

Revised: 3-26-09

FADE

Screenplay by
Adam Prince

Based on the novel by Robert Cormier

From BLACK, we fade into a slate green, shiny surface...

POLAROID FILM

An image burns into the instamatic film surface -- a family snapshot, taken against a shed on a beach in the early '70s:

Two sets of young PARENTS proudly display their infant boys, and two little girls. In the back row, between the young dads stands their brother ADELARD (18, mischievous smile).

His image fades out, like a tooth abandoning a perfect smile.

Suddenly the "type-ball" head of an old IBM "selectric" typewriter THWACKS against a white page!

THE DREAM

Takes us into dark, disturbing images of birth.

Freaks. Oddities of nature.

The sky turns angry as a storm fast approaches.
The heavens turn blood red. Clouds turn into roiling fire.

A CHURCH STEEPLE

Glow and ignites. As the fire spreads downwards, a heart beats. The beats become THWACKS of the typewriter as --

We enter the burning church...

INT. BURNING CHURCH

We float down the aisle, to the altar... SMASH CUT TO:

AN ELECTRIC TYPEWRITER CARRIAGE

Sliding back to its first position, right at us ---- THUD!!

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM / NYC - NIGHT

PAUL MOREAUX's (mid 30s) eyes snap open as he wakes. His heart-rate SLOWS dangerously. His skin grows goose-pimple cold. His breath condenses -- as if the room suddenly got cold. But it didn't; the cold is coming from inside him.

He bolts out of bed and sits on the floor, folding his legs into a lotus position. Presses his palms against the floor, extends his arms, lifting himself off the ground, maintaining his crossed legs. This brings his heart rate back up...

As he hovers, we glimpse out his bedroom window ten stories below, barges and tugboats lazily traverse the Hudson River, a slow stream of lights marking Manhattan from the world.

Paul drops to the floor, exhausted and shivering. But whatever he was afraid of he seems to have fought off.

He grasps a St. Jude pendant on his night stand, whispering:

PAUL
Don't do this to me...

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST - NYC - AFTERNOON

Returning from the Central Park, Paul jogs through his Upper West side neighborhood on his way home.

EXT. PAUL'S BUILDING - AFTERNOON

As Paul finishes his run, he notices a LIMOUSINE parked in front of his building. As he walks toward it, a beautiful, though frustrated MEREDITH MARTIN (30) emerges in a black dress -- taken aback by the sight of Paul in his sweats.

MEREDITH
You forgot.

PAUL
You're early. I'll get ready fast.

MEREDITH
Paul you can't be late.
And neither can I.

PAUL
Just go. I'll take a cab.

MEREDITH
I'll wait. It's my ass if you're
not there on time.

PAUL
Did you tell them 'no pictures'?

MEREDITH
I got the photographer's e-mail
address and contacted him directly.

Satisfied, Paul goes inside. Meredith's pissed.

INT. LIMOUSINE - AFTERNOON

Wearing a suit now, Paul gets in and sits across from her, as far as two people can get back here. The limo takes off.

MEREDITH
You clean up pretty good.

PAUL

Thanks.

MEREDITH

But I think you missed a spot.

She points to his poorly-shaved chin.

PAUL

Merry, I know this must be awkward for you. I guess we're both obliged to go to this thing.

MEREDITH

At least I know you got my calls.

PAUL

Sorry I haven't gotten back to you. I'm sure you're angry.

MEREDITH

At first I was just...confused. I thought things were good with us, then I wake up one morning and you're gone. No note -- just an empty bed. When I didn't hear back from you, I admit I got angry. But now...I just want to understand what happened. Why did you leave?

PAUL

(under his breath)
I didn't.

MEREDITH

No, I searched every inch of your place. You took off on me, and I haven't heard from you since. Paul, what did I do?

PAUL

You didn't do anything.

MEREDITH

Then what happened?

PAUL

Is this really the time?

MEREDITH

It'll have to do.

(off his SILENCE)

It's been a month, Paul. Don't I deserve some kind of explanation?

PAUL
 Absolutely, but...I just don't know
 what to say.

MEREDITH
 Anything's better than nothing.

PAUL
 I'm sorry, Merry. Trust me --
 you're better off without me.

MEREDITH
 Jesus, Paul. Every guy in the
 world uses that line. Of all
 people I'd expect more originality.

PAUL
 If you want to assign another
 editor to me, I'd understand.

MEREDITH
 You're going to take that away from
 me, too?

PAUL
 No, I'm just saying it might be
 easier for you.

MEREDITH
 How is any of this 'easier' for me?

PAUL
 I don't want to hurt you.

MEREDITH
 Too late.

PAUL
 That's not what I meant.

Another silence as she tries to understand what he *did* mean.

Paul looks outside at the city going past their window. She
 realizes she's not getting any more out of him right now.

Over this we hear Paul READING his book in a large room:

PAUL V.O.
*Stumbling out of the mine shaft
 elevator, he burst into the world
 of air and light...*

This carries us over to --

A PAINTED PORTRAIT

Of Paul, when he was about 15. Bright colors balanced by thick black lines create a psychologically haunting image, especially in his eyes, like he knows some horrible secret.

PAUL V.O.
*...the Autumn breeze benevolent
 after the heat of Purgatory.*

This is on a poster for BIG APPLE LITERACY FOUNDATION fund-raiser. **Paul Moreaux reads from his National Book Award-winning Bruises in Paradise.**

Our view widens to...

INT. BALL ROOM / MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Paul stands at a podium under a spotlight, reading to 200 well-heeled New Yorkers, who sit in rapt attention. Meredith sits off to the side of Paul, beaming with pride.

PAUL (READING)
*He saw his soot-covered face,
 recognizing only the eyes staring
 back. He wondered if his father
 had been young like him. And he
 wondered if he, too, would someday
 become like the mine -- blemished,
 battered, in danger of collapse.*

Paul closes the book. The room breaks into applause. Embarrassed, Paul looks to Meredith, who claps the loudest.

Meredith's boss -- the SENIOR EDITOR -- gives her a silent nod of approval, then steps up with a microphone:

SENIOR EDITOR
 How about we take a few questions?

Paul didn't expect this, but he rolls with it.

PAUL
 Let's do it.

Several hands rise. He points to nearby LITERARY PROFESSOR.

LITERARY PROFESSOR
 In your works thus far, your
 protagonists are men on the
 outside, looking in.
 (MORE)

LITERARY PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Haunted by their past, capable of great self destruction, if not destruction of others. To what do you attribute these common threads?

FLASH! A photographer snaps a picture with a high-end digital camera. Paul turns on Meredith, furious. The audience picks up on his consternation. FLASH!

Paul abandons the podium and walks straight to the photographer -- FLASH! Paul grabs him --

PHOTOGRAPHER

Get your hands off me!

Paul pushes him into the swinging door behind him, taking them both out of the ballroom. The audience is shocked, though some may wonder if it's part of an act.

The Senior Editor knows it's not. He finds Meredith.

SENIOR EDITOR

Get your writer in line.

INT. LOBBY - NYC BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Meredith rushes into the lobby and finds Paul wrenching the camera away from the photographer. He rams a shoulder into the guy's chest and knocks him off.

MEREDITH

Paul! Stop it!

Paul pushes buttons on the camera, trying to figure out:

PAUL

How do you erase on this thing?

Suddenly, he feels his heart-rate drop... He doubles over.

The photographer pulls his camera from Paul's grasp.

PHOTOGRAPHER

The fuck's the matter with you?

All sounds start to fade away for Paul as he forces himself to hyperventilate in order to get his heart rate up.

Meredith takes the photographer around the corner.

MEREDITH

Are you hurt?

PHOTOGRAPHER

No.

His camera seems to be checking out, too.

MEREDITH

I did ask you not to take his picture.

PHOTOGRAPHER

I thought you meant just during the reading, so he wouldn't get distracted by the flash.

MEREDITH

That's not what I said.

PHOTOGRAPHER

What's the big deal?

MEREDITH

To be honest, I don't know. He's not the first of our authors with an odd request, but Mr. Moreaux is important to our publishing company so we accommodate.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENT LATER

Meredith comes around the corner, holding his MEMORY CARD.

MEREDITH

I took care of it, Paul.

But he is nowhere to be seen. She notices one of the doors to the outside closing. Meredith follows and goes out onto:

EXT. STREET / MID-TOWN - NIGHT

Meredith bursts out to the street, but sees no sign of Paul in any direction. Frustrated and angry, she retreats inside.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Meredith puts the memory card in her purse.

SENIOR EDITOR

Where'd he go?

Meredith looks up to see her pissed off boss in the Lobby.

MEREDITH

Disappeared. Again.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

An elevator opens, revealing Paul who walks to his apartment. He sees a manila envelope sitting in front of his door. From *Chief Jules Moreaux, Monument Police Dept. Monument, MA.*

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Paul shuts the door behind him and opens the envelope. He takes out a small-town newspaper, *THE MONUMENT TIMES.*

The stationary attached to it obscures the front page. The note reads: "*Thought you'd find this of interest. - Jules.*"

Paul opens his closet to reveal a file box where he keeps a stack of these papers, all with a similar note attached.

Paul tosses the latest edition onto the stack. He's about to put the lid back on, but something inexplicable stops him.

He pulls off Jules' note to reveal: **FIRE RAVAGES ST. JUDE'S**

The photo of a burning church is what Paul saw in his dream.

PAUL

...Oh god...

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

A quick series of shots show Paul's urgent departure:

He's online and buys a bus ticket from New York City to Monument, MA. He hastily stuffs clothes into a duffel bag.

He stuffs a few of his novels into a paper bag. Paul grabs his St. Jude pendant off his night-stand and puts it on.

He picks up his duffel bag and LEAVES, too distracted to turn off the light. Seconds later his home phone rings. CUT TO:

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

I-phone to her ear, Meredith sits in the back of the limo (alone this time). Paul's phone rings and rings until she hears Paul's voice mail pick up: "You've reached --" then there's a two-second vacuum of silence instead of a message.

MEREDITH

Nice message. Of course you're not answering. Do you know how much you embarrassed me and yourself? You're lucky the photographer doesn't want to press charges on you or sue the foundation.

(MORE)

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

And for the record, I got him to cough up the memory card so we can delete the pictures of you ourselves.

(sighs)

I just don't understand what's gotten into you...

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS TURNPIKE - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

A PETER PAN bus turns onto the Mass Pike.

INT. BUS - SAME

Paul sits with an old Polaroid snapshot in hand -- the one from his dream. His young parents and his aunt & uncle, each with their babies and two little girls, circa 1970.

As in the dream, Adelard is missing from the back row.

In front, the pretty, dark-haired girl vamps for the camera.

YOUNG YVETTE'S VOICE (O.S.)

You could tell even then.

We're still looking at the photo, but now we're in --

INT. KITCHEN / WHERE PAUL GREW UP - EVENING (20 YEARS AGO)

Young Paul (15 now) looks up from the picture to his sister Yvette (19) as she points at the little girl. Her hair and clothes clue us in to the fact that it's the mid-1980s.

YOUNG PAUL

Tell...?

YOUNG YVETTE

What a slut she'd turn out to be.

Offended, Young Paul shuts the photo album with a thud. He takes the Polaroid with him into his tiny bedroom.

INT. YOUNG PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (20 YEARS AGO)

Young Paul lays the Polaroid on his cramped desk. He sits and takes out his notebook. He starts composing a poem...

My love for you is

His pencil pauses, unsure what should come next. **THUD-THUD!!** Young Paul hears a broomstick tap the ceiling below his feet.

Paul understands the signal and goes immediately to the window. He opens it up, letting in a draft of chilly air.

Paul sticks his hand outside and reaches for the cut-out Coke can which is attached to the homemade rope & pulley system between this second floor of the tenement and the first.

Paul retrieves the message stuffed by Jules inside the can: **Uncle Adelard's coming home.** Paul is shocked and thrilled.

He scribbles a response on the back of the note: **When?**

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAWN (PRESENT)

Adult Paul's BUS drives through wooded Berkshire county in western Massachusetts, passing a sign: **Entering Monument**

INT. BUS - DAWN

Paul looks out the window as they drive by a defunct factory. The Monument Plastics sign is rusty and faded.

The gate is chained and locked. The parking lot empty. The big brick factory building looks ghostly and abandoned.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MONUMENT, MA - MORNING

The bus pulls to a stop in Monument's town square, well before the open of business. Paul steps onto the quiet street and surveys the once familiar territory...

Time, shifting demographics and economic depression have altered the face of the town he remembers. A few of the storefronts look vacant, boarded up.

Paul notices the tires on the nearest car have been slashed. And the glass on the parking meter has been broken. In fact, as far as Paul can see, they all have.

Several of the storefront windows are cracked. Other shops have plywood over windows they can't afford to replace.

The best maintained shop sits across the square from Paul: ROSANNA'S BEAUTY. The exterior looks recently repainted.

Two WORKMEN replace one of the salon's busted windows. Inside the shop is dark; closed at this hour like the others.

Duffel bag over his shoulder, Paul walks down a side street. We follow him into his old neighborhood of Frenchtown.

A block away he sees CHARRED REMAINS of St. Jude's church.

A SCHOOL BUS stops at the smoke-stained St. Jude's Parochial, a middle school adjacent to the destroyed cathedral.

Kids in parochial school uniforms which have seen better days approach on foot from all directions.

CLOSER - CHURCH RUINS

Most of the children stay across the street as they pass the church, as if it were too painful to walk past, or haunted.

Paul stands before the charred ruins, eyes glazed with guilt.

PAUL
Should've gotten here sooner...

As if in response to his muttered confession, he hears:

FATHER GASTINEAU
God damned shame.

Paul turns to see Father Gastineau, who doesn't recognize him. The Father fingers his priest collar, smiling wanly.

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)
I shouldn't take the Lord's name in
vain, but in this case exceptions
are warranted.
(puts out his hand)
Father John Gastineau.

PAUL
Father, it's me. Paul Moreaux.

The priest's face lights up.

FATHER GASTINEAU
My boy, good to see you, finally.
I've heard you've made quite a name
for yourself.

PAUL
I've been lucky.

FATHER GASTINEAU
(glancing at the ruins)
Perhaps you can share some of it
with our rebuilding committee.

PAUL
I'll do what I can.

Father Gastineau beckons him past the yellow CAUTION tape.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You sure we should go in there?

FATHER GASTINEAU

I've been doing it every day since
the fire. Visiting the dead.

Paul follows him down what was the center aisle, past the blackened remains of the pews. Sunlight streams through the decimated roof, rays stabbing through the dusty air.

Father Gastineau points to the floor beneath their feet...

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)

I baptized you right here.

A wind whistles through the town and the blackened ruins. Paul feels the skin on his neck grow cold.

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)

I tell you, my boy, it was truly a
horrific ordeal...

He lights up a cigarette. Takes a deep drag.

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)

Horrific...

Our POV switches to someone watching them from amid the ruins. Paul looks over at us but doesn't see anybody.

Father Gastineau exhales his smoke and launches into his retelling of the event; this is far from his first time.

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)

I was teaching my 7th Graders,
including your nephews, the Nicene
Creed, when I started to smell
smoke. Not incense, mind you.
(holding up his cigarette)
And not one of these... Wood.

Paul walks past a rack of glass votive candles blackened by the fire. The priest points down to the center aisle.

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)

So I lined the children up here...

Mindful of the holes in the blackened floors, Paul walks through the ruins, looking for whoever might be watching.

He sees the side of the MIDDLE SCHOOL -- each window has a child looking out of it, peering at them.

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)

I kept them calm and we went
straight to the front exit.

The priest walks toward what was once the front door.

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)
The door wouldn't budge.

He sees Paul seems to be focused elsewhere.

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)
We were trapped.

Paul looks over...

PAUL
Why was the door locked?

Father Gastineau shakes his head.

FATHER GASTINEAU
Wasn't. Something was wedged underneath. So I figure "go out the back". But the rear of the church was already consumed by flames. Now the children panic. I'll be forever haunted by the fear on their faces... I thought 'This is it, time to meet your lord and savior.' Then the strangest thing happened... The front door opened.

PAUL
Was someone on the other side?

Father Gastineau shakes his head "no".

FATHER GASTINEAU
As soon as I got the last child out I looked to see who had saved us.

PAUL
The article didn't mention this.

FATHER GASTINEAU
They're not going to credit divine intervention.

PAUL
Do you?

The priest looks around to make sure they're alone.

FATHER GASTINEAU
It was a windy day.

He consults his watch; time for school. Takes one last drag.

PAUL

Do you have any idea who set the fire?

FATHER GASTINEAU

I don't know anyone capable of this...destruction.

PAUL

That's not true.

The priest looks at him oddly.

PAUL (CONT'D)

We all have the capacity to do good and evil. We make the choice every day. You taught us that.

Father Gastineau nods and drops his cigarette on the charred floor. Extinguishes it with his foot.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Were all the kids in attendance?

FATHER GASTINEAU

Your cousin asked the same thing. I told Jules not to waste his time.

PAUL

Were my nephews absent that day?

FATHER GASTINEAU

No, they were with me. I'm surprised you don't know this.

PAUL

I'm hoping to see my sister and the kids tonight.

FATHER GASTINEAU

Good. See if you can get Bernard to rejoin the team. He's my best forward.

PAUL

So who *wasn't* there that day?

