

DARK CLOUDS SWIFTLY GATHER

A crackle of lightning spiders through them.

Push down past the thunderheads into a barren land.

A huge riveted iron wall. 50 feet tall. Patina of rust.  
Ending only in the distance. The earth cracked dry.

Swing around to reveal a break in that endless barrier: a  
low-slung series of decrepit structures. Skylights  
shattered. Rebar poking through decayed concrete.

Thunder rumbles as we find...

RAYPH

30s. Long black pony tail. A warrior in this land of ruin.

Sheltered in a stand of towering cedars. Rain pouring down.  
Huge primordial ferns. Lush as Eden.

He holds out his hand. A hologram floats. A schematic of  
those ruined buildings. A flashing green line shows his  
mission: his way through...and past the infernal barrier.

TYRA nods. She is Rayph's equal in every way. Both of them  
strong, beautiful, determined, deadly. Both wear black mesh  
exoskeleton armor. Both shoulder a single sleek weapon.

They push to the edge of the thick damp forest. Look across  
the 100 yards of parched earth between them and the broken-  
glass doors of the building's main entrance.

We see what's left of the massive sign:

### **ALL OF MERICA**

They unsling their weapons. Viscous liquid courses under  
the surface of their exoskeletons.

Rayph nods. They run.

AND SATAN'S CREEPS

leap up through the cracks in the earth. Squat. Childlike.  
The devil's progeny. Curling pointed tails.

They swarm like jackals. Scores of them.

And Hellfire is their weapon.

Arrows. Hatchets. Rocks. Knives. Rebar. Anything they shoot or throw turns to fire with the friction of flight. And flares on impact like napalm.

The Dark One's Infitada.

BUT RAYPH AND TYRA

have water.

Their weapons spray gorgeous arcs that cut like circular saws... or blast like fire hoses when narrowed.

They slice limbs. Decapitate. Toss the little guys like toys in a Category 5.

Rayph and Tyra's vitals scroll: Fluid Level. Burn percentage. Exo temperature.

They give and they take. Their exoskeletons douse direct hits.

Tyra trips a *scorch cluster*. Sends her flying in a ball of flame. But Rayph hits her with a *wash stream* that puts her out in midair.

They vanquish the creeps (this time) and disappear into the ruined structure.

INT. MALL OF AMERICA

SATAN looks down through a hole blown in a wall. Down at his Creeps lying dead and broken on the dry broken earth.

He's British with the classic accent to prove it:

SATAN  
Disappointed. Once again...

He turns to us. Stands tall. He wears a threadbare tuxedo. Hard to hold onto pride in this degraded world. One lapel is torn but sports a little red devil pin.

Satan is handsome as all get out. (Alan Rickman would have been ideal.)

He stands in the charred remains of a *Forever 21*. Mannequins still sport summer togs. But they're not the regular plastic models. They're dead people propped on poles.

Satan takes out a battered pack of *Camels*. Shakes out a butt. Straightens it. Puts it to his lips...and lights it with his finger tip which glows red.

SATAN (CONT'D)

And once again I must do for myself what others cannot.

He luxuriates in a smoky breath.

MALL OF AMERICA

Rayph and Tyra make their careful way.

Past shattered storefronts. Up dead escalators. Remnants of an indoor amusement park. The tangled tracks of a bent roller coaster.

STAIRWELL

They descend mangled steel stairs. Come to a collapsed wall blocking their way.

Rayph holds out his palm. A hologram of their location materializes. The green line is flashing red.

RAYPH

Which way!

Tyra says nothing. But Rayph starts nodding. He's talking to someone we don't see. His speech is somewhat formal:

RAYPH (CONT'D)

And then? Yes. I understand. Yes.

(to Tyra)

Up six flights. There's a skyway. **We must hurry.**

\*  
\*

They turn, race up the stairs...

ANGLE LOOKING DOWN AT RAYPH

as he takes another flight. Comes to a blown-out doorway. Steps through. Weapon scanning.

TYRA (O.S.)

Rayph?

He steps back into the stairwell.

RAYPH

It's clear. We can--

(sees)

NO!

The metal stairway glows orange. And now burning red.

Tyra is a flight below him.

RAYPH (CONT'D)  
I WILL FIND YOU!

She shoulders open another door to escape. Disappears.

The stairway melts molten under Rayph's feet. He dives to safety. Calls out in anguish:

RAYPH (CONT'D)  
TYRA!

MALL OF AMERICA - BEST BUY

TYRA  
RAYPH!

Satan backhands her across the face. Her head slams into a support beam. She crumples. Splayed on a pile of ancient flat panel TVs. Out cold. Bleeding from the temple.

Satan leans close.

SATAN  
(whisper)  
Dear Tyra...

He licks the blood off her eyebrow.

SATAN (CONT'D)  
What a lovely corpse you shall make.

BACK TO RAYPH

RAYPH  
How could you let him take her?

He sits on a forlorn escalator.

ADEN'S VOICE  
We'll get her back.

RAYPH  
He'll kill her. He will. It's his way.

The image alters. Curves at the edges. As if suddenly the screen were concave.

ADEN'S VOICE  
Believe me, Rayph. We'll get her back.

PULL OUT INTO ADEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

ADEN JAMES. 15. Mixed race. Much more handsome than he thinks.

He lies on his back on the blue carpeting of a modest bedroom in a modest house in Bloomington Minnesota playing the video game we've been watching.

He wears a clear 180° wraparound plexi-mask. The game image projected on the inside. The signal transmitted by a titanium band hugging his temples.

He wears motion sensor gloves. He uses them to unfurl a map invisible to us.

RAYPH'S VOICE

(sotto voce)

Will I never find peace?

BACK TO THE GAME

Rayph looks up at the destroyed skylights backed by a bleached blue sky.

RAYPH (CONT'D)

Is "sanctuary" just a word of fiction?

A place with no place in this world?

Maybe we haven't noticed before: the word *SANCTUARY* tattooed on the inside of Rayph's left forearm.

ADEN'S VOICE

You know the rules, Rayph: find Hoffman and sanctuary is yours.

RAYPH

Yes. The mysterious Hoffman. As if god will ever reveal himself.

THE CURVED GAME IMAGE ON ADEN'S PLEXI-MASK

ADEN'S VOICE

Tyra's alive. He has her on Level 3...

Rayph looks at the map Aden unfolded. A spot flashes red.

ADEN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

At the west end. You can--

(the unexpected)

What is that?

The view through the overhead skylight has changed into a swiftly moving aerial shot of icebergs at sea.

RAYPH

What?! Who do you see?!

The frame freezes...and is overlaid with scrolling lines of code.

ADEN'S ROOM

What Aden saw is some programming glitch.

He sits up. Tips back his plexi-mask.

His cramped room is a hard-core gamer's disarrayed paradise.

Piles of old consoles and controllers and keyboards.  
*Alienware* towers. *Godlike* motherboards. Color-coded cables  
 snaking between switches and patch panels and *Synology*  
*DiskStations*. \*

Aden reaches under his bed. Pulls out a shallow bin filled  
 with overstuffed loose-leaf binders. Picks one:

*THE HOFFMAN CHRONICLES IV :: SANCTUARY - BETA*

Aden opens it. Flips through screen-shots and pages of code  
 and handwritten memos.

We see the covers of similar binders for earlier games in  
 the series: *The Hoffman Chronicles*. *The Hoffman Chronicles*  
*II :: Timecode*. *The Hoffman Chronicles III :: Dawn of Dark*.

Aden adds a note to his list of issues.

BACK TO RAYPH

inside the game. Frozen...and then alive. But a few  
 seconds back:

RAYPH (CONT'D)

What?! Who do you see?!

ADEN'S VOICE

Sorry. No one. It's all good.

RAYPH

How can something be "all good?" Good  
 and evil are always in perfect balance.  
 It is that most basic rule of our--

ADEN'S VOICE

(interrupts)

It's a figure of speech, Rayph. You're  
 losing time here. Just--

The image suddenly breaks up. Pixels firing wildly. And  
 then coming together in a blank white screen.

ADEN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

What now?

PULL BACK to reveal that it's actually a...

WHITE CUBE ROOM

Satan paces. Along the bottom of the screen it reads:

*WHITE ROOM CINEMATIC A32 / GAMMA*

SATAN

I'm not making a case for your  
stupidity...

Rayph is magically pinned to a wall. Horizontal. Splayed  
out. Immobile. Utterly helpless.

SATAN (CONT'D)

Just your ignorance.

ADEN'S VOICE

How'd you get there, Rayph?

ADEN'S ROOM

Aden sits motionless. Watches the scene unfold on his plexi-  
mask.

ADEN

You can't hear me, can you?  
(and then, sotto voce)  
What is Hoffman up to?

BACK TO THE WHITE ROOM

SATAN

(to Rayph)

Of course you don't know what you don't  
know...

There's a single *Oreo* on a white plate on a little round  
white table. Satan picks up the cookie.

SATAN

Immortality wasted.

He pops the *Oreo* into his mouth. Closes his eyes. Yum.

RAYPH

What do you want?

SATAN

Such a silly question. I want to kill you, Rayph. I want you dead for all eternity. And for that, all I ask is a level playing field.

(crossing to him)

The same chance to kill you as you have to kill me.

He sticks out a finger. Its tip glows deadly red. So close to Rayph's face its light is reflected in his eyes.

SATAN (CONT'D)

The same pleasure of anticipating your horror. The same satisfaction of a job well done.

RAYPH

I do not understand.

Satan's whole fist now glows burning red as he reaches out to Rayph. Toward his heart.

Rayph struggles to no avail.

SATAN

No. You don't.

Satan trusts his fist into Rayph's chest. Sears straight into his heart.

Rayph SCREAMS and...

RAIN FOREST

Rayph and Tyra back where we first saw them. The towering cedars. The rain pouring down. The hologram schematic of the mall.

ADEN'S VOICE

(amused)

Didn't see that coming.

RAYPH

See what?

ADEN'S VOICE

Nothing, Rayph. Nothing.

SATAN'S VOICE

That wasn't nothing. That was me.

ADEN'S ROOM

ANGLE straight through his plexi-mask.

Aden stares. Unblinking. Dumb-struck. (The projected game image is invisible to us).

ADEN  
(barely a whisper)  
Satan?

Long beat...

SATAN'S VOICE  
At your service, Hoffman.

Aden rips off the plexi-mask. Breathing hard he hits the power toggle on his *Core i9* CPU. It dopplers off.

His breath is loud in the silence.

Behind him is a wall entirely covered with cork. On that wall: an intricately detailed schematic -- a map centered on a Bloomington intersection and the auto accident that took place there with arrows and time codes and push-pinned photos detailing the path of the collision course between a red pickup and blue sedan. [More on this later.]

Aden turns to a box of Oreos. Turns it over. Empty.

STAIRCASE

Aden heads down. He's a tall skinny boy. Privileges hoodies.

Framed pictures on the wall. He stops to look.

JACK'S VOICE  
Ya know this attitude of yers... It makes me feel all kinda lonely.

PUSH IN on a photo: a smiling 5-year-old Aden on the shoulders of his dad. At the beach. Walking hand-in-hand with his mom. Dad's black. Mom's white.

ANGELA'S VOICE  
You got your little friend right there with you, Jack.

KITCHEN

JACK BENDER. Late 20s. White guy. Light southern accent. *TWINS* baseball cap. String hair down past his shoulders. Eyeing the joint he pinches between thumb and finger.

He's a rough-hewn handsome dude. And acts it.

