

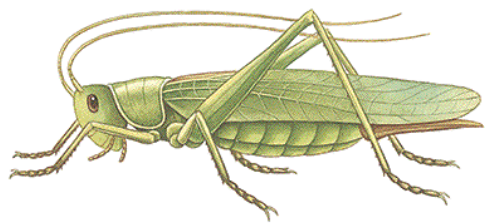
GRASSHOPPER

BY

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To Marion Mitchell who said I could,
To Elizabeth Laing who said I should,
And to Jack Green who'll say anything.

Black.

Heavy breathing.

INT. ABANDONED BUNKER - NIGHT

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: From a low, fallen, first-person angle, we see a traumatized young man and a woman stand next to each other. Horror stains their eyes, blood coats their faces. They survey the dark, bleak interior - it's difficult to make out much of anything, but there's blood, a lot of blood..

The man turns to the woman, the woman to the man..

EXT. ABANDONED BUNKER - DAY

CLOSE ON: Tomato sauce. White, battered flesh dips into the sauce.

Best friends BEN BROLIN and CHARLIE BAKER munch fish n chips and sip cold beer. The sun streams down.

Ben rests his beer beside him. He has kind eyes but a damaged smile. Behind the curtains of his 'boy-next-door' hides something intense, perhaps monstrous..

For now, Ben *is* a monster - a first-rate Mutant Zombie complete with gory makeup and a distorted physique.

Charlie is a handsome smart-ass. He hasn't lost his boyish charms - you'd roll your eyes if you weren't seduced by his constant smile.

Charlie's arms and hands are covered in fake bruises and lacerations - all very realistic and impressive. His black tee is torn. He's the perfect Zombie Apocalypse Survivor.

The bunker complex is made up of broken, concrete walls - most lost to overgrowth, almost all to graffiti. A vast array of shooting equipment surrounds Ben and Charlie - lights, stands, camera gear, makeup and scattered props. A shooting-script is in Ben's lap, a chainsaw at Charlie's feet. Ben uses a zippo to light his cigarette.

CHARLIE

You coming to Carrie's tonight?

BEN

I dunno. Maybe.

Ben scribbles some last-minute rewrites.

CHARLIE

We should go like this. Chicks dig scars.

BEN

Holly might be there.

CHARLIE

Yeah, Sam too.

Charlie grins wryly. Ben looks up from his script.

BEN

Dude, they're best friends.

CHARLIE

Hey I didn't screw the crew.

BEN

Dude, we're best friends.

CHARLIE

What, you're crushin' on Sam now?!

BEN

No, it's, I dunno...

CHARLIE

...she's crushin' on you.

BEN

Yeah. Apparently.

Ben returns to his rewrite. Charlie downs a swig of beer.

CHARLIE

You gonna go for it?

Ben takes a long drag from his cigarette. He raises his beer bottle.

BEN

No. 'Cause you are.

Charlie meets Ben's bottle with his own - 'CLINK'.

CHARLIE

Fuck yeah. I'm totally into her.

Ben forces a smile. Charlie wipes deep-fried grease from his hands, picks up the chainsaw.

CHARLIE

You ready for the next scene?

BEN

That depends. You ready to kill me?

CHARLIE

Dude, that's what friends are for.

TITLE CARD: 'WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR'

INT. ABANDONED BUNKER - DAY

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: A dark, featureless corridor. A slither of sunlight from a distant, open doorway. Heavy, panicked breathing. Our first-person view is losing focus. A ferocious howl offscreen. Our breath quickens. We regain focus, reach for something in the dark..something metallic, rusty, blood-spattered..a chainsaw! We pull at the chainsaw - it won't start! We pull again, no good. A shadowy figure drops into the doorway - it's human..almost. It sniffs the air, sees us - another piercing scream..this thing is hungry! It charges. We pull at the chainsaw - third time's a charm. It roars into life, billowing white smoke. The shadowy figure doesn't slow. We lunge at the half-human beast as it leaps, and.. ..chest cavity penetration! The chainsaw rips through Mutant Zombie's torso - ribs crack, organs explode, blood flies!

Ben's Zombie character recoils! We shove the chainsaw all the way through. Ben thrashes about, gurgling on his own blood..

INT. LOCAL BAR - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: the 'crack' of a pool break.

The bar is an 'every-local'. Cheap patronage, cheap beer - and tonight, cheap Halloween decor. Live music, albeit noise, fills the murky space. Two balls sink off Charlie's break.

Like the patrons around them, Ben and Charlie are dressed for Halloween. They wear their homemade movie costumes from the previous scene - Ben with less prosthetics.

Ben watches a girl amongst her FRIENDS. This is KATE SINCLAIR. Kate's outwardly confident, has smooth pale skin and big, deep eyes. Tonight she's also a sexy vampire. Kate catches Ben's stare, smiles, revealing fangs.

BEN

I don't think I'll ever understand girls.

CHARLIE

That's just it man, you don't have to. Girls want the same thing as guys. Well, most guys.

Charlie sinks another ball. Damn, he's quite good.

BEN

Yeah, I don't think I understand that either.

CHARLIE

Dude, you think too much. Don't think...

Charlie lines up his next shot..

CHARLIE

...act.

'SMACK!' Another ball sunk. Charlie looks to Ben looking at Kate.

CHARLIE

Go talk to her.

BEN

Wha? No.

CHARLIE

Ben, look at her. She's practically begging for it. Just, go say hello, offer her a drink, and then, you know..

BEN

I'm not, that's not..it's too soon.

CHARLIE

Since what? Since you last brought home a girl? Cause I gotta tell ya man, I'm starting to worry.

BEN

Since Holly.

Charlie drops his head to the side of the table.

CHARLIE

Christ.

Ben looks to Kate.

BEN

She was different. When I was with her, I felt different. I really loved her Charlie.

Charlie reaches for his drink.

CHARLIE

Fuck, you gotta stop it with the 'L' word. It's been what, three months? Move on!

(MORE)

CHARLIE(cont'd)

Come on dude, you know more than anyone, only movies have happy endings.

Charlie returns to his shot.

CHARLIE

Go. Talk to her.

Kate laughs at a friend's joke - she's luminous.

CHARLIE

Fuck if you don't, I will.

Charlie shoots. Two balls sink off an impressive ricochet. Ben sighs.

BEN

One drink.

CHARLIE

There you go..

BEN

I'll buy her one drink.

CHARLIE

Or several. Can't hurt.

Charlie sits on a stool with his drink.

BEN

Hold on, what do I say?

CHARLIE

Ask her some questions. You know, what brings you here? Would you like to come to a party? Do you swallow?

BEN

Charming.

CHARLIE

Just, be unscripted. Confident.

Ben looks to Charlie, downs his beer.

BEN

Unscripted. Confident.

Ben marches forward.

A plastic blonde steps to the pool table, her back to Charlie. She lifts the black from the game.

CHARLIE

Hey! What the fuck?!

The blonde turns. This is CARRIE PRICE. She leans seductively against the table, ball in hand. Charlie relaxes.

CHARLIE

Hello Carrie.

Ben whispers under his breath..

BEN

Unscripted. Confident. Unscripted.
Confident.

Kate spots Ben's approach. She looks away, sheepish - or was that disinterest? Ben spins, almost bails, then carries on..

BEN

Hey.

Kate's girlfriends all stop at once, turn to the male intruder, eyes like daggers.

KATE

Hey.

Silence.

BEN

Can I um, can I..

Kate's friends turn away.

Charlie, now sitting with his arm around Carrie, looks to his friend, whispers..

CHARLIE

Confidence you fuck.

BEN

Um, what's that? What are you drinking?

Kate is almost ready to dismiss Ben, then..

KATE

It's a grasshopper.

BEN

Oh, Ok, so, hey, if I can tell you a joke, that I make up right now, about a grasshopper, and you think it's funny, will you come to a party with me?

Kate's friends laugh - 'you've got to be kidding'.
Kate is marginally curious.

BEN

If you think about it, you can't lose.

KATE

Ok.

BEN

Ok? Ok! So ah, a grasshopper walks into a bar, the barman sees him, and he's like, dude, we have a drink named after you! And then, the grasshopper, all serious-faced, turns to the barman, and says, really? You have a drink called Steve?

Stoney silence. Kate's friends shake their heads - fail..
..no, wait, is Kate trying not to smile?

Ben grins a dopey grin, Kate cracks up - it's a beautiful laugh. Ben extends his hand.

BEN

I'm Ben.

Kate responds through a burst of giggles.

KATE

Kate.

Ben points to Kate's drink.

BEN

Another Grasshopper?

KATE

Maybe later. I think I'm going to a party.

Ben escorts Kate away. He turns to Charlie, Charlie points at his friend - 'nice work champ'.

Charlie drops his hand to Carrie's leg, doesn't look at her.

CHARLIE

We're not gonna play pool, are we?

Charlie looks at Carrie, she at him - they hold each other's stare..

EXT. CARRIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Boom! Loud electronic music blares through a massive sound system - it's ear-bleeding loud.

Carrie's house is huge and extravagant. Ben leads Kate through a front door and people-packed chaos. They squeeze past trancers, drinkers and small-talkers - all in costume for Halloween. Fake cobwebs and jack-o-lanterns are everywhere. Blue-neon light and a thick, musky promise of cheap thrills fills the air.

In the kitchen, a small group are gathered around an island bench. An almost-naked DEVIL-HORNED GIRL dances a tequila-fuelled strip.

The kitchen sink is a punch-bowl, a BULKY FRANKENSTEIN sucks straight from it. Ben opens the fridge door, it's empty.

KATE

Where's your friend?

BEN

Who Charlie? Don't worry, he's fine.

CUT TO: Charlie and Carrie crash through a bathroom door, madly undressing each other, kissing passionately.

Charlie pushes Carrie up onto a vanity sink, pulls her short skirt to her ankles. She removes his shirt, observes the scars across his chest and upper arms - wow they look real. She thinks to comment, thinks better off it when Charlie unzips and removes her skirt completely.

CUT TO: Ben scavenges for a drink amongst beer boxes. Finds a couple of bottles.

BEN

Here. Best I can do.

KATE

I can do better.

Kate pulls herself up onto the island bench, boogies her way over to Devil Girl.

The kitchen dwellers cheer. Ben grins, cracks his beer.

Devil Girl turns to Kate, puts her arms up - 'dance with me'. Kate obliges, unabashed.

CUT TO: Charlie kisses Carrie's neck as she undoes his belt and lowers his jeans. Charlie steps closer, tucks his hand into Carrie's panties. She moans.

CUT TO: Kate and Devil Girl share an intimate, entangled shimmy. The crowd hoot and holler. Kate squeezes in close - kissing distance. Devil Girl stops, contemplates the moment..the crowd take in a breath..Kate kisses Devil Girl.

The crowd lose it! Ben lowers his beer - 'woah'.
The pash is long and thorough - Devil Girl is overwhelmed.
Kate seizes the opportunity to swindle Devil Girl's tequila bottle - no one notices, no one except Ben.
Devil Girl stumbles, loses her balance, falls off the bench into the arms of a WIZARD.

CUT TO: A tall, thick-necked superhero enters the bathroom. This is JASON DOBBS, Carrie's boyfriend. He obviously needs the facilities, then, he spots it..

JASON

Carrie?! What the fuck?!

Carrie pushes Charlie - he's reluctant. Carrie pushes him hard, he trails back, almost trips over his half-slung jeans. He spins to Jason, exposed.

CHARLIE

Jason! Long time no see!

Fury burns in Jason's eyes..

CUT TO: Kate jiggles the tequila bottle as she passes Ben - 'look what I've got'. He follows her through a kitchen door to a large, sloped backyard. People are scattered about, some make out amongst the flora.

Ben lights a cigarette.

BEN

You're quite the performer.

Kate sucks from the bottle, gestures at it.

KATE

Just wait. So, what do you do Ben,
other than amazing jokes?

Ben spots an approaching female. This is SAM LIGHTHEART. She's elegant, fragile, quietly fierce. Ben's face drops.

BEN

Oh fuck me.

KATE
Friend of yours?

BEN
Something like that. Hey Sam.

SAM
Hi Ben. Who's she?

KATE
She, is Kate. Nice to meet you.

Sam ignores Kate.

SAM
You know you shouldn't be here, not
with her. What if Holly saw you?

BEN
Holly's a big girl.

SAM
She's pretty pissed you cut her
from the movie.

BEN
Her scenes weren't working. It's a
movie Sam, nothing personal.

Sam flicks her eyes at Kate.

SAM
She your girlfriend?

Ben opens his mouth to respond..

KATE
Yes, she is.

Kate grabs Ben, kisses him - Ben's surprised as anyone!
Sam watches on, jealous. Then..

JASON (O.S.)
I'll fucking kill you!

Ben spins to see Charlie fly through the kitchen doorway. He lands, rough. He winks at Ben.

Carrie attempts to hold Jason back, he shakes himself free, fuming.

JASON

Get off me!

Ben flicks his cigarette.

BEN

Excuse me.

Ben leaps to his feet, walks quietly, confidently, to Jason. Jason's much bigger than Ben.

BEN

Hey man, what are you doing?

Jason considers Ben, then swings, connects, dead centre of face. Ben stumbles from the hit - it hurts. The party-goers collectively gasp.

Ben wipes blood from his nose..and smiles. An odd look comes over his face. All sounds cease except for a single piercing, high note - the sound of ears ringing..

Charlie's face drops. He recognizes something in Ben..

FLASHBACK: INT. GIRL'S BEDROOM - DAY

No sound but the loud-ringing.

SUPER-QUICK MONTAGE (IMAGE BLOWN-OUT/OVER-EXPOSED):

Ben kicks in a door.

An unknown girl clutches her sheets, terrified.

Ben storms towards the girl, yelling his head off.

Ben spots an opened condom box, throws it at the girl.

Ben shakes the girl, she slaps him - he just takes it.

The girl punches Ben - his nose bleeds.

Ben wipes the blood, he's wearing that odd look - he's lost it, he's an animal, a monster.
The girl yells something..

EXT. CARRIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

With his monstrous look, Ben's eyes lock on Jason..

INT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - DAY

Ben stares at nothing, his gaze empty. He's sitting upright in his bed under a mess of sheets. Kate lies beside him, asleep. Ben's nose is stuffed with bloody cotton buds. Make-shift bandages cover actual cuts and bruises to his face.