FATHER GASTINEAU

A sickly boy, a poor wretch who wouldn't hurt a fly I assure you.

PAUL

Then who do you think did it?

FATHER GASTINEAU
 Ask your cousin. If anyone should
 have a clue, it's him.

He picks up the dead cigarette to dispose of it.

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)
 In the meantime, the diocese has me
 living with the nuns.

PAUL
 The convent up Mountain Road?

The Father cringes as he nods.

FATHER GASTINEAU
 Don't get me wrong, it's a nice
 place to visit, on a *bright* day.
 And they have a well-stocked
 pantry. But... I just want to go
 back to the way things were.

Suddenly they hear a CLINK-CLINK-CLINK!

They look over at the rack of blackened votive candles, which
 shakes as if someone just bumped into it.

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)
 Who's there!?
 (off the SILENCE)
 You're not supposed to be in here!
 It's a safety hazard!

He looks around but sees no one.

PAUL
 Kids.

He ducks under the CAUTION tape, back on the sidewalk.

FATHER GASTINEAU
 Insurance won't cover the entire
 cost of rebuilding. Stonework is
 too expensive these days.

PAUL
 Like I said, I'm happy to give.

They hear the school bell ring.

FATHER GASTINEAU
 That's me.
 (then)
 Bless you, son. And welcome back.

Paul walks away, passing more students heading the other way.

Paul peers over his shoulder. He sees nothing, but can't help but feel that he might not be alone. With this awareness he walks through his old Frenchtown neighborhood.

It's more ethnically mixed than he remembers, but in many ways it's unchanged. Clotheslines loop from house to house, hung with shirts and pants like flags of many colors.

Paul enters the FRENCHTOWN INN, a small B&B.

INT. ROOM / FRENCHTOWN INN - DAY

Paul enters, throws his duffel bag down on the bed. Takes out his cell phone and scrolls to the name "Yvette". The ringing phone carries us over to --

EXT. TENEMENT HOUSE - SAME

We hear the phone ring inside the second floor of the double-decker tenement house where Paul grew up.

INT. YVETTE'S APARTMENT - SAME

Paul's sister Yvette (now 40) is busy getting ready for work. She sees it's Paul on caller I.D. but she lets it go to the machine. She hears his hesitant voice:

PAUL'S VOICE (ON MACHINE)
 'Vette, it's your brother. Believe it or not, I'm in town... Kind of spur of the moment. Anyway I was--

Yvette picks up. Much tension and distance between them.

YVETTE
 Why now, Paul?

PAUL (ON PHONE)
 Hey, Yvette. I had some business in the area and well... it's time.

The older sister lets out a caustic laugh.

YVETTE
 It was 'time' when I got married, Paul. It was 'time' when I had Laura. Or the boys.

PAUL
 Were the boys in the fire?

YVETTE
They're in 7th grade, aren't they?

PAUL
How are they doing?

YVETTE
Back to school. Listen Paul, I don't have time to play catch-up with you. I've gotta go to work.

PAUL
Can we get together tonight?

YVETTE
Kinda short notice.

PAUL
I know, but I'm here. Please.

Yvette sighs...

YVETTE
Still remember where we lived?

PAUL
Come on, Vette.

YVETTE
Be here at five.

PAUL
For dinner?

YVETTE
Nothing fancy.

She hangs up. As she glances towards the front door, we go back in time, in Paul's memory to --

THE SAME APARTMENT - 20 YEARS AGO

Their father LOU MOREAUX (40s) enters the apartment that same chilly evening, carrying a picket sign: **HIGHER WAGES NOW!**

Young Yvette and Paul watch him pull off his gloves and hat, face beet red from standing in front of the factory all day.

YOUNG YVETTE
Well...? Is Management coming back to the table or what?

Lou shakes his head. Tosses down his gloves in frustration.

YOUNG YVETTE (CONT'D)
Pop, it's been over a hundred days.

LOU
They don't wanna talk. They're in bed with Rudolphe Toubert. Rumor has it, the bastard's trucking in scabs from New Hampshire.

YOUNG YVETTE
But they can't just...take your jobs, can they?

LOU
Not if we don't let them.

YOUNG YVETTE
What does *that* mean?

Lou doesn't say, but the implication of violence is clear.

YOUNG PAUL
Jules says Uncle Adelard's back.

LOU
Supposedly.

YOUNG YVETTE
When?

LOU
Tonight. Your Uncle Victor's meeting him at the bus stop.

YOUNG YVETTE
Don't sound so excited, Pop. It's only been, what...?

YOUNG PAUL
My whole life!

LOU
Exactly.

Young Paul hands his father the Polaroid.

YOUNG PAUL
He was supposed to be in this picture, wasn't he? Right between you and Uncle Victor.

LOU
How many times you gonna ask me, Paulie?

YOUNG PAUL

Well you never tell where he went.

Lou is holding something back as he gives Paul the picture.

LOU

Adelard was good at disappearing.

INT. ROOM / FRENCHTOWN INN - DAY (PRESENT)

We're CLOSE on the Picture, as Adult Paul sets it down on the night stand. We hear him turn on the shower in the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM / FRENCHTOWN INN - DAY

Adult Paul takes a hot shower. Steam thickens the air.

BACK IN THE BEDROOM

The doorknob turns slowly...

INSIDE THE SHOWER

Despite the hot water Paul suddenly feels a shiver run through him. He turns it off, grabs a towel, and puts his ear to the door. Hearing nothing, he opens the door a crack.

Peers into the bedroom, but sees nothing.

Except the Polaroid is on the floor.

Paul opens the door all the way and slowly makes his way into the next room. He looks around -- to the eye, it's empty.

IN THE HALLWAY - JUST OUTSIDE PAUL'S ROOM

On the other side of Paul's door. The floorboard creaks.

Paul yanks the door open and looks out into the hallway, as the inn PROPRIETOR descends the stairs with fresh towels.

EXT. MONUMENT SQUARE - DAY

Paul walks through town square, alive with the everyday goings on of the town on a weekday.

This time, he approaches Rosanna's Beauty. Standing before the front window he peers into the salon...

At 45, Rosanna looks like a movie star hiding out in town.

Paul remembers --

EXT. TENEMENT HOUSE - NIGHT (20 YEARS AGO)

Young Paul stands outside the first floor of his tenement building, looking into Rosanna's bedroom window.

He looks past her shade, glimpsing inside at his gorgeous 20 year-old cousin as she brushes her hair, in her bathrobe.

Paul peels away from the window, then looks at the opening line of his poem in progress: *"My love for you is..."*

With confidence it's the right word he adds *"pure."*

INT. YOUNG ROSANNA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Young Rosanna notices the top of Paul's head outside her window. She opens it and sees her embarrassed cousin.

YOUNG ROSANNA

Thought I saw someone.

YOUNG PAUL

I uh... was just about to come in.
Through the front, I mean.

Rosanna waves him in through her window. He hesitates.

YOUNG ROSANNA

Well? Come on in.

Young Paul climbs into her window. As he does, Rosanna gets her hands on the paper he's carrying and unfolds it.

YOUNG ROSANNA (CONT'D)

What's this? A love poem?

He tries to get it back but she holds it away from him.

YOUNG ROSANNA (CONT'D)

Who's it for...?
(off his SHRUG)
Is she pretty?

YOUNG PAUL

Beautiful.

She reads his gaze and knows he's talking about her. She sits on the bed and pats it for Paul to join her. Unnerved by the power of her nubile beauty, he sits next to her.

YOUNG ROSANNA

My love for you is a whisper in the night. That's beautiful, Paul.

She sees his eyes lower to her cleavage. She grasps his hand, and to his utter surprise, places it on her breast.

Young Paul is speechless, but Young Rosanna knows how he feels when she sees he's erect. She reaches for his --

-- Suddenly Young Jules opens the door...

YOUNG JULES

Uncle Adelard'll be here any min--

-- Paul quickly retracts his hand from Rosanna's breast. She moves her hand away more casually. Jules is shocked.

YOUNG ROSANNA

Forget how to knock, Julie?

Jules can't look her in the eye, pretending he didn't just see that. He turns around and retreats into his room.

YOUNG PAUL

Jules!

He glances back at Rosanna, thrown by her Cheshire cat grin.

EXT. ROSANNA'S BEAUTY - DAY (PRESENT)

Adult Paul walks away from the salon window, before Rosanna turns and looks toward the street. We follow behind Paul, as if we're the unseen presence that may or may not be watching.

We stop as he walks into the Monument Police Station.

INT. MONUMENT POLICE STATION / JULES' OFFICE - DAY

We start close on a dark oil painting of Frenchtown on the wall. Our view widens to reveal Jules' office, which looks much like you'd expect for a small town Police Chief but for this and the other expressionistic paintings of the town.

Jules (now mid-30s, in his Chief's uniform) is on the phone.

JULES

Yeah, I got the fax. Can the lab narrow down the possibilities?

KNOCK-KNOCK! Jules looks up to see a familiar face. Jules brightens and beckons Paul into his office.

JULES (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Tommy, I'll call you back.

(hangs up)

I must be seeing things.

He comes around his desk. The cousins embrace -- despite the time and distance, there's still a deep connection.

JULES (CONT'D)
Good to see you, Paula.

PAUL
Ditto, Julie. *

JULES *
So, what brings you back to our *
not-so-fair hamlet? *

Paul pulls out the article. Jules breaks out into a grin.

JULES (CONT'D) *
I've been hoping to lure you back.
Only took what, twenty or so years?

PAUL
I had to see it with my own eyes.

Jules looks at his cousin with a discerning eye.

JULES
That church was a prison to you.

PAUL
When we were kids.

JULES
Don't tell me you're a church-goer.

PAUL
Hardly, but that place was a big
part of my childhood.

JULES
Every major event of my life took
place there, including my wedding,
which was beautiful by the way.

PAUL
Sorry I missed it, Jules. Really.

Jules decides not to pursue it further.

PAUL (CONT'D)
So you're sure this fire was set?

JULES
We found traces of accelerant.
Some kind of paint thinner. We're
trying to get more information.

PAUL
Anyone could buy that.

JULES
Most accelerants can be bought over
the counter.

PAUL
Is it related to all the vandalism?

JULES
You noticed, huh?

PAUL
Hard to miss.

JULES
I've been looking into it.

He shows Paul some photographs of broken store windows
(including Rosanna's Beauty), street lamps, parking meters.

JULES (CONT'D)
Started about a month ago. We've
been looking for the culprit, but
our only eye witness account comes
from a vagrant who says the windows
started smashing by themselves.

PAUL
By themselves?

Jules motions that the guy was drinking.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Any suspects?

Starting to feel encroached upon, Jules pulls the file away.

JULES
Look -- I'll let you know when we
catch the son of a bitch.

PAUL
What about the kid who was absent?

JULES
How do you know about him?

PAUL
I talked to Father Gastineau.

JULES
Poor kid's story checked out.

PAUL

What do you mean, 'poor kid'?

JULES

My guy says the kid looked beat up. The dad said he was jumped at school; not the first time. Father Gastineau corroborated, but still we suspect abuse at home. Nothing we can do about it at this point.

PAUL

Is it possible the arsonist could've been inside the church? Maybe even one of the other kids?

JULES

Why don't you leave this to me?

PAUL

Maybe I can help.

JULES

Paul, writing mysteries isn't the same as solving them.

(changes the subject)

So, you passing through or what?

PAUL

Well, I'm staying the night.

JULES

With your sister?

PAUL

I'm having dinner there, but I got a room at that little B&B.

JULES

A hotel? Come on, Susie can make up the couch --

PAUL

-- Thanks, Julie. But I already checked in.

Jules nods, disappointed Paul didn't accept the invitation.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Anyway, I kind of need my own space these days.

JULES

These days?

PAUL
Let me ask you one thing about the
fire. Who opened the door?

JULES
Father Gastineau.

PAUL
Is that what he told you?

Jules gets up, ending this line of questioning.

JULES
So, when am I gonna see you next?

EXT. MONUMENT POLICE STATION - DAY

Jules walks Paul to the street.

JULES
Send my best to your sister
tonight. It can't be easy.

PAUL
What can't be easy?

JULES
Dealing with three kids by herself.

PAUL
What about Don?

JULES
You don't know?
(off Paul's confused silence...)
They separated a few months ago.
No surprise, really. Guy looked
miserable at Christmas.

Jules sees that it pains Paul to be so out of the loop.

JULES (CONT'D)
I'm sure she'll tell you about it
tonight.

PAUL
Speaking of matches made in hell,
how's your sister?

Paul's hit a sore spot with Jules, who shrugs.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You see her much?

JULES

It's a small town. I see her all the time. But 'talk'?

(shakes his head "no")

Not while she's still married to that piece of shit.

PAUL

Is Toubert still lending money?

JULES

And running a sports book, and god knows what else. Right under my fucking nose. He's greased the assholes of the mayor, city council, and the church.

PAUL

You can't touch him.

JULES

Especially since he started developing real estate, playing 'pillar of the community'. Son of a bitch bought the old factory, can you believe it. Gonna gut it and attract a big box store to move in.

PAUL

At least it'll make jobs.

JULES

Minimum wage, part time, no benefits. Before you know it whatever's left of Monument's small business will be dead n' buried, and half the population will join the ranks of the working welfare. Thanks to my dear brother-in-law.

PAUL

I can't believe she's still with him...

Jules rubs his fingers together, as if to say "money."

PAUL (CONT'D)

You think that's all?

JULES

Well it ain't for the kids, 'cause they don't have any. I swear that's been my only consolation.

PAUL
You and Suzie still trying?

Jules nods, but doesn't look hopeful. He diverts...

JULES
Were you planning to see my sister
while you're up here?

PAUL
I wasn't planning anything.

Jules looks unsure if he believes his cousin.

INT. YOUNG JULES' BEDROOM - NIGHT (20 YEARS AGO)

Young Jules enters his bedroom, disturbed by what he just saw between his sister and cousin. He sits at his desk, picks up a pencil and refines his drawing in his notebook of Captain America punching out a steroid-pumped Soviet villain.

Young Paul comes in, picking up a "Fantastic Four" comic.

YOUNG PAUL
If you could choose, which super
power would you want?

Jules looks at him, and in an unspoken moment knows that Paul wants to avoid talking about what just happened.

YOUNG JULES
Writing's so lame in comics.

They hear the front door open and Paul's uncle Victor call:

UNCLE VICTOR
Jules! Rosy!

They hear Young Rosanna's shouted response from the bathroom:

YOUNG ROSANNA
I'm washing my hair!

INT. LIVING ROOM - UNCLE VICTOR'S APARTMENT (20 YRS AGO)

The boys rush into the Living Room where Young Paul's uncle Victor ENTERS with Paul's dad Lou, who carries a heavy box.

The boys look outside with anticipation as their mysterious UNCLE ADELARD enters with his duffel bag slung over his shoulder. His broad-brimmed hat is slung low, obscuring him.

UNCLE VICTOR
Meet your uncle Adelard.

Adelard set his duffel down with a THUD, takes off his hat, revealing a weathered face seemingly older than his 33 years.

Both boys stare at this mythical figure they've heard about for so long, but who looks nothing like either imagined.

With sunken, haunted eyes Adelard glances at Young Paul and Jules, trying to discern something but failing to do so.

ADELARD

Hello, boys.

He holds out his hand. The boys stand frozen for a moment, until Lou nudges Young Paul, who reaches out and shakes.

LOU

That's Paul. That's Jules.

Young Jules shakes Adelard's hand, also silently.

Adelard fills the void with a forced smile, an unspoken acknowledgement of the awkwardness of this reunion.

ADELARD

I have something for you both.

He opens his duffel bag and roots through items not of a casual traveler, but of a man who lives on the road (such as toilet paper, a small gas stove, a tattered wool blanket).

As this goes on, Young Jules whispers to Young Paul:

YOUNG JULES

Thought he was *younger*.

Off to the side, a disapproving Lou whispers to Victor:

LOU

Lookit him. Strung out.

UNCLE VICTOR

On what?

Adelard takes out a PAINT SET and turns to Young Jules.

ADELARD

I hear you're quite the artist.

He hands it to Young Jules, whose eyes widen like saucers. As the boy examines his gift, Adelard turns to the box.

ADELARD (CONT'D)

And for you, Paul...

Young Paul takes the POLAROID out of his shirt pocket and thrusts it into his uncle's hands.

YOUNG PAUL

Uncle Adelard -- where did you go?

Lou and Victor exchanges a glance and listen for the answer, but Adelard just smiles mysteriously. He hands the picture back to Paul and rips the packing tape off the heavy box.

VICTOR

(aside, to Lou)

I hope he didn't steal this shit.

Adelard takes out an IBM selectric typewriter.

LOU

You hauled that from Canada?

ADELARD

A writer needs his tools,
like any craftsman.

Paul can't believe his eyes as he examines the typewriter.

ADELARD (CONT'D)

Can you imagine -- going to the
library and finding books written
by our own Paul Moreaux.

Lou laughs. Adelard sees the pain in Young Paul's eyes.

INT. JULES' OFFICE - DAY (PRESENT)

We're tight on the COMPUTER SCREEN in Jules' office, as he plays the surveillance video from St. Jude's -- an angled view looking down on the front entrance of the church:

It's broad daylight. The front door opens, as if by itself. A moment later, panicked 7th GRADERS stream through the door.

Jules replays the video, but just before he pauses it, he notices a flash of something in the upper corner.