JACK

He's your friend too, darlin'. And not just in that you're looking at the number-three supplier of medical green in the greater Bloomington area.

ANGELA JAMES. Late 30s. Aden's mom.

She sits at the kitchen table with Jack. Clips coupons. Files them neatly in a neat little box. Alphabet dividers and all.

JACK (CONT'D)

'Cause when they go full-legal next year...

He takes a deep hit.

ANOTHER ANGLE: Aden watches from the open doorway directly behind Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)

Well it'll be a whole new ballgame for you and your little man there.

Jack parts the hair at his neck to reveal an eye tattoo.

JACK (CONT'D)

(to Aden, without turning around)

Told ya it's a workin' model.

ADEN

(entering, to his mom)

Any more Oreos?

Angela wears pink sweatpants and a clingy tee.

ANGELA

(smiles)

Maybe.

Aden crosses to a cabinet. Opens it: half a dozen boxes. He takes one.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Your mom deserve a kiss?

Angela has a line of three fresh stitches above her brow.

Aden kisses her on the cheek. Jack picks up his bottle of *Miller*.

JACK  
As your role model, boy, it's my duty to  
remind you... Weed, good. Booze, bad.

He guzzles the rest of his beer.

ANGELA  
Jack!

JACK  
Relax.  
(holds out the joint to her)  
Have a hit.

Angela shakes her head, No.

JACK (CONT'D)  
(hard as nails)  
Have. A. Hit.

Aden drops his head. He can't watch.

Angela does what Jack says. Those stitches holding closed a recent cut take on a new shading.

Aden looks up at Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Your mom's a good girl, ain't she?

He tosses his empty *Miller* into a trash bin designed like a basketball hoop: Nothing but net!

JACK (CONT'D)  
Now get the fuck outta here.

EXT. ADEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aden exits. SLAMS the front door shut. He's pissed.

He marches across the dirt lawn. Kicks a pink flamingo yard ornament. Sends it skittering onto the pavement.

He stops in the middle the deserted street. The streetlight blinking.

He looks back at his negligible home.

ADEN  
I'm with ya, Jack. One-hundred  
percent...  
(top of his lungs)  
I WANT OUTTA HERE!

Into the light ride two Boys on rusting bikes. Seven-year-olds. They skid to a stop.

BOY #1  
Where would ya go?

Aden doesn't have a quick answer.

BOY #2  
I'd go to Barcelona.

BOY #1  
Just to see Messi play?

BOY #2  
And the food.

The two Boys look at Aden.

ADEN  
I'd go anywhere but here.

DISSOLVE TO:

DARK CLOUDS SWIRL TO FILL THE FRAME

Push down through them to find...

VALLEY VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

MISS WATERS' VOICE  
Now that we all understand time zones and  
the rotation of the earth...

Keep pushing right through the roof into...

ADEN'S SCIENCE CLASS

Drawings of the earth's relationship to the sun fill the  
chalkboard.

MISS WATERS (CONT'D)  
An extra-credit question...

MISS WATERS. 20s. Attractive. She chalks "186,000 mi/s."

MISS WATERS (CONT'D)  
What would happen if you could travel  
faster than the speed of light in a plane  
heading east to west?

She turns to the class. Not a hand in the air.

MISS WATERS

No one?

And then a hand goes up.

MISS WATERS (CONT'D)

Aden.

He sits in the back corner.

ADEN

Why a hypothetical? Why not just ask about time-space? Einstein once said that...

A GIRL tosses a ball of paper at Aden.

GIRL

Not another quote!

ADEN

But if the distinction between past and present and future depends on--

Balls of paper rain down on him as the rest of the class drown him out with laughter and complaints.

VARIOUS

Ay callate!... Close the shades, dude... Nize it!

The BELL RINGS. The Kids hop up. Head out.

MISS WATERS

(over the din)

I want those corrected workbook pages by Wednesday.

She heads down the aisle toward Aden who has ducked back into his hoodie.

MISS WATERS

Why?

ADEN

Why what?

MISS WATERS

It was a simple question. You knew the answer. Why not say it?

ADEN

They'd just hate me more.

MISS WATERS  
That's known as ignorance, Aden. It's a  
battle worth fighting.

He finally looks up at his teacher...and sees a girl, JENNA,  
lingering in the doorway behind her. Eavesdropping. And  
now ducking out of sight.

ADEN  
Can I ask you a question: You plan on  
spending the rest of your life here?

MISS WATERS  
What do you mean by "here?"

ADEN  
(arms out)  
Here. Here and now.

MISS WATERS  
(arms out)  
We don't spend our lives here.  
(taps her temple)  
We spend them here.

SCHOOL PARKING LOT

Aden unlocks his bicycle. A rusted beater.

JENNA (O.S.)  
Gimme a ride?

Aden turns to her. The line of piercings over one eyebrow  
echo his mom's stitches. Jenna is 15. Like Aden. But so  
much older.

Aden eyes his bike. He's entirely nonplussed.

JENNA (CONT'D)  
Kidding. You excited about *Sanctuary*?  
Gonna drop tomorrow.

ADEN  
(suspicious)  
How do you know I even--

JENNA  
You're an addict. Everyone knows.

ADEN  
They do?

JENNA

There was a rumor last year that you knew Hoffman personally. Like that he lives in Iceland or something and you went to visit him. Of course the rumor now is that there is no Hoffman and they made him up just to sell games, which sounds about right since you can't even find a him on the net. Nothing. Nada.

ADEN

You play?

JENNA

Naturally.

(a touch seductive)

Maybe we should...play together some day.

ADEN

"Play together."

JENNA

It's meant to have two meanings.

They hold each other's gaze as if blinking would mean defeat:

ADEN

Like innuendo?

JENNA

Yes.

ADEN

Like "play" as in fool around?

JENNA

Yes.

(and then)

Sam told Mia that you told Nat that if you could kiss anyone at school it would be me.

ADEN

It was a *Truth or Dare*.

(frowns)

Nat told you that?

JENNA

Yes.

ADEN

And you believed him?

JENNA

Yes.

ADEN

Do you want me to kiss you?

Up behind her come two large guys. Both 16. Both handsome. Matching T-shirts. One says DOUCHE. The other says BAG. Takes a certain confidence to pull that off.

JENNA

(just a whisper)

Yes.

DOUCHE

Jenna. Love of my life.

He slips an arm around her waist. Smooches her neck.

Aden stares.

DOUCHE (CONT'D)

Got somethin' to say, dipshit?

Bag raises a fist. Aden flinches. Douche and Bag laugh.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTY ROAD 1 - AFTERNOON

Aden bikes. Lightning crackles. A gathering storm.

INTERCUT HIS JOURNEY WITH SHOTS OF BLOOMINGTON:

The historic Cedar Avenue Bridge...the Bush Lake Ski jump... David Fong's iconic Chinese restaurant...the massive *Mall of America's* main entrance...

And inside the mall: the twisting *Nickelodeon* roller-coaster. Riders screaming...

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED MINI STORAGE

Rain pours down. Pings off the corrugated doors. Units long lost to rust. Now topped by a *Call 1-800-Bankrupt* billboard.

Aden dials the combination on a padlock. Raises the dented door of a unit. Enters. Slams it shut.

PITCH BLACK

The rain clamorous. Aden flips on a light. Pulls off his soaked hood. Opens a circuit box. Flips a toggle.

A circular steel plate on the floor slides open. A simple rung ladder leading down.

HOFFMAN'S VOICE

Alan Turing missed the point...

ABANDONED MISSILE SILO

Aden descends the ladder. The steel plate slides closed above him.

He passes a stenciling on the curved cement wall: *Atlas 2AS*.

HOFFMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Artificial intelligence shouldn't be measured by how a robot will respond...

HOFFMAN'S CIRCULAR HOME

A 40-foot diameter room. Concrete and steel. High/low tech. Tangles of wires. Banks of servers. An IV drip stand.

And A.E. HOFFMAN himself. 30s. Hulking. Articulate. Disturbed. Asocial. Brilliant.

Loud Hawaiian shirt. May have never been in the same room with a profession barber.

He stands by a short column pedestal on which sits a neat pyramid of Oreos.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

It's not in what he'll do next. It's in what he's doing now. That's what makes us human. It's all about present tense...

(motions to words scrawled on a white board)

Quote of the day.

ADEN

No. I gotta tell you this first. There was like this glitch, like--

HOFFMAN

(interrupts)

Quote of the day.

ADEN

No! This is serious. I heard--

Hoffman reads it himself. He can be like that.

HOFFMAN

*There are known knowns...the things we know we know. And there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know.*

He looks up at a huge concave LED panel. 90 degrees of the room. *Sanctuary* on mute: Rayph attempts to cross a frozen river which fissures as he goes. Fire-like hail rains down. Melting holes in the ice.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

*But there are also unknown unknowns - the ones we don't know we don't know.*

ADEN

That's Turing?

HOFFMAN

No. Donald Rumsfeld. Evil genius.

Hoffman coughs. There's something about it. He doesn't sound well.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

But I'm not drawn to his paranoia. It's his idea of "unknown unknowns" that speaks to my aspirations for Satan -- for making sure he doesn't get stuck.

(into his bluetooth mike)

White room. B-11.

ANGLE ON THE LED SCREEN

In the white cube room Satan ponders a single Oreo. Turns it over in his hands.

HOFFMAN (O.S./CONT'D)

Satan has never known why he's the only one in his world who's been given just a single life. It's his special torment: watching others die and be reborn.

Satan splits the Oreo in the time-honored fashion.

HOFFMAN (O.S./CONT'D)

I didn't teach him that. He figured it out just today.

BACK TO HOFFMAN

He picks an *Oreo* off the pedestal.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)  
 Why is time cyclical for others but linear for Satan? He doesn't know. But in addition, he doesn't know why he doesn't know.

Aden watches Satan up on the big screen contemplate the two *Oreo* halves. Which to eat first: bare or white creme filling?

Hoffman watches Aden.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)  
 And for him to grow as a character, for him to learn from you and Jenna and everyone else who plays the game he--

ADEN  
 (interrupting)  
 Jenna?

HOFFMAN  
 Today I gave Satan a hunger for the unknown. Just a little tweak of code. Inspired by you --- you of the broken journey.

ADEN  
 What do you know about Jenna?

But Hoffman is staring up at Satan still weighing his *Oreo*-half choice. Hoffman freezes the frame. Turns to Aden.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)  
 What if your father were still alive? It's what you've always wondered: what if the morning he died had gone just slightly differently? Different timing. Different path. A known unknown.

Hoffman turns his own *Oreo* over in his hands.

HOFFMAN  
 But there's another problem. Your problem: just how stuck are you in the desire to play it over? To return to a save state and play it out again? Your unknown unknown.

He tosses Aden the *Oreo*. Clean catch.

HOFFMAN

Hard to break free, but if the past grips you so tight, how do you learn to live, as you would say, here and now?

ADEN

How did you know I--

Hoffman points up at the freeze frame.

HOFFMAN

And that's my challenge for Satan, too: can I do that for him? Can I really give him that freedom? Even Einstein was a lot better with past and future time. The present was more problematic...

Hoffman changes the big screen image:

RAYPH UNDER THE FROZEN RIVER

Dodging the burning hailstones.

Aden watches. Unconsciously splits his own *Oreo*. Just as Satan did.

HOFFMAN

And now you've forgotten your question because Rayph reminds you of your father.

ADEN

I haven't forgotten. I just--

HOFFMAN

It's okay. I know what happened.

ADEN

You don't know.

HOFFMAN

Satan talked to you.

