad) You think you're going to win me over with that? You've lost your mind! Abel was your friend, and he always stood by you. The three of us... we were like brothers, and now you've

betrayed him... and me.

BRYAN

*Now you are only my enemy. If you refuse
my generous terms, then, you will die!*

BRYAN hurls a torrent of plasma at JOHN, lifting him up and hurling him farther down the chamber. BRYAN levitates back over to the podium with his book, and extends his hand, causing the pages to turn rapidly to a new location.

BRYAN

*VOCO MAGNUM DIABOLOS! LUCIFERUS, DOMINUS
INFERNO, VENIT CELERITAS!*

The entire chamber shakes violently. BRYAN is unaffected since he is hovering in the air, but dust falls from the ceiling and we hear rocks fall in the distance.

BRYAN

*Your reward for your past friendship is
to see the inauguration of the new era
with your own eyes. Soon earth will be
indistinguishable from hell, and your
last moments will be spent in the glory
of the Lord of Devils.*

JOHN

*I'm sorry, Abel. I couldn't do anything.
If only you could help... wait a minute!*

JOHN reaches for the book, but it is simply too far away for him to reach.

JOHN

*Oh, damnit! What was that spell? Voco
spiritus? No, there was more to it than
that!*

BOOKSTORE OWNER VOICEOVER

*To summon a willing spirit, repeat
"Auctoritatus Dominus, Voco Spiritus"
and say your spirit's name, and then
repeat "Voco Spiritus" twice more.*

JOHN shakes his head as though surprised.

JOHN
*That's it! Auctoritatus Dominus, Voco
Spiritus Abel! Voco spiritus, voco
spiritus!*

The spectral form of ABEL appears in the chamber.

JOHN
Abel!

BRYAN snarls and turns to face the apparition.

BRYAN
*What! Why couldn't you have just stayed
dead like you were supposed to!*

ABEL
*It wasn't because I wanted to be here. I
was sent back.*

BRYAN
*Oh, so the other side does have some
interest in saving humanity. If so, it's
too little, too late!*

A red portal appears in the middle of the room, large and getting bigger.

BRYAN
*Observe! Even now Satan himself waits on
the other side to make his entrance into
the world! Even if the gates of heaven
were to open now, humanity is still
doomed!*

As BRYAN speaks, the hulking outline of SATAN can be seen within the growing portal. We hear his laugh.

ABEL
*Not on my watch. Auctoritatis Dominus!
Dona nobis potestas sanctus respondere
hostis!*

A light emerges from ABEL's hands, striking the portal, and the portal stops expanding.

BRYAN

No! You cannot interfere! The ceremony must be completed by 11 o'clock! Potens meum committo Luciferos!

The portal shudders as both BRYAN and ABEL are locked in a battle of wills.

ABEL

John! The book!

JOHN slowly, painfully makes his way over to where the JOURNAL has landed. By coincidence (?) it has landed to an open page.

JOHN

"To counter a demonic spell..."

BRYAN

No! Be silent!

BRYAN looks away from Abel for a moment, and points a finger at JOHN to throw another lightning bolt.

JOHN

Custodis! Defendo servus contra potens curvus!

BRYAN's lightning leaps towards JOHN and suddenly twists back around and strikes BRYAN, causing him to shout in pain. BRYAN stumbles forward, engulfed in electrical energy, momentarily forgetting what he is doing. He takes a step to close to the portal, and with a shriek is sucked within. We hear SATAN's angry bellow, and the portal pulsates wildly for a moment, and we fear that it might open completely, but then it shuts with a slamming sound. JOHN's watch beeps. It is 11:00 exactly.

Above the graveyard, we see other open portals closing, and the roaming skeletons abruptly fall down to the ground, their animating force gone.

ABEL

Well, we did it.

JOHN

I thought we were both dead.

ABEL

Nope. I'm pretty sure that all this happened so that I could stand here now.

JOHN

So your work is done, then?

ABEL

It looks like it. I had a short life, but it was fun. Maybe... I'll see you again on the other side. Goodbye, man.

JOHN

Goodbye, Abel.

ABEL is engulfed in a bright light, so bright the JOHN pulls his arm up to cover his eyes, and for a moment we see nothing of ABEL. The light fades away, and when JOHN lowers his arm, he is shocked to see ABEL standing before him, in the flesh.

JOHN

Abel? What happened?

ABEL

It looks like someone else has other plans for me. I think I've been given a second chance.

ABEL walks over to help JOHN stand up. JOHN stares at him as though not sure he's real.

ABEL

C'mon, man, let's get back to the world up above.

Fade to black.

SCENE TWELVE
JOHN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM

JOHN and ABEL are watching television on the couch.

NEWSCASTER

...in the latest development in this bizarre case, the body initially identified as that of Abel McGovern was instead reidentified as that of drug lord Jose Juan Cuaron who was believed murdered one month ago.

The television shows a picture of Cuaron, who does not remotely look like Abel.

NEWSCASTER(continuing)

McGovern himself was discovered to have been on an extended vacation the entire time. As for Bryan Blum, McGovern reported that he has left the country under an assumed name, and authorities have since abandoned their search.

In other news, scientists continue to be baffled by the freak electrical storm that struck the city last week, leaving thousands of citizens without power until April third.

Police are still investigating the vandalism of dozens of gravesites near the abandoned Domino Sugar factory. The vandals are believed to have used the blackout as cover for their crimes.

JOHN clicks off the television.

JOHN

So what do you think really happened to Bryan?

ABEL

I'm certain that he was taken to hell. His new master won't be pleased with his failure. But I'm not angry with Bryan

anymore, I'm just sorry this all happened.

JOHN

It's all so sad. I never knew he had fallen so far from us... I would have checked up on him more often... but he seemed fine, you know?

ABEL

At some point he just gave up, and he was lost to us. He was consumed by his hatred- and that's a prison without walls or doors. He could never let it go, and it finally took him away.

JOHN

He said he wanted hell, and now I guess he's got it. He said he knew the risks.

ABEL

I wish we could have saved him anyway, though. One thing I learned in my readings- everyone experiences hell differently. It reflects what you most fear or hate back at you. And everyone is afraid of different things.

JOHN

What was Bryan afraid of?

ABEL

I think it was... just being alone. Forever.

JOHN and ABEL sit silently for a moment, lost in their own thoughts.

ABEL

What about that girl?

JOHN

I took care of her and sent her back to her family. She didn't remember anything that had happened to her at all.

ABEL

I suppose that's for the best, considering where her soul's been all this time. Oh- I hope you didn't mind- I took the book back to The Oculus.

JOHN

That's good, I meant to get it back to the old guy, but with so much stuff going on... you know, I though I heard his voice for a moment there, when I needed to summon you and couldn't remember how.

ABEL

(lauging) I think you probably did. Now, you want to get out of this house and do something?

JOHN

Absolutely.

CAMERA PULLS OUT, and whites out.

We see BRYAN, in an enormous white space. There are no apparent floor, walls, or ceiling.

BRYAN

*Hello? Is there anybody here? (pause)
Anyone at all? Where did everybody go?*

BRYAN sits down on the "floor" and clutches his knees to his chest.

BRYAN

(sings softly) 99 bottles of beer on the wall, 99 bottles of beer... (talking to the void) Ok guys, you can come out now, it's not funny anymore. (resumes singing) -take one down pass it around, 98 bottles of beer on the wall...

END