Jules slows down the video. In the corner of the image, the blur of a HUMAN FORM suddenly appears -- walking away, then turning a corner of the building and going out of view.

INT. LOBBY / PAUL'S BUILDING, NYC - DAY

Meredith enters Paul's building, raring to confront him about last night. She puts on a smile for the DOORMAN.

MEREDITH
Hey, Eddie. Is he around?

DOORMAN
Haven't seen him go nowhere. And I
been here since six this morning.

INT. PAUL'S BUILDING / HIS FLOOR - DAY

Meredith gets off the elevator and approaches Paul's apartment. Rings the bell but hears no movement inside.

She knocks on the door. Still, nothing. But sees light emanating from the other side. She pounds on the door.

MEREDITH
Paul?!

Still no answer. She digs into her bag and takes out keys.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Tired of this...

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Meredith lets herself in, calling inside...

MEREDITH
Paul.

She hears nothing, then turns on the lights. She hears a hum... It draws her toward Paul's desk.

The clunky IBM selectric typewriter is sitting on the top of his credenza and it's humming because it was left on.

Meredith clicks the typewriter's power to off.

She notices his phone message pad. The carbon copy shows the last thing Paul scribbled: **Frenchtown B & B (508) 555-3455**

She walks toward Paul's bedroom door afraid of what she might find. She opens the door, sees the bed is empty and unmade.

Meredith remembers --

A MONTH AGO - HERE, MORNING

Meredith wakes up in Paul's bed, looking over to his side and finding it empty. She looks around for signs of him.

MEREDITH
Paul...?

No answer. She gets out of bed. We FOLLOW as she looks around the apartment...confused as she finds no one home.

BACK TO THE PRESENT

Meredith turns on the lights of Paul's bedroom. Her eyes fall to the framed photo on his night stand:

It's of her, asleep in his bed. The other side of the bed is empty as Paul captures this beautiful, intimate moment.

She's so confused... Her I-phone beeps with an incoming text from Paul: **Had to go to Monument. Sorry.**

MEREDITH

He's home... Who died?

INT. ROSANNA'S BEAUTY - DAY (PRESENT)

Rosanna unfurls the barber's apron over her new customer.

ROSANNA

So... What do you like?

PAUL

Every now and then, a little poetry. How about you?

This wouldn't be the first male customer to flirt with her.

ROSANNA

Who doesn't, but I meant your hair.

PAUL

(reciting his poem)

*My love for you is pure /
As candle flame / As bright as
sunshine / As sweet as --*

ROSANNA

-- *baby's breath.*

She says, recognizing both the poem and its writer.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)

Paulie!

She throws her arms around him and whispers in his ear:

ROSANNA (CONT'D)

I thought you forgot about me.

PAUL

Impossible.

ROSANNA
Where the hell have you been?

PAUL
New York. You look great.

ROSANNA
I'm on my feet all day. Paul, why haven't you visited me?

PAUL
I've been inside my head too long. Hazard of my trade, I guess.

Rosanna lightly tugs at his shaggy hair.

ROSANNA
You *do* need a trim.

She picks up a spray bottle and wets down his hair.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)
I love in *Bruises in Paradise* when you say Hell would not be anger, but indifference.

PAUL
You read my book...

ROSANNA
You kidding? All of them.

Paul is taken with her, just as he was years ago. She runs her fingers through his wet hair. There's a sensuality about this that Paul is attuned to, which makes us uncomfortable.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)
To be honest -- I was afraid you were like the rest of the family.

PAUL
What do you mean?

ROSANNA
Judging me for my marriage.

PAUL
Rudolphe Toubert doesn't exactly have good history with us.

ROSANNA
Rudy's mellowed. He's not the tough guy you remember.
(MORE)

ROSANNA (CONT'D)

Does a lot for the community,
especially St. Jude's. And takes
good care of me.

PAUL

You've got security, what else?
(off her SILENCE)
Why didn't you two have kids?

ROSANNA

A little personal, don't you think?

PAUL

I'm family.

ROSANNA

It wasn't in God's plan.

PAUL

I never thought you of all people
would become churchy.

Rosanna smiles, knowing what he means. Her bad girl past.

ROSANNA

I like going. Being connected to
something outside my little world.

The shop phone rings. Rosanna answers.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)

Rosanna's Beauty... Yes, Rudy...
No, of course not. ...Rudy, how
many times do you need to hear it?

Paul tenses listening to this.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, it's just...
(looks away from Paul)
I'm with uh, a customer.
...No, no, I didn't mean--
...Of course you're my priority.

The grip Toubert has on Rosanna makes Paul sick. She hears
the *ding* of her door as it opens and closes. Paul is gone.

EXT. TENEMENT HOUSE - NIGHT (20 YEARS AGO)

Coming from the reunion with his uncle, Young Paul lugs his
typewriter up the STAIRS on the side of the building. At the
top, he waits for his dad to come up and open the door.

Down below, as Lou approaches, a hulking man named OMER
LaBATT (30s) steps into the light, cutting him off.

OMER LABATT
Hey there, Lou.

LOU
Omer... How ya been?

OMER LABATT
Tryin' to get by. Listen, Mister
Toubert's gettin' impatient.

LOU
You collecting for him now?

Omer nods, not proud of this fact.

OMER LABATT
Not too many other opportunities
since the factory laid me off.

LOU
I'm still hangin' in, what with the
strike and all.

OMER LABATT
Don't hold your breath. Look,
gimme half now, I'll talk to him.

LOU
I don't have any money coming in.

OMER LABATT
Then I'm sorry, Lou. Real sorry.

He PUNCHES Lou in the gut. Lou doubles over, breathless.

LOU
...Ten years we worked together...

OMER LABATT
I know, but orders is orders.
I got two other mouths to feed.

Omer knees Lou in the face! Lou goes down, nose bleeding.
Omer hates to do this, but he KICKS Lou in the back!

A potted plant flies down at Omer! He ducks it, but a second
pot is thrown right at his head...

Omer deflects it --SMASH!-- the pot explodes on his arm.
Pottery and soil go flying and Omer shouts in pain.

Grabbing his arm, a pissed off Omer turns his sights on Young
Paul standing frozen at the top of the stairs. Young Paul
tries to get back in the apartment but the door is LOCKED.

As Omer stomps up the stairs, a desperate Young Paul slips through the banister and jumps down to the ground -----

THUD!!! Young Paul lands hard, hurting his knee.

He hears Omer clomping back down the stairs, but Young Paul is physically unable to run away.

Terrified, he scrambles under the stairs. Then, it happens:

His racing breath and thumping heart slow to a STOP. All sound fades out. His body seizes up, he cries out in pain. His breath condenses, as if it suddenly got frigid out here.

INSIDE - SAME

Adelard stands with a beer in his hand, looking over Young Jules' shoulder as he examines the paint set.

ADELARD
Careful with the paint thinner,
it's flammable --

-- He suddenly feels his heart slow precipitously like a car slamming on the breaks. He drops the beer...

Hearing a THUD, Young Jules turns around but Adelard is GONE.

BACK OUTSIDE - SAME

Omer reaches the bottom of the stairs and comes around to the other side. He looks underneath the stairs, into the shadows. Gets a good look but no one's there.

Like his Uncle Adelard, Young Paul seems to have disappeared.

EXT. TENEMENT HOUSE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Standing under those very stairs, Adult Paul feels the cold wind on his neck as leaves and debris whip up around him. He feels as if he's being watched. Paul looks around...

He slowly peers around the back of the building...

WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! A pit-bull mix flings itself toward Paul, jaws snapping. Paul jumps back, falling.

The dog reaches the end of the chain around his neck--THUNK!!

On the ground but safe by inches, Paul looks up to the second floor of the tenement house -- up to the window which was once his -- where a boy's shadowy figure looks down on him.

MOMENTS LATER

The paper bag packed with Paul's books. He snatches it up from under the stairs and takes them up to the SECOND FLOOR.

He stands before the front door that was his, knowing that on some level, he has become Uncle Adelard. Paul knocks...

Yvette opens up. Looking past the doorway, Paul takes it in. The apartment of his youth looks different, yet the same.

YVETTE

You're letting the cold in.

INT. YVETTE'S APARTMENT (PAUL'S CHILDHOOD HOME) - CONTINUOUS

Paul steps inside. They seem to be the only ones here.

PAUL

Where are the kids?

YVETTE

Where else?

She heads off toward their rooms.

PAUL

Vette, wait a sec. I saw Jules today. He told me about Don. He...thought I already knew.

Yvette laughs to herself -- *Like you'd know anything.*

PAUL (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

YVETTE

It's best for both of us.

PAUL

How's Don?

YVETTE

Relieved, I think. He's renting a place in Pittsfield. He always hated the commute from here anyway.

Paul turns the conversation.

PAUL

So, the boys have been through a lot lately.

YVETTE
 Laura, too. It's hard enough being
 a teenaged girl.

PAUL
 But the fire...

YVETTE
 They're tough, like Pop.

PAUL
 How's their health?

YVETTE
 What'd Jules tell you?

PAUL
 Nothing.

YVETTE
 Then why do you ask?

PAUL
 They're the only ones carrying our
 family's genes into the future.

YVETTE
 Ha. Bernard's taken the separation
 pretty hard. Been having trouble
 in school. He should be at the gym
 right now, playing basketball, but
 he quit the team. And Armand,
 we'll get things under control.

PAUL
 What's wrong?

YVETTE
 Doctors think he has Wilson's
 Syndrome.
 (off his SILENCE)
 Chronic low body temperature.

This strikes a chord with Paul.

YVETTE (CONT'D)
 He gets cold sometimes and just
 slows down. The doctor's putting
 Armand on a course of hormones.

PAUL
 Which ones?

YVETTE
What are you, an endocrinologist?

PAUL
Just an uncle.

YVETTE
Now you decide?

EXT. TENEMENT HOUSE - NIGHT (20 YEARS AGO)

Young Paul comes out from under the stairs and sees Uncle Adelard sitting on the stairs, legs crossed, waiting for him.

ADELARD
You just did it, didn't you?

Now when he looks at the boy, Paul's got an AURA around him.

YOUNG PAUL
Did what?

Adelard smiles. He points to Paul's front shirt pocket.

ADELARD
That picture... You could say it's
the reason why I'm here.

Paul takes the Polaroid out again, sets it on a railing.

YOUNG PAUL
So where were you when Grampa
snapped it?

ADELARD
Playing a prank.

YOUNG PAUL
Oh...

The boy looks away, somewhat disappointed.

YOUNG PAUL (CONT'D)
I always thought you...

He can't bring himself to say it aloud, for fear of sounding childish. He hears Adelard finish his thought:

ADELARD (O.S.)
Disappeared.

Young Paul turns back to his uncle, but Adelard is not there.

YOUNG PAUL

Uncle Adelard? W-Where did you go?

Suddenly, he sees the Polaroid lift off the railing and fade away within seconds until it's completely disappeared, too.

Young Paul's eyes widen with amazement. As he blinks and his lids re-open they reveal Adelard's reflection in his corneas.

Paul finds his uncle sitting in front of him, exactly as he was a moment ago, with the Polaroid in his hands. Adelard stares back with the saddest eyes Paul has ever seen.

YOUNG PAUL (CONT'D)

...H-How?

ADELARD

How did *you* do it?

YOUNG PAUL

I-I didn't.

ADELARD

You didn't feel your heart stop?
Pain didn't shoot through every
nerve in your body? Every inch of
your skin didn't feel prickly?

(off Paul's NOD)

Felt was like you stepped into a
meat locker, right? And it felt
that way until you came out of it.
That'll never change. And if
you're anything like me, you'll
never get used to it.

YOUNG PAUL

(realizing)

That's why Omer didn't see me...

ADELARD

It's called The Fade, like color
gone from old cloth.

(then)

My father's cousin Theo had it.
And before that, Theo's Uncle. And
so on... It comes to a male in
every generation in our family,
some time during adolescence.

YOUNG PAUL

Why...?

ADELARD

My best guess -- we've got a recessive gene, makes a pheromone that covers our body and somehow it affects the pathway of light. But like I said... Just my theory.

(then)

I *do* know that your clothes and whatever's on your body will fade with you. And if you're in the fade and pick something up...

YOUNG PAUL

It disappears.

ADELARD

As you saw, yes. But not instantly, so be careful.

YOUNG PAUL

I couldn't see you, but...
I could feel you.

ADELARD

That's the trick of it. You can move about the world unseen, but people will sense you. Be careful.

YOUNG PAUL

Uncle Adelard, why'd you choose me?

ADELARD

I didn't.

(then)

See, I was having these dreams. I didn't understand them at first, but then I realized... It was time.

YOUNG PAUL

For what?

ADELARD

The new fader. It was either you or Jules. I didn't know right away. In fact, you hadn't come into it -- until just now.

(then)

Now you have the Glow, just like me when Theo told me it was my time.

He looks around -- no one can see them.

ADELARD (CONT'D)

Do it.

YOUNG PAUL

It just...happened.

ADELARD

Close your eyes. Clear your mind
of all distractions. Then lean
into a wall that isn't there.

Paul closes his eyes and --

-- A frightened Young Yvette comes outside, interrupting.

YOUNG YVETTE

The scabs... They're coming.

INT. YVETTE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (PRESENT)

We're CLOSE again on the Polaroid -- TIGHT on a young Lou and
Victor and the space between them once occupied by Adelard.

YVETTE (O.S.)

Your uncle.

Paul looks up as Yvette comes in with her daughter, LAURA
(13, bookish). Paul offers his hand.

PAUL

I'm Paul.

LAURA

I know.

She bypasses his hand and, to his surprise, hugs him.

LAURA (CONT'D)

It's nice to meet you.

Paul sees behind her -- one of his 11 year-old nephews.

PAUL

Bernard?

Armand seems half a beat behind.

ARMAND

...He's in there. I'm Armand.

YVETTE

Armand's like you, Paul. Spends
most of his time holed away in his
room, scribbling away.

PAUL
 So you're a writer?
 (off Armand's SHRUG)
 What do you write?

ARMAND
 Comics.

YVETTE
 I always tell him Paul, I thought
 that's what you'd end up writing.
 And Jules would draw the pictures.
 But it didn't turn out that way.

PAUL
 Armand, you like superheroes?

ARMAND
 And bad guys.

PAUL
 Sometimes it's hard to tell the
 difference.
 (off Armand's SILENCE)
 The best ones have secrets.

ARMAND
 I guess.

PAUL
 So your mom tells me sometimes you
 get cold suddenly. What happens?

ARMAND
 I don't get cold. I'm *always* cold.

PAUL
 What about your heart?
 Does it ever...slow down?

Armand shrugs.

YVETTE
 It's always a little slow, but the
 doctor's gonna fix that.
 (calls toward the bedroom)
 Bernard!
 (to Armand)
 Get your brother.

Armand gets up from the table. So does Paul.

PAUL
 I'll go with him.

INT. BOYS' BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Armand brings Paul back into the room that was once his.

No one's here, apparently. But Armand opens the closet, revealing his brother BERNARD (also 11) playing a "1st person shooter" video game on his PSP.

Bernard's got an eerie fixation on the game, shooting people with precision as he moves through a high school corridor.

Paul waves his hand across Bernard's face. He looks up.

PAUL

Hey. I'm --

-- Bernard gets up abruptly and walks past him, out the room.

INT. YVETTE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bernard now sits at the dining room table with Paul, Armand, his sister Laura, and his mom. Paul says to the kids...

PAUL

I wanted to give you something.

From his paper bag he pulls out his novels -- Bruises in Paradise, Come Home, Come Home, Dialogue at Midnight.

LAURA

You really wrote these?

PAUL

Well, that's what I do.

Laura's impressed. But Armand and Bernard leave the books on the table -- utterly disinterested.

BERNARD

Can I be excused?

ARMAND

Me, too.

Yvette nods and the boys go back to their activities. Laura breaks out into giggles. Yvette sees Paul is mortified.

YVETTE

They're eleven year-old boys.
What did you expect?

LAURA

Don't worry. I'll read them.

PAUL
Thanks...

Seeing his disappointment, Laura goes over to her brothers.

LAURA
Why don't you play hide-n-seek with
Uncle Paul?

Armand shrugs "sure" but Bernard pays no attention.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Come on, Bernard, he hasn't been
here in a long time so he doesn't
remember the good spots.

Paul remembers --

INT. THE APARTMENT DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT (20 YEARS AGO)

We're in Young Paul's Fade P.O.V. as he moves UNSEEN into the living room where Uncle Adelard talks to his older brothers Lou and Victor. Lou has an ice pack on his face.

ADELARD
Manufacturing is moving overseas.
Today it's Mexico and Central
America, tomorrow --

Adelard senses Young Paul's presence and looks right at "us".

ADELARD (CONT'D)
Tomorrow it'll be someone else.

LOU
So we're supposed to roll over?

VICTOR
Let Toubert break our union?

As the men continue to argue, Paul's Fade P.O.V. moves through the living room, down the HALLWAY, into...

INT. YOUNG JULES' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Young Jules is trying out his new paints for the first time. The largest tube (white) starts to move, then disappears.

Young Jules looks over and can't find the white paint. He spins around, but sees no one else in the room.

Young Jules feels the presence of something he can't explain, but it does feel a little colder in here.

He tries to find that missing tube of white. As he looks on the floor, the tube appears right next to Jules' palette.