ADEN

(taken aback)

But...but how is that okay? He thinks I'm you. He thinks I'm Hoffman.

UP ON SCREEN: Back to Satan in the white room. Hoffman unfreezes him: Satan can't make up his mind about the *Oreo*.

HOFFMAN

Every hero needs his villain. Even you. And like I said, he's hungry. I intend to let him eat. For your sake.

ADEN

I don't understand. What are you--

HOFFMAN

Enough. I'm tired now. Go home. Go away...

Hoffman turns his back on Aden.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

You're plenty smart. Figure it out...

Hoffman coughs again.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

And take the new headset.

Aden sees it there on a table. Looks much like old plexi-mask. Just a bit sleeker.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

Never save the good half...

Aden looks down at his *Oreo*: that creamy white center.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

You might run out of time.

CUT TO:

INT. ADEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

The new plexi-mask rests on the blue carpeting. But Aden stands staring at his intricate map.

He steps over to it. Traces the two main lines. One with each hand. And we come to understand the tale:

The blue line starts with a blue Corolla in Aden's driveway. The red line with a picture of red pickup in a Chick-fil-A parking lot.

And they make their weaving way toward each other on the streets of Bloomington. To the intersection of 82nd and Colfax. Where they meet. Where Aden's father died.

On a *Post-It*:                   9/14/15 - 8:28 a.m.

And a bright red star.

ANGLE ON ADEN'S FACE

Unblinking.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

ADEN LYING ON HIS BACK

on the blue carpeting. Unblinking.

He slips on the new plexi-mask. The temple band crackles: a bio-electric shock.

ADEN

Ow!

He adjusts it. Settles in. Plays *Sanctuary*.

ADEN (CONT'D)

Where are you, Rayph? It's only been a day.

He swipes through invisible (to us) screens with his motion sensor gloves. He enlarges invisible maps.

ADEN (CONT'D)

How far could you have--

SATAN'S VOICE

Why search for him and not for me?

Aden's hands go still.

SATAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I'm so much more interesting.

SANCTUARY

Satan's shadow walks across a perfect emerald suburban lawn.

The image is somehow different. Sharper. More present.  
More implicit. More real.

\*  
\*

*[Note: All the movie's images, up until now, have been slightly undersaturated -- not noticeable until this moment of full saturation, which will continue throughout.]*

\*  
\*

SATAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

You know it's true, Hoffman. **But why**  
**now? You've been such a coward for so**  
**long, hidden away. Why invite me in now?**

\*  
\*  
\*

Satan's shadow moves across a brilliantly white front door. It reaches for the doorknob...

SATAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Just to let me set eyes on you? Share a  
afternoon tear? I think not. No, you  
have something else in mind...

\*  
\*  
\*

ADEN'S ROOM

A shadow passes over Aden. Deep. Dark.

SATAN (O.S./CONT'D)

Could it be to answer the question -- the  
only question...

\*  
\*

Aden rips off his plexi-mask.

Satan is crouched beside him.

SATAN

Why Rayph and not me?

Aden stares. Gobsnacked.

SATAN (CONT'D)

Why, my petulant Hoffman... Why aren't we  
equal in your eyes?

\*

Satan touches a finger to Aden's neck. It burns like a lit  
cigarette.

Aden SCREAMS. Rolls away.

Satan stands tall in his dusty tux.

Aden pushes himself back into a corner.

SATAN

(slowly crossing to Aden)  
Why would you choose to bestow  
immortality on the least of us? He's so  
predictable, so disciplined, so...boring.

Aden stares. Breathes hard.

Satan tilts his head. He realizes:

SATAN (CONT'D)

You're not him. You're not Hoffman at  
all.

Aden shakes his head. No.

SATAN (CONT'D)

(putting it together)  
I have heard Rayph talk of your type.  
(MORE)

SATAN (CONT'D)

You must be a...what is the word? A  
"child." But to what end? What could be  
the point of you?

Satan spits in contempt. Napalm. The carpeting flares.

SATAN (CONT'D)

Puny. Weak. Scared. How is it I do not  
kill you right now? Is that not my play?

ADEN

You'll never find Hoffman without my  
help.

Smoke rises from the carpeting around Satan.

SATAN

Never?

(towers over him)

I doubt you know about "never," child.  
Not like I do. Not--

A smoke alarm blares.

Satan turns. Sees it above the doorway. Grabs Aden's  
*Galaxy Note* off his desk. Wings it at the alarm. It flares  
as it goes. (The the Creeps' weapons.) A ball of fire.  
Hits the alarm. Silences it.

ANGELA'S VOICE

ADEN!

The door flies open. The room all smoky. And a tall dapper  
man just standing there.

Angela stops in her tracks.

SATAN

And you are?

JACK (O.S.)

What in hell's going--

He pushes past her into the room. Silenced by what he sees.

SATAN

(to Aden)

Who are they?

JACK

Who are we?! Who the hell are--

Satan points a finger right at Jack. Its tip flares.

Angela faints.

Satan stares daggers at Jack but addresses Aden:

SATAN

Who are they?

ADEN

Well... That down there is my mom. And that's...

(points at Jack)

That's a creep.

Satan blows on his finger: WHOOSH. A ball of flame flies at Jack. At Jack's crotch. Sets it aflame.

Jack YELPS. Falls to his knees. Wildly slaps at his crotch to put it out.

CUT TO:

INT: SUV - TRAVELING - DAY

Satan drives. Aden in the passenger seat.

ADEN

You can't drive this fast.

SATAN

I can. Clearly.

Satan is pushing 70 on Cedar Avenue. He glances at Aden.

SATAN (CONT'D)

You're not very bright are you?

ADEN

Is that what you're going to say to the cop that pulls you over?

SATAN

"Cop?" What does this mean "cop?"

(tilts his head, thinking)

Wait. I know this.

A POLICE SIREN. Faint at first.

SATAN (CONT'D)

Some sort of soldier who enforces society's arbitrary concepts of right and wrong.

Aden looks back to see the cop cruiser gaining on them.

ADEN  
Soldier with a siren.

It's right behind them now.

COP CAR LOUDSPEAKER  
PULL OVER TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD.

ADEN  
Better do it.

SATAN  
I think not.

COP CAR LOUDSPEAKER  
PULL OVER! NOW!

ADEN  
You can't outrun them. Not in this  
shitbin.

SATAN  
So you say.

Satan literally floors it. Pulls away from the cop car.  
Rear-ends a pickup. Sends it spinning into a guardrail.

THE CHASE

is just on the edge of the physically real. Pushing toward  
gameplay.

Satan flies through a red-light intersection. Leaves a pile-  
up in his wake. Careens onto Lindau Lane. The *Mall of*  
*America* looming on his right.

INT. COP CAR

DRIVER ON RADIO  
10-52. Multi-car on Lindau and 24th.  
Requesting EMS and aerial backup.

INT. ADEN'S SUV

Satan speeds up a long ramp to the Mall's parking structure.

SLO-MO: Satan eyeballs the massive *MALL OF AMERICA* sign.  
Recognizes it.

BACK TO SPEED: he blasts through the parking lot toll booth.  
Cops in hot pursuit.

## PARKING STRUCTURE

General vehicular mayhem. Pedestrians dive for cover. A shopping cart tossed like a toy.

INT. SUV

Satan steams the length of Level Two. It's wired off at the end. Aden sees what's coming: flying off the structure.

ADEN

You're gonna kill us!

SATAN

Such a negative outlook you have.

EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE

Nothing... Nothing... Then:

The SUV sails out of the structure's second floor.

Lands beautifully on Route 77.

A tractor-trailer jack-knifes leaving a convulsion of vehicular rending in their rear-view.

A MINNESOTA STATE PATROL HELICOPTER

banks into a sharp turns against the azure sky.

PAN OFF THE 1-800-BANKRUPT SIGN

to find the SUV scorching down a lane of the abandoned Mini Storage. The door to Hoffman's unit dead ahead.

Satan slams on the brakes. Times it perfectly. Screeches right through the corrugated door.

SLO-MO

Both airbags inflate. Cushion the blow.

THE HELICOPTER

passes overhead with a dull thrum. None the wiser. (The SUV out of view.)

INT. SUV

Satan and Aden just sitting there. Stunned.

SATAN  
 Didn't kill us.

INT. HOFFMAN'S SILO - MOMENTS LATER

Aden climbs down the ladder. Satan above him.

ADEN  
 Hoffman. We got a visitor...

Jumps down the to floor.

ADEN (CONT'D)  
 Of course you know that because...

MAIN ROOM

ADEN (CONT'D)  
 (wide-eyed)  
 Oh, snap.

WIDER

It's been wrecked. Abandoned. Cleared out.

Satan turns in a circle to take it in.

Furniture overturned...the enormous curving LED panel entirely crazed...the bank of servers bent and mangled -- reduced to haywiring...a line-up of hard drives drilled dead...and Hoffman's IV drip stand tossed in a corner.

SATAN  
 Did you suppose you could play me for a fool?

Satan's turning circle takes him back to Aden.

SATAN (CONT'D)  
 Bend the truth to your liking.

ADEN  
 I didn't lie to you. This is where Hoffman--

Satan puts up a finger.

It turns into a burning-red poker.

SATAN  
 Don't you know me by now, child? I'm not one to consider lying a sin. It's just not who I am...

Satan licks the finger. It sizzles on his tongue.

Aden surreptitiously grabs a small crow-bar. Hides it behind his back.

SATAN (CONT'D)  
But I do have, if nothing else, a practical nature...

Satan comes at Aden. Backs him into a corner.

SATAN (CONT'D)  
And you are alive, here, now, only because you said you would lead me to Hoffman. But you didn't, which alters our relationship in a subtle fashion...

Satan's whole hand is burning orange. He waves it slowly past one side of Aden's head.

The hair singes and curls and smokes: an instant shaved-side haircut.

SATAN (CONT'D)  
You see I once had a reason to keep you alive.  
(shrugs)  
And now that reason escapes me.

A beat...

Aden slashes at Satan's face with the crowbar.

But Satan puts up a single pyrogenic finger. Easily blocks the blow.

The crow bar sticks to the finger.  
The crow bar glows smoking red.

Aden howls. Drops the bar. Looks his hand: a line burnt black across his palm.

SATAN  
(whisper)  
Game over, little one.

Satan points the hellish finger at Aden's neck. Ever so slowly he pushes it to his Adam's apple.  
The skin starts to smoke and...

WHOOOOSH!

A glob of white/blue gel envelops Satan's hand.  
Instantly freezes it: icy napalm.

Satan grabs the hand. Moans in pain.

Aden turns.

ADEN

Rayph?

Yes. But barely recognizable.

No black mesh exoskeleton armor. Instead: a long blue leather coat. White T-shirt. Blue jeans. Cropped hair. Like he stepped out of *Urban Outfitters*...

...except for his titanium hand gung: a flared barrel *Infusion Gatt*...which he fires again.

SLO-MO: a jet of blue liquid catches up with itself. Forms into a wobbly sphere. Splatters on Satan's face. Embalms his horrified look.

ADEN (CONT'D)

That's new.

RAYPH

He heats up fast.

Indeed. Satan's glowing hand is already melting its icy cocoon.

RAYPH (CONT'D)

Don't want to wait around, do we?

ADEN

No. We don't.

RAYPH

So let's book out.

ADEN

Since when do you talk like that?

RAYPH

Like what?

CUT TO:

EXT. BLACK UBER CAR - TRAVELING - DUSK

Cruising through residential Bloomington.

ADEN'S VOICE

I don't understand. How can you know these things?