Ben's room is crammed with movie props and collectibles, many his own, many more from known monster movies and horror films. Above his bed is a prominent 'Creature From The Black Lagoon' poster. Last night's tequila bottle sits on a desk beside a laptop. The bottle is still half-full.

Charlie enters the doorway, towel around his naked waist. He holds a glass of dissolving aspirin. Ben stirs into being.

The ear-ringing stops.

CHARLIE

My hero! For you big man.

Kate remains asleep. Charlie nods at her.

CHARLIE

Can't believe you had the energy
after that beating. God you're a
fucken animal!

Ben takes the glass, looks to Kate.

CHARLIE

So, how was she?

Ben says nothing - he's dazed.

CHARLIE

You OK dude?

BEN

Yeah.

CHARLIE

Good. Sam's made breakfast!

Ben looks puzzled - 'Sam?!'

Ben downs a large gulp of aspirin as he enters the kitchen. Unlike Carrie's party house, Ben and Charlie live modestly - their sparse kitchen is that of young men who spend their time and money on hobbies rather than day-to-day living.

Her legs bare, Sam wears an oversized tshirt - it must be Charlie's. Clutching a hot fry pan, she scoops bacon into an all-inclusive breakfast bounty. Charlie sits to the table - for him, this is Christmas.

CHARLIE

Thank you darling.

Sam spots Ben.

SAM

Morning.

BEN

Morning.

CHARLIE

Dude. Check these out.

Charlie raises a sketchbook. He's drawn storyboards for a movie scene - his illustrations are very good.

CHARLIE

It's for the end of the series. Big Mother kill scene. Fucken bad-ass.

Ben sits beside Charlie, reaches for the sketchbook, raises it to have a private conversation with his mate.

BEN

Did you and Sam...?

CHARLIE

What? Dude, no. Well, not yet anyway. She had nowhere to stay last night, so you know..

BEN

What about Carrie?

CHARLIE

What about her?

SAM (O.S.)

Bacon?

Ben lowers the sketchbook.

SAM

Do you want Bacon?

BEN

Um, yeah. Thanks.

CHARLIE

So you like the scene?

Ben quickly regards Charlie's sketches..

CLOSE ON: Charlie's storyboard comes to life as an animated flipbook.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

It's just how you wrote it man. I'm hiding in the dark, pressed up against the wall. Hannah's sandwiched in the pile of bodies, waiting for big mother. Big mother sniffs, but she can't make her out through all that rotting flesh. Big mother steps closer, Hannah waits, and..

Storyboard Hannah rises from the pile of bodies..

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 ..shotgun's loaded! 'Come and get
 me, mother...' ROOAAAAR!

Flipbook Mother Zombie screams!

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 Blam!

Storyboard Hannah fires off a round - Storyboard Mother
 Zombie loses an arm!

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 AAHHH! Blam!

Storyboard Mother Zombie loses her other arm!

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 AARRRHHHH!

Sam looks disgusted.

SAM
 That's gross. You guys are gross.

KATE (O.S.)
 I think it's awesome.

Everyone turns to see Kate in the doorway. Her vampire
 costume has seen better days.

CHARLIE
Yeah it is!

Charlie pulls a seat out for Kate.
 If looks could kill, Sam's would certainly end Kate.

KATE
 What's it about, your movie?

BEN
 Um..

CHARLIE

It's a high concept first-person web series. We're calling it 'Final Girl'.

KATE

Final Girl?

Kate sits beside Ben, snuggling in close. She helps herself to breakfast. Charlie talks through mouthfuls of scrambled eggs.

CHARLIE

Yeah, you know. Last girl standing. Classic horror trope. All her friends are dead, she's the only one who hasn't sinned in some way, so, she's the only one who can do it.

Kate looks blank. Charlie passes her his sketchbook, turns a page.

CLOSE ON: Charlie's storyboard with one final animation..

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Kill the monster! Boom!

Storyboard Mother Zombie's head explodes.

KATE

Oh, she has to be a virgin right?

BEN

Not necessarily. Not these days anyway.

Charlie punches Ben's arm playfully.

CHARLIE

Shit, Holly wasn't.

Kate looks at Sam.

KATE

And you replaced her?

SAM

Me?! God no. I'm a writer.

KATE

So who's playing Hannah then?

BEN

We haven't recast it yet. We're still looking.

Kate reaches for Ben's hands - he's still not used to how forward she is..

KATE

Look no further.

Everyone stops eating, looks at Kate. She smiles, regards the storyboard.

KATE

Tell me more about this Hannah.
She's quite the character.

TITLE CARD: 'QUITE THE CHARACTER'

INT. ABANDONED BUNKER - DAY

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We creep through a dark passageway. Ahead we hear the sounds of sharp teeth tearing through flesh. We reach an open doorway, dare to peek inside.. ..and spot a savage half-human beast! Mutant Zombie devours the remains of a human arm. Blood oozes from his mouth - it's an awful mess. Then..Mutant Zombie sniffs the air. He smells something..us!

EXT. ABANDONED BUNKER - DAY

CLOSE ON: Ben's face and closed eyes. A mascara brush enters frame, gently swabs Ben's eyelids.

Charlie adds the final touch to Ben's Mutant Zombie look. Ben sits atop a pelican camera case, cigarette in his mouth.

CHARLIE

I'm begging you, do not fall in love with this one. Seriously, what is it with you and actresses?

BEN

I'm not in love.

CHARLIE

Good. 'Cause I'd actually like to finish this movie.

BEN

You have to admit, she's great for the part.

Charlie finishes with the brush.

CHARLIE

Dude, she's beautiful.

INT. THEATRE HOUSE - NIGHT

In a jaunty green room, Kate checks her reflection in a hollywood mirror. Glossed-up in bright-red lipstick and sparkling-blue mascara, she looks every part the fearless performer. Yet beneath her beauty, we see she's human..we see she's nervous. She takes a deep breath, exhales..

Kate performs onstage, alone under a bright spot light. She wears a stunning yellow dress. Her character, NANCY, is distraught. Kate's emotion is very raw, very real.

NANCY

Sure I could go on. Sure I could pretend. But I can't. Not without Gunner.

Members of the audience sob. We spot Ben and Charlie - both are captivated. Ben's cuts are healing.

NANCY

He told me he loved me. But I
couldn't..it was, too soon, too
soon..

Kate looks to Ben in the audience.

NANCY

..and much too late.

The lights dim on Kate. A moment of silence as the moved
audience collect themselves, then..rapturous applause!

The lights come back. Kate bows, the crowd roar and leap to
their feet!

Kate glows with an appreciative smile. Her CO-STARS enter
side-stage, she waves them over to join her. The small cast
link hands, bow together in a line.

Ben wolf-whistles. Kate sights him again, grins.

High-spirited audience members trail out the compact theatre
to a busy city street. We see a glossy poster featuring Kate
in the yellow dress: 'Never Too Late - Closing Night!'

Ben and Charlie stand to the side of the bustling crowd. Ben
wears a satchel-bag over his shoulder. Kate appears amongst
the departing patrons, her party dress dazzling. She leaps at
Ben.

KATE

So glad you came! What'd you
think?!

BEN

It was amazing.

CHARLIE

You're amazing Kate. Really.

BEN

Can I take you out for a drink? We
should..

Kate is whirled around by a HUNKY THEATRE FAN. He hugs her tightly.

BEN
..celebrate.

HUNKY THEATRE FAN
Thank you, just, thank you. I
really enjoyed your performance.

Kate blushes.

KATE
Oh. Wow. Thanks.

Hunky lets go of Kate, she turns back to Ben, momentarily swept away..

KATE
Sorry, what?

CHARLIE
Ben's asking you out. On a date.

BEN
Well, if, you know..

KATE
Oh, no, I can't.

Two of Kate's co-stars step out with the crowd. They seem to be something of a couple - that or they're just tipsy-drunk.

FEMALE THESPIAN
Kate! You ready girl?!

MALE THESPIAN
Katey potatey! Stop foolin' with
the fans!

KATE
Sorry, there's an after party for
the show.

Charlie shoves Ben enthusiastically - 'get in there!'

CHARLIE

Oh yeah, where?!

KATE

Jason's.

CHARLIE

Oh.

KATE

Plus it's, kind of invitation only.
But I'll see you guys on the
weekend yeah?

CHARLIE

Absolutely. We can't wait to shoot
you shooting us, right Ben?

Ben opens his satchel-bag, reaches in, pulls out a stack of
A4 paper.

BEN

Here.

KATE

What is it?

BEN

Your script.

KATE

Oh right. Ok, cool. Thanks, well..

Kate waves goodbye, Charlie salutes. Charlie's phone begins
to ring.

CHARLIE

Hey man, next time. She's mad-keen
I'm telling ya.

Charlie answers his phone.

CHARLIE

Sam-Sam! Yip, yeah, quite the show.
Yeah, he's still here..in fact,
Ben's keen to join us, aren't you
Ben? Ok-darling-see-you-soon-bye!

Charlie quickly hangs up.

CHARLIE

Come on man. Let's drink.

Ben grins.

BEN

You're a dick.

INT. COCKTAIL BAR - NIGHT

A sharply-suited BARMAN shakes the beginnings of a swanky creation. His drink prep routine borders on acrobatic. Sitting at the bar, Ben shoots Charlie a look..

BEN

This is where you're meeting her?

The bar is surreal. Every surface is lit, every wall a mirror or screen. STAFF buzz about in a uniform that belongs in an 80s rehash of 50s sci-fi. A spacey, electronic soundscape finishes the feel. Flash Gordon would feel right at home.

CHARLIE

Shit yeah. It reflects well on me.

The Barman pours the contents of the shaker into a space-age glass.

BEN

It reflects on everyone. This place is... Dude, you're..

The Barman lights the cocktail on fire. It shoots a vertical stream of blue flame.

CHARLIE

Classy.

BEN

Crazy.

The Barman passes over the ridiculous cocktails. Charlie smiles - 'Ok yeah, it's crazy'.

CHARLIE

Shut up and drink your Rocketship.

Ben raises his glass, Charlie does the same.

BEN

To beer.

Ben sips, looks across the bar..and nearly spits his drink.

He's spotted Sam..and, someone with her..she looks familiar - it's the girl from the rage-in-the-bedroom flashback! This is HOLLY PEARSON. She's a head-turner and she knows it. Ben is not happy.

BEN

What the fuck dude?

CHARLIE

Ben, I had no idea she was coming.
I swear.

BEN

Enjoy your rocketship.

Ben leaves Charlie to his drink. He marches away, doesn't slow.

SAM

Hi Ben!

Ben ignores Sam, has almost made it past Holly, when Holly reaches for his wrist.

HOLLY

How are you? Are you Ok?

Ben is flummoxed by the question.

HOLLY

Are you feeling better?

Holly hasn't let go of Ben's wrist. He looks to it, Holly releases.

HOLLY

Why don't you join us? Just one drink.

Ben looks to Sam - 'what's going on?' She shrugs. A moment passes..

BEN

One drink.

Ben, Charlie, Sam and Holly huddle around a small table. The table is littered with the remains of numerous expensive cocktails. Charlie has his arm around Sam. Everyone seems to be having a good time, everyone but Ben.

CHARLIE

It's gonna be a fucken masterpiece!
Oh man, the stuff we've cut, and
I'm not talking about footage!

Charlie pokes and prods Sam.

CHARLIE

Sammy loves the blood and guts,
don't you babe?!

Sam looks away, embarrassed but grinning. Charlie tries tickling her, she slaps at him, playfully.

CHARLIE

Hey!

Charlie downs the last of his latest cocktail.

CHARLIE

Let's dance!

Everyone groans.

CHARLIE

No come on! This place is made for the robot. Sam, tell me you want to see me do the robot. I'm awesome!

She shakes her head, smiling - 'unbelievable'.

BEN

You should actually see this Sam. It is pretty awesome.

CHARLIE

You see! Come on!

Charlie jumps to his feet, pulls Sam along with him. He stops, twirls back to the table..

HOLLY

I think we're gonna sit this one out Charlie.

CHARLIE

Oh *I* get it. You two need some you-two time. Ah, Ok..

Charlie winks a terribly-obvious wink at Ben, puts his arm around Sam and leads her to a small dance floor.

HOLLY

So does Sam know?

BEN

Know what?

HOLLY

That he's sleeping with Carrie.

BEN

He's not anymore. 'Least not since the run-in with Jason.

Ben looks to Charlie and Sam on the dance floor. Charlie's rockin' the robot - he really is very good. Sam laughs along beside him - she's having a great time.

BEN

He seems really into Sam. It's strange.

HOLLY

Charlie's a great guy.

Holly reaches for Ben's hand.

HOLLY

You're lonely. Really Ben, how are you?

BEN

Why are you doing this Holly?

HOLLY

Doing what?

BEN

This. This bullshit pity thing. Is it to make yourself feel better for what you did?

Holly lets go of Ben's hand.

HOLLY

God, you're still the same.

BEN

Good. At least I'm consistent.

HOLLY

What's that supposed to mean?

BEN

I am who I am. This is me, Holly. Take it or leave it, I don't lie. I don't cheat.

HOLLY

Why is everything such a big drama to you? It's like you can't separate yourself from your stories.

Ben turns to look at Charlie and Sam.

BEN

We were like that once. Who was it Holly?

Ben turns back to Holly.

BEN

Who'd you sleep with?

Holly stares at Ben a moment..then looks away, ashamed.

BEN

Goodbye Holly.

Ben stands, begins to walk away. Holly yells out after him.

HOLLY

You won't find any one better Ben!
You told me you loved me!

Charlie and Sam can't help but overhear. Concerned, they stop dancing. Ben keeps walking.

INT. JASON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Elevator doors open on Ben. He walks a corridor to a numbered door. Loud bass thumps beyond the door - there's a party inside. Ben knocks.

The door opens - the large man behind it is momentarily distracted by the conversation he's having with a WHISKEY-DRINKER..then, he turns. It's Jason.

Jason's face is much worse off than Ben's, and..is that, a cast around his arm?!

Jason can't believe his eyes. He shoves Ben out into the hallway with his good arm, slams the door behind him.

JASON

The fuck do you want?!

BEN

Kate. I want to speak to Kate.

JASON

Kate?! Why would *she* wanna talk to you?!

BEN

Careful..

Ben pokes Jason's cast.

BEN

..we both know how this ended last time.

With his good arm, Jason pushes Ben up against the wall. He looks as though he could easily take Ben, and yet..

JASON

Just so you know, when this comes off, I'll fucken kill you. You and your small dick friend.