Jules sits up and sees the white tube right in front of him. As Jules tries to understand, Paul's POV backs out, into:

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Paul's fade POV rests at the BATHROOM door. We hear the SHOWER running. The door handle turns, as if by a ghost.

The door opens slowly until we see Young Rosanna (obscured by a translucent curtain) shaving her legs under hot water.

INSIDE THE BATHROOM

In the shower -- the COLD WATER faucet turns "by itself".

Young Rosanna shrieks. She re-adjusts the faucets. As she resumes shaving her legs, the hot water faucet turns off entirely, leaving the shower trickling.

Rosanna feels "our" presence but she cannot see "us". Hands shaking with fear, she slowly brushes the curtain aside.

YOUNG YVETTE (O.S.)
(from the hallway)
PAUL?!

Rosanna grabs a towel, yanks the bathroom door open and bolts into the hallway. Yvette looks at her, dripping wet...

YOUNG YVETTE (CONT'D)
I'm guessing you haven't seen him.

Rosanna gives her a dirty look. A cold breeze blows through. Yvette opens the bathroom door and sees the window is open.

YOUNG YVETTE (CONT'D)
Close the window, it's freezing!

Rosanna is frigid standing there in the draft. Yvette gives her pretty cousin a disdainful look then walks away.

YOUNG YVETTE (CONT'D)
PAUL?

EXT. TENEMENT HOUSE - NIGHT (20 YEARS AGO)

Young Yvette comes around the side of the house. The bathroom window's still open. She sees no signs of Paul.

YOUNG YVETTE
Where the hell did you go...?

Young Paul emerges from the shadows under the stairs.

EXT. TENEMENT HOUSE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Adult Paul is in the same spot -- counting -- with his eyes shut, as the boys scamper in all directions. Hide-n-seek.

INT. YVETTE'S APARTMENT - SAME

Adult Yvette and her daughter watch from the second floor window. Despite the built-up hostility toward Paul, Yvette enjoys watching him play with her boys OUTSIDE.

EXT. TENEMENT HOUSE - SAME

Paul first looks under the stairs and sees condensed breath.

He reaches into the dark but no one's there.

Did he really see that? WIND flows through the neighborhood rusty fences. The clothes on the lines flap violently.

Paul turns up his collar. Is it just the wind he's feeling?

AROUND THE BACK

The chained up pit-bull mix looks confused sitting there as he tracks an unseen presence across the ratty back yard...

The dog whines, confused and unsettled. Paul comes around the corner. The dog turns on Paul and starts growling.

ARMAND

(loud whisper)

Toby, no!

Paul looks up to the FIRE ESCAPE above him. He cannot see his nephew clearly because he's *glowing*...

Then again, he's standing under the broken light fixture with a bare bulb. Paul climbs up to the fire escape, bringing himself face-to-face with his nephew.

He reaches out and turns the hot light-bulb until it's off...

ARMAND (CONT'D)

What're you doing?

Paul sees he does not have The Glow. He restores the light.

PAUL

Nothing.

He sees the pulley from his communication system with Jules. The rope and can are long gone, but the pulley is still intact (albeit rusty). Paul spins the wheel with his finger.

He glances toward the opened window.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Did your brother go inside?

Armand nods mischievously. Paul climbs inside his old room.

INT. BOYS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's empty. Paul opens the closet. This time, empty.

INT. YVETTE'S APARTMENT

Paul looks through the rest of the apartment -- Laura's room, Yvette's room, the bathroom, the kitchen where the girls sit.

PAUL
Where did he go?

YVETTE
Bernard? We've been sitting here the whole time.

LAURA
We haven't seen him.

PAUL
But you heard him?

They both nod. Paul walks into the hallway, looks up at the hatch in the ceiling.

INT. ATTIC - TENEMENT HOUSE (PRESENT)

Paul climbs up and sees Bernard playing his P.S.P.

INT. KITCHEN / YVETTE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Paul sprays whipped cream into the ice cream-filled bowls of Yvette's kids, then sprays some into his own mouth.

ARMAND
Me, me, me!

BERNARD
Me, too!

As Paul obliges, he sees a smiling Yvette ENTER with a camera to capture this candid moment. She raises it to her face --

PAUL

Wait!

Alarmed, Yvette stops. Paul takes the camera from her.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I want one of you four.

YVETTE

Okay...

Yvette crowds in with her kids. Paul snaps a picture.

PAUL

Beautiful.

A close look on the viewer shows all of them clearly.

PAUL (CONT'D)

'Vette, will you send this to me?

YVETTE

Of course, Pauly.

The boys leave the room with their Sundaes.

PAUL

You have great kids.

YVETTE

Hopefully someday you will, too.

PAUL

Why hasn't Jules?

YVETTE

They've tried, a long time now. She's young, but something isn't working, I don't know what. It's not like they're advertising.

PAUL

What about Rosanna?

YVETTE

Who?

Paul knows his sister's just holding a grudge.

PAUL

Why didn't she have kids?

LAURA

He probably tied her tubes.

YVETTE

Laura!

LAURA

What do you care, you don't talk to her.

PAUL

But her beauty parlor's right in the Square, isn't it?

YVETTE

I get my hair done in Pittsfield.

She gets up and ushers young Laura out...

YVETTE (CONT'D)

Get your brothers to bed.

Alone with Paul now, Yvette says how she really feels:

YVETTE (CONT'D)

God doesn't want Rosanna to have kids.

PAUL

Funny, that's what she said.

YVETTE

You saw her?

PAUL

Is that a crime?

YVETTE

After what happened to our father?

PAUL

(stands)

I've gotta go.

Afraid she pushed him away, Yvette says:

YVETTE

Paul... Seeing you with the kids, it was really nice...

PAUL

Like it should've been, always.

Yvette is surprised to hear him say this.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I haven't been around.

YVETTE
 Will you be back? Or are you just
 like Uncle Adelard?

EXT. TENEMENT HOUSE - NIGHT (20 YEARS LATER)

Young Paul sees fear in Yvette's eyes as she approaches.

YOUNG YVETTE
 Pop's going to the factory.
 There's gonna be a fight.

Suddenly Paul's father emerges from his brother's apartment
 on the first floor, followed by Adelard.

ADELARD
 Lou, you can't beat history.

Disgusted by his brother's attitude, Lou turns to his boy.

LOU
 Stay with your sister.

Paul nods. Lou turns to join his older brother, Victor.

ADELARD
 Be careful.

Lou responds with a look of disapproval before he heads off
 with Victor to the factory and the fight that awaits them.

Yvette starts up the stairs, looking down at Paul.

YOUNG YVETTE
 You coming in or what?

YOUNG PAUL
 In a minute.

She goes up the stairs and into their second floor apartment.
 Left alone with Adelard, Paul follows him to the FRONT PORCH.

YOUNG PAUL (CONT'D)
 You have to help them!

Adelard picks up his duffel bag.

YOUNG PAUL (CONT'D)
 Where are you going?

ADELARD
 I can't get caught up in this.

YOUNG PAUL
You could be a hero!

Adelard quickly envisions --

EXT. FACTORY - DAY (ADELARD'S VISION)

The scabs approaches the factory armed with pipes and chains.

FAST CUTS as an *unseen blade* slashes their necks, mowing them down amid confusion and gore -- until Adelard is partially visible because he's covered in so much blood.

BACK TO SCENE - OUTSIDE TENEMENT

Adelard walks onto the sidewalk and turns away from the factory -- like an alcoholic walking away from a bar.

Young Paul catches up to him...

ADELARD
Only bad things come of the Fade.
You can't save people with it.
You'll be lucky if you can save
yourself.

PAUL
But it's...incredible. A gift!

Adelard stops in his tracks and makes this very clear...

ADELARD
I never called it that.

Paul looks sobered by his uncle's response. *

INT. HALLWAY / ST. JUDE'S MIDDLE SCHOOL - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Father Gastineau's middle school BASKETBALL TEAM files into the locker room after practice.

FATHER GASTINEAU
Good work, boys. See you tomorrow.

He goes into the GYM to close up for the night.

INT. GYM / ST. JUDE'S MIDDLE SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

The priest sees a basketball rolling slowly across the court.

Father Gastineau looks around but doesn't see anyone. He walks over to the ball and picks it up. Dribbles, then shoots from three-point land. The ball clanks off the rim.

He chases the rebound, nearly running smack dab into someone!
He yells out. Gathering himself, he sees that it's PAUL.

FATHER GASTINEAU
Mr. Moreaux...
(catching his breath)
...Fancy...meeting you here...

PAUL
Sorry, father. I'm working on
getting your star forward back.

FATHER GASTINEAU
Good on you, my boy. We need him.

Paul picks up the basketball and shoots it...
The ball bounces off the rim. Father Gastineau *tsks*.

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)
Power comes from your legs.

Paul passes it back to him. The priest shoots -- swish!
Paul retrieves the ball and passes it back to him.

PAUL
Father, who was the boy absent the
day of the fire?

FATHER GASTINEAU
...Why?

PAUL
It's for my new book. About a boy
born... different than the rest.
An outsider. Others see this as
weakness. Some prey on him. Does
that sound familiar?

INT. LIBRARY / ST. JUDE'S MIDDLE SCHOOL - NIGHT

From darkness --CLICK-- Father Gastineau turns on a light in
the school library. Now we're in Father Gastineau's office.

The rest of the school is dark and dead quiet.
He locates the St. Jude's Parochial YEARBOOK.

FATHER GASTINEAU
This is from last year.

He opens the book and shows Paul, but we do not get to see
it. Paul looks disturbed by what he sees.

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)
 His name is Oscar Slater. The kids
 call him Ozzie, but I don't think
 he likes it.

PAUL
 What happened to his nose...?

FATHER GASTINEAU
 Poor wretch. Victim of the system.

PAUL
 The school?

FATHER GASTINEAU
 Christ no, man. Foster care.

A light-bulb goes off for Paul.

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)
 He bounced around, home to home.
 One abuser or dysfunction to the
 next, until he landed with the
 Slaters. Margaret was a lovely,
 church-going woman, enrolled Oscar
 here. She was already sick but
 didn't know it until it was too
 late. I believe Oscar filled a
 void left by her husband and his
 affair with the bottle. I can't
 imagine how he's coping, raising
 the boy by himself -- especially
 now, since he was laid off.

PAUL
 So who are his biological parents?

The priest looks away and closes up the yearbook.

FATHER GASTINEAU
 How should I know?

PAUL
 Where did he come from?

FATHER GASTINEAU
 Sisters of Mercy. He was given up
 as a baby.

PAUL
 By whom?

FATHER GASTINEAU
 I've only been living there a week.
 You'd have to ask someone who was
 around then, like Sister Anunciata--

-- The lights go out!

FATHER GASTINEAU (CONT'D)
 Must be on a timer.

EXT. HALLWAY / ST. JUDE'S MIDDLE SCHOOL - NIGHT

Paul finds his way out of the dark library. He looks down the long hallway and sees the silhouette of a lanky ADOLESCENT BOY in street clothes. Paul walks toward him.

PAUL
 Oscar...

He walks faster. The kid looks up, suddenly scared.

BOY
 You're not Father Gastineau.

It's dark, Paul can't make out his face.

PAUL
 Are you Ozzie?

The boy winces in response, shaking his head "no".

BOY
 Hey, what happened to the lights?

EXT. SLATER HOUSE - NIGHT

Paul walks up to the front of a small, ramshackle house in Monument. The name "Slater" on the mailbox next to the door.

Paul knocks. He hears something behind him... Paul looks around, sees no one. The skin on the back of his neck grows cold, as if the wind were whipping up, but the air is still.

Suddenly behind him the front door gets ripped open. A huge man fills the doorway. This is BILL SLATER, 40s.

SLATER
 What do you want?

Paul can smell the booze on his breath from here. Slater leans against the door jamb to keep steady.

PAUL
 I'm here to talk to your son.

SLATER

Son...

(laughs at the thought)

You mean Ozzie. What's he done now?

PAUL

Nothing bad. But I understand he's been missing school lately.

SLATER

Who the hell're you anyway?

PAUL

I'm writing about the fire.

SLATER

Well he wasn't there.

Slater steps back to close the door.

PAUL

I'd still like to speak to --

-- The door THUDS shut in his face.

INT. SLATER HOUSE / 2ND FLOOR - SAME

Oscar's POV looks out the window, down at Paul as he walks away from the house. We hear Slater's heavy boots.

SLATER

Goddamnit, boy, I'm sick and tired of answering questions about you.

Oscar's POV pans over to catch him coming up the stairs, taking off his thick leather belt and folding it over as a weapon. Slater reaches the top but doesn't see Oscar.

SLATER (CONT'D)

Where the hell'd you go?

Ozzie's POV moves past him, down the stairs and **OUT the door.** *

EXT. FRENCHTOWN STREET - NIGHT (20 YEARS AGO)

Adelard (duffel bag slung over his shoulder) and Young Paul walk toward Monument Square, mid-conversation.

ADELARD

For years I worried what would happen if the next fader were someone who'd... Well, use it for terrible purposes.

YOUNG PAUL
Not me. You've got my word.

ADELARD
Don't make any vows.

They reach the Bus Stop at one corner of the Square.
Adelard sets his bag down. They sit on the bench.

YOUNG PAUL
Is it really just some random gene?
There has to be more to it. I
mean, why would God do that?

ADELARD
God...
(shrugs, unsure)
I've asked myself for a long time
if there's a higher purpose to
this. But... I haven't found it.

YOUNG PAUL
Of all the families, why us?

ADELARD
Moreauxs have always been simple
people. We were peasants in
France, farmers in Canada, factory
workers here. Then there's me, a
drifter. But you -- you're
different, Paul. You're going to
be educated. A new beginning.

Young Paul feels burdened by the expectation, but accepts it.

ADELARD (CONT'D)
I know it's tempting, Paul, but you
cannot tell a soul. Do you
understand me? No one.

Paul nods. Adelard checks his watch, looks for the bus.

ADELARD (CONT'D)
There are a couple more things you
should know. First, avoid having
your picture taken. When you're in
the Fade, there won't be an image.
But even when you're not in the
Fade, film won't capture you right,
not anymore. But most of all, Paul
-- use the Fade only when
absolutely necessary.

Paul holds out the Polaroid, challenging...

YOUNG PAUL
Like this?

ADELARD
That was stupid of me. Reckless.

YOUNG PAUL
I don't see what the big deal is.

ADELARD
It's tempting to Fade all the time.
To move among the world like a
ghost. The power, it's incredible,
but it comes at a price.
(off Paul's look)
When you're in the Fade, you get
these... urges. They can take you
over. It has a life of its own.

YOUNG PAUL
How often do you Fade?

Adelard doesn't answer, but his eyes tell him, "too much".

ADELARD
I pray your experience is different
than mine, but be very careful.

Young Paul nods, nervous.

ADELARD (CONT'D)
Paul, if there is a mission in all
this, it's to find the next fader.

YOUNG PAUL
What if I can't?

ADELARD
I felt the same way when Theo said
this to me. He told me I'd know
what the signs mean when they came
to me, and he was right.

Young Paul nods again, trusting him despite his fears.
They hear the rumble of a BUS as it approaches the Square.

ADELARD (CONT'D)
Find the next fader, Paul.
Find him and warn him.

The PETER PAN bus pulls up.

ADELARD (CONT'D)
 Don't forget your responsibility.
 After you, the cycle *will* go on.

The bus door opens with a *THUNK*. Adelard climbs aboard. *

EXT. FRENCHTOWN STREET - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Oscar's Fade POV follows Adult Paul through Frenchtown. Feeling that he's not alone, Paul looks over his shoulder. The POV retreats behind a van. We can hear him breathing.

INT. FRENCHTOWN INN - NIGHT (PRESENT)

We follow Adult Paul up the stairs as he approaches his room. The door is slightly ajar and the light is on inside.

Standing at the door jamb, Paul listens carefully. Hears movement inside, then nothing. He pushes the door open.

INSIDE PAUL'S ROOM

Paul pokes his head inside, but finds the room EMPTY. Slowly he ENTERS, careful not to make a sound. He holds out his hand, feeling for someone who may or may not be there.

He peers into the BATHROOM but no one's there. He turns around as the front door suddenly swings open --

He jumps back -- as MEREDITH enters. She screams, startled.

PAUL
 ...Merry?

She smiles wanly.

MEREDITH
 Surprise.

Paul sits, absorbing this unexpected twist of events.

PAUL
 What're you doing?

MEREDITH
 Getting coffee.

She holds up packets of grinds for the room's coffee machine.

PAUL
 I meant "up here". In Monument.

MEREDITH

I know... I'm worried about you. Besides disappearing on me, you accosted that photographer, then left town in the middle of the night -- to go home, where you haven't been since you left for college.

(sits next to him)

Whatever's happening,
I want to help you --

PAUL

-- You can't.

MEREDITH

You don't have to go through it alone.

PAUL

I have to.

MEREDITH

Can I ask -- who died?

PAUL

No one.

MEREDITH

Oh.

PAUL

So far... How'd you find me?

MEREDITH

Monument isn't exactly bustling with places to stay. What did you mean 'so far'?

PAUL

Nothing.

MEREDITH

Paul, what are you doing here?

He looks out the window to the back yard below... CUT TO:

EXT. FRENCHTOWN INN / BACK YARD - SAME

Oscar's Fade POV -- looking up at Paul in the window.