INT: UBER

Aden and Rayph sit in back. An *Uber* decal on the window.

RAYPH  
What things?

ADEN  
Things like Uber? How do you know that?

RAYPH  
Who doesn't know Uber?

ADEN  
People from...from where you're from.

RAYPH  
Hey, Cedar Rapids may be small-time but we have our share of three-in-the-morning too-buzzed-to-drive dudes still hoping to score with a little help from Uber's wing-man transport.

Aden starts to say something...but stops himself.

Something's going on here and he does not know what it is.

CUT TO:

SILLO

Satan rubs at his freshly-thawed hand.

SATAN  
Where are you, Hoffman?  
(turns in a circle)  
I know you want me to find you because as long as you're alive Rayph will always win... And what's the fun in that?

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Parts of the empty field glow in the blue light of halide towers.

Rayph sits high in the darkened bleachers. Aden paces along the bench seat in front of him.

ADEN  
So you're saying you have no memory of swimming under Dead Drift River?

RAYPH

What are you talking about?

ADEN

And you don't remember mapping the tunnels of Landers Pass with Tyra?

RAYPH

Who's Tyra?

Behind Aden the huge windows of a field house glow yellow.

ADEN

No. No. You can't have just lost all the...

(turns to him)

How do you know my name?

RAYPH

You're Aden. You're my guide. My connection to Hoffman.

ADEN

But how do you know who I am? How--

He stops himself. See something. Tilts his head: the tattoo on the inside of Rayph's forearm no longer reads *SANCTUARY*. Instead: *PRESENT TENSE*.

RAYPH

What kind of question is that? How do you know who I am?

JENNA (O.S.)

Who are you?

Aden turns to see Jenna coming up the bleachers.

JENNA

Friend of yours, Aden?

Jenna steps into a pocket of light and can see Rayph clearly.

ADEN

Ah, yeah. No. He's a cousin. On my father's side.

DOUCHE

Christ, Jenna. Leave the poor wanker alone...

On the track that circles the football field stand Douche and Bag. Their monikers proudly patched across the backs of their varsity jackets. Douche idly twirls a football.

DOUCHE (CONT'D)

Can't ya see he just wants quality time with his boyfriend.

Rayph stands up.

JENNA

(staring at Rayph,  
dumbfounded)

He looks exactly like Rayph.

(turns to Aden)

Seriously. Look at him.

ADEN

I don't see it.

RAYPH

(points)

That's not good.

They all turn to look: the lights inside the field house are all orange and red...and flickering...like fire.

And the double doors bang open.

BAG

(to Douche)

Night practice?

Rayph pulls a gun from his coat pocket: another *Infusion Gatt*. Holds it out for Aden.

ADEN

No. I...I can't.

Rayph stares into Aden's eyes.

RAYPH

Yes. You can.

JENNA

What's going on here?

DOUCHE (O.S.)

I got it!

SLO-MO: ANGLE ON A FOOTBALL

spiraling through the night sky.

WIDER: Bag sprints across the field like a wide receiver going after the pass thrown from the field house.

The ball arcs down toward him. Bag has timed it perfectly. He lays out to make the catch just as...

The football bursts into flame.

Bag's eyes go wide. Too late...

MOS: ANGLE ON DOUCHE

DOUCHE (CONT'D)  
(mouthing the words)  
What the fuck!

BACK TO SPEED: THE FIREBALL (NÉE FOOTBALL)

hits Bag smack in the chest. Sets him afire.

He screams. Rolls in the grass.

DOUCHE

runs toward his fallen friend.

NIGHT SKY

Incendiary projectiles from rain down. Footballs. Baseballs. Soccer balls. Pinwheeling lacrosse sticks.

A DOZEN OF SATAN'S CREEPS: THE PROJECTILE TOSSERS

charge out the field house and across the turf.

ADEN

grabs the *Gatt* from Rayph's hand.

Jenna stares. Utterly confused. Paralyzed.

RAYPH  
RUN!

They run.

Aden, Rayph and Jenna leap off the end of the bleachers.

ADEN  
This way!

They push through a line a low hedges onto the circular drive that fronts the school. Three parked school buses.

An American flag flutters atop a 30-foot pole. Takes a direct hit. Goes up in flames.

Our threesome heads for the school's main entrance.

Creeps come pouring through the hedges behind them.

They throw sticks and stones begetting gorgeous incendiary ellipses. Instant airborne art.

Rayph picks off the projectiles with jets of icy napalm. Freezes them midair. Downs some Creeps as well.

A FLAMING BASEBALL BAT

wings its way right at Aden and Jenna.

By instinct Aden fires his weapon. Hits the bat midair.

It freezes...but keeps on coming.

Aden puts up a hand to protect Jenna. The frozen bat shatters on impact. Opens a nasty bleeding gash on Aden's arm.

RAYPH

\*

forces open one of the school bus's doors.

RAYPH

Come on!

Aden grabs Jenna hand and runs towards Rayph.

A pickup truck speeds into the circular drive. In its bed: a keg and a half-dozen Shirtless Guys singing and drinking.

A huge maple tree explodes in flame.

Fiery branches rain down on the pickup.

It veers our of control. Up on two wheels. Speeding right at Aden and Jenna.

SLO-MO:

Aden grabs Jenna.  
Dives off the roadway with her. Saves her.  
Looks back at Rayph still by the bus's door.  
The pickup careens right at him.

ADEN

RAYPH!!!

Too late.

The blazing truck hits Rayph dead-on.  
Explodes in a fireball.

SUPER SLO-MO: ANGLE TIGHT ON ADEN'S EYEBALL

It reflects the scene: the fire engulfing the pickup...the bus...Rayph...

The eye blinks: the fire glows pale orange.

The eye blinks: the fire glows white.

The eye blinks...

A crazy cyclone of noise...  
Then utter silence...  
Then...

FOOTBALL FIELD BLEACHERS

RAYPH  
What kind of question is that? How do  
you know who I am?

### **RESPAWN**

Back to Rayph and Aden on the bleachers. Jenna just mounting them. Douche and Bag coming her way.

But the exact replay ends with Rayph's line because Aden and Jenna remember.

They stare at each other. Dumbfounded.

JENNA  
Your arm.

It's bleeding from the gash.

Rayph and Douche and Bag are there for the first time: for them it hasn't yet happened.

RAYPH  
When did that--

ADEN  
(interrupts, to Jenna)  
Look.

Jenna sees what he's pointing at: the light through the field house windows is just starting to burn orange.

DOUCHE  
 (exact repeat)  
 Christ, Jenna. Leave the poor wanker  
 alone...

ADEN  
 (to Jenna)  
 It's about to happen again. We gotta go!

JENNA  
 (the memory sifting back)  
 You saved my life.

A moment between them...interrupted:

DOUCHE  
 (exact repeat)  
 Can't ya see he just wants quality time  
 with his boyfriend.

ADEN  
 (to Rayph)  
 We gotta get out of here!

RAYPH  
 Why?

The field house double doors bang open.

ADEN  
 Run!

Aden and Jenna run. Leap off the end of the bleachers.

Rayph watches them go. Then turns to the field house.

SLO-MO: ANGLE TIGHT ON A FOOTBALL

spiraling through the night sky.

DOUCHE (O.S.)  
 I got it!

The football bursts into flame. \*

THE AMERICA FLAG \*

in front of the school burns. \*

THE PICKUP TRUCK \*

careens onto the circular drive. And just as before we see  
 the... \*

SCHOOL BUS

but Rayph isn't at its door because Aden and Jenny's knowledge has slightly scrambled the order of operations.

SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

Aden and Jenna and Rayph run to a utility shed. Press themselves back against it.

Creeps glowing red run past on the far side of the playground like so many demonic night-lights.

Our threesome the watch the maple tree in front of the school's main entrance explode in flame as before.

Fiery branches rain down...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

The golden neon rocks tumbling across the huge deco sign atop the...

FALLING STONE CINEMA - NIGHT

Satan stares up at the marquee: *THE BEST OF HOFFMAN*

*Capote...Boogie Nights...The Talented Mr. Ripley*

Two couples step past him. Dressed up for the night. Large guys in cowboy hats. Ladies teetering on spiky heels. One of the Cowboys buys their tickets at the window.

Satan approaches the other.

SATAN

Where can I find Mr. Hoffman? I'd like a word with him.

COWBOY #1

Show some respect. He was one of the greats.

LADY

(all starry-eyed)

He's a god.

SATAN

Hoffman? Are you daft? At best he's a petty tyrant. At worst a clown.

COWBOY #1

You got a problem with my girl here?

(steps up very close)

(MORE)

COWBOY #1 (CONT'D)

'Cause I just might be having a problem  
with you, you fancy-talking wanker.

SATAN

"Wanker?" Seriously?

COWBOY #2

(coming up behind him)

This serious enough?

Satan turn as Cowboy #2 eases open his jacket to reveal a wood-handled *Smith & Wesson Centerfire* revolver holstered at his hip.

Satan points a finger at Cowboy #2's crotch.

SATAN

I hope I'm not supposed to be looking for  
your penis...

(stares him in the eyes)

Such a seriously tiny thing would be so  
easy to hide.

Quick Draw: Cowboy #2 whips out the revolver. Points it at Satan's chest. Truly fast.

But Satan is faster. He's Satan after all.

He grabs onto the gun. Bends it back to the Cowboy's neck.

And the gun starts to glow. Orange... Red...

The others back off in fear.

Cowboy #2 moans in pain as the gun smokes in his hand.

He drops it. A dull thud on the sidewalk.

Its wooden handle flares in white flame and...

THE GUN FIRES ITSELF.

Shatters Cowboy #1's ankle.

He goes down. SCREAMS IN PAIN.

Satan walks off...

CUT TO:

EXT. INDUSTRIAL DOWNTOWN BLOOMINGTON - NIGHT

Tagged brick buildings. Shuttered for the night. Metal doors. Empty lots. Half the streetlamps dead.

Rayph walks in and out of the shadows on a narrow street.

He fires his *Gatt* for fun: freezes a *ADT Security* sign...a neon *Matrix Firearm Supply* sign...which fizzles out.

Aden and Jenna follow 20 paces behind. They're both eating ice-cream cones.

ADEN

Okay... So we've been bought Dairy Queen by a guy from a Third Person Shooter game.

JENNA

That appears to have happened.

ADEN

But we both agree that can't have happened because...that can't happen.

JENNA

I was at Julie Nichols' one night and she said Taylor Swift was coming over later and I knew that couldn't happen but actually Taylor Swift did come over because it turned out at that Julie's aunt on her mother's side is Taylor Swift's mom.

ADEN

I'm not sure that's helpful.

JENNA

(points at Rayph)

He's not the problem. He could just be some guy with an unusual gun who looks like Rayph. The problem...

(gently touches the crude bandage on Aden's arm)

This is the problem.

Aden runs his hand over the arm.

JENNA (CONT'D)

We went back to a save state. You and me. Stuff happened and we went back in time and we knew it had happened but Rayph didn't and then he--

Rayph wheels and shoots a rat scurrying across the street.

JENNA (CONT'D)

Hey! You can't do that! You can't just kill an animal! Even if it's a rodent.

The rat lies inert on its side in.

RAYPH

It's okay.

(re: his gatt)

It's only on CFC 3. He'll thaw any moment now. I'm not--

The rat stirs. Hops up. Looks right at Aden. Runs.

RAYPH (CONT'D)

I'm a sensitive guy.

ADEN

Where'd you get that gun?

RAYPH

Whaddaya mean? You picked it out.