BEN

Sure you will. Now, you gonna get Kate? Or am I coming in?

Jason studies Ben a moment, releases him.

JASON

Wait there!

Jason opens and slams the door. Ben fixes himself, rolls his shoulders. The door opens.

KATE

Ben?!

BEN
Hey gorgeous.

KATE
Ben?! What are you doing here?

Ben steps closer to Kate.

BEN
I came to tell you something.

KATE
Oh god, is everything Ok?

Concerned, Kate closes the door behind her.

BEN
Yeah. Yeah everything's fine,
everything's good actually.

Ben puts his hand on Kate's waist.

KATE
Oh. Maybe, maybe you could've
called?

BEN
I have to tell you this, I want to
tell you this, face to face.

KATE
Um, you're acting strange.

BEN
I know.

Ben puts his other hand on Kate's waist, leans in, softly
kisses her cheek. Kate fights the urge to kiss him back.

KATE
We shouldn't. I've been drinking.

BEN
So have I.

Ben kisses Kate. She kisses back.

KATE

What..what did you want to tell me?

Ben words patter across Kate's lips..

BEN

You're my final girl.

For a second, Kate looks uneasy..then Ben kisses her neck. She surrenders.

Ben scoops his arms up under Kate's thighs, hoists her up against the corridor wall. He kisses her fervently, swings her around to the wall opposite - BOOF! Kate giggles. Ben grins. He hikes up her dress..

An older male NEIGHBOUR from across the corridor opens his door.

NEIGHBOUR

Hey! Clear off!

Ben and Kate turn to the intruder..

BEN

There a problem old man?

NEIGHBOUR

You're disgusting. Get a room.

BEN

It's just young love. What, you forget what's that like?

Kate chuckles..

NEIGHBOUR

I'm calling the cops.

KATE

Ben..

Ben looks to Kate. He reads her instantly - 'let's go somewhere else'..

INT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Ben and Kate surge through the kitchen door. Ben pushes Kate up against the kitchen table, removes his shirt. Ben kisses Kate, forces her onto the table - a plate and glass fall to the ground - 'SMASH!'. Kate looks only slightly concerned - Ben affirms her nonchalance with a whisper..

BEN

Who cares.

Ben tugs at Kate's legs so that they wrap around him. He kisses her again, but she grips his chin - 'hold on'. Kate whispers something in Ben's ear, he leans back, smiles..

Ben lets go of Kate, disappears into his bedroom. Kate hops down from the table, rummages around the bench and finds what she's looking for - a salt shaker.

Ben returns with the half-empty tequila bottle. Kate leaps to the table, lies on her back. She lifts her dress up past her waist, revealing elegant lingerie. Ben kneels across her, swigs from the bottle. He offers the bottle to Kate who gulps a healthy swallow. Ben licks Kate's stomach, paying slow, close attention to her belly button. Kate groans, then slowly, she raises the salt shaker and releases a steady flow of salt. Kate passes Ben the tequila. He carefully pours clear liquid over the salt, looks to Kate..she nods. Ben helps himself. Kate arches her back, exhales..

Naked, lying on his side behind Kate, Ben lifts Kate's leg as he thrusts. The kitchen table shakes. Kate strokes Ben's cheek, turns him to kiss her..

INT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - DAY

Ben stirs awake. Kate lies cocooned beside him on his bed, asleep. Ben looks to Kate, smiles.

He attempts to slip out of bed without disturbing her, but she opens a precious, sleepy eye..

KATE

Hey.

BEN

Hey yourself.

KATE

Where are you going?

Ben leans in to gently kiss Kate's forehead.

BEN

Nowhere without you.

TITLE CARD: 'NOWHERE WITHOUT YOU'

Ben wanders into the kitchen - no sign of Charlie or Sam. Ben boils the kettle, reopens a near-empty bag of instant coffee.

Clutching his morning cup, Ben peers into Charlie's room - no one's there. Like Ben's room, it's jam-packed with collectibles and memorabilia. We can see that Ben dabbles in almost all filmmaking crafts - he has a camera setup on a tripod, half-finished costumes and prosthetic pieces piled in a corner, and a considerable editing suite complete with speakers, dual-monitors and a multitude of light-flashing hardware peripherals.

Ben sits down to the editing suite, looks to one of the monitors and sees that Charlie has been checking the status of the duo's website..

CLOSE ON: The words 'FINAL GIRL - COMING SOON' in dripping blood. The mouse cursor slides to 'PROJECTS' and clicks. A thumbnailed list of older series appears - 'SCARS', 'HELLBENT', 'DEATH PLANET', 'THE UNSEEN'.. Ben scrolls down to a graphic that reads 'TOTAL VIEWS' - the number is in the millions.

Ben smiles, looks to the second monitor - sees that Charlie has been working on an unnamed edit.

CLOSE ON: A freeze-frame of a filmed scene. The scene belongs to the opening sequence - a young man and woman (who we now recognize as Charlie and Holly, albeit Zombie Apocalypse Survivor and Final Girl), stand side by side. They're traumatized, covered in blood.

Ben considers hitting the spacebar to watch the clip..is about to, when..'BOOM!', a shotgun fires! Ben nearly falls off his chair!

Ben dashes outside. The flat backyard is unkempt, overgrown. A lone shed stands at the rear. Ben races inside.

Facing forward, Sam is slumped over a work bench. A sizeable gory hole and a spatter of brains mark the back of her head!

Ben buckles at the knees, dry-wrenches..when Charlie jumps out from nowhere with fang-like teeth, a ripped, drooping eyeball and a shotgun pointed straight at Ben!

CHARLIE

Arrrrrrh!

'BAM!' Charlie fires the shotgun - it shoots a blank. Ben nearly has a heart attack! He falls back into a stack of scrap metal, completely undignified.

Charlie erupts into a fit of laughter. Sam rises from her slump - she too is balling. Charlie high-fives her.

CHARLIE

Still can't tell when a girl's
faking it, huh Ben?

Ben grabs the gun off Charlie, flips it open.

CHARLIE

Relax buddy..

Charlie pulls a box of shotgun shells off a high shelf, holds up a pair for Ben to see..

CHARLIE

..I wouldn't actually load that
shit!

Ben throws the gun to the floor.

CHARLIE

Oh come on Benny, admit it, we got
you.

Charlie returns the pair of shells to the box, drops the box
on the workbench. Ben gathers himself, grins.

BEN

Yeah you got me. Christ Charlie.

Charlie picks a piece of fake brain from Sam's head.

CHARLIE

Hey don't blame me. Sam was the
brains.

Sam back-slaps Charlie's shoulder - 'sshhhh!'

Charlie pulls off his fake drooping eye, hands it to Sam.

CHARLIE

Hold this. I gotta use the little
boys..

Charlie looks to Ben.

CHARLIE

Unless you need to go first?

Ben rolls his eyes.

CHARLIE

Ben, check out Sam's work. We
should totally bring her on set. I
taught her everything she knows.

SAM

It's not much really.

Charlie pulls out his fangs, uses them to 'voice' his response.

CHARLIE

Ouch. Fangs very much.

Charlie tosses the fangs to Ben, addresses Sam..

CHARLIE

You're learning form the best
sweetheart. Believe me, your stuff
is hot.

Charlie leaves the shed.

Sam glances at Ben, glances away, smiles at the floor.

BEN

Well go on. Show me.

SAM

Ok. But don't laugh. I'm new.

Sam skips to the workbench, picks up a long, bloody string of fake guts. She drapes in front of her, like a dainty necklace.

SAM

What do you think?

Ben smiles.

BEN

Absolutely disgusting.

Sam blurts out a puff of laughter, tries to take it back. She's a darling.

SAM

You know, Charlie really believes
in this film. He really believes in
you.

BEN

I know. I don't mean to let him
down.

SAM

I believe in you too.

Ben gauges Sam a moment.

Sam smiles sweetly. Ben smiles back.

EXT. ABANDONED BUNKER - NIGHT

In Zombie Apocalypse Survivor costume, Charlie performs a final check on the security of a large, rusty chain. He pulls at it, is satisfied it's properly fixed to the high corner of a large open doorway.

CHARLIE

Ok. Bring in the talent!

Charlie ties an imitation shackle around one of Kate's wrists. Sam, dressed as sickly, overweight 'Big Mother Zombie', ties a second shackle around Kate's other wrist. Kate looks to Sam with a demeaning 'don't get it wrong'. Charlie catches the look.

CHARLIE

Not too tight babe. Remember, she has be able to struggle.

Sam stings Kate with a fake smile. She tightens, pauses..then loosens the shackle to make a point.

Ben is wearing a face-rigged camera. Essentially a mask, the rig looks like a less-delicate version of a pair of night goggles. The rig is custom built to give the illusion of its operator's first-person perspective - thus eliminating the need for literal hand-held operation.

BEN

Ok man, this is the frame. It's all yours.

Charlie darts to take the camera from Ben. Sam glares once more at Kate, tip-toes out of frame.

BEN

Now remember Kate, you're conflicted. On the one hand you're relieved to see Charlie, on the other, you know what's about to happen. Ok guys let's shoot it!

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: Zombie Apocalypse Survivor steps out from a tunnel into the moonlight. His focus adjusts to the change in light..then, he sees it..

..a young woman, 'Hannah', is tied to the tops of an open doorway. The tunnel beyond disappears into darkness - it might as well be a cave for a lingering beast. Two rusty chains, one for each arm, hold Hannah in place. It's like a warped crucifixion, or an offering to King Kong. Hannah has seen better days. Her summer dress is torn, her hair is ragged and her face, torso and arms are bashed and bloody. Her dry, cracked lips suggest it's been some time since she's had something to drink. Despite her state, a persistent beauty shines through - Hannah's a fighter. Hannah spots Survivor, cries out a warning..

HANNAH

Stop! Don't come near me!

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We halt as commanded. Then, we inch forward..

HANNAH

I said stop! Please. Oh god, please.

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: Kate's performance is out of this world. Her tears are shattering to behold.

We inch forward, slower this time..

With a sudden, desperate energy, Hannah begins to thrash around in her chains.

HANNAH

Go away! Noohohooo! Please no..not again.

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We stop our advance - 'what does she mean, again?' Broken, Hannah collapses forward - at least as far as the chains allow. She raises her head, looks straight at us.

HANNAH

Run.

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We spin, just in time to spot a bulky, shadowy figure leap from the tops of a concrete bunker - it's Big Mother!

Big Mother is every Bouncer's worst nightmare - she's strong, stubborn, wickedly uncoordinated, thrashes around like a wild drunk and regularly spits gooey chunks of god-knows-what. Under her torn dress and all that added weight, Sam is doing an incredible job of bringing her opposite to life. Big Mother swings a long-nailed claw at us, slicing us square in the face. The impact is enough to whirl us around..and down - we fall to Hannah's feet.

HANNAH

Nooooo! You..bitch!

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: The frame pauses on Hannah. Fury is frozen on Kate's face.

INT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Inside Charlie's bedroom, we pull back to reveal paused playback of Kate's performance on Charlie's editing suite. Charlie, Ben, Kate and Sam huddle around the paused image.

CHARLIE

Holy shit Kate. Wow.

KATE

Guess I really hate the bitch.

Sam registers the not-so-subtle insult.

BEN

Everyone did good. Dude, Big Mother's fricken insane.

Charlie puts his arm around Sam.

CHARLIE

Yeah well, you're only as good as what you get to play with.

KATE

Hey Charlie, do you think you could make me a copy of that scene? I like to track my characters across various scenes, helps me with my intensity levels.

CHARLIE

Um. Sure. If Ben's Ok with it?

Ben shrugs - 'sure'.

CHARLIE

Cool, gimme a few minutes to burn the disc yeah? Ok folks, show's over. Tomorrow's a big day and Big Mother needs her beauty sleep. In other words, you stay in my room, you watch us having sex.

BEN

And..we're leaving.

Kate and Ben scoot out of the room, Sam catches Ben just as he's closing the door.

SAM

Ben? I've got something for you, well, I'm hoping you'll take a look at it anyway.

Sam hands Ben a stapled stack of A4 paper. Kate, who's gone on ahead, turns, spots the exchange..

KATE

Ben? Are you coming?

Sam speaks softly to Ben.

SAM

It's a script I wrote. Maybe you could tell me what you think?

BEN

Oh. Oh, yeah sure.

Sam gently clasps Ben's wrist.

SAM

Thanks. I think you'll like it.

KATE

Ben?! Let's leave them to it.

Ben smiles as quickly as he can at Sam. She smiles back, closes Charlie's bedroom door.

KATE

What's that?

BEN

It's um, notes on my script. Just some reminders for tomorrow's shoot.

KATE

I don't trust her.

BEN

Who Sam?! She's a sweetheart.

KATE

Exactly.

Kate quietly beckons Ben into his room.

Ben enters, stops briefly to put away Sam's script in his desk drawer. Kate sits on his bed. She pats the duvet beside her - 'sit'. Ben sits.

KATE

I don't think she's right for the movie.

BEN

I dunno Kate. You saw her performance.

KATE

It's not her acting Ben, well, that was hardly acting, it's her attitude.

Ben looks puzzled.

KATE

Her intent. I think she's doing this just to be with you. It's not..professional.

Ben attempts to smile-away the insinuation.

BEN

None of this is professional. Kate, my last pay slip had a lot of zeroes, no wait, it was *all* zeroes.

KATE

Doesn't that bother you?

Ben wasn't expecting that..

BEN

What's this about Kate?

Kate turns to face Ben direct, she clutches both his hands.

KATE

You have...so much potential. I've seen it Ben, how you operate. You could really be something, something amazing.

BEN

Ok. Thanks.

KATE

But you throw it all away, on your friends, instead of people who can actually help. Don't you want to take this seriously? Don't you want to be somebody?

BEN

Well sure, but..

KATE

I know people Ben. You should meet a friend of mine, he's a producer. He's connected, the kind of person who could change your life.

BEN

I dunno. I don't think Charlie would go for it.

KATE

Forget Charlie! If that's his attitude you're done for. Might as well sign up to that desk job now. But that's not your future, is it Ben?

BEN

Jesus. The future?! I'm kind of a one-day-at-a-time guy Kate.

Kate drops Ben's hands, looks away.

KATE

Such a waste.

BEN

Well, on that pleasant note..good night.

Ben swings around to his side of the bed, removes his shirt.

Kate continues to sit where she is, sullen..then, with her back to Ben, she pulls off her top, her pants..