BACK INSIDE PAUL'S ROOM

MEREDITH
Is someone sick?

PAUL
Kind of.

MEREDITH
What's wrong?

Paul doesn't say, leaving her frustrated.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
You used to tell me everything.

Paul smiles to himself, shaking his head.

PAUL
Never 'everything'.

MEREDITH
We were good together.
I know you felt it, too.

PAUL
It's not that simple.

MEREDITH
Whatever's wrong, whatever's *been*
wrong, we can work through it.
Let me do what I can.

PAUL
You're not the problem.

Meredith watches Paul, uncomfortable in his own skin.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Look -- I really do appreciate that
you'd come all this way, but it's
better for me if you're not here.

MEREDITH
Well, since I have no idea what
brought you back here, I'll just
have to take your word for it.

PAUL
You should hit the road before it
gets too late.

MEREDITH

It's already too late. I'd be
asleep before I hit the Mass Pike.

She waits for Paul to invite her to stay with him.

PAUL

I'll get you a room.

MEREDITH

I'll take care of it. Why don't I
give you a lift back to the City
tomorrow? Give us time to talk.

PAUL

I don't know how long I'll be here.

MEREDITH

Can we at least have breakfast?

PAUL

Sorry, Merry. I'm meeting Jules.

MEREDITH

Oh Jules! I'd like to see him
again. Is he still painting?

PAUL

You met him *once*.

MEREDITH

And talked to him, when he called
for your birthday last year.

PAUL

We have family stuff to go over.

Meredith sighs, giving up for the moment. Paul opens the
door for her, silently ushering her out.

PAUL (CONT'D)

See you back in New York.

Meredith wants to scream. Instead she just walks out.

INT. ADULT JULES' BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Jules is in bed with his cute wife SUSIE. She kisses his
chest, trying to get some tonight, but Jules' mind is
elsewhere. The home phone rings. He reaches for it.

SUZIE

Jules, donnnn't...

He looks at the phone's caller ID. A 646 area code.

JULES
New York number. It must be Paul.

To Suzie's annoyance, Jules picks up.

JULES (CONT'D)
Moreaux.

MEREDITH (O.S. - ON PHONE)
Jules? Hi, it's Meredith Martin,
we met once in New York with your
cousin --

JULES
-- Meredith, how are you?

MEREDITH (O.S. - ON PHONE)
I'm sorry for calling you at home,
but the number was listed.

JULES
That's okay. How are you?

MEREDITH (O.S. - ON PHONE)
Well for starters, I'm in Monument.

JULES
You came with Paul?

MEREDITH
More or less. I need to talk to
you about him.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM / FRENCHTOWN INN - SAME / LATE NIGHT

Paul lays in bed, staring at the Polaroid -- at the 5 year-old Rosanna vamping for the camera, as he remembers --

EXT. MONUMENT SQUARE - NIGHT (20 YEARS AGO)

The door to Adelard's bus closes. As it rumbles out of the square, Young Paul watches his uncle leave town for good.

The roar of the bus becomes distant, returning the Square to silence. Then he hears the heel-clicks of a woman walking on the other side of the Square. Paul sees it's Young Rosanna.

Despite the late hour, she's made up for a date. She walks the deserted streets with purpose.

Feeling as if someone's following her, she looks over her shoulder but sees no one. CUT TO:

YOUNG PAUL'S FADE P.O.V:

Following her, using the Fade despite Adelard's warnings.

EVENTUALLY

Rosanna walks down 4th Street, to the nicest house in town.

Paul's POV stops as Rosanna walks past the Mercedes in the driveway. The sign on the garage reads: **TOUBERT ENTERPRISES**

A young RUDOLPHE TOUBERT (30s, small-town gangster with big-town style) opens the door and kisses her hungrily.

Toubert looks out like he knows he's being watched, but upon seeing nothing, he steps back inside, shutting the door.

Young Paul materializes out of the Fade, utterly devastated.

EXT. SLATER HOUSE - LATE NIGHT (PRESENT)

We're watching the Slater's house from a distance, slowly PUSHING IN throughout this scene. We see into a window -- the curtain's drawn but we can only make out the shadowy figures Slater looming over Oscar as we track closer.

SLATER (IN SILHOUETTE)

Teach you to run out on me...

We see a violent movement and hear SMACK of the leather belt against skin. We hear Oscar cry out in pain, then sob.

SLATER (CONT'D)

Stop your crying.

WHACK!

OSCAR (IN SILHOUETTE)

...I can't...if you don't stop hitting me.

WHACK!! Suddenly, the silhouette that was Oscar DISAPPEARS.

SLATER (IN SILHOUETTE)

How did you... do that?

Now we've reached the window, looking in past the break in the curtains. A bewildered Slater appears to be alone.

But suddenly -- out of nowhere... WHAM!!! -- Slater's struck by an unseen force that sends him to the floor.

Blood pours out of his head. Half-lidded eyes hold no life.

TIME LAPSE until morning light fills the room.

EXT. MONUMENT / WIDE SHOT - DAWN

Several shots of the sun rising over Monument.
Over the factory, etc. The sky is blood orange...

INT. PAUL'S ROOM / FRENCHTOWN INN - MORNING

Tracking across the floor of Paul's room at the inn... We hear him gasp as he wakes. We BOOM up but the bed is empty.

INT. HALLWAY / FRENCHTOWN INN - MORNING

Paul climbs the steps and goes over to Meredith's door. He's about to knock on it -- to explain himself to her -- but he thinks the better of it and walks back down the steps.

EXT. MONUMENT DINER - MORNING

This diner on Monument Square could be from an Edward Hopper painting, except for the plywood in place of a broken window.

Meredith sits across from Jules.

MEREDITH

I don't want you to think I'm some
crazed ex-girlfriend.

JULES

Why would I think that?

MEREDITH

It's not exactly around the corner
to New York.

JULES

When I visited Paul, you guys
weren't dating yet.

MEREDITH

We were just friends then, and
colleagues... Things changed just
in the last few months.

JULES

Even then I thought you two had
potential.

MEREDITH

You're not the only one.

She grins darkly. Jules sees what Paul would see in her.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

I can handle Paul breaking up with me. But I'm worried about him. Something is definitely off.

JULES

"Off"?

MEREDITH

He's been...erratic. The other night he shoved a photographer and grabbed his camera.

JULES

Why?

MEREDITH

Paul asked that his picture not be taken, but the guy did it anyway.

Jules doesn't get it.

JULES

Some people are camera shy, but...

MEREDITH

Paul is a freak about that. That's why we use that creepy painting of yours instead of a publicity still.

JULES

I'm flattered. So why do you think he's been ducking you?

MEREDITH

(shrugs, then)

I'm guessing it's related to why he's here.

JULES

He's here because of the fire.

MEREDITH

...What fire?

JULES

Someone torched the church where we went as kids.

He points out the window; Meredith can see part of the burned down church a block away. Suddenly she hears Paul --

PAUL (O.S.)

You two look awful cozy.

She turns to him. Paul looks pissed, seeing them together.

JULES
Have a seat, Paula...
Tell us what's on your mind.

PAUL
No thanks, Julie.

He heads for the exit.

MEREDITH
Paul, wait!

Jules stops her from getting up. He'll handle this.

EXT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Jules emerges from the diner and catches up with Paul standing there, calling information on his mobile.

JULES
You're lucky to have someone like
her looking out for you.

Paul ignores him for the moment, talking into the phone:

PAUL
Monument Cab Company, please...

JULES
I hope you've got all day.
(then)
Maybe I can give you a lift.
Where are you going?

PAUL
You don't want to go all the way up
there.

JULES
Paul, don't speak to me in riddles.
Where are you headed?

PAUL
Sisters of Mercy.
(off Jules' look)
Some business with the prioress.

JULES
What kind of business?

PAUL
Will you stop being Jules the
fucking cop for one minute?

JULES
Only if you tell me what you're
doing at the convent.

PAUL
Just curious about that Slater kid.

JULES
Oscar Slater? I told you his alibi
checked out.

PAUL
You believe anything that guy says?
His breath smells like a bar rag.

JULES
How would you know?

PAUL
I spoke to him last night.

JULES
Paul, what are you doing?

PAUL
Just trying to help.

JULES
I don't need it. I told you.

PAUL
Then who burned down St. Jude's?

Jules has no answer. His radio beeps with an incoming call.
He unhooks the receiver from his shoulder and speaks into it.

JULES
Moreaux here.

Paul can hear the response from Jules' officer McAllister: *

OFFICER MCALLISTER
Chief, you won't believe this. **We** *
just found Bill Slater, murdered. *

The color drains from Paul's face as the responsibility for *
this comes crashing down on him. Jules notes his response. *

INT. DINER - SAME

Meredith watches the two men outside, trying to understand what's going on. Paul looks **devastated**. *

EXT. DINER - SAME

Jules hangs up and looks at his cousin...

JULES

You're coming with me.

He unlocks the doors of his Police Cruiser.

PAUL

...I-I had nothing to do with it. *

JULES

I never said you did.

INT. JULES' CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

They get into the car.

JULES

But the fact is, you were one of the last people to see him, so I need details.

PAUL

There's not much to tell.

KNOCK-KNOCK on Jules' window. It's Meredith.

MEREDITH

Uh...where you guys going?

EXT. SLATER HOUSE - DAY

Jules' police car pulls up to the house of Bill Slater and parks behind the other Monument Police cruiser. Jules and Paul get out. Officer McAllister walks up to Jules.

As the two policemen confer, Paul looks at the door where he stood hours ago, now blocked off by CRIME SCENE tape.

Meredith's Saab pulls up. She gets out, watching Paul peer into the window. Paul sees Officer McAllister go back inside the house. Paul walks over to Jules.

JULES

Victim was struck in the face with his own hammer.

PAUL
Sounds personal.

Meredith ventures forward. We FOLLOW her as she looks through the window -- glimpsing the large splayed out body of Bill Slater on his floor. She turns away in horror.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Where's Oscar?

JULES
A kid couldn't take down a man the size of Slater.

PAUL
If he doesn't see him coming...

JULES
I have to process the crime scene, bring in the county coroner, and plow through God knows how much paperwork.

PAUL
You don't get murders every day.

JULES
The last one was Toubert shooting Omer LaBatt.

PAUL
Didn't he get off on self defense?

JULES
(waves him off)
Something about that case never added up.

PAUL
Lucky for him you were only in high school.

JULES
Too bad for my sister. Listen, I want you to stick around Monument. I'll need a statement later.

PAUL
Of course.

Jules walks into the house. Paul turns to Meredith:

PAUL (CONT'D)
I need to borrow your car.

MEREDITH
Where are you going?

PAUL
Does it matter?

MEREDITH
Not if I go with you.

Paul weighs his options...

INT. MEREDITH'S SAAB / DRIVING - DAY

Meredith starts the car...

MEREDITH
Where to?

Paul points. Meredith makes a left.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Why didn't you tell me you came
here because of the fire?

PAUL
Is that what Jules told you?

MEREDITH
Is he right?

PAUL
Julie's always right.

MEREDITH
How do you know the dead man's son
is named Oscar?

PAUL
Foster son.
(then)
He may've set the fire.

MEREDITH
Think he killed his foster father?

Paul reluctantly nods.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Why do you know so much about him?
(off his SILENCE)
Paul?

He points for her to make a right turn. She does...

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Are you going to tell me where
we're heading?

PAUL
To find out more about him.

MEREDITH
You should leave this to Jules.

PAUL
Jules doesn't know what he's
dealing with.

MEREDITH
And you do?

Paul doesn't say.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Have you met him before?

PAUL
No.

MEREDITH
Have you?

PAUL
I said "no".

MEREDITH
I'm just trying to understand why
you think you've got insight on
him. What's your connection to
this boy?

*
*
*

PAUL
I don't know...

MEREDITH
You're not making sense.

PAUL
I'll handle it. Just drive.

Rebuffed, Meredith shakes her head and drives in silence.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

They haven't spoken since. Monument is in the background.
Paul directs her onto Mountain road. As she does, the Saab
passes a sign indicating SISTERS OF MERCY is at the top.

MEREDITH
We're going to a *convent*?

PAUL
Don't worry, I won't leave you
there.

She can't help but crack a smile and heads up Mountain Rd.

EXT. SISTERS OF MERCY - DAY

Sisters of Mercy is a Gothic, stone convent atop a small mountain, overlooking the town Monument.

Meredith's Saab pulls into the small lot.

MEREDITH (IN THE CAR)
Beautiful view...

PAUL (IN THE CAR)
Enjoy it. I'll be right back.

INT. SISTERS OF MERCY CONVENT - DAY

SISTER ANUNCIATA (50) exits her office marked "PRIORESS" where she's met by a YOUNGER NUN.

SISTER ANUNCIATA
Be sure to change Father
Gastineau's bedding every day,
plus leave him a fresh towel.

YOUNGER NUN
And a mint on the pillow?

The prioress cracks a smile.

SISTER ANUNCIATA
He's been through a lot recently.

*

They hear FOOTSTEPS on the stone floor but when Sister Anunciata looks to see who it is, no one is there. She continues walking with her younger charge.

SISTER ANUNCIATA (CONT'D)
As far as meals go, we should cut
down on his salt...

As they walk away, we see the door to her office open and close for the second time, but no one seems to be there.

YOUNGER NUN
Oh Sister, there's someone here to
speak with you.

Sister Anunciata comes over to Paul.

SISTER ANUNCIATA
Can I help you?

PAUL
May we speak in private?

INT. SISTER ANUNCIATA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A pair of hands rifles through Sister Anunciata's files.
They stop, finding one of interest labeled: **Oscar Slater.**

Suddenly the doorknob squeaks as it turns.
The manila folder falls to the ground.

The door to the Sister's single bathroom opens and shuts --
just as Sister Anunciata enters with Paul from the hallway.

SISTER ANUNCIATA
Father Gastineau never fails to
mention he baptized a famous
author.

She turns on the lights and they enter. Paul feels the skin
on his neck grow cold. He rubs his neck, looking around...

Sister Anunciata points to the pendant around Paul's neck.

SISTER ANUNCIATA (CONT'D)
That's lovely.

PAUL
Father Gastineau gave it to me at
confirmation.

SISTER ANUNCIATA
People erroneously say Jude is the
saint of lost causes.

PAUL
Isn't he?

SISTER ANUNCIATA
Desperate, not lost.
(shuts the office DOOR)
So -- you have your privacy.

PAUL
I came to ask about Oscar Slater.

SISTER ANUNCIATA
(stiffens, defensive)
What about him?

PAUL

I understand he was brought here as an infant.

SISTER ANUNCIATA

(nods, then)

But let me be clear -- Sisters of Mercy is not an orphanage. We were responding to an extraordinary situation within the community...

PAUL

And what was that?

SISTER ANUNCIATA

I can't get into details with you but when someone leaves a child on your doorstep, literally or figuratively, it's incumbent upon me to place him in a home. After that, it's in God's hands.

PAUL

Or some lousy foster parent.

SISTER ANUNCIATA

We did our best.

PAUL

Who were his real parents?

The sister looks at him sternly...

SISTER ANUNCIATA

You know I can't tell you that.

Paul notices the dropped manila folder on the floor, under her desk, lying open and empty. Are his eyes deceiving him? He's sees that it is in fact labeled *Oscar Slater*.

SISTER ANUNCIATA (CONT'D)

The rules of the state, not to mention the seal of the cloth, prevent me.

Paul looks over at her bathroom, at the slit of space between the stone floor and the bottom of the door.

PAUL

Yes, of course, sister.

SISTER ANUNCIATA

May I ask what is your interest in the boy?

PAUL
Excuse me, may I use your restroom?

SISTER ANUNCIATA
The toilet's on the blink.

PAUL
I only need to wash my hands.

SISTER ANUNCIATA
Very well.

Paul goes over to the door and opens it -- no one seems to be there, but Paul feels an overwhelming sensation...

Suddenly he's shoved aside -- thudding against the door jamb.

A second later, the door to the HALLWAY gets thrown open.

SISTER ANUNCIATA (CONT'D)
Mister Moreaux!?

Paul brushes past the confused nun and rushes out --

INT. HALLWAY / SISTERS OF MERCY - CONTINUOUS

Paul follows the *clack-clack-clack* of Oscar's footsteps.

INT. MEREDITH'S SAAB / PARKED - DAY

Sitting behind the wheel, still parked in the convent lot, Meredith glimpses Paul RUNNING out of the convent.

OUTSIDE - PAUL

Rounds the corner of the stone building, to the side of the convent which is bordered by the woods --

WHAM!! Something strikes Paul in the stomach!

Paul doubles over, to his knees. He looks up, seeing no one there, but feeling him nearby. Paul gasps for air...

PAUL
...I know what you are--

WHAM! A gash appears across his cheek as he's struck down.

Oscar remains unseen, but he's right there.

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)
What do you want from me?

PAUL
To help...

He hears Oscar laugh. Paul climbs back to his knees, holding his arms out, trying to feel for him.

Oscar's Fade POV moves around Paul, staying just out of reach, feinting left, feinting right -- toying with Paul...

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'm like you.

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)
No one's like me.

PAUL
I can Fade, too.

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)
Fade...?

PAUL
Disappear, to the eyes.

We hear Oscar's twisted giggle, then...

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)
Prove it.

Paul shakes his head "no".

PAUL
The last time I Faded, the urges made me do something... Something I've regretted ever since. It turned me into a monster. I promised myself -- never again.