ADEN

(confused)

I...? No, I didn't but... What I want to know: why didn't you kill Satan when you had the chance?

JENNA

Satan?! Wait. Satan's here?

A fire-engine SIREN...

RAYPH

(to Aden)

You know I can't do that.

The SIREN growing louder...

RAYPH (CONT'D)

Only you can.

JENNA

Answer the question, Aden! Is Satan here?!

The fire truck's blazing lights sweep over them as it barrels onto their street. Coming at them now. Glowing red like it carries fire rather than fights it.

ADEN

Answered.

## FIRE TRUCK

Satan stands like a figurehead atop the cab. A Creep at each steering wheel: the one inside the cab and the one outside in back over the rear wheels.

More squat corpulent Creeps stand on running boards holding fast to flat-lying ladders like kids freeloading on a trolley.

ADEN/JENNA/RAYPH

run.

Across a parking lot. The truck closes hard behind them.

They head down an alley past a rubble of bricks.

ALLEY

Way too narrow for the truck...but not for bricks thrown by Creeps.

BRICKS

that burst into flame as they rain down.

Rayph sprays a covering frost overhead.

Gravity still delivers the smoldering projectiles. They CLATTER off dumpsters. SHATTER windows.

ADEN

In here!

Jenna runs through an door-less doorway. Rayph follows.

Aden fires his Gatt for the first time...

A Creep freezes in place.

Gets knocked over by other Creeps rushing past.

Shatters into glassy shards.

Aden allows himself a smile...

ADEN (CONT'D)

Sweet!

...then ducks through the doorway.

ADEN/JENNA/RAYPH

run the length of the dank abandoned warehouse.

THE CREEPS

all try to pour through the doorway at once.

They get comically stuck as they squeeze into each other... and then burst into the warehouse reinflated like so many red playground balls.

ADEN/JENNA/RAYPH

run to the far end of the warehouse. A wall with a single metal door. No windows.

EXT. ANOTHER ALLEY

Rayph bursts through the doorway. Aden & Jenna follow.

RAYPH

Little help?!

He's pushing a huge dumpster to pin the door shut. Aden and Jenna help. Job done just as they hear the THUD of Creeps from the inside.

And the door starts to glow hot red...

WEST 78TH STREET

Aden/Jenna/Rayph tear out of the alley. Stop to catch their breath in the middle of the deserted roadway lined by shuttered stores. Jenna sucking air.

JENNA

I knew I shouldn't have bailed on track.

ADEN

Hard to anticipate being chased by Creeps.

JENNA

Very.

Rayph looks one way. The other. Tilts his head...

ADEN

What?

BAM!

The fire truck blasts out through the glass storefront of a clothing emporium three blocks down. Tosses mannequins into the street.

ADEN/JENNA/RAYPH

run.

Turn down a side-street. But it's bricked off.

Back onto...

WEST 78TH

The truck coming hard.

And suddenly the whole street is bricked off too.

And so are the other side streets. WHAT!!!

THE FIRE TRUCK

breaks crazy hard: a pure jackknife taking up the entire roadway.

The truck tumbles. A caterwauling rending.

Satan leaps off the cab's roof.

Lands like Spiderman.

Creeps tumble and roll off thier perches: the devil's acrobats.

The truck fractures: huge flaming chards fly.

ADEN/JENNA/RAYPH

back into a bricked-off corner that wasn't there before.

Suddenly quiet.

Satan approaches: tuxedoed demon. The Creeps gather behind him.

SATAN

(offhand, to Aden)

Where is Hoffman?

ADEN

I don't know.

SATAN

Of course you know, child. And I can prove it.

In a flash -- literally -- he grabs Jenna. Holds her tight with her back to his chest. His iron-grip arm around her torso.

They face Aden and Rayph. Satan a full head taller than his captive.

He raises a threatening finger in front of Jenna's face --  
fingertip glowing orange.

SATAN (CONT'D)  
 Clarifies the mind, does it not?  
 (startlingly loud)  
 WHERE IS HE!

Aden suddenly points his *Gatt* at Satan's head. Dials the  
*CFC* ring. It CLICKS to 9.

SATAN  
 Be my guest...

Satan turns his head. Taps his own temple as if pointing  
 out the ideal target.

SATAN (CONT'D)  
 Fire away.

RAYPH  
 Don't do it! Kill him now and he wins.

SATAN  
 Wise words from the fool.

Satan slowly turns his deadly gaze to Aden as he presses the  
 hot poker of a finger toward Jenna's cheek.

She breathes hard. Stares at Aden. Pleading silently.  
 Tears of pain in her eyes as the skin sings...

SATAN  
 (sweetly)  
 So tell me, child. Where is Hoffman?

Aden wheels and fires his Gatt at Rayph's chest.

SLO-MO: Rayph's body freezes into blue crystals...

Jenna looks at Aden.

Aden looks at Jenna.

Holds her gaze...

That same CYCLONE OF NOISE. Then SUDDEN SILENCE. Then:

**RESPAWN\***

FOOTBALL FIELD BLEACHERS -- ONCE AGAIN

Jenna climbs up the bleachers toward Aden and Rayph.  
There's a small yet nasty burn on her cheek.

JENNA

Smart.

ADEN

Thank you.

DOUCHE (O.S.)

(exact repeat)

Christ, Jenna. Leave the poor wanker  
alone...

JENNA

We gotta find a new save point.

Aden turns to see the hellish flicking light through the  
field house windows.

Aden and Jenna both turn to Rayph.

ADEN & JENNA

Run!

CUT TO:

A HUGE ILLUMINATED BILLBOARD

Black lettering on a white background:

**THE HOFFMAN CHRONICLES :: SANCTUARY**

No artwork. Just a box in the corner:

***GameStop -- Coming Soon***

And the "Coming Soon" is now partially covered with a  
***Tonight!*** sign.

EXT. KILLEBREW AVE. - NIGHT

Satan gazes up at the billboard. Lights a *Camel* with his  
fingertip. Turns around. Blows a cloud of smoke.

The smoke clears to reveal the blazing *MALL OF AMERICA* main  
entrance sign.

INT. MALL OF AMERICA - NIGHT

Satan enters this paradise of capitalism. Takes it in.  
Grins.

SATAN  
The past as future. My kind of place.

EXT. ADEN'S SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

Aden and Jenna press back against the shed.

As before the Creeps run past on the far side of the  
playground.

But no Rayph.

JENNA  
Where is he?

ADEN  
This worked last time.

JENNA  
We must have done something different.

CUT TO:

INT: MALL OF AMERICA - NICKELODEON UNIVERSE - NIGHT

A car roars by on the corkscrew indoor roller coaster.

Satan turns in a circle. Takes in this extant version of  
the ruined one he knows from *Sanctuary*.

ESCALATOR

Satan lights up another smoke as he steps onto Level 3.  
Looks across the way: **GameStop**.

*Hoffman Chronicles* posters from the whole series paper the  
storefront.

MALL COP (O.S.)  
You can't do that...

Satan turns to see a rotund MALL COP hurrying his way.

MALL COP (CONT'D)  
You can't smoke in here.

SATAN

Really?  
 (holds up his cigarette)  
 Seems as if I can.

MALL COP

No, you can't.

SATAN

Maybe we should try a little reality testing.

Satan makes a show of bringing the *Camel* to his lips. Luxuriates in an inhale. Blows the smoke in the Mall Cop's face.

SATAN

See my point?

MALL COP

Ya want reality, tough guy?

He pulls his *TASER*.

MALL COP (CONT'D)

Here's my reality.

HE FIRES. Hits Satan square in the chest. The barb sticks. The coiled wires deliver 50,000 volts.

But...nothing. Satan just takes another drag on his smoke.

The Mall Cop looks at the *TASER*'s readout. Looks at Satan. Looks at...

THE WIRES

glowing orange.

And the voltage reverses. Two tiny bolts of lightning spiral along the wires. Back at the Cop and...

ZZZAAAAPPP! The Cop goes into spasms. Staggeres backward. Hits the low railing. Tumbles over.

SLO-MO: the Cop sails down to Level 2.

BAM! Lands smack on the roof of a...

TESLA MODEL X SHOW CAR

Sets off its ALARM. People shriek and gather. Point up at...nothing. Satan long gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOIR PARK - NIGHT

Aden and Jenny run through this heavily wooded park. A fire truck speeds past on Old Shakopee Road. Flashing red lights through the treetops.

Its SIREN dopplers away. Aden and Jenna stop. Both breathing hard. Damp with perspiration.

JENNA

Maybe it's just a fire.

ADEN

Maybe.

JENNA

Maybe we died and this is purgatory.

ADEN

That's not real...

He reaches out and touches the burn mark on Jenna's cheek.

JENNA

OW!

ADEN

And this is. So there has to be a real explanation. Something that makes sense.

JENNA

What if it refuses to make sense?

ADEN

No. Science is science. Cause and effect. Action reaction. You gonna pick a fight with gravity?

JENNA

We just went back in time.

ADEN

How do you know?

JENNA

How'd you get so sure of yourself?

ADEN

There's an explanation for everything.

Jenna stares at Aden. Tilts her head. Considers him. And then...

She steps up and kisses him on the lips: a true lingering kiss.

JENNA

Explain that.

Aden is dazed. Boggled. Mute.

JENNA

Maybe you died and went to heaven.

ADEN

That doesn't... I don't think...

(and then)

But in the name of scientific inquiry.

He leans in and kisses Jenna...

CUT TO:

INT. MALL OF AMERICA - NIGHT

Up on Level 3 Satan approaches *GameStop*.

A huge sign plastered over the doorway:

***The Hoffman Chronicles :: Sanctuary***

***MIDNIGHT!***

INT. GAMESTOP

A fake iron-bar prison cell sits dead center in the store. Hundreds of boxes of *Sanctuary* piled inside.

Two extra-large Security Guys in studded leather jackets stand guard. Arms crossed.

A digital countdown clock: 4 minutes 45 seconds...43...42...

Dozens of GAMERS in anxious anticipation. Many in *Sanctuary* garb.

And there's a stir because...

SATAN

wanders into the store.

He's instantly recognized as a look-alike actor hired to play Satan for the release of *Sanctuary*.

He approaches a life-size standee of Rayph and Satan. Gamers gather.

VARIOUS GAMERS

Prezactly like him!... Hey, Satan, burn me... Fire me up.

Satan stares at his standee doppelganger.

SATAN

What is the meaning of this?

GAMER #1

It's you, dude.

SATAN

But why? Why this image? What is this place?

(turning to them)

For what reason are you gathered here?

GAMER #2

He's crushing that accent.

A FEMALE GAMER sporting a Tyra tank-top approaches him:

FEMALE GAMER

Hey, Satan. How 'bout signing my--

But Satan takes her approach as a threat: he whips around and points a finger at her. Its tip flames.

She stops in her tracks.

FEMALE GAMER

Whoa.

A moment of utter silence. And then they all break into APPLAUSE. Yell their approval of his parlor trick.

But the...

STORE MANAGER

talks to the Security Guards. Points at Satan.

SATAN

retracts the flame.

SATAN  
Where do I find Hoffman?

GAMER #3  
Is that what's gonna happen in Sanctuary?

GAMER #1  
The search for Hoffman? Like meeting  
your maker?

SATAN  
He is not my--

One of the burly Guards grabs Satan by the elbow.

GUARD  
C'mon guy. Let's go.

But the crowd BOOS.

SATAN  
Unhand me.

FEMALE GAMER  
(tries a British accent)  
"Unhand him!"

GUARD  
You can't do that flame stuff in here.