Ben and Kate sit still a moment, opposite sides of the bed, facing away from each other, saying nothing..

..all at once Kate swings her pillow and smacks Ben on the back of the head, hard. The impact forces him off the bed to his knees..

BEN

Ah what the fuck?!

Without thinking, without looking, Ben seizes his pillow and swings - 'BOOF!' Kate takes the pillow in the face! She instantly plummets from the merciless swing, lies motionless.

BEN

Shit! Kate! You alright?

Kate remains still on the bed, face down..

BEN

Kate?

Kate suddenly erupts with a deafening slap - 'WHACK!'

Ben barely recovers before Kate swings with her other hand - but Ben's sees it coming. He seizes her wrist before she connects, grips it fiercely..

KATE

Let me go. You're hurting me.

BEN

Good.

Kate tries to slap free with her free hand but Ben grabs that also. He pulls Kate in close..kissing distance..their eyes lock..

Kate kisses Ben hungrily, he pulls away..

BEN

You're angry.

KATE

So are you.

Ben throws Kate to the bed, lowers himself on top of her, reclaims her wrists. He keeps her gaze, pauses..

Kate stares a moment..then with incredible strength, she flips Ben up and over onto his back, pinning him in place. Ben is amazed at her aggression. Kate pulls a sheet over them both, removes her panties, throws them to floor..

KATE

Take off your pants.

Kate lifts her pelvis to give Ben room. Ben removes his pants as instructed, struggles to clear them from his ankles, kicks wildly to get the job done..

KATE

Stay there. Don't move.

Kate mounts Ben, begins to ride, up and down..

Kate observes Ben's 'Creature from the Black Lagoon' poster as she continues to grind..

INT. ABANDONED BUNKER - DAY

Harsh white light fills a concrete room. Under Charlie's work lamps, we see that the space is large, square and almost entirely featureless - the mostly sparse walls contain occasional graffiti, underground water leaks and resulting moss.

Ben and Charlie toss a body atop a pile of rotting deceased. However fake, the pile is truly disgusting. Ben crouches down to Kate - she's wedged in the middle of the bloody mess.

BEN

How you doing. You alright?

Kate gives a thumbs up. Charlie crouches down to her.

CHARLIE

Here's your gun. Remember, it fires blanks, but it makes a hell of a noise and has a bitch of a kick. Use it like we practiced and you won't get hurt.

BEN

If we had an insurance plan it wouldn't cover this. Be careful yeah?

Kate nods.

BEN

I think we're ready! You ready Sam?

Sam, dressed as Big Mother, gives a thumbs up.

BEN

Ok guys, as we rehearsed, just ten times the intensity!

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: Cowering in a dark corner, we watch as Big Mother enters the room. She sniffs the air - she knows someone's in here. She roams past the pile of bodies, misses Kate, but seems to notice *our* scent. She looks to us, steps closer..

..and SURPRISE! Hannah leaps to her feet!

HANNAH

Come and get me, mother...

BIG MOTHER

ROOOAAAR!

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: Blam! Hannah fires off a round. Big Mother loses an arm and screams! Blood showers everywhere! Hannah cocks the shotgun, raises it to her chest. Real anger drips from her face..

'BLAM!'

As Kate fires the second time the shotgun kicks back -
pounding her squarely in her middle. She's winded
immediately. She stumbles back into the pile of bodies.

BEN

Oh shit.

Ben dashes to Kate, Charlie does the same. Sam stares on.

CHARLIE

Jesus Kate, you Ok?!

Kate can't catch her breath. She clutches her chest.

CHARLIE

You're winded. Just give it a
second.

BEN

I'm so sorry Kate.

Sam shuffles over.

SAM

Oooo, nasty. But it's like Ben
said, be careful. So, we ready for
take two?

Everyone turns to Sam - 'show some sympathy!'

SAM

What?!

EXT. ABANDONED BUNKER - DAY

Outside the bunker complex, Ben and Charlie pack up a light
kit. Charlie looks over his shoulder, spies Sam as she enters
an open doorway into a corridor beyond. Sam passes Kate, they
don't acknowledge each other. Kate turns towards a mirror and
makeup stand.

CHARLIE

Nice to see the girls getting on
huh buddy?

Ben looks over his shoulder to Kate, then back to Charlie.

BEN

They're not close I suppose.

CHARLIE

You suppose? Fuck, you and Jason are better friends. You do know it's all because of you right?

BEN

Me? Dude, you're the one who asked Sam on set.

CHARLIE

No you idiot, Christ. They're both into you man, like *into* you.

Ben scoffs.

BEN

Yeah I doubt that.

Charlie takes a deep breath..

CHARLIE

I think I'm gonna break up with Sam.

BEN

What?! Why? She's lovely.

CHARLIE

Yeah I know. The truth is, well the truth is we've never, you know..

Ben takes a moment to respond..

BEN

Charlie. It's still early days.

CHARLIE

Yeah, na it aint gonna happen.

BEN

How do you know?

Charlie slaps Ben on the back.

CHARLIE

Because it hasn't yet! Dude, don't you know anything about girls? If you haven't had sex in the first couple of weeks, it aint ever gonna happen. It means she's just not that into you. Anyway, with Sam, it's because she wants you man. God knows why.

Charlie grins. Ben laughs.

BEN

Fuck me.

CHARLIE

Exactly! So how are things with Kate?

Ben looks over his shoulder again. Kate fixes her hair in the mirror.

BEN

Fine, good. I mean, yeah, great. Apparently we're celebrating tonight. It's a surprise.

CHARLIE

Cool man, that's cool. You deserve it.

BEN

Thanks man.

CHARLIE

Hey Ben?

BEN

Yeah man?

CHARLIE

I think I want to be with Carrie.

Ben shakes his head - 'of course'.

BEN

But Charlie. You don't think, you act. Unless of course you think with your dick, in which case..

CHARLIE

It's not like that.

BEN

What about Jason? No wait, when did that ever stop you?

CHARLIE

It's not like that! Damn..

Charlie leans in towards Ben..

CHARLIE

..I can't believe I'm about to tell you this, but, I think I love her.

Ben leans back, a shocked and sarcastic smile spreads across his face.

CHARLIE

Shut up. No shut up.

Ben raises his hands in defence.

CHARLIE

You're a bastard.

BEN

Hey I'm just, surprised. You say a lot of things Charlie, but never the 'L' word.

CHARLIE

Screw you Ben, I thought you'd understand.

Ben leaks laughter, tries to contain it..

BEN

No, no I do! It's just, wow, my
little boy's all grown up.

Charlie spots Sam approaching as he packs away the last of
the light kit.

CHARLIE

We done here?

SAM

Hey Ben. So, have you read it?

BEN

I'm sorry?

SAM

My script. Have you read my script?

BEN

Oh. Uh, no, not yet. Haven't had
the chance, but I'll get to it.
Should be good.

SAM

Ok, well, let me know when you do,
promise?

KATE (O.S.)

Ben?!

Kate has just about removed all her face makeup.

KATE

Could you help me with this?

Charlie looks to Ben caught between Sam and Kate - 'told ya'.
Ben sighs, answers Sam..

BEN

Promise.

INT. PRIVATE CINEMA - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Popcorn bursts to life inside an industrial popcorn machine. A rosy-cheeked retiree bends into view to observe the progress - his smile is that of a kid in a candy store. This is BOBBY BROWN, eternal optimist, forever child. He's the proud owner/operator of a homemade cinema that shares his name - 'Bobby Brown's'.

BOBBY

She's looking good Rosie.

ROSE BROWN is Bobby's wife and fellow operator of the cinema. She's a big hugger, ace cook and hostess extraordinaire. Together in their matching red-and-white-stripped uniforms, the Browns could easily be mistaken for Mr and Mrs Claus.

ROSE

Smells even better my love.

A small number of CINEMA-GOERS mingle in the compact foyer. Film collectibles of every kind suffocate every inch of space - old cameras, theatre projectors, costumes, props, items of nostalgia.. It's cramped, and entirely awe-inspiring.

Rose plates a fresh batch of fluffy-white scones on top of the candy bar. The bar itself is something from Santa's Workshop. Candies, truffles, icecreams and snacks of every size and colour line several shelves to the floor. Rose scoops cream onto her scones. Bobby steps to her, shares a smile of a man happily in love. He reaches for a spoon beside a small dish of raspberry jam.

BOBBY

May I?

ROSE

That depends Bobby Brown.

Rose leans to Bobby, points to her cheek. Bobby bends forward, plants a soft kiss. The couple glow. Bobby begins spooning jam when..

..the front door of the cinema foyer opens - it's Kate and Ben. Kate wears a sophisticated navy-blue evening dress, Ben a borrowed grey suit - suave, but in desperate need of alterations. Kate's in control, Ben's a bit nervous.

KATE

Helloooo?

ROSE

Our beautiful Katelyn! Oh my goodness, look at you! Come here my girl, oh such beauty!

Rose steps forward from the bar, Kate strides towards her, arms open. Rose envelopes Kate in a loving squeeze, whispers..

ROSE

Your mother. She hasn't called..

Kate flashes her eyes - 'not now'. Bobby joins them in an all-embracing three-way hug. Ben holds back.

BOBBY

Don't be shy son, bring it in!

Ben cautiously approaches. Bobby's big mitts pull Ben in for a good huddle-and-release.

BOBBY

So you must be Ben. A filmmaker I'm led to believe.

BEN

Ah, yeah I guess. I mean, I do my best.

BOBBY

As you should. Glad to hear it.

ROSE

Kate's told us a lot about you.

BEN

Uh-oh.

ROSE

All good things, don't you worry!

Kate bites her lip - it's the prettiest she's ever been.
Ben gestures at the surrounding walls.

BEN

This is truly amazing.

BOBBY

Kate said you were a dedicated fan.
Monsters and horror I take it?

BEN

Oh man, what *hasn't* she told you?
Is that..no, it can't be?!

Ben steps to a porcelain mannequin - a lady in an old, moth-bitten black dress. Her collar is high, her sleeves long. With glowing red-eyes she looks like Mary Poppins possessed.

BOBBY

The Nanny from..

BEN

..Night of the Mannequins!

BOBBY

Yes that's right! I see you're not
adverse to the oldies.

BEN

You mean the classics! How..how did
you get this?!

With Ben and Bobby distracted, Rose pulls Kate aside..

ROSE

He's a sweetie isn't he? How are
things with you two?

KATE

It's still early days.

ROSE

Not like your last I hope. You
broke that poor boy's heart.

Ben turns to Kate, a big, dopey grin on his face.

BEN

Kate. This is incredible!

ROSE

It's only gonna get better
sweetheart!

Ben spins back to Bobby who guides him to his next priceless piece.

Rose regards Kate - 'you just think about what I said'. Kate looks defensive, forces a smile.

Kate and Ben sit together in Bobby's theatre. Bobby has spared no expense - the seats are plush and spacious, the screen is dressed in a brilliant purple curtain. Mood lighting is everywhere. Ben selects from an embarrassingly large stash of candy he shares with Kate.

BEN

How did you find this place?

Kate smiles.

KATE

I told you, I know people.

Bobby steps in front of the screen.

BOBBY

Ladies and Gentlemen. On behalf of
Bobby Brown's cinema, I'd like to
welcome you to a very special
mystery screening!

Kate hoots and claps in her seat.

BOBBY

Tonight's movie is an oldie but a goodie. Some would even say a classic.

Bobby looks to Ben, Ben grins.

BOBBY

So without further ado, enjoy the show, and remember, there will be an intermission with the very freshest of refreshments..

Bobby pats his rotund belly.

BOBBY

..unless of course I get to them first! Enjoy!

KATE

Yeah Bobby! Wooo!

Bobby waves, departs, the lights go down. Ben whispers.

BEN

You know what film this is right?

KATE

Maybe.. Just watch.

The curtain rises, the projector whirls..

..and BOOM! The black-and-white title for 'Creature from the Black Lagoon' explodes onto screen!

Kate looks to Ben - 'how great I am?!'

Ben looks to Kate - 'you're the greatest!'

EXT. ABANDONED BUNKER - NIGHT

On a small knoll, Ben and Kate kiss at the foot of a great tree. It's a perfect summer's night - warm, still, and not entirely dark. Wildflower and long grass are the twosome's only company. Below them we can see the full extent of the bunker complex.

Kate begins to remove her blue dress - Ben quickly stops her, indicates that he'd like to do it himself. He kneels before Kate, kisses her softly, strokes her long hair. Kate exhales sweetly - she understands - 'we'll go slow'.

Ben pulls off his shirt. Kate reaches for his stomach, his chest, his arms. Ben caresses Kate's shoulders - her dress falls away at his touch.

Ben kisses Kate's neck, the centre of her chest. He places his hands on her delicate waist, lowers Kate to her back. Ben lifts Kate to kiss her stomach, continues lower..uses his hands to peel away her lingerie..

Kate's breath quickens. She sits forward, undoes her bra and grabs at Ben's belt. She fumbles with the buckle - it's stuck. Kate giggles. Ben takes her hand, guides her slowly with the buckle. She pulls his zip, tugs at his pants.

Ben lies above Kate. Moving slow, as one, they remain close, intimate..

Ben and Kate snuggle side by side, staring into each other's eyes. They look flushed, satisfied. Kate draws Ben in..

KATE

Ben.

BEN

Yeah?

KATE

Did you like the movie?

Ben grins - 'of course'.

BEN

Yeah.

KATE

Ben?

BEN

Yeah?

KATE
Do you like me?

Ben leans back so Kate can see he's serious.

BEN
Yeah.

Ben holds Kate tight, her head on his shoulder, his head above hers.

KATE
I'd really like you to meet that producer.

A pained expression crosses Ben's face.

BEN
I know.

KATE
Why don't we go there tomorrow, together?

BEN
Maybe.

Kate smiles, remembering something..

KATE
He always pays for coffee.

BEN
I bet.

Kate turns to face Ben.

KATE
Tell me you'll sleep on it. Don't answer me now, but let me know in the morning, promise?

Ben smiles patiently.

BEN

Promise.

Kate squeezes Ben, kisses his cheek. She rests her head on his shoulder again.

KATE

I'm so glad you bought me that grasshopper.

BEN

You mean that Steve.

Kate laughs.

KATE

Steve.. Isn't it funny how things turn out?

BEN

Yeah, it is.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

Ben wriggles uncomfortably in a ridiculous bar stool - forget ergonomics, this thing is all show.