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)
You don't know what you're talking about. You're goddamn liar.

He trips Paul, who falls on his back, holds his hands up.

PAUL
Your skin tingles all over as your heart slows down and the whole world seems to just...stop. Pain shoots through your body, and you get cold, down to your bones.

Silence, which Paul takes as Oscar listening.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Then there's the urges. They can
 make you do things you wouldn't
 otherwise do, like set fires.

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)
 It was you... I never asked for
 this life!

Paul holds his arms up to protect his face --

PAUL
 I'm not your father!

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)
 Then who are you?

PAUL
 Paul Moreaux...

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)
 (mispronounces)
 Not Rudolphe Toubert?

PAUL
 How do you know that name?

He receives an unseen blow to the face -- *WHAM!*

EXT. TOUBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT (20 YEARS AGO)

Young Paul's Fade POV: as he peers into a garage door
 window, looking inside... Paul sees (Young) Toubert's knife
 lying on his desk. He looks further in and sees --

Toubert behind Young Rosanna, bent over a stack of Monument
 Gazettes as he fucks her relentlessly. Feeling Young Paul's
 presence, she glances up toward the window but sees nothing.

Paul's POV peels away and steps around the side of the house.

A REVERSE SHOT shows Young Paul, now out of the Fade,
 shivering, his labored breath condensed. He's devastated.

HONK!!! A flatbed TRUCK loaded with scabs drives past
 Toubert's house and honks to let him know they've arrived.

Toubert comes to the window of the garage door and looks
 outside as the second flatbed passes, also honking.

Outside, Young Paul slips away from Toubert's property and
 runs off toward the factory. A third truck rumbles past him.

Rosanna appears over Toubert's shoulder, awed and frightened by the small army he amassed to descend on the factory.

Knowing these men will go up against her father, her uncle, their people, Rosanna lowers her head in shame.

TOUBERT

You got something to say?

Rosanna shakes her head "no" and recedes to their love nest, ready to give herself to Toubert again...permanently.

EXT. SISTERS OF MERCY / SIDE OF THE BUILDING - DAY (PRESENT)

As Meredith rounds the building, she sees Paul crumple to the ground (following the unseen blow he received from Oscar).

MEREDITH

Paul?!

She runs over to him. Sees the gash on his face.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Jesus -- what happened to you?

She hears a noise in the woods. Looks up and sees a DEER.

Oscar's POV retreats until they are no longer visible to him.

Paul knows he's lost him for now. Meredith looks at the wound on his face, she touches it. He grimaces in pain.

PAUL

He was here.

MEREDITH

Who... The kid?

PAUL

Oscar.

MEREDITH

That's who you were talking to?

PAUL

He's gone now.

Meredith looks around the woods but sees no one.

MEREDITH

He couldn't have gone far.

PAUL

Does it matter?

MEREDITH
Was he really here?

Paul notices a crumpled piece of paper left on the ground.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
What is that?

Paul opens it up. It's a TRANSFER OF GUARDIANSHIP.

His eyes widen seeing the names *Rudolphe and Rosanna Toubert*.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Where did you get this?

PAUL
He must've stolen it. *

MEREDITH
You mean *you* stole it.

PAUL
No...

She looks concerned -- things may be worse than she imagined.

MEREDITH
Let's get you back to the hotel and
get some ice on that, okay?

We FOLLOW her as she walks around the corner of the convent
as a concerned Sister Anunciata comes out...

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
I-I've got it under control.

SISTER ANUNCIATA
What's wrong with him?

MEREDITH
He's not himself at the moment,
but I'll take care of it.

She takes out her I-phone. Looks up Jules' number, but when
she tries to call she gets NO SERVICE here atop the mountain.

Paul comes around the corner. Sees Meredith and Sister
Anunciata, who's shocked by the gash across his cheek.

PAUL
Thank you for your time, Sister.

INT. MEREDITH'S SAAB / DRIVING - DAY

A thick silence as Meredith drives Paul down the mountain.

PAUL
Our last night together... I want
you to know -- I didn't leave.

MEREDITH
So you said.

FLASH TO: INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM / NYC - ONE MONTH AGO

*

Meredith wakes up in Paul's otherwise empty bed, but this time we see this from Paul's Fade P.O.V, watching her.

MEREDITH
Paul...?

Getting no answer, she peers into his bathroom but doesn't find him. Paul's Fade POV follows her as she searches in vain for him. She's not alarmed, just confused.

Suddenly she turns around and stares at "us", feeling Paul's presence but not understanding what's really going on.

BACK TO SCENE: MEREDITH'S CAR (PRESENT)

MEREDITH
At first I thought maybe you went
for a run. I waited for --

PAUL
-- For three hours. You made
yourself coffee, complained I
didn't have decaf. Then you called
your mother, discussed her physical
therapy, but then she got a call
from your sister so you let her go.
Then you read an article about
Parisian fashion in the --

MEREDITH
-- How do you know all this?

PAUL
Merry, I told you. I was there.

MEREDITH
Where were you hiding? And why?

Paul hesitates. This is big. He decides to forge ahead...

PAUL
I have a uh, a condition.

MEREDITH
Condition? Like...a disease?

PAUL
Sort of. But when I first got it,
I thought it was a gift.

MEREDITH
Is it physical or psychological?

PAUL
...Both. It's called the Fade.

MEREDITH
I've never heard of it.

PAUL
It's rare.

MEREDITH
How rare?

PAUL
It only runs in my family.

MEREDITH
...*Only* your family?

PAUL
As far as I know.

MEREDITH
Is it curable?

PAUL
No.

MEREDITH
The doctors said that?

PAUL
It's... not that kind of thing.

MEREDITH
I-I don't understand.

PAUL
It's hard to explain.

MEREDITH
Try.

PAUL
You're going to think...

MEREDITH
What?
(off his SILENCE)
Paul. Just say it. What is it?

Paul doesn't know how.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
This..."Fade" lets you to be in a
room with me only I can't see you?

PAUL
Yes.

MEREDITH
Like a ghost.

PAUL
Not exactly. If you touched me,
you'd feel me.

MEREDITH
This... this is insane.

PAUL
It sounds that way, but it's not.

MEREDITH
Paul -- you're telling me you can
become *invisible*.

PAUL
I know.

MEREDITH
It's not possible.

PAUL
It is.

MEREDITH
How?

PAUL
I don't know. I just...can.

MEREDITH
So -- do it.

PAUL
No.

Meredith laughs darkly.

MEREDITH

Come on, Paul. You can't just tell me you've got this *power* and not show me. I want to see it.

PAUL

I don't do it anymore.

MEREDITH

You just said you did a month ago.

PAUL

Not by choice.

MEREDITH

You're not making any sense!

PAUL

I need you to listen to me, Meredith. Listen, and don't judge.

MEREDITH

You're not making it easy.

PAUL

I know how this sounds. That's why I've never told anyone. I haven't faded *by choice* since I was a kid. Since I first came into it.

MEREDITH

Why? Hell, if I could, I'd do it all the time --

PAUL

-- There's a cost.

MEREDITH

A cost?

PAUL

At St. Jude's they taught us, every day we choose to do good or evil. Create or destroy. A or B. Those choices define us, make us human.

Meredith nods, unsure where he's going with this.

PAUL (CONT'D)

What if you could no longer choose?
(off her puzzled look)
Something...compels me.

MEREDITH

To do what?

PAUL

B.

Meredith grows even more concerned by his cryptic revelation.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I've fought it, for years. Put it in a box, locked away. Almost let myself forget about it. Then one day, the lid opened.

MEREDITH

This 'one day' was...

PAUL

A month ago.

Meredith realizes this is why Paul disappeared on her.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'd been having these weird, dark dreams for weeks, but I didn't understand them. Or didn't want to. But that night was different. I woke up and went into the Fade for the first time in twenty years. I was terrified you'd wake up next to me and know.

MEREDITH

But why then? After all that time.

PAUL

It's when Oscar came into the Fade.

MEREDITH

Oscar?

PAUL

The next fader. He's just like me.

MEREDITH

You didn't kill anybody.

Paul feels terrible but chooses not to correct her.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

What does Jules think of all this?

PAUL

He doesn't know.

MEREDITH

I thought it runs in your family.

PAUL

One person in each generation.
Only the faders know. When it was
my time, my uncle came back to find
me. That's why I'm here, to warn
Oscar. But I put it off and got
here too late.

MEREDITH

It's not like it's your fault.

PAUL

Everything he's done is my fault.
(then)
He needs my help.

MEREDITH

You need help.

PAUL

Merry --

MEREDITH

-- Not the kind I can give you. I
just don't know what to do for you.

PAUL

You can choose to believe me. Even
if you don't understand, you can
believe that I wouldn't be saying
this if it weren't true. That's
all I'm asking of you.

MEREDITH

You're asking a lot.

PAUL

I get that it sounds implausible,
that it rests on me doing something
I claim I can do but won't.

MEREDITH

You can solve that pretty quickly.

PAUL

I don't want to risk it.

MEREDITH

What's the worst that can happen?

He doesn't want to say. She shakes her head in disbelief.

PAUL

How else can you explain how I knew *exactly* what you were doing in my apartment when waiting for me?

MEREDITH

You saw the newspaper open to that article. You know I like regular coffee and you never have it. You know I talk to my mom all the time. Paul, you know me better than anyone. I thought I could say the same about you.

He knows it's hopeless... Stopped at a red light, Meredith sees she's got a signal on her I-phone. She calls someone.

PAUL

Who are you calling?

MEREDITH

Jules. Maybe he'll know what to --

PAUL

-- You can't tell him, Meredith. You can't tell *anybody*.

She hits SEND on her phone but Paul rips it out of her hands.

PAUL (CONT'D)

This was a mistake.

MEREDITH

What?

PAUL

Trusting you.

Paul gets out of the Saab.

MEREDITH

Shit. Paul!

He tosses the phone back in the car and slams the door shut.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

PAUL!

He walks behind her car. Another car HONKS at her to get going. She looks in her rear view and sees Paul turn down an alley and go out of sight. She slams the wheel, frustrated.

EXT. MONUMENT STREET - NIGHT (20 YEARS AGO)

Young Paul runs to Monument Plastics, catching up with Young Jules, both terrified for their dads and the impending fight.

YOUNG JULES

You asked me before, whose power
I'd want. The Torch. I'd burn
those fucking scabs to the ground.

Paul says nothing of his new power. They turn a corner, see:

OUTSIDE THE FACTORY

Violence has already broken out. Illuminated by the trucks' headlights, FACTORY WORKERS and SCABS battle. Shadows shift in the dusty shafts of light. Fists... Clubs... Fear...

A grotesque ballet of amateur combatants, punctuated by grunts and groans that punctuate the otherwise eerie quiet.

Young Jules scans the mess, trying to spot their fathers.

Young Paul looks at the battle, murder in his eyes...

He sees a FACTORY WORKER fall nearby. Paul eyes the short lead pipe in his hand which he used for a weapon.

Young Jules spots his uncle Lou. Looks back for his cousin.

YOUNG JULES

Paul! Over here!

But Paul is gone.

We CUT TO the fallen factory worker. An unseen force pulls his short lead pipe out of his hands. It DISAPPEARS.

Young Paul's Fade POV moves through the melee...

We hear his breath as he STRIKES DOWN scabs left and right, breaking ribs with unseen blows. No one sees him coming.

He single-handedly turns the tide of the battle.

Paul's POV spots his father in the melee. Without thinking:

YOUNG PAUL (O.S.)

Dad!!

Lou looks over, distracted by his son's disembodied voice. He's struck in the back of the head by a sawed off bat!

Everything seems to slow down suddenly as Lou lies on the ground, a pool of blood growing around his head.

Young Paul's Fade POV pulls away as he stumbles away, while others start to cluster around his father.

UNCLE VICTOR
Call an ambulance!

ANOTHER FACTORY WORKER
Too late, lookit him.

Paul's Fade POV recedes past Jules, who's looking for him.

YOUNG JULES
Paul! ...Where are you?

INT. ROSANNA'S BEAUTY - DAY (PRESENT)

Rosanna is blow-drying an OLD LADY's hair as Paul enters, clearly agitated and intense. Seeing the gash on his face, Rosanna turns off the blow-dryer.

ROSANNA
What's wrong, Paul, and what happened to your face?!

Paul ignores her question as he locks the front door.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)
What're you doing?

Intent on securing the salon, he strides past her heading for the back door. Rosanna turns to her client.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)
Mrs. Rosario, would you mind if I finish you up over there?

She points to the old-school dryer. The old lady sits underneath it and Rosanna turns it on. The dryer is loud -- the old lady can't hear their conversation.

Rosanna goes over to him as he locks the back door.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)
Why are you locking my doors?

PAUL
You didn't tell me the truth before, did you?

ROSANNA
What do you mean?

PAUL
You *had* a child.

ROSANNA
What? No.

PAUL
You gave birth.

ROSANNA
Yes, but... He didn't live.

PAUL
He did.

She looks at him, confused, thrown...

ROSANNA
No. No... We buried him.

PAUL
"We?" Who? Who was there?

ROSANNA
Just Rudy, me and Father Gastineau.

PAUL
Did you see inside the casket?

ROSANNA
I didn't have to...

PAUL
Apparently you *did*.

ROSANNA
What? What do you mean?

PAUL
He's alive, Rosanna.

ROSANNA
That can't be.

PAUL
(points to his wound)
I just met him.

Rosanna sinks into one of her chairs, trembling.

ROSANNA
No... It's not possible...

PAUL
 Anything's possible.
 (then)
 They lied to you.

Rosanna shakes her head "no."

ROSANNA
 Why?

PAUL
 "Rudy" never wanted kids, did he?

ROSANNA
 So?

PAUL
 Didn't want the inconvenience. The
 loss of your undivided attentions.

ROSANNA
 You don't know him.

PAUL
 Made a hefty donation to the church
 in exchange for a sham burial.

ROSANNA
 That's my husband you're talking
 about, whether you like it or not.

PAUL
 I don't.

ROSANNA
 I don't care. How dare you? Get
 out. Get the fuck out of my salon.

PAUL
 Take a look at this first.

He takes out the document and tries to hand it over, but she
 whacks his hand away and it falls to the ground.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 What're you afraid of? The truth?

After a moment, Rosanna picks it up and unfolds it. She goes
 numb as she reads the Transfer of Guardianship.

ROSANNA
 Oh Jesus...

PAUL
Is that really your signature?

ROSANNA
No...

PAUL
Figures. The lines look unsteady.
Your husband must've forged it.

ROSANNA
...He's really alive...?

Paul nods. A shaken Rosanna turns towards Paul.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)
What's... what's his name?

PAUL
Oscar. He has your eyes.

Tears well up in Rosanna's face. Paul holds her in his arms.

ROSANNA
Where...? Where is he?

PAUL
I don't know exactly.

ROSANNA
But you saw him!

PAUL
I ran into him, but he's not there
anymore.

ROSANNA
Where?
(off Paul's SILENCE)
I need to see him.

Paul shakes his head "no". She pushes away from him.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)
Tell me where you saw him!

PAUL
It's not a good idea. Not now.

ROSANNA
Why not?!

PAUL
He's sick.

ROSANNA
What's wrong with him?

PAUL
...I don't know exactly.

ROSANNA
Goddamnit, I want to see my son!

PAUL
He needs help.

ROSANNA
I have money. I can help him.

PAUL
You can't.

ROSANNA
How do you know if you don't know
what's wrong?

PAUL
Rosanna -- last night...
He killed his foster father.

Rosanna looks numb... Needing to do something, she swipes her keys and head for the door, but finds it locked.

ROSANNA
Why is this locked?!

PAUL
For your protection.

ROSANNA
Rudy's gonna need protection from
me.

PAUL
I'm not talking about him.
(holds up the document)
I got this from Oscar.

ROSANNA
Are you saying he wants to hurt me?

PAUL
He might.

She's stunned. Paul gently puts his hands on her.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Let me protect you.

ROSANNA

I need to speak with my husband.

She unlocks the door and walks outside. As Paul watches her get into her Mercedes, he takes out his cell phone and dials Jules. As she drives off, Paul gets Jules' voice mail.

PAUL

Jules call me, immediately. We need to talk about your sister.

INT. BATHROOM / TOUBERT HOUSE - DAY

Toubert (now late 50s, still dangerous) goes through the semi-daily agony of take a piss. Sweat pours down his reddened face. A vein pops out of his forehead. As he clutches one of his kidneys we see a GRISLY SCAR scar from long ago.

Finally we hear the release stream into the bowl, but it does little to alleviate Toubert's pain.

Out the window, he sees Rosanna's car pull up fast.

TOUBERT

Fuckin' finally.

INT. TOUBERT'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Toubert wipes the sweat from his forehead as he comes out of the bathroom, Rosanna ascends the stairs to this floor.

TOUBERT

Rosy, where's my lunch already?

ROSANNA

What happened to our son?

Taken aback by her question, Toubert finally asks...

TOUBERT

What, medically? I don't remember exactly, it was so fast. Something to do with his heart not being right. Why are you even asking?

ROSANNA

I just had an interesting conversation with my cousin.

TOUBERT

Your cousin who?

ROSANNA

Paul.

(off his BLANK LOOK)
Paul Moreaux, the writer...

TOUBERT

Since when do you talk to him?

ROSANNA

He just showed up in town.