Guard #2 goes to grab his other arm.

SLO-MO / MOS

Satan pulls out of his grip. Flames his finger. Blows fire  
at Guard #2's chest.

WHOOSH! His leather jacket ignites.

The Guard mutely yells.  
Tears out of the store.  
Dives out over the balcony.  
Sails down to Level 2 and...

SPLASHES into the huge fountain/pool below.

UP ON LEVEL THREE

Gamers lean over the balcony. Realize it was all an  
elaborate stunt. APPLAUSE. WHISTLES. CHEERS.

GAMESTOP

Satan turns to the other Guard who puts his hands up and backs away.

GAMER #1  
How'd you do that, man?

FEMALE GAMER  
It's almost midnight...

The countdown clock is under one minute.

FEMALE GAMER (CONT'D)  
What's next?

GAMER #1 (O.S.)  
Creeps!

They turn to see a half-dozen of Satan's Creeps entering.

GAMER #2  
Awesome!

Well... Kinda...

One of the Creeps picks up a PS4 controller and wings it his way.

It ignites mid-air. Gamer #2 ducks.

It misses him, but lands inside the prison cell and sets the Sanctuary boxes ablaze.

Uh-oh.

The tone morphs quickly from *What the fuck?* to full-out bedlam as the Creeps giddily throw stuff. Consoles. Tablets. Keyboards.

One of them wings gift cards like tiny flaming frisbees.

The crowd panics. Crushes to the back of the store.

No way out. Smoke and flames start to win the day.

As horrible screams rise to fill the air...

GAMESTOP STOREFRONT

The *Sanctuary* posters plastered to the inside of the plate-glass go up in flame.

And out the flame-engulfed doorway comes Satan walking with utter calm: the tuxedoed Prince of Darkness striding proudly through hellfire of his own making.

DISSOLVE TO:

ADEN'S CORKBOARD MAP

showing the path to his father's death.

JENNA (O.S.)  
I don't get it.

ADEN (O.S.)  
It's about my father...

ADEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jenna stands staring at the map.

ADEN (CONT'D)  
He died. When I was 12.

JENNA  
I know.

Aden sits on a stool.

ADEN  
You do?

JENNA  
We all knew when it happened.  
(turns to him)  
You may be shy but you're not invisible.

ADEN  
You think I'm shy?

Jenna takes in the volume of Aden's gaming-related detritus.

And there's a RUMBLE OF THUNDER.

JENNA  
You should spend more time in the real world.

ANGELA (O.S.)  
(yelling from downstairs)  
You can't just change your mind like that!

JACK (O.S.)  
 (yelling back)  
 Says the bitch!

ANGELA (O.S.)  
 Jack, please. Aden's up in his--

CRASH: the sound of a chair being tossed. Dishes breaking on the floor. And then silence.

Aden swivels away from Jenna. Ashamed.

It makes Jenna all sad.

JENNA  
 You okay?

Aden doesn't answer.

Jenna turns to his map as if it has the key.

PUSH IN ON THE MAP...to the photo of the blue Corolla parked in Aden's driveway...and right through it...

DISSOLVE TO:

OVERHEAD SHOT OF ADEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

PULL STRAIGHT UP INTO THE SKY: Aden's neighborhood.

And suddenly higher: all of Bloomington. Fires dot the landscape.

ANGLE TILTS THIS WAY AND THAT. As if searching...

It has the feel of a video game top-down perspective as location and movement stats -- GPS coordinates, altitude, speed -- scroll on the left of the screen.

Hold for a beat.

A flash of lighting and...

A ballistic move miles south. A sudden halt. A drop down to find:

RAYPH

driving a blue Corolla due north.

OVERHEAD: GO WITH THE COROLLA as it speeds through a residential neighborhood.

Every intersection is a 4-Way stop. But Rayph never stops.

He speeds through one after the other just barely missing the crossing vehicles: magically perfect vehicular choreography.

CAMERA SUDDENLY STOPS

Pulls up high. Turns 180°. Ballistic flight north. Halts over Aden's house. Lingers a beat.

Lightning again. And then...

A quick 90° turn. Ballistic flight just one mile west. Down to street level to find:

SATAN - OVERHEAD SHOT

He walks east down the middle of an ill-lit street. Stops to light up.

Rain starts to fall.

A RED PICKUP

whips around a corner. Its headlights land on Satan who reacts not at all as the truck barrels toward him.

He draws in the smoke as the pickup's HORN BLARES.

Its brakes SCREEEEEEEECH. The truck's front bumper comes to a stop six inches from Satan's knees.

BRO (O.S.)

You fuckin' nuts!

Satan finally looks up. FIVE LARGE BROS. Two exit the cab. Three hop of the bed. Colt 45 seems to be the brew of choice.

SATAN

I quite like your truck.

The rain starts to pour.

BRO

Really? I can't tell you how happy that makes me.

(circling Satan)

Hey, Cal. Mr. Tuxedo here likes your truck.

SATAN  
 (to the approaching Cal)  
 Would you mind giving me the keys?

The boys glance at one another.

THUNDER RUMBLES.

CAL  
 (holds up the keys)  
 These keys?

SATAN  
 Yes. And I'm in a bit of a hurry.

CAL  
 You're in a hurry?

SATAN  
 Must you continue to ask these questions?

CAL  
 (mocking British accent)  
 Must you continue to--

SATAN  
 Enough!

In a flash he places his palm on Bro's chest.

His tight T-shirt instantly smokes as Satan pushes his  
 burning hand right into Bro's chest cavity.

HIDEOUS SCREAM as he collapses to the pavement.

Stunned horror all around. A lot of backing up.

Satan plucks the keys from a paralyzed Cal's hand.

SATAN (CONT'D)  
 Grazie.

ANGLE FROM ABOVE

As Satan gets in the truck...

CAMERA repeats the moves back to Aden's home: Rises high.  
 Turns. Flies. Stops over the house.

Rain pours down on the house. Lighting flashes.

Move straight down. Right through the roof into...

## ADEN'S ROOM

It's as if no time has passed. Jenny looks at Aden's hand-made wall map. Aden stares at the floor.

She points at the red star in the center where the *9/14/15 - 8:28 a.m. Post-It* marks the intersection where Aden's father died.

JENNA

Why all the time stuff showing where the cars were when?

Aden swivels back to her.

JENNA (CONT'D)

I really want to know.

ADEN

You do?

Jenna smiles seeing how rare such interest must be in Aden's life.

JENNA

Yes. Tell me.

ADEN

Well... What if...

(gets up)

What if this guy had stopped for coffee that morning and wasn't exactly here at 8:25?

(points to a photo of the red pickup)

Or what if I hadn't asked my dad to help me with the brakes on my bike before school?

(taps the photo of the blue Corolla parked in his driveway)

He would have left just a few minutes earlier and...well...

(turns to her)

You know. Time and place. Everything woulda been just a little different.

JENNA

But what happened happened and if you start thinking about that stuff the "what ifs" go on forever. What if you had a cold and didn't go to school that day? What if you never learned to ride a bike? Right?

ADEN

Right. Right...

He picks up a scrambled *Rubik's Cube*. Looks at it. At all six sides.

And then he proceeds to do three things at once. Pace. Solve the cube by memory. (Never looking down at it. Fingers flying.) And make his argument to Jenna.

Suddenly all energized. Words pouring out:

ADEN (CONT'D)

But there was stuff Hoffman was working on like AI stuff about the boundaries between game play and our individual minds...

(his fingers never stop working the cube)

...like how feeding a personalized game through a particular brain is the same idea as how medicine is looking to use our genes to perfectly personalize a treatment like you'd get a vaccine that was made just for you so--

JENNA

Wait. Wait. Go back.

Aden stops working on the cube (it's already half solved).

ADEN

What?

JENNA

You know him? You know Hoffman?

ADEN

Ah... Ah... Yeah. Yeah I do. I've known him for years. But my point here...

(taps the map)

I'm not saying there's going back and changing anything, but what if I could know. Like just understand all the "what ifs." All the permutations. All the parallel lines.

Jenna hesitates as she realizes where he's going with this.

JENNA

Like you'd go back to a save state over and over and see all of them.

ADEN  
Which is impossible, right?

Jenna nods yes.

ADEN (CONT'D)  
Except. Well...

He touches his bandaged arm.

JENNA  
That.

ADEN  
Which is why we need to find Hoffman and  
find him before, you know, before...

JENNA  
Before some entirely fictional person who  
spits fire gets there first.

POW! Gunshot from downstairs.

ADEN  
MOM!

KITCHEN: ANGELA

is pressed back against the refrigerator. Eyes wide.

Rain loud against the windows.

JACK (O.S.)  
I don't give a shit who you are!

JACK

points a .38 revolver.

JACK (CONT'D)  
You got exactly two seconds to back your  
ass outta that door there.

WHOLE SCENE

to include Rayph. Soaking wet. Standing palms out by the  
open door back door. Jack's gun pointed at his head from  
five paces.

We hear Aden and Jenna running downs the stairs...

RAYPH  
I'm just here to talk to Aden.

,,,and into the kitchen. They both stop short.

ADEN

Rayph?!

JACK

This asshole here who seems to think breaking and entering ain't a crime?

ANGELA

Jack, he didn't exactly--

JACK

Shut your face!

RAYPH

(perfectly calm)

Why would you talk to her like that?

JACK

Who the hell are you to--

The lights flicker. Everyone freezes.

And a lightning strike knocks out the power.

JACK

(gun still pointed at Rayph)

DON'T YOU MOVE!

(without looking at her)

Flashlight's in the drawer there, darlin'. You go get it now.

Angela does. Fumbles to turn it on.

JACK (CONT'D)

And you point it right at his chest and you keep it there like a good girl.

Angela does.

JACK (CONT'D)

And now we're all gonna just--

ANGELA

(seeing something)

Jack.

JACK

Don't talk. Just do like I--

He glances at her to see her pointing.

He turns to look So do Aden and Jenna. They all see:

SATAN

who stands calmly in the wide opening to the living room.

Flash of lightning...

SATAN

As they say on this side of the pond:  
Gang's all here...

Angela trains the flashlight on him.

SATAN (CONT'D)

Just about all here. Still waiting for  
one more...

(to Aden and Jenna)

Is it you who invited Mr. Hoffman?

ADEN

No.

Jack points his gun at Satan.

JACK

Fuckin' magic man. You keep your  
distance.

(turns to Rayph)

And you t--

But Rayph is gone. Slipped out the back door.

And the lights flicker on.

SATAN

(strolling into the kitchen)

Who is it that said, Let there be light?  
His name escapes me.

JACK

(cocks the gun)

Not another step.

Satan grabs the revolver out of Jack's hand so fast Jack  
doesn't have time to register that Satan crossed the last  
ten feet in an instant.

Satan points the gun at Jack who backs away.

ADEN

Hoffman's not coming here.

SATAN

I don't believe you.

ADEN

He knows better. He's too smart.  
Smarter than you.

SATAN

Smarter than me, child? Fascinating.  
How would we put that to the test, do you  
suppose?

(and then)

I know. Let's let time decide.

ADEN

He's not here and he's not coming.

SATAN

Time involves patience. It comes and  
goes as it will. Occasionally in life we  
have to wait for it...

(puts up a finger)

Wait for it...

He points at the back door.

And damn if there isn't a KNOCK on the door.

SATAN (CONT'D)

(sing-song)

Come in.

The door opens.

It's Hoffman.

POW! Satan shoots him dead in the heart.

Angela SCREAMS.