The coffee house itself is equally as vain - street art, a service bench made up of a fish tank housing exotic specimens, a gaunt female BARISTA with a haircut from Blade Runner..

Kate sits at the service bench on a stool beside Ben - high heels, red dress, designer jacket. Somehow she looks perfectly comfortable in her misshapen seat. Barista shoots Ben a look.

KATE

Would you stop squirming?!

BEN

I'm not squirming, I'm adjusting.

KATE

Well stop it.

BEN

Hey I'm here aint I?!

A phone behind the service desk rings. Barista answers it, nods silently, hangs up.

BARISTA

You can go up now.

BEN

Up?

KATE

Come on!

Ben falls from his stool - it spins in his absence. Ben jumps into a 'karate chop' pose - 'do your worst, spinning chair!' Barista remains expressionless, unimpressed. Ben skips after Kate.

BEN

She's friendly.

KATE

Don't you have another suit?!

Ben looks to the same suit he wore to the cinema.

BEN

Actually I don't have any suits.
This is Charlie's.

KATE

Yeah, I can tell.

Kate opens a disguised door, behind it a cramped, dirty staircase. The stairs ascend a half-storey, turn, then climb another half-storey in the opposite direction. Kate preps Ben as they climb..

KATE

Whatever you do, don't act like you
don't know him.

(MORE)

KATE(cont'd)

In fact, I can't believe you don't.
I think you'll like him..

Kate proceeds through an unmarked door at the top of the staircase. The producer's office is a small, sparse attic. The space is minimalist in design, but boy is it narcissistic. Awards, trophies and photos of beautiful faces line the walls. The concrete floor is spotlessly clean and brilliantly polished. A pair of angular, futuristic chairs face a long, legless desk.

A man in his thirties spins in what can only be described as a command chair. Ben stops in his tracks - he recognizes the immaculately groomed man..isn't that, that Hunky Theatre Fan?!
Hunky steps from his chair, greets Kate with a kiss on each cheek.

HUNKY PRODUCER

Katie..how's my superstar?

Kate gestures at Ben as if he's being introduced at a ball..

KATE

This, is Ben Brolin.

Hunky marches over to Ben. His chiseled features and impossible confidence could cut steel. He extends his hand to Ben.

HUNKY PRODUCER

Nicholas Garroway. Friends call me
Nick.

BEN

Hey. Pleased to meet you.

Nick considers Ben in his ill-fitted suit as he vigorously shakes Ben's hand..

NICK

So..Katie tells me you're the next
big thing. You're a lucky guy, in
my books Katie's recommendations
carry a lot of weight.

Ben's really not comfortable.

BEN

Good to know.

Nick studies Ben a moment more, lets go of his hand.

NICK

Well, have a seat. Tell me about your series.

Kate sits. Ben joins her. Nick struts behind his legless desk. Ben tilts his head for a closer look - 'how is that thing suspended like that?!'

BEN

Well, for a start it's not finished.

Nick laughs. His pearly-perfect teeth sparkle and shine.

NICK

Jumping straight to it I see! I like your style.

Ben looks to Kate.

BEN

Jumping straight to what?

NICK

Asking for money of course.

BEN

Money?

NICK

Yes money. The same that makes the world go round, the stuff that makes dreams come true. Katie, I thought you told him..

KATE

I was going to..he's incredibly stubborn.

NICK

As any good filmmaker ought to be.

KATE

It was almost impossible getting him here.

NICK

Mind always on the job huh? I like that. Ok Ben, let's cut to the chase, I know all about your series, all the gory little details..and I gotta tell ya, I love it!

Ben looks confused. Nick lifts a copy of Ben's script from his desk. Paper-clipped to its front is an unlabeled DVD disc marked with the handwritten words: 'Kate - Final Girl. Fuck yeah!' - it's the disc Charlie burned for her! Ben turns to Kate.

BEN

Really?

KATE

Just listen.

NICK

Ben, I like your stuff. Yeah it's a little shlocky, yeah it's zombies, but that shit sells right? Hell, Europe, the Japanese, they can't get enough! Might even work further afield if we strike a good deal. Here..

Nick tosses the script and disc to Ben.

NICK

..I've seen all I need to see.

BEN

You want to sell my series?

NICK

First I want to buy it. Then I want you to rewrite it. Thing is, we can't sell what you have, but we can sell a full-length feature film.

Nick pauses for dramatic affect. Ben looks at Kate. Her eyes are lit up in anticipation - she knew this was coming..

BEN

Did you just say, a feature film?

NICK

Damn right I did! Fact is Ben, you know your stuff. You take old ideas and throw in a new spin. That's what a guy like me needs.

Ben takes it all in, then..

BEN

Who are you exactly?

Kate lets out an audible gasp, looks away, embarrassed..

NICK

It's Ok Katie. Ben's got sass. He's proud of his work, as he should be. I'm a producer Ben, a successful one. I'm here to offer you the beginnings of a real career, a chance to make a feature film! Ben, I can change your life.

Ben glances at Kate.

BEN

Yeah. I've heard that's what you do. What about Charlie? We're a team.

NICK

Ah yes. Charlie. No Ben, this deal isn't for Charlie. This is for you. You and Charlie don't get to make the feature, and I'm afraid you don't get to finish your little series either. Conflict of interest, you understand.

BEN

Then I'm not interested. I never said my series was for sale.

NICK

Come on Ben. Everything has a price. You just haven't seen what I'm offering. Listen, you can't keep uploading everything to the internet.

BEN

Hey it's worked so far. Me and Charlie have received a lot of attention.

NICK

And now you have mine. Here, I want you to look at this contract..

Nick pulls a contract from his desk, places it in front of Ben. He puts all his focus on Ben - the big sell..

NICK

Take it home, delve into it. I think you'll like what you see, it's incredibly generous. I believe in you Ben. All you have to do is believe in me.

BEN

I still don't know who you are. For all I know you're just some dude with an office above a coffee shop.

Kate back-slaps Ben arm. Nick leans back in his chair, smiles..

NICK

I tell you what Ben, do a little research. Find out about me. I'm sure you'll like what you find.

Nick leans forward..

NICK

Just don't keep me waiting. I'm a busy man.

Kate grabs the contract, stands..

KATE

Thanks Nick! We'll be in touch!
Come on Ben.

Ben looks to Kate. He stands, slowly..Kate grips his arm, looks severely pissed. She leads him away..

NICK

Grab a coffee on me on your way out. See you soon Katie. And Ben..

Ben turns to Nick.

NICK

Sign your life away.

TITLE CARD: 'SIGN YOUR LIFE AWAY'

INT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Under his bedside lamp, Ben mulls over the contract. He looks burdened, tired. He looks to his laptop screen..

CLOSE ON: Nick Galloway's website. Like his office, Nick's website is simple, elegant, imposing. Ben scrolls through an 'AWARDS' section.. Nick has produced a myriad of successful titles - his films have been shown in all the big festivals.

Ben sighs, looks back to the contract..
..all at once Charlie bursts through the door - does his energy ever cease?! The shotgun is strapped to his right forearm via a custom-made fitting. A cable runs from the gun to his hand - a squeeze trigger.

CHARLIE

Benny! Check it out! I've done it!
Oh, hey, what are you reading?

Like a kid caught with his hand in the cookie jar, Ben quickly stuffs the contract under his bed.

CHARLIE

Oh I know! That's Sam's script
isn't it?! Good 'night time
reading' I bet!

BEN

Uh, yeah, you got me. It's Sam's
script. Some filthy stuff in there
man. Shame you two never..

CHARLIE

Dammit. The quiet ones. Always
killer in the sack. What's it
called?

BEN

Um, it's..it's called Grasshopper.

CHARLIE

Grasshopper?! Huh. Hey guess what?
I gave Sam the news this morning.
We're finished.

BEN

How'd she take it?

CHARLIE

Well, I think. I'm fine too, thanks
for asking.

Ben points to the shotgun.

BEN

Seems that way. That what I think
it is?

CHARLIE

Yeah man! Just finished it. Check
it out, no more kick-back!

Charlie takes a hero's stance.

CHARLIE

This looks amazing in first-person.
You ready?

Ben grins.

CHARLIE

Hey fuckwit. You talking to me? I
said, are you talking to me?!

Charlie pumps his arm, back and forward - the thrust causes
the shotgun to load.

BEN

Dude! That's badass!

CHARLIE

Cover your ears.

Ben does as instructed. Charlie swings the gun away and
clenches his fist - the squeeze trigger is activated and
BLAM!, the gun fires a blank!

BEN

Ohhhohohoho! Charlie that's
amazing!

CHARLIE

Hey you're the evil psycho who
dreamt it up.

Ben can't help but feel guilty..

BEN

Yeah but you're the mad genius who built it. I'd be nowhere without you Charlie, you know that right?

CHARLIE

'Course I know. We're a team Ben, we do everything together.

BEN

Yeah..

CHARLIE

You alright dude? You look like shit.

BEN

I'm just, tired.

CHARLIE

Too much sex not enough sleep. I bet you want to get back to Sam's script too huh?!

Charlie punches Ben's shoulder.

CHARLIE

Fucken animal.

Charlie starts to leave, spins a final time, points his shotgun arm at Ben.

CHARLIE

Just let me borrow it when you're done yeah? Love to know what I missed out on.

Charlie pumps his arm - gun loaded. He strolls out the door, happy with his new toy.

Ben smiles as he watches his mate go. Then, his face turns, and all at once he's never looked so troubled.

INT. LOCAL BAR - DAY

Ben sits at a booth with the contract, breakfast and a morning coffee. He's hardly touched his bacon and scrambled eggs, but his long black doesn't stand a chance. He guzzles his cup as Kate swoops in opposite him.

BEN

Hey.

KATE

Hey yourself.

BEN

Want one?

KATE

No. No I'm good. So. What's the verdict?

Ben passes Kate the contract. She turns to the final page..

CLOSE ON: Final page of the contract. Ben has signed the dotted line.

Kate lights up, throws the contract to the table, jumps from her seat and leaps at Ben in a smothering embrace!

BEN

Ohoho! Ok. So I take it you're happy then?

KATE

I'm so proud of you! Oh this is wonderful! Maybe I will have that coffee.

BEN

Good.

Ben gestures at a passing WAITRESS.

BEN

Could I grab another please?

KATE

Take away.

Waitress nods. Ben holds Kate in his arms.

BEN

You off somewhere?

KATE

Important person, busy schedule.

Kate leans in against Ben's chest.

KATE

But this is by far the highlight of my day.

BEN

So Kate, listen. We have so much to celebrate. I wanna take you out for that drink, no interruptions this time.

KATE

Sounds perfect. Where are we going?

BEN

Oh just this crazy place. I think you'll love it.

Kate sits back to look at Ben.

KATE

You know, I think I might.

Ben can't quite read Kate's expression, but it's powerful. In a moment of silence something unspoken is being said - it's exciting, unnerving..

KATE

So..I'm gonna grab that coffee.

BEN

Yeah, yeah you..yip.

KATE

Ok well, call me.

BEN

I will.

Kate scoots away. She's both charged and frazzled, so is Ben. Ben exhales. He pokes a fork at his scrambled eggs, can't bring himself to eat when..

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Shit if you're not gonna eat that I will!

Charlie slides in opposite Ben, grabs at Ben's plate, unfolds a napkin-wrapped knife and fork, is about to squirt sauce from a bottle..

CHARLIE

That cool?

Ben grins, nods. Charlie pours the sauce, tucks into Ben's breakfast.

CHARLIE

Sorry I'm late.

Charlie spots the contract.

CHARLIE

Oh hey, that Sam's script?

Charlie reaches for the contract.

BEN

No wait!

It's too late. Charlie's already reading. Ben shrinks in his seat as Charlie looks puzzled, disgusted, then, upon skimming to the final page, angry..

CHARLIE

Dude, what is this?

BEN

A contract.

CHARLIE

I can see that. Why is about our series?

BEN

It's not our series anymore. The shoot's over Charlie.

CHARLIE

What the fuck did you do?

BEN

I'm making us some money, some real money. Look.

Ben snatches the contract, flips a couple of pages, passes the contract back to Charlie.

BEN

It's a hell of a lot.

Charlie briefly scans the page, then drops the contract.

CHARLIE

I don't get it.

BEN

Yeah, Ok, so it says I'm the sole recipient of that share of the profits, but that's just a technicality dude. They only credit the creator.

CHARLIE

The creator?! Jesus Ben, we're a team!

BEN

Which is why I'm gonna split it with ya, straight down the middle.

CHARLIE

I still don't get it.

BEN

I can't explain it any simpler..

CHARLIE

No! Christ. I don't get why you've done this at all. This isn't us! This isn't you!

BEN

I'm just trying to make us some money.

CHARLIE

Fuck the money Ben! When was this ever about the money?!

BEN

Kate said you'd be like this.

CHARLIE

Kate?! She put you up to this?! Jesus you're a push over. You get just a whiff of a girl and you roll on your back, legs in the fucking air. Guess you haven't learned a thing since Holly.

BEN

This has nothing to do with her.

CHARLIE

No, it's everything to do with you. Benjamin fucking Brolin, centre of the god dam universe. Dammit Ben, you ever not in that head of yours, you ever think of others?

BEN

Hey I did this for us Charlie, I did this for you!

CHARLIE

No, what you did was go behind my back and ruin the one thing I believed in. I hope you're happy dude.

Charlie stands.

CHARLIE

I'm sure you and Kate will be just great together. Heartless fucken actress.

BEN

Charlie, wait..

Charlie spins, scoffs the remaining bacon and eggs, and shoves the empty plate across the table to Ben.

CHARLIE

Thanks for breakfast big shot. I'm sure you can pay for it.

Charlie storms off, Ben looks destroyed.

EXT. CARRIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie pounds on the front door of a large house. We recognize this as Carrie's place. The door opens - Carrie's there, alone. She looks unimpressed.

Charlie is unforgivingly drunk. He can't look at Carrie without swaying. The large bottle of vodka in his limp grip could drop at any moment..

CHARLIE

I fucken loooove you. No, I do, really. It's always you..Carrieeee.

Carrie grabs the vodka off Charlie.

CARRIE

Come on.

Carrie gestures Charlie inside, he stumbles forward.

CHARLIE

Heyyy, I was drinking that.

Carrie looks to the world outside to check no one spotted Charlie. She closes the door.

INT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Ben arrives home - it's late. He enters the kitchen, washes dishes, looks through a window to the shed in the backyard.