TOUBERT

He's not staying here.

ROSANNA

He's at the Frenchtown Inn but
thanks. He's just my family.

TOUBERT

Since when has your family said or
done anything good for us?

ROSANNA

He says our boy is still alive.

TOUBERT

Exactly what I'm talking about! A
bunch of lies, trying to poison us.

Rosanna pulls out the document and unfolds it for him.
Toubert can't quite hide the surprise on his face.

ROSANNA

That is definitely your signature,
and definitely *not* mine.

Toubert stands up tall, flashing a charming smile.

TOUBERT

Rosy...

ROSANNA

Don't. No more lies, Rudy.

TOUBERT

You were just opening the shop, and
I knew how much that meant to you
to make good, even with me staking
it. How could you've pulled it off
with a baby on your hip?

ROSANNA

So it's true then. My son's alive?

TOUBERT
 He was when I left him in Father
 Gastineau's hands.

Rosanna takes this all in, it's overwhelming...

ROSANNA
 How could you do this to me?

TOUBERT
 I was looking out for you, and your
 dreams -- which you've been living
 for the last twenty or so years.
 Haven't I given you a good life?

She nods... He holds up the Transfer of Guardianship.

TOUBERT (CONT'D)
 This was so long ago.
 (he CRUSHES it)
 It changes nothing.

Rosanna shakes her head in disagreement, turns to the door.

TOUBERT (CONT'D)
 Rosanna, where you going?

ROSANNA
 Leaving.

TOUBERT
 What about lunch?

ROSANNA
 Fuck you and your lunch, Rudy.
 If you can't see that THAT --
 (points to document)
 -- changes EVERYTHING then I...
 I can't be with you anymore.

She tries to open the door but Toubert's arm comes into view,
 shutting the door. He leans in front of the door.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)
 Get out of my way.

TOUBERT
 You don't wanna do this.

ROSANNA
 Why, are you going to send Javier
 to work me over, or would you have
 the balls to do it yourself?

Toubert smacks her hard! She looks at him with disgust.

TOUBERT

You know what I do for a living. I am not a gentle man. But in all these years, this is the first time I've laid hands on you. But you can push a man just so far.

ROSANNA

Move.

TOUBERT

Fine, go. Just know I'm shutting down your credit cards. The car's in your name so I can't report it as stolen, but you've got a week before the next lease payment.

ROSANNA

None of that means shit to me now.

Toubert opens the door for her.

TOUBERT

It will.

Rosanna walks out. Toubert watches her get into her car.

TOUBERT (CONT'D)

You'll be back by dinner.

INT. FRENCHTOWN INN - DAY

Meredith climbs the stairs, passing Paul's room. She sees an envelope by his door. A child's scrawl reads: UNCLE PAUL. Curiosity gets the better of her and she picks it up.

The envelope is unsealed. She opens it and pulls out a photograph of a smiling Yvette and her three kids.

Something clicks in her mind...

INT. MEREDITH'S ROOM / FRENCHTOWN INN - MOMENTS LATER

Meredith's in-room coffee maker percolates as she extracts the MEMORY CARD she confiscated from the photographer.

MOMENTS LATER

Click, click, click, Meredith moves from one picture to another on her laptop until she stops at an image of --

A BLURRY FIGURE standing at the podium. Everything around him, including the podium, is crisp. The next picture:

Paul moves towards camera, but once again, he's blurry while everything that's just as far from the lens is crystal clear.

The third picture, Paul's blurry figure looks monstrous as he reaches toward "us", confronting the photographer...

Meredith's mouth hangs slightly agape as she processes the possibility that Paul may have been telling the truth.

Outside the windows, winds blow through the trees...

A draft flows through the inn and sucks Meredith's door shut, startling her. She takes a deep breath -- she's jumpy.

Suddenly she hears the sound of the dead-bolt sliding shut.

Meredith turns around and sees no movement. But a closer look shows that the dead-bolt in her door is fully engaged.

She looks around the room, feeling somehow no longer alone.

MEREDITH

Paul...?

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)

Guess again.

MEREDITH

Oh God, it *is* true... Oscar?

She reaches out for him, groping around the room like a blind person -- only she can see everything *but* him.

Oscar's POV ducks and bobs just out of her grasp. He laughs, amused by her fear and inadequate attempts to cope.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

W-What do you want from me?

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)

Can he, or can't he?

MEREDITH

Can he what, Fade? I don't know.

Suddenly a lamp flies off the table -- SMASH! She screams!

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)

Liar!

Meredith lunges for the door and unbolts it, but the unseen force of Oscar hooks her neck and throws her!

Her back slams against the wall. She's cornered.

MEREDITH
H-He says he can.

His unseen foot slams into her sternum, doubling her over.

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)
"Says". He's a liar, too.

Meredith gasps for air.

OSCAR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You know what I do to liars?

Meredith's reaches for the coffee pot, grasps it and swings wildly -- SMASH -- the glass shatters on Oscar's face!

He screams! For a second, the hot coffee reveals contours of his pained face, until the liquid goes into the Fade.

Meredith charges past him, unbolts the door and runs out.

EXT. SLATER HOUSE - DAY

Paul arrives at the crime scene, but this time there's only one cruiser. Paul slips past the tape and peers inside. He sees the blood stain and chalked out figure on the floor.

He hears the clomping of footsteps coming up from the basement. Officer McAllister carries up cans of a flat, tin, squeeze container of Lacquer Thinner. He's on the radio:

OFFICER MCALLISTER (INTO RADIO)
Guy's got tons of this stuff. Must
put in floors for a living. Could
be our accelerant. ...Okay, I'll
send it to lab for comparison.

McAllister hangs up. He sees Paul in the living room.

PAUL
I'm looking for my cousin.

OFFICER MCALLISTER
Chief's back at the station.

Paul's mobile rings. Seeing that it's Meredith, he picks up.

MEREDITH (O.S. - ON PHONE)
 (shaken)
 Paul... He was here.

EXT. FRENCHTOWN INN

As Paul approaches the Inn with urgency. Rudolphe Toubert waits for him at the front porch.

TOUBERT
 You Paul Moreaux?

PAUL
 Yeah, why?

A BLUR behind Paul as someone jumps out and hits him between the shoulder blades with a blackjack! He falls to his knees.

Paul looks up at Toubert's right-hand man JAVIER (late 20s) as he kicks Paul in the chest, sending Paul flying into the building. Toubert now appears and looms over Paul.

TOUBERT
 Who the fuck are you to come here,
 talkin' shit to my wife?

PAUL
 She could've been a mother.
 You robbed her --

-- Toubert explodes with a downward punch to the bridge of Paul's nose -- CRACK! Paul cries out, holding his face.

Oscar's Fade POV: watching the confrontation from the street.

Meredith comes out of the safety of her locked car and rushes over -- but Javier grabs her. She struggles.

TOUBERT
 I don't care if she's your cousin.
 Stay clear of Rosanna, or we'll see
 what else gets broken.
 (turns to Meredith)
 Your boy better get the fuck outta
 Frenchtown.

He shoots one last look at Paul, then starts toward his Mercedes. Javier backs away, then catches up with his boss.

Meredith kneels next to Paul. She feels terrible.

MEREDITH
 I'm sorry I doubted you...

Paul sits against the foundation, holding his bleeding nose. He watches Toubert and Javier get in his car and drive off.

EXT. TOUBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT (20 YEARS AGO)

Young Paul's Fade POV watches Young Rosanna emerges from the garage with the younger gangster in his terry cloth bathrobe.

They kiss goodbye. Young Toubert pats Rosanna on the ass before she walks off... He goes back into the garage.

INSIDE TOUBERT'S GARAGE / HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Toubert feels someone else's presence, but sees no one but himself. His phone rings. He picks up on speaker phone.

YOUNG TOUBERT
Yeah, what's going on?

FLUNKIE (O.S. - ON SPEAKER PHONE)
We got a problem. One of the
factory workers got whacked in the
head real bad. It don't look good.

YOUNG TOUBERT
You gotta crack a few eggs to make
an omelette.

We hear Paul's breathing, as he cannot contain his anger. Young Paul's Fade POV looks at Toubert's knife.

Toubert hangs up. As he takes a swig of Mylanta, he sees his knife inexplicably float up from the counter, then DISAPPEAR.

Toubert thinks he's seeing things.

YOUNG TOUBERT (CONT'D)
Gotta get some sleep...

He hears the blade fold out of its body and CLICK into place.

Toubert backs away from the presence. He hears Young Paul's stifled laugh. With shaking hands, a confused and frightened Toubert opens a drawer and pulls out a .38 REVOLVER.

Young Paul's POV as he steps toward Toubert violently. We hear the blade pierce the flesh of Toubert's body.

The GUN clatters to the concrete floor as Toubert seizes up from the initial blow, then falls backwards...

His robe opens, revealing the wound above his kidney. As his body hits the floor, a knife appears (no longer in Paul's hands) in that wound, sticking out of Toubert's body.

We hear Young Paul's terrified, labored breathing. Suddenly the side door to the garage / office OPENS: it's Omer LaBatt.

OMER LABATT

Boss, I heard --

He freezes, seeing his employer lying on the floor, bleeding.

The gun lifts from the floor, disappearing. Omer can't believe his eyes. Then suddenly -- BAM!! A GUNSHOT rings out, seemingly from nowhere, hitting him in the chest.

Omer falls back, then crumples to the floor. A crimson floret appears on his chest as he bleeds profusely.

Young Paul comes out of the Fade, hyperventilating and shaking violently as he surveys the carnage he created...

Omer writhes on the floor, screaming in agony. Young Paul stands over him, looking for some way to help.

Omer suddenly grabs Young Paul by the shirt and pulls. The boy slips on the blood now spilled on the floor and falls on top of Omer. He rolls off, covered in the man's blood.

YOUNG PAUL

I'm s-sorry. S-so sorry...

But Omer looks up at him with lifeless eyes.

Snot runs down Young Paul nose, crying and trembling as he works through his sheer PANIC to cover his tracks.

Using a paper towel to avoid leaving prints, he puts the gun in Toubert's hand and the knife into Omer's, setting up a different impression of what went on here. We FOLLOW him...

OUTSIDE - CONTINUOUS

As he heads down the driveway, we look through the garage window -- back inside to see that Toubert stirs, still alive.

EXT. MONUMENT PLASTICS FACTORY - DAY (PRESENT)

Toubert's Mercedes pulls up to the front gate. Javier jumps out, opens the lock, unwraps the chain and opens the gate.

INT. FACTORY - MOMENTS LATER

Toubert and Javier ENTER the one-time heart of this town. The factory floor is dark but for the dusty shafts of light screaming through the yellowed windows, landing on dormant, cob-webbed machines for products never to be made again.

TOUBERT

A retailer's gotta walk in and
imagine all their shit everywhere,
so clear this place out.

Javier points at the injection molding machinery.

JAVIER

Sell it all?

TOUBERT

Too dated. These machines are
worth more as scrap. Bring in a
flatbed and haul it to the junkie.

They hear a sound, a chain clinking and clanking.

TOUBERT (CONT'D)

Somebody here?

JAVIER

I didn't see nobody when we pulled
up, but maybe someone took up here.
Times is bad, y'know?

TOUBERT

Yeah, well I didn't just buy a
fuckin' hotel. Take a look around,
and if you find anyone you don't
have to be nice. Just get 'em out.

Javier nods. Toubert grimaces with pain...

TOUBERT (CONT'D)

Where's the john?

JAVIER

Saw one on the way in.

Toubert shuffles off. Javier hears a door open somewhere.
He investigates the sound. He hears a voice whisper --

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)

Over here.

Javier looks around a large molding machine, but sees no one.

JAVIER

Yo, you best get outta here.

He looks but still can't see the trespasser.

OSCAR (O.S. CONT'D)

Here.

Javier spins around. Suddenly an unseen object SLAMS into his face -- SHATTERING his front teeth!

Toubert hears the sickly THUD and Javier hit the floor.

TOUBERT

Javi?

He looks back toward the factory floor and sees Javier writhing on the cement, clutching his face in agony.

Toubert flicks the blade of his knife open. Listens for the attacker's whereabouts. But it's quiet until he hears a tool clatter to the floor on the other side of the factory.

Toubert carefully moves to the exit, and pushes on the bars to open the double door, but someone has taken the CHAIN from the front gate and wrapped it around the outside of the door.

Trapped, Toubert looks for another way out. Using machines as cover, he makes his way to the other side of the factory.

Chains hanging from the ceiling start to sway all over the factory, clanking into each other in an unnerving cacophony.

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)

You're next.

Toubert backs up, his knife held at the ready.

TOUBERT

Who are you?

Suddenly a wrench materializes out of nowhere, flying right at his face. Toubert ducks, and it just nicks his shoulder.

Confused and frightened, he tries to go in another direction, but once again, another tool materializes out of nowhere and comes flying just in front of him, cutting him off.

He looks at the swirling dust in the shafts of light. He can hear breathing. Toubert spins, slashing with the knife.

BAM!! Something unseen has struck his right hand. The knife drops to the ground. An unseen foot kicks it away.

BAM!! Something strikes the side of his knee, blowing it out. Toubert screams, clutching his leg as he crumples.

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)

You throw away garbage. Forget about it, like it never existed.

Suddenly Oscar materializes out of thin air -- a big wrench in full swing -- WHAM! -- hitting Toubert in the cheek.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

But I do, I do exist.

From the floor, we see his legs and the wrench firmly gripped in his young, strong hand. (NOTE: we never see Oscar's face throughout this scene, though Toubert does.)

TOUBERT

S-son...?

(breaks down)

I-I'm sorry. Please...forgive me.

Oscar slams the wrench into the side of Toubert's skull, killing him instantly. As his body rolls over, Oscar strikes Toubert's face (off-screen) again and again and again.

We hear Oscar crying as he mashes his biological father into non-existence. Finally he stops out of exhaustion.

We see his hands rubbing his prints off the handle and toss the bloodied wrench to the ground next to Toubert's body.

Seeing that Toubert pissed himself in death, Oscar giggles.

OSCAR

Our Father, who art in Hell right
about now, God-damned be your name,
you fraud of a human being.

He picks up Toubert's knife and pockets it as he leaves. We hear the rear exit door open as Oscar leaves the factory.

INT. MONUMENT POLICE STATION / JULES' OFFICE - DAY

Paul holds an ice pack to his face. Jules has just heard the news about Rosanna and the baby. He still can't believe it.

MEREDITH

It's true, I saw the document.

PAUL

He wants to hurt Rosanna.

JULES

Did Oscar say that?

PAUL

Not exactly, but look what he did
to his step-father. Your sister
needs your protection.

JULES

I don't have the resources for a security detail. Besides, her tough guy husband's more than capable of handling a 14 year-old.

Meredith looks at Paul; she's keeping his secret.

PAUL

Like Bill Slater?

The DESK SERGEANT comes over.

DESK SERGEANT

Chief -- a call from Monument Plastics.

JULES

The factory...?

EXT. MONUMENT PLASTICS FACTORY - AFTERNOON

Two Monument Police Cruisers and Meredith's Saab are parked outside. Officer McAllister gives first aid to Javier, whose face is bloody. Through demolished front teeth he mutters:

JAVIER

Place is fuckin' haunted.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR / MONUMENT PLASTICS - AFTERNOON

Paul stands over Toubert's corpse. For a split second we see the gangster's face is pulverized. There are no features left. Nothing but coagulated blood and bits of bone.

Meredith sits to the side, unable to take in the sight.

MEREDITH

What a horrible way to go.

PAUL

He broke the union, grew fat off its blood. He got what he deserved. It was long overdue.

Jules comes over, concerned.

JULES

She's not answering at the salon.

PAUL

Can you send a man to her house?

JULES

I did, she's not there. Told him
wait for her to come back. I don't
know where else to look.

PAUL

I do.

INT. SISTERS OF MERCY - LATE AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

Rosanna approaches the Young Nun.

ROSANNA

Excuse me, I was told Father
Gastineau is staying here.

YOUNG NUN

Is he expecting you?

ROSANNA

No, Sister. But I'm a parishioner.
He knows me and my husband well.

She and the Young Nun walk past the dark convent KITCHEN...

INSIDE THE CONVENT KITCHEN

We hear movement and see the pantry door seemingly close by
itself. *Click.* The light turned on inside.

INSIDE THE PANTRY

Oscar's hands use Toubert's knife to slice a hunk of cheese.
We never see his face but he's on the floor, eating greedily.

INT. CHAPEL / SISTERS OF MERCY - LATE AFTERNOON

Rosanna ENTERS, finding Father Gastineau in prayer. He looks
up and sees the familiar face and lights up with a big smile.

FATHER GASTINEAU

Rosanna! Radiant as always.

ROSANNA

Father.

FATHER GASTINEAU

Would you tell Rudy that we've put
together a rebuilding committee.
He'd be a valuable member.

ROSANNA

Oh, I'm sure he would.

She looks around to see if they're alone.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)
I came to ask you about the burial
of my son. Do you remember?

FATHER GASTINEAU
How could I forget? Such a
devastating loss...

ROSANNA
Did you bless my boy?

FATHER GASTINEAU
...Of course. I anointed him, too.
He went straight to heaven.

ROSANNA
What contribution did my husband
make to the parish that year?

FATHER GASTINEAU
Generous, I would imagine. My
dear, what seems to be the problem?

Rosanna glances toward a wood carving of crucified Christ.