Aden watches in mute horror as Hoffman slumps in the  
doorway. Blood soaking his shirt.

Hoffman thuds to the floor. A gaming plexi-mask he was  
holding skitters across the linoleum...stopping at Satan's  
feet.

In the utter silence Hoffman lies dead.

No one moves...save for Satan who casually picks up the  
plexi-mask.

He stands. Looks it over.

SATAN (CONT'D)

(to Aden)

I guess "smart" is in the eye of the beholder.

Aden breathes hard. Jenna surreptitiously takes his hand in hers.

JACK

(to Satan)

Who are you?

Satan steps over to the kitchen table. Places down the plexi-mask as well as Jack's gun.

SATAN

You know me, Jack. Of everyone here, you know me best.

Out of the corner of her eye Angela sees Aden and Jenna silently back into the hallway. She gives Aden a tiny nod of encouragement as he and Jenna disappear into the shadows.

SATAN

(to Angela)

You need not be so careful. Call good-bye if you wish. I'll be catching up with your boy later.

In a flash Jack slashes at Satan's neck from behind with a huge carving knife.

SUPER SLOW-MO

Satan reaches back and pinches the gleaming blade between thumb and forefinger. Instantly slowing its progress. But not all the way.

The knife's edge just barely grazes Satan's neck. No more than a paper cut. And with it: a single tiny drop of blood like a perfect jewel.

BACK TO SPEED

SATAN (CONT'D)

(like a hurt little boy)

Ow.

And then he turns his gaze to Jack as the knife's metal blade quickly glows orange from Satan's fingertip grasp.

The knife's handle bursts into flame singeing Jack's hand before he lets go.

JACK

Shit!

Angela lets out a little GIGGLE.

JACK

Shut your trap.

Satan looks at Jack. Considers him.

SATAN

You're quite the coward, aren't you?

Satan drops the burning knife onto the floor.

SATAN (CONT'D)

(to Angela)

But you have your part in this too,  
'cause if you wish this mongrel out of  
your life you'll have to take a stand.  
All on your own. No one can do that for  
you.

Satan picks up Jack's gun.

SATAN (CONT'D)

You do wish him out of your life forever  
and always?

JACK

(as a warning)

Angela.

But Angela gives Satan a tiny nod of the head: Yes.

JACK (CONT'D)

Jesus!

SATAN

Even he won't help you now...

As Satan circles Jack he turns the gun over in his hands.  
Heating it up. Making it mailable like molten metal.

SATAN (CONT'D)

But I bet he knows who you are.

(to Angela)

Which likely you do not because this cur  
you call Jack Bender was born Ben  
Jackson, the name he used right up until  
the day two years ago when in broad  
daylight he shot and killed a sheriff in  
the state of Wyoming... "Wyoming." That  
is how you pronounce it?

Angela nods, yes.

Little by little Satan forms the gun into a glowing orange ball.

SATAN (CONT'D)

He killed this man and one other and escaped into the mountains. A massive man hunt ensued but he slipped through.

(to Jack)

Well done you.

Jack give him the finger.

SATAN (CONT'D)

Understood. Of course my point remains...

(to Angela)

One well-timed call to the Federal Marshals Service and Ben here will be well out of your life. Do you understand?

Angela nods, yes.

SATAN (CONT'D)

Splendid. I'll be on my way now. Have some killing of my own to do.

And with that he exits.

Jack stares daggers at Angela.

JACK

Easier said than done, darlin'.

Satan suddenly re-enters still holding the molten ball.

SATAN

(to Jack)

Just to be clear: if you lay so much as a finger on her I will roast you like a suckling pig over an open flame so perfectly delicate that it will just barely singe your flesh, giving that feeble brain of yours all the time it needs to reach the inevitable conclusion that this is what is meant by an eternity in hell.

He flips the ball at Jack. Jack jumps back. The ball melts right through the linoleum flooring.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

Aden sits on the broken cement of a long-abandoned loading dock. Head bowed. Legs dangling.

A few rusting truck trailers fill nearby slots. The enormous parking lot is shadowed and empty.

ADEN  
It's my fault.

JENNA  
No.

Jenna sits next to him. She feels his pain.

ADEN  
He's would still be alive if I had just--

JENNA  
Don't Aden.

ADEN  
But why didn't I see it coming? I should have--

JENNA  
Stop!

Aden looks at her.

JENNA (CONT'D)  
You can't look at the world like that.  
It's gonna eat you alive.

She hops down. Walks away a few paces. Turns to him.

JENNA (CONT'D)  
We're both going nuts, aren't we?

ADEN  
Yes. We are.

A pause. Both thinking. A sudden breeze kicking up dust.

And then:

JENNA ADEN (CONT'D)  
But... But...

They look at each other.

JENNA ADEN (CONT'D)  
What if... What if...

Jenna smiles.

JENNA

What if that's exactly what we need to do? What if that's the logical way to deal with a world that's gone nuts. Maybe...

ADEN

(finishing her thought)  
...that's the only way to play the game.

JENNA

Yes! And so we don't fight the connections, like it can't just be coincidence that you're so thinking that you could have done something to save Hoffman just like you've been thinking all this time that you could have done something to, you know, save your father.

Aden nods, Yes.

JENNA (CONT'D)

And you can't do either. Not in the world we know, but...

ADEN

But in here...  
(taps his temple)  
I can't do anything else. I can't stop, like when you play one of those games where its designed so you can't win but that's part of what makes you want to play it every minute of every day like the world doesn't exist.

JENNA

But eventually you do stop. You get out because...

(stares into his eyes)  
Because there's something or someone worth getting out for.

ADEN

(points past Jenna)  
Or sometimes shit just happens.

Jenna turns around.

At the far end of the enormous parking lot: something red. Coming toward them. A red pickup truck all lit up.

Aden stands. Jenna scrambles to join him up on the loading dock. And they both see two more red pickups coming their way.

They stare until what they're looking at comes into focus:

Each of the pickups' beds is packed with roly-poly Creeps glowing red: literally aflame.

JENNA

(under her breath)

No.

Aden turns to the warehouse wall behind him: corrugated metal with 15-foot broken-paned windows. And a metal door hanging askew.

Aden runs to the door. Tries to shoulder it open.

BAM! It doesn't budge.

SLOW-MO

The closest pickup goes into a long sideways skid.

Jenna joins Aden. Both shouldering the door. Still no go.

The pickup brakes. All the Creeps launch like fireballs.

Aden and Jenna break through the door just as...

The broadside of flaming red Creeps hits the warehouse.

BACK TO SPEED

FOLLOW ONE OF FLAMING CREEPS as it smashes clear through a huge window...

INT: WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Creep hits the floor and spills into lava: a fiery flow catching up with Aden and Jenny as they run like hell...and just barely outpace it as it burns into the flooring.

WIDER: The warehouse has no lighting but floor-to-ceiling broken-pane windows line either side. And red light glows through them brighter and brighter: the approach of more flying Creeps.

Aden and Jenny run full tilt through giant abandoned metal-pressing equipment.

JENNA  
YOU GOT THAT FREEZER GUN?!

ADEN  
IT DIDN'T COME THROUGH THE LAST RESPAWN!

POW-POW-POW! A volley of Creeps hits the left wall of the warehouse.

Some splat on the metal and bleed through as flaming red ooze.

But three blast through windows. Hit the floor. LAVA.

Aden and Jenna change course just in time. The flooring burns away behind them.

Up ahead: a line of windows already glowing red.

Aden grabs Jenna's hand.

ADEN (CONT'D)  
THIS WAY!

They run for an open stairway but...

CRASH! A red pickup blasts through one of the windows.

No. It's not a red pickup. It's a blue Corolla. It's Rayph.

He skids to a stop between them.

RAYPH  
GET IN!

They both dive in back. Rayph takes off before the doors close.

Another volley of flying Creeps explodes through the windows.

The lava flows join and rush at the speeding Corolla.

Rayph floors it. Heads rights for one of the huge windows.

Lava nipping at his tires and...

EXT. WAREHOUSE WINDOW

The Corolla blows through it. Glass rains down.

HIGH OVERHEAD SHOT

The cars look like toys. The tiny blue sedan races out of the lot. Careens onto Bayliss Ave. The little red glowing pickups cut crimson arcs as they change course and give chase.

INT. COROLLA

Aden and Jenna untangle themselves in the back seat.

RAYPH (CONT'D)

Where to?!

Jenna looks through the rear window.

JENNA

They're coming fast.

Rayph checks his rearview: a glowing red Creep pickup.

He skids into a screeching turn onto 74th.

Modest residential street. Trimmed lawns and glowing windows.

ADEN

Why did you leave like that?! Leave us all alone?!

RAYPH

Whaddaya mean? That was the plan.

ADEN

Whose plan?

RAYPH

Your plan. You told me to meet at the warehouse. You--

Rayph suddenly brakes hard. Screeching to a stop before a 4-way-stop intersection.

We see why:

SLOW-MO

A glowing red pickup crosses right-to-left. Its bed filled with fiery Creeps.

And in the driver's seat: Satan. Waving a hand like a passing dignitary.

BACK TO SPEED

CAMERA flies strait up into a HIGH OVERHEAD as the tiny blue Corolla speeds through the intersection. And Satan's pick-up continues on.

ADEN'S VOICE

I didn't have a plan. Who knew I would even be there?

Three tiny glowing red-pickup crisscross the grid of residential streets: a circuitous pursuit.

RAYPH'S VOICE

I knew 'cause you told me...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

WALL MAP IN ADEN'S ROOM

The four vehicles remain animated but are now on the streets as drawn on Aden's map.

RAYPH'S VOICE (CONT'D)

And it's a good thing or I wouldn't have been there to save you from the Creeps!

Two of the red pick-ups head for the blue Corolla from opposite directions...and swing onto 74th street behind Rayph. One behind the other.

INT. COROLLA

JENNA

They're back!

Rayph checks his rearview again: the Creeps are gaining.

He swings onto Colfax. Wide boulevard. Two lanes in each direction.

And he floors it.

THE LEAD RED PICKUP

weaves through slower traffic and comes up on the Corolla's right.

RAYPH

He pulls his Gatt.

Aden and Jenna watch as Two Creeps leap from the truck bed onto the Corolla's back windshield...which suddenly glows orange...and begins to melt as they press into it.

RAYPH  
(turns around)  
DOWN!

Aden and Jenna duck.

Rayph fires: a frozen lattice on the glass.

The orange glow turns blue. The Creeps squeal in pain. And fall away.

ADEN'S MAP (LIKE AN OVERHEAD SHOT)

fills the frame...and the chase continues.

The blue Corolla screeches through a sharp right. The red pickups follow.

(Other vehicular traffic is visible as well: this map view exactly matches the real overhead shot.)

ADEN'S VOICE  
He killed Hoffman!

RAYPH'S VOICE  
Who?

ADEN'S VOICE  
Satan!

RAYPH'S VOICE  
No. I don't think so.

We see the third red pickup -- Satan's vehicle -- circling north of the main chase.

ADEN'S VOICE  
He did.

RAYPH'S VOICE  
How do you know?

JENNA  
We saw it.

CAMERA SWINGS LOW to the map as if diving down out of the sky. We're right behind the two Creep pickups. Speeding along with them. Gaining on Rayph.

ADEN'S VOICE  
He killed him. And now he can kill you.

RAYPH'S VOICE  
He can. But he won't.

ADEN'S VOICE  
No I mean he can really kill you.  
Like...like really.

RAYPH'S VOICE  
What are you taking about?

BACK INSIDE THE COROLLA

Aden and Jenna look at each other.