Ben enters his room, turns on his bedside lamp and flips open his laptop. He begins to write..

INT. CARRIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A rectangular showerhead sprays hot water.

Carrie slips into the luxurious shower - it's huge, a small room really, designed for two. Water falls like rain from the ceiling-mounted showerhead. A second showerhead remains unused.

Carrie steps under the deluge, soaks in the heat, closes her eyes.

Charlie sneaks in behind Carrie, turns the second showerhead on. Carrie opens her eyes but doesn't turn. She smiles. Charlie slips his hands onto Carrie's naked waist. Carrie looks to his hands, pauses. She turns to Charlie and puts her hands around his neck. They kiss.

From outside the shower we see Carrie as she's pushed face forward to the glass. Steam envelopes her as Charlie thrusts from behind..

INT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

At his desk, Ben stares at his laptop screen, trying to write. He rubs his unshaven chin..nothing's coming..then..his phone rings. Ben recognizes the number, doesn't look happy.

BEN

Hey Nick.

TRANSITION BETWEEN BEN'S ROOM AND NICK'S OFFICE:

NICK

How's my favourite writer? Churning those pages?

BEN

Ah yeah, I'm..making progress.

NICK

Glad to hear it Ben, keep up that quota! Speaking of which, I've got some good news! The Germans have come through!

BEN

The Germans?

NICK

Uh-huh. Schneider Film no less. I know, I know, they're not exactly a billion-dollar company, but they do good work and they just loved your treatment. Rehearsals begin in a month!

Ben is speechless.

NICK

Hello? Hello, Ben?

BEN

Wow Nick, that's..wow.

NICK

I know right?! Told you I'd change your life. So, you can deliver?

BEN

In one month? Yesterday it was six months.

NICK

That's showbiz Ben. I can count on you, can't I?

BEN

Um, yeah, yeah of course.

NICK

Good! Now, as per the contract an accelerated delivery date guarantees one thing. More money! I'm sending you an email with the details, should get to you any moment now. Ok Ben, I'm hanging up now, important person, busy schedule. We'll talk soon yeah? Get to those pages champ!

Nick hangs up. Ben takes a second to absorb the news. His laptop beeps - 'you've got mail'. Ben scrambles for his mouse..

CLOSE ON: Laptop screen. Ben opens up his email, skims through the information inside..

..and leans back in his chair, dumbfounded. It's a lot of money.

BEN

Ho-ly shit.

Then.. KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK! Ben wasn't expecting anyone..

Ben opens the front door - outside it's Kate, dressed up for a romantic date.

She looks as radiant as ever, except her expression is anything but. She marches inside, heads straight to Ben's room.

KATE

You asshole.

BEN

Oh, fuck! Kate, I'm so sorry!

KATE

I waited three quarters of an hour for you, alone. Everyone was staring at me! Do you have any idea how embarrassing that is?

BEN

Ok I'll just, throw something on. I'll take us straight back there I swear..

Ben falls over himself in a desperate hurry to redress.

KATE

I'm not going *back*!

Kate plonks herself down on Ben's bed.

KATE

Why didn't you call?!

BEN

Oh. I've been writing. Actually, did you hear the news?

KATE

News. What news?

Ben steps to his laptop, swivels it to face Kate.

BEN

Check it out.

Kate stands, walks to the laptop, reads the email..
..she lifts a hand to her mouth - 'oh my..'

BEN
Crazy right? Guess you're going to
Germany.

Kate squeezes Ben in a tight embrace, then quickly remembers she's supposed to be angry.

KATE
You still owe me a drink.

BEN
I know.

Kate relaxes.

KATE
And a date.

BEN
I know.

Kate looks back at the laptop.

KATE
And I'm going to stay here tonight.

Ben grins.

BEN
I know.

INT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - DAY

Ben shuffles into the kitchen. He rubs his tired, morning eyes, turns the kettle on. He notices his cell phone on the kitchen table, picks it up..

CLOSE ON: Ben's cell. Ben scrolls through his contacts, reaches 'Charlie'..

Ben sighs. He decides against calling his friend..

INT. CARRIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Carrie sits in her bed, back against a frilly, fluffy pillow. An enormous teddy bear is under the covers beside her. Almost the same size as Carrie, teddy has been positioned so that it appears he's reading - like Carrie, he holds a woman's magazine and wears a pair of librarian's glasses. Carrie's never looked so cute.

Carrie's bedroom door swings open - it's Charlie. He carries a bed-tray of breakfast goodies - orange juice, toast, yoghurt and fruit of every colour. He's wearing nothing but a small, black apron. He grins his famous grin.

CHARLIE

Breakfast, is, served.

Carrie beams. She drops her magazine, exposing her naked chest behind. She pats the bed - 'bring it over!' Charlie struts over, his backside exposed in all its glory. He places the tray over Carrie's covered legs, then action-rolls across her feet to join her under the sheets.

CHARLIE

Sorry Oscar, this bed aint big
enough for the both of us.

Charlie carefully lifts Oscar the teddy up over himself, rests him gently on the floor beside.

Carrie spoons a slice of strawberry and dips it in the yoghurt. She extends the spoon to Charlie's mouth, he happily accepts..and VROOM! We hear the sound of a large car engine drawing in outside. Carrie freezes.

CARRIE

Oh, my God.

Carrie peeks through the blinds of a bedside window.

Below we see Jason step out from a serious muscle car. His arm is still in a cast.

CHARLIE

Please don't tell me that's..

CARRIE

Jason. Shit.

Charlie jumps from the bed, scoops up his shoes and a pile of clothes.

CHARLIE

I thought you said he was gone for the week!

CARRIE

He was..

Charlie darts to Carrie.

CHARLIE

I'll go out the window.

CARRIE

You can't. It's too high!

Charlie looks through the blinds. Jason is already heading inside. Charlie and Carrie begin to whisper loudly.

CHARLIE

Ok, I'll hide..in the bathroom!

Jason enters the house downstairs.

JASON (O.S.)

Carrie? I'm home!

Carrie pulls on Charlie's arm.

CARRIE

Don't be stupid, there's nowhere to hide in there, remember?!

Jason climbs the stairs.

JASON

Carrieee? Where are youuuu?

CARRIE

Under the bed! Quick!

Charlie hesitates. Carrie forgets to whisper.

CARRIE

There's nowhere else!

Charlie shoots his finger to his mouth - 'sshhhh!'

Jason hears Carrie. He picks up his pace, worried..

JASON

Carrie?!

Charlie dives under the bed with his shoes and clothes, scuffles his way over to Oscar. Carrie jumps back under the covers, the breakfast at her feet. Charlie lifts Oscar up so that Carrie sees the bear..

CHARLIE

Psssst!

Carrie rolls her eyes - 'God, forget the bear!' She grabs the Oscar from Charlie, slaps Charlie back down under the bed..

Jason bolts through the door..

..and there's Carrie, seemingly alone, Oscar reading beside her, nothing going on..

CARRIE

Oh hey Baby! I thought I heard you pull in. How was the conference?

Jason prances around like a caged tiger.

JASON

Who were you talking to?

CARRIE

Baby?

JASON

Who were you talking to Carrie? I heard you! Don't you deny it! Was it him?! Was it that small dick punk?! Where is he?!

Charlie cowers under the bed. Jason peers into the bathroom.

CARRIE

I have no idea what you're saying baby. I've just been sitting here with Oscar.

Jason snatches the bear, throws it violently across the room. Carrie flinches - she's seen this before.

JASON

Goddammit! You tryin' to tell me you were talking to a freakin' bear Carrie?!

CARRIE

Os..Oscar and I thought we'd have ourselves a lil' breakfast, help pass the time..I missed you.

Jason stops his tirade. He turns to Carrie, catches his breath. All at once he's a little boy - a little boy in trouble with mummy..

JASON

I missed you too baby.

CARRIE

I know baby. Come here.

Charlie pulls a face of disgust under the bed.

JASON

I came home early to surprise you. You know I don't mean to get angry.

CARRIE

I know baby, I know.

Jason cuddles up to Carrie on the bed. The extra weight bears down on Charlie.

JASON

I'm sorry Carrie. I'm sorry.

CARRIE

It's Ok. Hey, why don't you have a shower and then help me finish this breakfast? I'd love to hear about the conference.

JASON

Yeah, Ok baby. I'll take a shower.

Charlie's eyes widen - 'is this my chance?!'

CARRIE

Don't get the cast wet baby.

Jason enters the bathroom, closes the door. Charlie waits for the sound of the shower, then clambers out from under the bed, still holding his shoes and clothes. He whispers to Carrie.

CHARLIE

You Ok?

Carrie simply bats him away - 'go!' Charlie does as commanded, tip-toes to the bedroom door..

JASON

Carrie!! Who's are these?!

Charlie and Carrie freeze. Jason's standing in the bathroom door, clutching a pair of Charlie's underwear. He spots Charlie.

JASON

You...

INT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - DAY

Kate rolls over in bed, opens her eyes, sees that Ben is missing. She sits up, curious..

Kate enters the kitchen, looks to the table..sees the all-but-empty tequila bottle with a note. She smiles, walks to the bottle, reads the note..

CLOSE ON: Ben's note - 'I never did get you that drink'.

BEN (O.S.)

A taste of things to come..

Kate spins to see Ben standing behind her. He has a single red rose in his hand.

BEN

..if you're free tonight?

Ben extends the rose to Kate. She accepts it, grinning.

KATE

Of course. I have a meeting with Nick at seven, why don't you meet me there at eight?

BEN

Sounds good. Making plans for Germany I take it?

Kate leans in for a cuddle..

KATE

Hey guess what?

BEN

What?

KATE

I have an idea for your script.

BEN

Oh yeah?

KATE

You should add a love interest.

Ben smiles.

BEN

It's ready for one, huh?

KATE

Yeah. I think so.

INT. CARRIE'S HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON: Jason's raging face. He's yelling something - spitting some savage hatred, but we can't hear a thing, all sounds are muffled.

Time is slow, stretched. We're losing focus, blood masks our view. Then..Jason's fist comes straight at us - SMACK!

Charlie's face is messed up, bad. He looks less himself and more one of his monstrous creations. Jason holds him on the ground with his broken arm, hammers away with his good arm. PUNCH. PUNCH. PUNCH. Carrie is losing it - she's in the bed, screaming.

At this moment, sound, time and focus return - it makes for an ugly symphony.

CARRIE

Stop! Noo! Stooooop! Aahhhh!

Jason ignores her pleas. He just keeps hitting Charlie, pulpy smash after pulpy smash.

CARRIE

Jaaasooooon!!

Finally Jason stops. He throws the person-who-used-to-look-like-Charlie to the floor.

Jason stands tall, like an all-conquering caveman who's just survived a sabertooth attack. He isn't human, not right now. He looks to Carrie, nostrils flaring..

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - NIGHT

Ben walks through the coffee house, a full bouquet of red roses in his hand. Barista doesn't see him - she's leaning down behind the service bench, her hair a mess, an unlit cigarette in her mouth. She's shuffling through drawers, desperate..

Ben recognizes her plight - nicotine withdraw, no lighter. Ben reaches to his pocket, pulls out his zippo, offers it to Barista.

BARISTA

You're early.

Barista snatches the zippo, lights her cigarette.

BEN

You can do that in here?

BARISTA

No. But I don't care.

BEN

Long day?

Barista looks at Ben, her eyes are hiding something..

BARISTA

Those for Kate? I'll give them to her.

Barista reaches for the bouquet, Ben steps back.

BEN

No I can do that. It's just, I want this night to be perfect.

BARISTA

You're cute. Stupid, but cute.

BEN

I'm sorry?

BARISTA

You're early. Take it from me
handsome, no girl likes being
interrupted early.

Ben lifts the bouquet like a trophy.

BEN

But you all like surprises right?

Barista blows smoke - 'you're joking?'
She leans forward.

BARISTA

Ben, you can't go in there. They're
not..finished.

Ben takes a step back, a step forward, opens his mouth to
speak..

BARISTA

It's crazy really. They've been at
it for a while..

Ben opens his mouth again..looks down, then quickly strides
to the disguised door and up the staircase. He reaches the
door at the top of the stairs, tries to open it - it won't
budge.

Barista leans back in her chair, pops the top of her
cigarette pack, smiles..

Beyond the upstairs door, Ben hears a loud THUMP! He presses
his ear to the door..and hears the sounds of a couple engaged
in loud sex!

Ben starts to lose it. He tries barging the door with his
shoulder - it won't budge.

BEN

Kate?! Kate!!

Ben's despair intensifies. He kicks the door, once, twice..
SMASH! - the door flies open on his third effort..

Ben freezes. He sees it. Atop his legless desk, Nick is nailing Kate from behind, doggy style. They turn to the unexpected intruder..both are horrified to see it's Ben.

Time slows, becomes stretched. We start to lose focus as Ben drops the bouquet of roses to the floor.

All sounds cease except for a single piercing, high note - the sound of ears ringing.

INT.HOLLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

No sound but the loud-ringing.

SUPER-QUICK MONTAGE (IMAGE BLOWN-OUT/OVER-EXPOSED):

Ben kicks in a door.

Holly clutches her sheets, terrified.

Ben storms towards Holly, yelling his head off.

Ben spots an opened condom box, throws it at Holly.

Ben shakes Holly, she slaps him - he just takes it.

Holly punches Ben - his nose bleeds.

Ben wipes the blood, he's wearing that odd look - he's lost it, he's an animal, a monster.

Holly begins to yell..

HOLLY

This is what you get Ben! This is
what you get!

TITLE CARD: 'THIS IS WHAT YOU GET'

EXT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Jason's muscle car pulls to the side of the road. The passenger door opens. Charlie is thrown to the curb. Jason drives off, engine roaring.

Charlie lies still - he's all but dead. After a moment he lifts his head, opens a battered eye, spots his flat - damn that looks far away..

Charlie crawls the short frontyard path to the flat door. It's painful to watch, like something from Passion of the Christ. He reaches the door, collapses, unable to stand.

Charlie sobs softly. Blood and saliva drool from his mouth. He pulls at his cell phone - his efforts are excruciatingly slow.

CLOSE ON: Charlie's cell. Charlie scrolls through his contacts, stops on 'Ben'. Charlie pauses, contemplates..then moves onto 'Sam'. He dials.

TRANSITION BETWEEN BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT AND THE LOCAL BAR:

Sam is sitting at the bar with a HANDSOME DATE. From the looks of the eye contact they're sharing, the date is going well. Sam's phone rings, she's flustered by the interruption. Handsome Date smiles sincerely - 'no problem'.