ROSANNA
Would you swear before our savior
that my child went into the ground?

FATHER GASTINEAU
...I-I don't take the Lord's name
in vain.

Rosanna sees the lie on his face.

INT. KITCHEN / SISTERS OF MERCY CONVENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Sister Anunciata enters the dark kitchen and sees the faint
outline of light around the pantry door. Going to turn off
the light, she opens the pantry.

It's seemingly empty, but she notices Toubert's knife lying
open on the floor amid some cheese and a mess of crackers.

Confused, she picks up the knife and set it on the counter.

She finds a dustpan and broom and returns to the pantry to
sweep up the mess. She notices the knife is no longer there.

INT. CONVENT COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Rosanna exits the CHAPEL, Father Gastineau on her heels.

FATHER GASTINEAU
Rosanna, wait!

She nearly bowls over Sister Anunciata.

SISTER ANUNCIATA
Excuse me!

Rosanna doesn't stop. Father Gastineau catches up.

SISTER ANUNCIATA (CONT'D)
Where's the fire?

FATHER GASTINEAU
Sister, this is between me and
Mrs. Toubert.

SISTER ANUNCIATA
I suggest you attend to it *quietly*.

ROSANNA
That's okay. We're finished.

EXT. CONVENT - EARLY EVENING

As Rosanna strides out to the parking lot of the convent, we see it's dark and foggy on this high-altitude site.

She gets into her Mercedes, tries to get the key in but her hands are shaking so much. She starts sobbing.

INT. MEREDITH'S SAAB / DRIVING - EARLY EVENING

Meredith's Saab drives up Mountain Road.

MEREDITH
It *does* seem like an incredible
gift. Just think what good you
could do with it... My god.

PAUL
I can't save anyone with the Fade.
I'll be lucky if I can save myself.

MEREDITH
But can't you control it?

Paul shakes his head "no".

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Have you *tried*?

PAUL

I only brought on the Fade one night, when I was a kid. I thought I was doing the right thing, but...

MEREDITH

What happened?

His silence tells her whatever happened was tragic.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Can't you try again?

PAUL

The urges were like a rip-tide. I don't want to be pulled out to sea.

EXT. TENEMENT HOUSE - EARLY MORNING (20 YEARS AGO)

Young Paul arrives at his family's double-decker. Young Jules bolts out the front door of the bottom unit.

YOUNG JULES

Were you at the hospital?

Young Paul shakes his head "no", only then noticing he's got blood on his hands. He shoves his hands in his pockets.

YOUNG JULES (CONT'D)

My pop just called from there. They operated on your dad.

YOUNG PAUL

...He's alive?

YOUNG JULES

Doctor says he's gonna make it!

Conflicting emotions wash over Young Paul -- his father's alive, eliminating his reason for having just killed.

INT. ROSANNA'S MERCEDES / PARKED AT CONVENT - SAME

Rosanna pulls herself together and turns the car on. She tries to back out but the car's stuck. She gets out, closes the door and walks around to the other side of the car.

OUTSIDE HER CAR

She sees beneath her passenger-side rear tire -- a ROCK wedged under it. She wiggles it out of her tires' path.

When she goes back around the car, Rosanna doesn't notice that one of her driver-side doors isn't closed all the way.

BACK INSIDE HER CAR

Her mind is elsewhere as she gets back behind the wheel and closes the door with a meaty THUD. She backs out of the Sisters of Mercy parking lot then heads down the tree-lined, steeply graded Mountain Ave. The road is slick, fog thick.

We're TIGHT on Rosanna's ear... Oscar's POV, close to her.

OSCAR (O.S.)

Fraud!

Startled, Rosanna misses the bend in the road. As her tires slide into a ditch she hits the breaks, but --

The Mercedes skids sideways and T-bones a tree -- WHAM!!!!!!

Bags deploy. Her harness holds her in, but feels the THUD of an invisible Oscar slamming into the back of her seat.

Dazed, she glances back and sees Oscar in the rear-view mirror coming out of the Fade. She screams!

Before she can get out, Oscar wraps his arm around her neck in a perfect choke hold. He holds his face tight to hers.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Fraud of a mother.

ROSANNA

It's you...

She tries to get a look at him, but can't see his face.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)

My boy.

OSCAR

The son you threw away.

ROSANNA

No!

Years of pain and rejection in his voice as he says...

OSCAR

Why?! Why didn't you want me?

ROSANNA

I wanted you, so bad.

OSCAR

Liar.

He tightens his grip, choking her. She can barely speak.

ROSANNA
Let me... explain...

Oscar loosens his grip, enabling her to speak. We notice a can of LACQUER THINNER bulges from inside his coat pocket.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)
My husband... Told me you died.

OSCAR
I saw your signature.

ROSANNA
He forged the papers, I swear.
I never would've given you up.

OSCAR
You didn't know I was in Monument,
all this time -- so close to you?

ROSANNA
I didn't...

OSCAR
Mothers know.

*

He holds the blade of Toubert's knife against her cheek.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Tell me! For once in my life -- I
want the *truth!*

Tears run down Rosanna's face. As if in a twisted confessional, she finally gets to unburden herself.

ROSANNA
I felt... like a piece of me was
missing. But I-I couldn't imagine.

OSCAR
So you knew. You knew *something*.

Rosanna despises herself for this, but she nods "yes".

OSCAR (CONT'D)
And did nothing.

ROSANNA
I was afraid.

OSCAR
Of what?

ROSANNA
The truth. Jesus, God...

OSCAR
He's not here.

ROSANNA
He's everywhere.

OSCAR
No. Here it's just you and me.

ROSANNA
We can start over.

OSCAR
It's too late.

ROSANNA
No. Please, Oscar.

OSCAR
Don't. You don't know me.

ROSANNA
I love you.

OSCAR
Don't lie to me.

ROSANNA
I'm not. You're part of me.

OSCAR
I'm part of nothing. Just a freak.
YOU made me. YOU did this to me!

ROSANNA
Forgive me...

OSCAR
I can't.

ROSANNA
I love you.

OSCAR
I hate you.

Suddenly he stabs at her. She flinches, the blade gets caught in the airbag. She opens her door and bursts outside.

EXT. ROSANNA'S MERCEDES / MOUNTAIN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Oscar's door starts opening, but a terrified Rosanna kicks the door shut -- jamming him back into the car.

Frightened, she looks up the hill but can't see far in the fog. But she knows the convent is nearby. We FOLLOW her as she takes off running heading uphill.

She hears Oscar's feet on leaves and snapping branches behind her but when she looks over her shoulder she can't see him.

Oscar's Fade POV follows her through the trees and fog.

INT. MEREDITH'S SAAB / DRIVING - EARLY EVENING

Meredith's car climbs Mountain Road.

MEREDITH

Paul, please let me help you.

PAUL

You can't.

MEREDITH

Don't cut me out.

PAUL

I haven't told you everything.

MEREDITH

Then tell me.

PAUL

I don't *want* you to know. You'd feel different about me.

MEREDITH

How?

PAUL

Afraid.

MEREDITH

I don't believe that.

PAUL

Merry, I'm just trying to live my life and not hurt anyone else.

(then)

Especially someone I love.

MEREDITH

Paul, I --

-- She stops, noticing UP AHEAD the crashed Mercedes.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Oh my god...

She quickly slows and pulls off the road.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Meredith get out and look for survivors. No one's here and they cannot see far in the fog. Paul takes out his phone, but gets NO SERVICE up here.

PAUL

Go back down and call for help.

She hates to separate from him, but there's no other choice. She gets back in her car, turns around and drives off.

As he runs up the steep hillside, Paul yells:

PAUL (CONT'D)

Rosanna!

EXT. SISTERS OF MERCY - EARLY EVENING

Rosanna reaches the top of the hill and sees Sisters of Mercy through the fog. She heads for the nearest structure...

The CHAPEL, next to the convent.

INT. CHAPEL / SISTERS OF MERCY - SAME

Rosanna makes it inside and shuts the door, hyperventilating.

ROSANNA

....h..help.... Help!

But no one responds. She finds the light switch and turns it on -- the chapel is empty. She hears the door start to open. She pushes it closed and slides the bolt, locking it.

Catching her breath, she kneels before the Virgin Mary.

ROSANNA (CONT'D)

I'm...so sorry...

Rosanna sees that can of lacquer thinner BURST THROUGH a stained glass window, a flaming rag in its mouth. The Molotov cocktail spreads accelerant across the chapel floor!

EXT. WOODS / TOP OF THE HILL - SAME

Paul emerges from the woods. He can see Sisters of Mercy convent and the CHAPEL from here. He sees smoke coming out its one broken, stained glass window. We FOLLOW him to...

FRONT OF CHAPEL

Paul finds the door locked. Hears the crunching of leaves.

Out of the corner of his eye he sees the fog swirl. Instinctively, Paul raises his arms to defend himself --

SLICE -- a gash opens up on the sleeve of his coat.

PAUL
Oscar, STOP.

Silence. Just breathing.

PAUL (CONT'D)
This has to end.

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)
That's what I'm doing.

PAUL
Not that way. Rosanna's husband was a bad man, but she doesn't deserve the same end.

OSCAR (O.S. - IN THE FADE)
You're all liars and frauds!

Paul hears Oscar's footsteps recede as he runs around the side of the chapel. Cursing under his breath, Paul follows.

INT. CHAPEL / SISTERS OF MERCY - SAME

On FIRE. Rosanna unbolts the door but can't open it -- Oscar's got something wedged under the door.

CRASH! **Rosanna** turns to see one of the windows burst open, but from what? She hears footsteps running towards her. *

Suddenly she's bowled over, feeling Oscar's hands around her throat as he materializes out of the Fade. She gets her first good look at her boy, who would be handsome if not for the grotesquely crooked nose -- an artifact of many beatings.

OSCAR
I would've been a good son.

On her back now, she tries to pry his hands off, but he's got the strength of youth, raging with testosterone and anguish.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I would've loved you so much!

Her face turns red from lack of oxygen. She passes out.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
 Hell is here, *Mother*, and you're gonna burn for what you did to me.

Suddenly PAUL drives his shoulder into Oscar -- sending him flying against the wall -- Oscar goes back into the Fade. *

PAUL
 Shit.

Paul can't see Oscar, but he sees the thick smoke swirl as he runs toward the broken window at the back of the chapel.

Paul turns his attention to Rosanna. As he shakes her, she slowly comes to, oxygen once again reaching her brain. She coughs from the smoke. Paul pulls her to her feet.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Let's get you out of here.

Tears stream down Rosanna's face.

ROSANNA
 ...All my fault...

PAUL
 No. It's bigger than you, and me.

He starts toward the rear of the chapel, to the broken window, but a flaming BEAM falls and cuts them off.

Paul turns toward the front door. He kicks it. The door inches open despite the wedge. He keeps kicking.

INT. MEREDITH'S SAAB / DRIVING

Meredith pulls up to Sisters of Mercy. She stops her car, gets out, and runs toward the burning chapel. She sees ROSANNA squeeze through the barely opened front door.

CLOSER - THE CHAPEL

Suddenly Rosanna's yanked from Paul's grasp by an unseen Oscar. Meredith witnesses the impossible:

Bit by bit, Rosanna starts to disappear from sight within seconds, like any other object in the hands of a fader.

Paul squeezes through the door, but now that he's outside, he can't see Rosanna. He makes eye contact with Meredith.

PAUL
Where did she go?

MEREDITH
She faded.

Desperate, Paul makes a difficult decision. He closes his eyes and screams... Meredith sees him go into the Fade.

PAUL'S Fade P.O.V: he can see the faded Oscar and Rosanna as if they were sketches. Their backs are to Paul, as Oscar clutches his mother, keeping her in the fade with him.

We cut back and forth from Paul's and Oscar's Fade POV -- and Meredith's perspective, seeing nothing but hearing it all.

PAUL (IN THE FADE)
Let her go, Oscar.

Paul's Fade POV -- Oscar releases Rosanna. As she falls to the ground, Paul sees that her throat is already CUT.

PAUL (CONT'D)
No!!

Meredith sees Rosanna come out of the Fade, bleeding.

MEREDITH
Oh my god...

Oscar's Fade POV -- he sees that Paul, too, is in the Fade.

OSCAR (IN THE FADE)
You are like me.

Meredith goes over to Rosanna, putting her hand over the wound, trying to staunch the bleeding.

PAUL (IN THE FADE)
What have you done?

Realizing that he's not alone in this world, Oscar's demeanor changes. He looks up at Paul now, realizing his mistake.

OSCAR (IN THE FADE)
I'm sorry, I --

He sees Paul's fist come flying at his face -- *WHAM!*
The lanky boy sails off his feet onto the ground.

MEREDITH

Paul? Where are you? PAUL?

Consumed by rage, Paul stands over Oscar.

PAUL (IN THE FADE)

I wanted to help you.

OSCAR (IN THE FADE)

Wanted?

PAUL (IN THE FADE)

But this...this cycle, has to end.

Oscar sees Paul eyeing the knife on the ground between them.

OSCAR (IN THE FADE)

There's no hope for me. *

PAUL (IN THE FADE)

For either of us.

Meredith hears this, but can't see them.

MEREDITH

Paul, don't say that.

Oscar materializes out of the fade, looking at her sadly.

OSCAR

We're damned. *

MEREDITH

He isn't.

OSCAR

You have no idea. *

Oscar speaks to Paul, whom he now cannot see.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Go ahead, Paul. End it.

MEREDITH

No. Paul, whatever you're feeling
now, resist it. You can do it.

Paul's POV, standing over a vulnerable Oscar. Wavering.

Oscar slowly picks up the knife, holding it out for him.

OSCAR
You know what to do.

Paul's POV backs away, fighting the temptation.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Do it!

A police siren wails, announcing Jules' cruiser as it speeds up Mountain Road and pulls into the convent parking lot. *

Oscar seizes the opportunity and lunges toward Meredith with the knife poised to strike!

As the blade descends toward Meredith's back, Oscar's body is knocked off its trajectory. As he hits on the ground --

Paul comes out of the Fade. The cluster of male bodies rolls over once, then twice. As Paul extricates himself, Meredith gasps -- seeing Paul's chest covered in blood. *

But Paul rises to his knees, seemingly unhurt. He looks down at Oscar lying on his side, unmoving. Paul carefully rolls the limp boy over to reveal first his lifeless eyes. Then he sees why -- Toubert's knife plunged deep into Oscar's chest. *

PAUL
No... Please God, no... *

He feels in vain for a pulse. Paul covers his own face, twisted with horror and regret, hands leaving bloody smears. *

A stunned Meredith looks over at Paul, only now able to fathom the war raging inside of him all this time. *

Jules emerges from his cruiser, its light-bar pulsating the fog red & blue. He sees his sister on the ground, Meredith's hands wrapped around her bleeding neck. He approaches...

JULES
Rosy? ROSY!!

The sky RUMBLES. A heavy RAIN starts coming down on them. *

Paul looks down at the boy he failed to save. For once, Oscar looks innocent, having found peace in his death. *

Paul looks up at the sky for an answer that does not come, but slowly the rain washes the smears of blood from his face. *

EXT. MONUMENT CEMETERY - DAY (20 YEARS AGO) *

We TILT DOWN from a raining sky to the face of YOUNG PAUL. *

He struggles to push his DAD's wheelchair (Lou's head is bandaged) through uneven terrain of the Monument Cemetery, accompanied by Young Yvette. They look dressed for church. *

They approach a cluster of MOURNERS standing around a freshly dug grave. The Young Father Gastineau presides: *

YOUNG FATHER GASTINEAU
We are gathered here to say
farewell to Omer LaBatt and commit
him into the hands of God...

The Moreauxs are still out of earshot when Yvette says: *

YOUNG YVETTE
I don't understand why we're here. *

LOU
I knew him a long time.
He was a good man.

YOUNG YVETTE
After what he did to you,
how can you say that?

LOU
Who knows what I would do if I
couldn't feed the two of you?

As they reach the grave, Young Paul sees Omer's traumatized WIDOW and their 15 year-old SON, whose tears mix with rain. *

YOUNG FATHER GASTINEAU
In the name of the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit...

For a moment, OMER'S BOY looks right at Young Paul's guilt-stricken face, as if somehow he knew; even if he doesn't.

THWACK-THWACK-THWACK. We hear the IBM selectric OVER --

THE TYPE BALL

Of Paul's electric typewriter banging out the words:

At that moment I vowed -- never to fade again.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT / MANHATTAN - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Paul pulls the paper out of the old typewriter and looks at the final line. He includes it with the rest of his manuscript of his childhood events he's entitled "FADE".

Next to his typewriter we see that photograph of his sister Yvette and her three kids. And next to that, another picture: Jules with his sister Rosanna, her neck bandaged.

On the cover page Paul scribbles: **For you, and you only.**

Paul takes the manuscript with him and leaves the room. *

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He enters his bedroom where Meredith sleeps. He lays the manuscript on the night stand where that photo of her sat.

Paul gets into bed **next to her and** turns out the light. *

CREDITS start... Then we CUT BACK TO: *

THAT PHOTO OF YVETTE AND HER KIDS

Paul's niece Laura glows, then fades out of the picture.

PAUL'S EYES

Bolt open as he WAKES from his portentous dream. Lying next to Meredith, he feels the Fade take over his body -- but this time he doesn't fight it. As he disappears from sight, we...

FADE OUT

END