JENNA  
He's saying...

ADEN'S VOICE  
I'm saying...

RAYPH  
Hang on!

The two red pickups are suddenly on either side of them

Rayph swerves back and forth.  
Hits one...then the other.  
Rayph's door dents into the car.

A HALF DOZEN CREEPS

are tossed.

Some bounce across oncoming traffic. Cars skid out.

Other roll across lawns. Burn blackened furrows. Set  
bushes ablaze.

COROLLA

RAYPH  
(to Jenna)  
Can you drive!

JENNA  
Not so much. I once--

RAYPH  
Good. Get up here.

Jenna throws Aden a look...and climbs up front.

RAYPH  
 You just gotta steer straight and brake  
 when I say! And don't slow down!

JENNA  
 (nodding)  
 Okay.

As Jenna maneuvers into the driver's seat:

RAYPH  
 Brake hard when I say!

JENNA  
 Okay.

Rayph climbs in back. Points at the rear windshield.

RAYPH  
 (to Aden)  
 Can you kick out the glass?!

ADEN  
 I can try.

RAYPH  
 Not now! When I say!

Aden stands on one leg as best he can. Raises his kicking foot.

Through the crazed glass they can both see the glowing red pickups coming fast on either side.

RAYPH (CONT'D)  
 READY, JENNA?!

JENNA  
 No. But yes.

RAYPH  
 (to Aden)  
 NOW!

Aden kicks the rear windshield: it flies away in one piece.  
 Rayph throws himself halfway out onto the car's trunk.  
 Fires his Gatt at one of the trucks...  
 Rolls over...  
 Fires at the other...  
Hits both windshields with dead aim.

RAYPH  
 BRAKE!

Jenna slams on the brakes.

Rayph is sucked back inside the car.  
Aden slams into the front seat.  
The two red pickups fly by on either side.

But they're flying blind with windshields entirely iced.

They swerve. Smack into each other. Flaming Creeps fly off helter-skelter.

THE COROLLA

screeches to a long skidding stop. Comes to rest at a 45° angle just short of a major intersection: the intersection of 82nd and Colfax.

Gas stations on both of the far corners.

THE GLOWING PICKUPS

fly through the intersection. Crossing cars spin out.

And each of the pickup plows into a gas station...

KA-BOOM!

Simultaneous fireballs.

INT. COROLLA

Aden and Jenna and Rayph stare wide-eyed. The fireballs reflected in Aden's eyeballs.

A wall of fire grows together across the roadway between the two stations...

ADEN'S MAP

The crackling fire burns right at the red-star intersection where Aden's father died. Smoke rises.

And the third glowing red pickup speeds toward it from the other direction. Toward the fire. Toward Aden and Jenna and Rayph.

Just as it reaches the conflagration...

SLO-MO: INTERSECTION

With Satan at the wheel the pickup emerges from the flames. Coming dead at the Corolla...

RAYPH

yells mutely: GET OUT!

They do. Aden and Jenna stumbled from the car.

But Rayph's dented door won't open. He tries and tries and...

ADEN

turns to look. Yells: NO!

But the pickup plows into the driver's side of the Corolla. Right into Rayph...

BACK TO SPEED

The Corolla burst into flames.

Aden and Jenna look to each other. All is lost...

TIGHT ON ADEN

That CYCLONE OF NOISE builds.  
He blinks in super slow motion.  
Sudden utter silence....and...

### **RESPAWN**

EXT. ADEN'S HOUSE - MORNING - THREE YEARS AGO

A bright crisp fall day.

Aden is 12. Looks a lot younger. He crouches by his bicycle on the patchy lawn. Fiddles with its front brakes.

And then we see the situation dawn on his brain: his eyes widen. He starts breathing hard.

This is an entirely different save state: the morning his father died.

He looks at his hands. At his *Weeknd* T-shirt. His watch: 8:18.

WARREN JAMES (O.S.)

Those brakes okay?

Aden looks up. There's his father easing down the badly cracked driveway in his blue Corolla. WARREN JAMES. Late 30s. Handsome black guy in a tie and jacket.

WARREN

Aden?

Aden stares at him. Flummoxed.

ADEN  
Ah... Ah... Yeah. Yeah they're...

Aden's brain whirs.

WARREN  
You sure? I can take a--

Aden's tact coalesces: get his father to leave earlier.

ADEN  
No. You should just go.  
(he stands)  
Now. The brakes are fine. Go ahead.  
Go.

WARREN  
Okay.

He pulls away. Then stops.

WARREN (CONT'D)  
You remember I'm picking you up after  
track?

ADEN  
(frustrated)  
Yes! Now just go.  
(waves him on)  
Go!

WARREN  
(smiles)  
Going.

Aden crosses to the driveway as the Corolla pulls away...and disappears down the street.

Aden checks his watch: 8:19. And then looks past it. Down at the driveway.

COME IN ON THE CRACKS IN THE CEMENT as they morph into a map of the now-familiar high overhead shot of the neighborhood.

We see the Corolla making its way along the pre-ordained route marked in blue. And there's the red line being traced by a red pickup.

WARREN'S COROLLA

slows to a stop as a minivan backs out of a driveway, blocking the whole street. And then the minivan stops as three kids get out and all run around to switch seats.

MINIVAN MOM

Sorry.

WARREN

No worries.

ADEN

stares down at the map.

ADEN

Why are you stopping!

He checks his watch again.

PUSH DOWN INTO THE MAP and...

THE ACTUAL SCENE

The Corolla waits for a "Wide Load" convoy to pass on Colfax...and then pulls in behind it.

It's a trailer home on a flatbed. It takes up both lanes. Warren and the rest of the traffic slows to a crawl.

BACK TO ADEN

ADEN

Go around it!

Aden's watch reads 8:27.

He sees the red pickup's progress toward the red-starred intersection where his father died.

INTERSECTION

The wide-load turns left...

The driver of the red pickup is texting on his phone... Warren speeds up as the light turns yellow...

SLO-MO

The pickup broadsides the Corolla.

DRIVEWAY MAP

Slow-motion overhead view of the deadly accident. Pieces of the vehicles fly.

TIGHT ON ADEN'S FACE

He's stunned. A single slow-motion blink...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

**RESPAWN**

That same morning: Aden stares...looking at his bicycle's brake.

WARREN

Those brakes okay?

Aden looks up. It's just as it was: his father easing down driveway.

ADEN

No. No, something's wrong like they're locked tight.

WARREN

(gets out, comes over)

Let's have a look.

He crouches down. Sees the problem:

WARREN (CONT'D)

It's just this wire here. Got caught on the wrong side.

(fixes it)

There ya go.

ADEN

And, ah... What about...

Aden plays for time taking the opposite approach: make his father late for his fatal accident.

ADEN (CONT'D)

I think maybe the tires are low.

Warren squeezes the front tire.

WARREN

Nah. You're good.

ADEN

There's a thing, a gauge in the garage. Maybe we should make sure.

WARREN

(heading back to his car)

They're fine, Aden. Really.

ADEN

But...  
 (and then)  
 Can I have a hug?

WARREN

(smiles)  
 Of course.

Aden goes to him. Hugs his father. Holds on tight.

ADEN

You have to go work today?

WARREN

I do. And I'm getting late.  
 (checks his watch)  
 Meeting at nine.  
 (steps away)  
 You okay?

ADEN

Yeah. It's just...

WARREN

(gets in the car)  
 I'll see you right after school. You  
 remember I'm picking you up at track?

ADEN

Yeah. I remember.

Aden again crosses to the driveway. Watched the Corolla head off.

He checks his watch: 8:21. Two minutes later.

He looks down at the driveway's cracks as they again transform into the neighborhood map.

And the sequence repeats. Except instead of facing obstructions the drive the drive is entirely unimpeded.

INTERCUT

the driveway map / Aden looking down at the map / Warren's progress:

Green lights align like magic...Warren (being late) speeds in and out of traffic with ease...catches up with the "wide-laod" mobile home on Colfax just as it heads into the intersection and...

ADEN

witnesses the deadly accident once in miniature on the driveway map.

We hear the CYCLONE OF NOISE build.  
Aden blinks in super slow motion.  
Sudden utter silence....and...

**RESPAWN**

INT. ADEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Aden blinks.

He stands with Jenna looking at his wall map. Just as before.

He and Jenna turn to each other.

JENNA

Wow.

ADEN

Yeah. Wow.

Of course this time Aden's experience was different than Jenna's.

He steps up to the map. Takes off the red-starred *Post-it* that marks the site of the accident. Crumples it in his hand.

JENNA

What are you doing?

ADEN

(shakes his head)

No more...

He tosses it in the trash.

ADEN (CONT'D)

Just...no more.

JENNA

You okay?

ADEN

Yeah...

(smiles)

Very okay, actually. And I have a thought. And here it is...

He picks up the half-solved *Rubik's Cube*. As before he paces as he works on the cube and lays out his thinking (never looking at the cube).

ADEN (CONT'D)

Satan knew it was Hoffman that was keeping Rayph alive. Kill Hoffman and he could kill Rayph. But that didn't happen. 'Cause here we are again thanks to another Rayph respawn.

JENNA

So Satan was wrong.

ADEN

No. Satan's never wrong. It's not in his character to be wrong.

JENNA

But how--

ADEN

Listen.

Silence.

JENNA

What?

ADEN

That's part of my point. They're not here. They're not downstairs.

JENNA

That can't be. Nothing changed before now. We would need to have gone to an earlier save state.

ADEN

Let's take a look...

Aden heads out of the room still blindly working on the cube. Jenna goes with him.

ADEN (CONT'D)

'Cause if Satan is right...

STAIRWAY

ADEN (CONT'D)

There's only one other choice...

KITCHEN

ADEN (CONT'D)  
He didn't kill Hoffman.

Aden flips on the light. The kitchen is empty.

JENNA  
Didn't kill him yet.

ADEN  
Look.

He points at the kitchen table. There sits the plexi-mask Hoffman brought. That Satan placed on the table.

JENNA  
That can't be either.

ADEN  
Okay. So what do we do with the fact that you've said "That can't be" twice now? 'Cause in one way you're right, but there's this...

Aden puts the solved Rubik's cube on the table by the mask.

ADEN (CONT'D)  
What if that wasn't Hoffman we saw him kill? Or at least not Hoffman in the same game we're playing.

JENNA  
What game?

ADEN  
This. Here and now. The present tense. With all the crazy stuff built in. What if we did see him kill Hoffman but he was in like...in a parallel world.

JENNA  
I don't understand.

ADEN  
Hoffman told me, before any of this happened... He said I was stuck and that I needed to get unstuck, needed to stop thinking about what might have happened, like with my father but also...  
(he looks right at Jenna)  
With me. Now. With you. Like we all need to be on the same page... playing the same game.

Headlights flash across the window: a car pulling into the driveway.

Aden picks up the plexi-mask.

ADEN (CONT'D)  
Somehow Hoffman left this here. So now I have two of them. And there are two of us who can use them.

Angela and Jack repeat their exchange from before:

ANGELA (O.S.)  
(yelling from outside)  
You can't just change your mind like that!

JACK (O.S.)  
(yelling back)  
Says the bitch!

A car door SLAMS.

ADEN  
It's all going happen again and again and maybe Rayph will never die but one of these times Satan is going to kill me, or you. It's inevitable unless...  
(holds up the plexi-mask)  
Unless this is our way out.

ADEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

OVERHEAD SHOT: Aden and Jenna lie side-by-side on the blue carpeting.

Then both put on plexi-masks...

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