HANDSOME DATE

Please..

Sam retrieves her phone from her handbag, raises it..

CLOSE ON: Sam's cell. It reads 'Charlie'.

Sam looks puzzled, annoyed.. She smiles at Handsome Date.

SAM

Excuse me.

Sam wanders to the pool table, answers her phone.

SAM

Charlie? This better be important.

CHARLIE

Saaaam. I need you.

SAM

It's too late for that Charlie.
You've made your bed, and I'm not sleeping in it.

CHARLIE

I'm hurt. I'm in pain.

SAM

Yeah well, I'm a hell of a catch
so, you brought this on yourse..

CHARLIE

Sam! I'm really in pain. Jason,
he..

SAM

Jason?! What'd he do? What did you
do?!

CHARLIE

I'm bleeding, so much blood..

SAM

Oh God. Where are you Charlie? I'm
calling an ambulance.

CHARLIE

At home, at the flat..

Charlie blacks out, drops his phone.

SAM

Charlie? Charlie?! Oh Christ.

Sam hangs up, dials emergency.

SAM

Yes hi, I need an ambulance..

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - NIGHT

Ben is too shocked to speak, too traumatized to act. He
simply turns, marches out of Nick's office. Kate yells out
after him.

KATE

Ben? Ben!

Ben runs down the stairs, strides past Barista. She's
attempts to speak, Ben raises a finger - 'don't!' Ben's phone
rings. Without thinking he answers it.

BEN

What?! Sam?! Fuck Sam I haven't
read your damn script, I told you,
I'll..oh. Oh shit.

INT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Two MEDICAL OFFICERS hoist Charlie in a stretcher and are
about to load him into an ambulance as Ben runs to his side.
Sam's already there.

BEN

Charlie?! Jesus, Charlie!

A Medical Officer attempts to intervene, Ben shoves him off.

BEN

I'm his friend! I'm his best
friend!

Ben catches a glance of Charlie - he's wearing an oxygen
mask, unresponsive. Ben grabs at the stretcher, forces it to
stop.

MEDICAL OFFICER

Please. He's critical. We have to
get him to the hospital!

BEN

Sam?! Sam! What the hell happened?!

SAM

What do you think. Jason.

MEDICAL OFFICER

Please son, your friend could die.

SECOND MEDICAL OFFICER

Come with us, just, don't get in
our way.

Ben realizes he's clutching the stretcher. He lets go. The
medical officers push past, load Charlie up..

SECOND MEDICAL OFFICER

You coming?

Ben's attention returns - he was somewhere else..

BEN

No. No not yet.

SECOND MEDICAL OFFICER

Suit yourself.

SAM

I'll go!

SECOND MEDICAL OFFICER

Christ.

Sam jumps aboard the ambulance, the medical officers slam the doors behind her. The ambulance speeds off, sirens blaring.

Ben watches the disappearing ambulance. He clenches his fist..

INT. JASON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Elevator doors open on Ben. He's a man possessed. He marches the narrow corridor to Jason's apartment, reaches the door, turns the handle..it's locked.

Without hesitation, Ben steps back and lunges at the door with his foot - SMASH! The door flies open.

Ben storms into Jason's apartment. It's a bachelor pad. Expensive furniture, a vast entertainment system, designer kitchen appliances and walls of sporting and custom-car collectibles pack the studio layout. Jason is nowhere to be seen.

Ben plucks a 'Most Valuable Player' trophy off a nearby shelf and hurls it at Jason's ridiculously large TV - the screen shatters.

BEN

Jason!

Ben lifts Jason's three-person leather sofa, flips it so that it crashes into the adjacent glass-top coffee - CRACK!

BEN

Jason!!!

In a meltdown frenzy, Ben rages around the apartment, ripping open drawers, tearing off wall hangings, kicking over electrical goods.

JASON (O.S.)

What the fuck?!!

Ben spins. Jason's at the door, Carrie beside him.

Ben looks at Jason with his animalistic, monstrous look.

Ben charges at Jason, dive-tackles him into the corridor wall behind. The impact is savage - it leaves a Jason-sized dent. Carrie falls out of the way, paralyzed with fear. Ben forces Jason to his feet, headbutts him, hard. He whirls Jason into the opposite wall, smashing another hole in the surface. Ben is not nearly big enough to take on Jason, but he has two distinct advantages - Jason's broken arm and his own, burning rage.

The old male Neighbour from across the corridor opens his door.

NEIGHBOUR

Hey! I've called the cops!

Ben wheels around to the neighbour, punches him squarely in the nose - blood runs instantly.

NEIGHBOUR

Arrh! What the hell?!

Neighbour retreats back into his apartment, slams his door. Ben turns to Jason..and SMACK! Jason punches Ben in the jaw. Ben takes the hit, regathers, punches back. Ben pummels Jason's head - his fury impossible for Jason to escape. He shoves Jason into his apartment.

Carrie remains in the corridor - bent over herself on the floor. There's nothing she can do.

Ben throws Jason to the floor, reaches for a trophy bowling ball. Jason punches and kicks - Ben slaps away most of his efforts, stanches out the rest. He raises the bowling ball..and WHACK!, the ball down hard on Jason's head. Jason is dazed, but not quite knocked out. Ben lifts the ball a second time..and THUMP!..Jason's out cold.

Ben drags Jason's unconscious body to the hard kitchen floor. He stretches out Jason's good arm, turns to pick up the bowling ball..

..Carrie steps inside, quivering. Ben regards her for a moment, then raises the ball. He brings the ball down hard on Jason's arm - it makes a sickening CRUNCH! Ben raises the ball again, CRUNCH!, and again, CRUNCH! The bone in Jason's arm is more than broken - it's destroyed. Jason no longer has a good arm. Carrie throws up.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Sam sits asleep in a bedside chair beside Charlie. He's hooked up to a vast array of life-sustaining machines, breathing through an oxygen mask, still unconscious.

A NURSE enters the room, spots Sam, smiles. She hoists the blanket on Sam's waist to her shoulders. Sam stirs. Nurse checks Charlie's vital signs.

SAM

How is he?

NURSE

Stable. He's lucky he had you. Had he been left alone...

Ben steps into the room. Sam and Nurse turn to him. Ben looks like hell. he looks to Charlie - his face melts into deep concern..

SAM

He's unconscious. Jason beat him into an inch of his life.

NURSE

There's not much you can do I'm
afraid. He needs time to recover.

BEN

When will he wake up?

NURSE

It's hard to say. Listen, we'll
keep an eye on him, you two should
go home, get some proper rest.
We'll contact you if something
happens.

BEN

Can I speak to him? Alone?

The nurse considers Ben a moment, makes a final check of a
monitor..

NURSE

Make it quick.

The nurse leaves. Sam loosens her blanket, is about to
stand..

BEN

No. Stay. If you want.

Sam pauses, nods, sits back down.

Ben steps to Charlie, looks to his motionless friend..

Ben opens his mouth to speak...but the pain is too much.
Ben implodes, falls to his knees, unable to control the
tears..

Sam stands from her chair, walks to Ben, places a hand on his
shoulder.

SAM

Come on. I'll take you home.

INT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Sam and Ben hobble into the kitchen.

Ben opens the fridge, pulls out a bottle of beer.

BEN

Want one?

SAM

No. You sure you need it?

Ben turns back to the fridge, grabs another three beers.

BEN

Yeap.

Sam regards Ben. She's looks concerned..and disappointed.

Ben attempts to deflect..

BEN

Hey you should stay. In Charlie's room I mean. You look like you're about to fall over.

Sam gestures to Ben's beer.

SAM

So do you.

Ben doesn't respond.

SAM

Yeah Ok, thanks. I am exhausted.
You sure you're Ok?

BEN

I'm sure. Well, you know where to go. 'Night.

Ben walks to his room. Sam looks on, troubled.

As he enters his room, Ben is immediately confronted by his 'Creature from the Black Lagoon' poster. He eyeballs it, swigs at his beer defiantly.

Ben sits at the side of his bed, places his unopened beers on his desk, drinks again from his opened bottle.
Ben stares at the floor..breaths heavily, turns to face the 'Creature' poster..

..and all at once throws his bottle - it smashes against the poster in a frothy explosion. Ben screams.

BEN
Arrrrhhhhhhhh!

INT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - DAY

Morning sun billows across Ben's face, he stirs. He sits up atop his bed, still dressed in yesterday's clothes. He rubs his head, pulls a cigarette from an open packet on his desk..but where's his zippo? Ben pats his pant pockets, hunts around the bedsheets, looks back to his desk..

Ben reaches down, pulls open his desk drawer..

CLOSE ON: Desk drawer as it opens. We see Ben's zippo..and is that, Sam's script underneath?..

Ben idles into the kitchen, Sam's script in one hand, a lit cigarette in the other. He sits at the kitchen table, flips Sam's script to its end. He opens the last page, begins reading..

BEN (V.O.)
Interior, Florence's Writing Room,
Night. Alone at her desk, Florence
types the final page of her script.

We now see Sam's story as an animated storyboard. Sam 'portrays' the character Florence, her voice becomes the reader's voice:

SAM (V.O.)

Florence rereads her closing sentence, likes what she sees, types 'FADE TO BLACK' and hits the return key with a satisfied 'THWACK'. She prints her final page, switches off Christopher's desk lamp, dances into the living room... "Chris?! It's done! I've finished!" But Christopher is nowhere to be seen. Florence searches, then, she sees it..a letter on the table..a letter in Christopher's handwriting. Florence rushes to the letter, grasps it in her shaking hand. She reads..

At this moment the animated storyboard becomes Ben's imagined interpretation of Christopher's letter - a live-action sequence inside of an animated storyboard, (inside of a live-action film). Ben plays Christopher. Christopher is alone, a pack over his back. He walks along an empty country road. The surrounding fields bathe in morning sun - everything amber, glowing, dreamlike. Ben voices Christopher's letter:

BEN (V.O.)

Dearest Florence, I'm sorry, but my answer is no. By the time you read this, I will already be many miles away. I can not say where it is I'm going, I do not know myself. All I know is my heart belongs elsewhere, to someone else. You should know you saved me, and although I can no longer love you, part of me will always carry the love we shared. I will never forget your smile, your laugh, your kiss. In time I will love again, as I know you will be loved.

(MORE)

BEN(cont'd)

May your journey be as glorious as
your script, may you find your
happy ending. To the road ahead,
Christopher.

We return to Florence inside the animated storyboard.

SAM (V.O.)

Teardrops fall to Christopher's
letter. Florence lowers the letter,
picks up her final page of script.
"My happy ending?" We look to the
words 'FADE TO BLACK' as our movie
does the same...

Back in the kitchen, we hold on Ben as he absorbs the finale
of Sam's script. Lost in Sam's words, he hasn't touched his
cigarette - it's almost burnt the whole way down..

..then, KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK! Ben leaps!

Ben opens the front door - it's Sam. She's holding a brown
paper bag and a tray of takeaway coffee.

SAM

Breakfast?

Ben sits opposite Sam at the kitchen table, inhaling his
food.

SAM

Wow, slow down! You'll hurt
yourself.

BEN

Sorry, haven't had breakfast
since..well since you last made
breakfast.

Ben reaches for a Jack Daniels bottle on the bench..

SAM

It's one of my things, you know,
start the day the right way..

Ben looks to the Jack Daniels, places it on the table, slightly ashamed..

SAM

And, I wanted to say thanks for letting me crash.

BEN

So I've been reading your script, it's kinda good.

SAM

Kinda?

Ben smiles, returns to his breakfast.

BEN

Ok it's very good. How'd you do it?

SAM

One word at a time.

BEN

No, I mean, how'd you get it so right? Your male lead..

SAM

Christopher.

BEN

Yeah, Christopher. How did you know how it feels, for a guy, to, you know..

SAM

Be lost in love?

BEN

Yeah. Be lost in love.

SAM

That's easy. Guys want the same thing as girls. Well, most girls.

Ben grins, then laughs. He can't help himself.

SAM

Why is that funny?

BEN

It's not. Sorry, it's just..I've heard that before, sort of.

SAM

Well there you go, it's true!

Sam grins a charming grin. Ben's never seen her like this - she's...lovely.

BEN

Hey thanks. Thanks for..breakfast.

SAM

Of course. Don't tell Charlie this, but right now you're much better conversation.

Sam takes a box of beer bottles outside. Ben's inside, washing a backlog of dishes. He watches Sam through a window as she stores the box. Sam turns to look at Ben, they catch each other staring.

Sam returns inside.

SAM

Can I help with those?

BEN

You've already helped enough. Believe me.

SAM

Ok, well..

Sam looks around at nothing in particular..

BEN

Why don't you stay for a drink? A hot drink I mean.

SAM

Um, yeah, Ok sure.

BEN

We've got coffee, tea, I think we have some hot chocolate somewhere. The coffee tastes like shit compared to yours.

SAM

I'll grab it out..

BEN

That's Ok. I'll just..

Ben reaches to a shelf at head-height..

SAM

No let me..

Sam reaches for the same shelf..her hands meet Ben's.

BEN

Oh. Sorry.

Ben drops his hands, Sam quickly grabs them.

SAM

Don't be.

BEN

Um. Sam.

SAM

I want to tell you something.

BEN

Don't.

SAM

You're Christopher.

Ben wasn't expecting that..

BEN

Sorry?

SAM

Christopher. I wrote him for you.
He is you.

BEN

Oh. That's..I'm flattered.

Sam moves her hands and gaze to Ben's chest, fondles it gently.

SAM

Do you have any scars?

BEN

Scars? Sam. No. I'm not..

Sam looks up to Ben - he is not comfortable.
Sam removes her hands.

SAM

I'm sorry.

BEN

You don't have to apologize. It's just..Charlie. What happened to you two?

Sam takes a deep breath..

SAM

Charlie's lovely, but he hasn't loved. I've seen what love is, what it does, what it's done to you.

Unconsciously, Sam steps closer to Ben.

SAM

You have so much anger inside of you..

Sam cautiously reaches for the front of Ben's shoulder..

SAM
It's terrifying.

Ben is silent, tense..
Sam places her hand on Ben's heart, looks into his eyes..

SAM
Charlie and I never slept together.
He told you that right?

Ben manages a quick nod.

SAM
It's because it has to mean
something. I know you feel the
same. Charlie..he doesn't know
anything about girls. He's just not
there..

With almost no space between them, Ben and Sam hold each
other's gaze. For a moment, nothing is said - nothing needs
to be said...then..

KATE (O.S.)
Wow. Get a room.

Ben and Sam spin to see Kate at the door.
Sam steps away from Ben, embarrassed. Kate addresses Ben..

KATE
We need to talk.

CUT TO: Ben steps into to the backyard shed carrying Sam's
script and the bottle of Jack Daniels. He pulls at the string
of the single light bulb, walks straight to Charlie's
workbench - the only thing on it is the forearm shotgun. He
drops Sam's script to the bench, downs a swallow of Jack. He
doesn't look to Kate behind him.

KATE
I told you she couldn't be trusted.

Ben ignores Kate, marvels instead at the quantity and quality
of his best friend's work.

Charlie has packed away his monstrous creations and countless tools - evidently in a hurry. Prosthetic body parts and apocalyptic costume pieces lie scattered in tall piles.

KATE

She's gonna ruin everything. Tell me you see that.

Ben spots the bloody chainsaw and...is that...the box of shotgun shells?

KATE

Ben! Are you listening to me?!

Ben turns to sit at the workbench, places his Jack Daniels in front of him.

BEN

Guess I'm deaf to the words of a hypocrite.

Ben straps the shotgun to his arm. Kate, unperturbed, hops onto the workbench and swings her legs at Ben like a piano singer. She reaches for Sam's script - Ben quickly sweeps it to the floor.

KATE

Not finished I take it.

BEN

What do you want Kate?

Ben pulls a cigarette packet from his pants pocket, lights one up.

KATE

My script.

Kate considers Ben - it's a new look, a calculating look..

KATE

What else would I be here for?

Ben shakes his head, looks away, blows smoke..

KATE

I'm not here to make up Ben, I'm not sorry for what happened. I don't want you any more, but you can't be with her.

Ben has to lean back in his chair - 'wow'. He gathers the words to say, manages very little..

BEN

Fuck off Kate. Seriously, fuck off.

Kate rolls her eyes, steals Ben's cigarette from his mouth.

KATE

So dramatic..

Kate pushes herself off the bench, drags from the cigarette and saunters over to one of Charlie's piles..

KATE

You're acting like we're in love.
You writers, my God.

Ben turns to stare at nothing. That mesmerising absence fills his eyes..

KATE

Nicky hasn't heard from you. He's concerned about his investment. I'm concerned.

Kate picks up a rubber mask, examines it, nonchalant.

KATE

You owe us a script.

Ben hasn't turned to look at Kate..

BEN

Put that back. I mean it.

Kate raises her hands in mock defence - 'don't shoot'. She puts the mask back, struts over to Ben..

KATE

You have little over a week left.
You should be finished Ben. What
else have you been doing? What's
your problem?

Ben suddenly stands from his chair and shoves it to the
ground.

BEN

Charlie was right about you. You're
heartless.

KATE

What do you want me to say? It's a
movie Ben, nothing personal.

Ben clutches his head. Time slows, distorts..
Ben turns to the shotgun shells..

The silent shed is all at once filled with a single, piercing
note - the sound of ears ringing..

FLASHBACK: INT. HOLLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

(IMAGE BLOWN-OUT/OVER-EXPOSED):

..the loud-ringing intensifies.

HOLLY

This is what you get Ben! This is
what you get!

BEN

Where the fuck is he Holly?

Ben yanks open a bedroom curtain - no one behind that. He
tears at a second curtain, pulls this one from its railing.
Still no one.

HOLLY

There's no one here Ben. It's all
in your head!

Ben seizes Holly's chin in his hand, forces her to keep still.

BEN

Why? Why are you doing this?

Holly hisses through clenched teeth.

HOLLY

You said you'd fight for me. You told me you loved me.

Ben tightens his grip, rests his head against Holly's, breathes heavy. Through thickened spit, his lips graze hers as he whispers loudly..

BEN

I'd fight *for* you Holly, not *because* of you.

Ben throws Holly aside, drops to the floor and looks under her bed - no one there either. Ben stands, marches to the bedroom door.

BEN

He's a lucky man, whoever he is.

HOLLY

But, I want you to be that man.

Ben smiles, doesn't turn around.

BEN

No, not what I mean. He's lucky I didn't find him. If I did, there'd be nothing left.

Ben leaves Holly's room. She calls out after him..

HOLLY

Ben? Ben?!

EXT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - DAY

Inside the shed, the loud-ringing continues..

KATE

Ben!

Ben steps to the shotgun shells, opens the box..

KATE

Your story has no ending. You have
a contract. You have to finish.

Ben pops two shotgun shells into the forearm weapon..

KATE

Ben?! Hey! Look at me! What
happens?!

Ben pumps his arm - loads the gun..

KATE

What happens to my character?!

Ben spins, squeezes the trigger - BLAM!

Kate doesn't wound so much as explode.
Viscous body matter erupts throughout the entire shed.
Blood sprays over Sam's script.

What's left of Kate falls to the ground - 'PLONK'.
Ben wipes the remains of something from his face.

TITLE CARD: 'DEAD END'

The ear-ringing stops.

EXT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - DAY

Still in the shed, Ben pulls at Charlie's Survivor costume.
He dons the black, torn tee.

Ben spots Charlie's first-person camera rig. He straps it on, lifts it above his forehead like a to-be-used pair of goggles.

Ben stuffs the remaining shotgun shells into his pocket, packs two into the gun.

There's a sudden, traumatized scream..

SAM (O.S.)

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhh!

Sam whirls to see Sam at the shed door. She's collapsed to her knees. Ben dashes to her, forces her up on her feet. She tries to shake free, bashes at Ben's arm, continues to scream..

BEN

Stop it. Stop it!

Sam doesn't stop. Ben throws her to the floor, raises his gun, loads..

BEN

Fucking stop!

Sam stops. She's terrified.

BEN

I don't want to hurt you. But you gotta do something for me.

Sam trembles.

BEN

Hey! Hey! Sam! You listening to me?!

Sam nods through her shakes. Ben steps to her, crouches low to look her in the eye.

BEN

Good. You're gonna go get Holly, Ok? Bring her to the bunker, tonight.

(MORE)

BEN(cont'd)

You take too long, talk to anyone,
you call the cops, others will end
up like her.

Ben points to Kate's corpse.

BEN

You hear me?!

Sam nods again. Ben stands up, walks to the chainsaw..

BEN

I'm not fucking around Sam.

Ben picks up the chainsaw.

BEN

People will get hurt.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - NIGHT

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: In Ben's first-person perspective, we
waltz into Nick's waiting room. Barista looks to us, baffled.

BARISTA

Ben?

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We cock the shotgun, squeeze the
trigger and BLAM! Barista is sent flying back into the wall
behind. She crumbles in a dead, bloody heap.

The door opens inside Nick's office. Ben steps inside, a
shotgun strapped to one arm, a chainsaw in his opposite hand.
His face is masked by the first-person rig - he looks like a
member of a twisted death squad.

Nick immediately stands up from his chair.

NICK

Christ! What the hell Ben?!

Ben is dead calm.

NICK

Is this some kind of publicity
stunt?!

(MORE)

NICK(cont'd)

Jesus Ben, you've got your contract! What was that noise, I thought I heard a gun!

Ben advances slowly..

NICK

Hey Ben, joke's over. You want me to bring back Charlie, that's what this is right? Sure, Ok, good point, the guy makes a great costume. Let me see what I can do..

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: Nick sits back into his chair.

NICK

..I could try for a supervisory role? Charlie could share his designs..

Nick is desperate. Ben tilts his head to once again observe Nick's legless desk.

BEN

Nice desk.

Ben pumps his gun.

NICK

Listen, Ben, about that. Kate and I are just..

BEN

Shame about the legs.

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We lower our gun to Nick's leg -
BLAM! Nick's leg is no more.
Nick falls to the floor, screaming in agony!
We pull at the chainsaw. It whirs into life.

NICK

Wha..whadda ya doing?!

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We stroll around the table, step to Nick who's trying to drag himself under his desk.

NICK

Ben! Ben! I can pay you more money!
Whatever you want, it's yours! You
want Kate? Take the bitch! I don't
care! Please, please, we can
negotiate! You want an extension?!
Let's get you an extension!

Ben raises the chainsaw.

BEN

You talk too much.

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We plunge the chainsaw at Nick.

INT. COCKTAIL BAR - NIGHT

Sam sits alone at a table, no drinks of any kind. She's
uneasy, on edge. A FLASH GORDON WAITRESS swings by.

FLASH GORDON WAITRESS

You gonna order anything?

SAM

No! I told you! I'm waiting for my
friend!

FLASH GORDON WAITRESS

Well do us all a favour and tell
your friend to hurry the hell up.
I've got paying customers too you
know.

The waitress whirls away as Holly steps inside. Holly looks
genuinely concerned. Sam spots her friend, waves her over..

HOLLY

Sam! What's this all about?

SAM

It's Ben. He's lost it.

HOLLY

Oh God, what did he do?

SAM

He..I..he just kept asking for you.
He needs you Holly. He's desperate.

HOLLY

Of course he is. Idiot. He didn't
hurt you did he?

SAM

Hurt me?! No! He, he..

HOLLY

Scared you, am I right? Yeah he
does that. God he can be intense.
Is he coming here?

SAM

No, he's, at the bunker.

HOLLY

The bunker?! He wants me on set?
Huh. Bet he wants me back in the
series. Typical.

SAM

You have to go Holly!

HOLLY

Ok! Geez Sam, you sure you're
fine?!

Sam grabs Holly's arm, pulls her along..

SAM

We have to leave!

EXT. CARRIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We march up Carrie's driveway -
Jason's car is parked at the end. We raise our shotgun arm,
load, fire - BLAM! The back windscreen bursts into pieces.

Jason comes running out the front of the house - he looks absurd with a cast on both arms, like an old fashioned movie monster waddling towards its prey, arms extended. We duck behind a garden bush, load two more shells.

Jason inspects the damage.

JASON

Ah what the fuck is this?! Ben?!
Ben!!!

BEN (O.S.)

Right here.

Jason twirls to Ben as Ben steps out from the bush. Ben isn't carrying the chainsaw, but he's wearing the first-person mask and has his shotgun trained on Jason.

Jason's eyes widen - he wants to attack, knows he can't. Jason begins to tip-toe away, turns, trips, bundles off into the house. Ben follows.

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We step into the house, Jason hasn't got too far - he's only at the foot of the stairs. Carrie comes running down the stairs, sees us..

CARRIE

Oh my God!

JASON

Carrie! Help me baby!

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: Carrie reaches for Jason, pulls at his broken arms - mistimes her attempt. Jason falls forward onto the stairs - CRUNCH! Jason cries out in pain as his broken arms take the full force of the fall.

CARRIE

Jason!

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: Desperate, Carrie doesn't think and pulls at Jason's arms to get him back up. He howls in misery! He falls forward onto Carrie, pinning her to the stairs. We raise our gun..

Ben stares on. He's about to speak..then, he simply shakes his head. He squeezes the trigger - BLAM!

Everything turns black.

INT. ABANDONED BUNKER - NIGHT

Harsh white light flickers on in a black space. We're back inside the large, square, sparsely featured concrete room.

A dull scraping can be heard. It draws nearer - something's being dragged along the concrete floor, something heavy..it's Jason's body.

Ben pulls Jason by his feet. Wearing the first-person mask above his forehead, Ben makes his way through the harsh white light and disappears into a darkened corner of the room. Jason's body soaks up a large red spill as it enters the shadows..

Ben drops Jason's legs, steps into the light, walks to the work lamp. He flips the lamp to light the darkened corner..and WOA! There in the corner is a pile of real, bloody bodies! We can see Jason, Carrie, Barista and the remains of Nick and Kate! The chainsaw rests beside them on the ground. Ben returns to Jason, pulls him to the others, lifts Jason's dead weight up over the pile.

BEN

Christ you're a big boy.

HOLLY (O.S.)

Sam! I think I see a light.

Holly walks a narrow passageway towards the concrete room. She has a torch in hand. Sam's not far behind.

HOLLY

Sam! Down here!

Ben has no time to lose. He scoops up the chainsaw, dashes to the work lamp, flips it off. The room plunges into darkness.

Sam catches up to Holly. They both spot the disappearing light.

HOLLY

Ben? Ben, it's Holly.

SAM

And Sam.

Holly and Sam reach the end of the passageway, step through the open doorway into the concrete room..

HOLLY

Ben? We're coming inside.

Holly whirls her torch around the pitch-black room, sees nothing. Sam creeps towards the work lamp, away from Holly..

SAM

There's a light in here somewhere..

Holly turns from Sam, flashes her torch around, runs it along the far wall. All at once she notices a pool of blood, and then..is that..a pile of bodies?!
Sam screams! Holly spins! The work lights flash on! Holly flinches in the blinding light.

BEN

Hello Holly.

Ben is standing with his shotgun arm pointed directly at Sam's head - she's shaking. The chainsaw's at Ben's feet.

HOLLY

Ben! What are you doing?!

Holly recovers from the glare.

HOLLY

Jesus. Put that gun down! You don't want to hurt Sam!

BEN

You're right..

Ben lowers his arm, unstraps the shotgun.

BEN

..I don't.

Ben tosses the gun to Holly's feet. She looks at it, confused.

HOLLY

What's going on Ben? Who are those people? Why are you doing this?!

BEN

Isn't it obvious?! I'm finishing my movie. Every story has to end somehow, wouldn't you say?!

For a moment, Holly registers Ben's madness..then, she rushes for the shotgun. Ben snatches the chainsaw from the ground, rips it into life, points it at Sam. Holly aims the gun at Ben. It's a standoff.

BEN

I wouldn't do that if I were you.
Not unless you wanna see both me
and your best friend in pieces.

Holly holds the gun on Ben a moment. Sam is beside herself with terror. Inches away from the roaring blade, she doesn't dare flinch.

BEN

You lower yours, I'll lower mine.

Holly looks at Sam who nods a tiny nod. Holly lowers the gun. Ben retracts the chainsaw, but keeps it running.

BEN

Besides, I haven't shown you how to use that yet. Strap it to your arm. You're gonna love it, trust me.

Holly hesitates.

BEN
I said strap it!

Holly fastens the gun to her arm.

HOLLY
What's gonna happen Ben?

Ben shuts the chainsaw off.

BEN
Come on Holly, you've done this
scene before. First, you lie in the
pile of corpses..

Holly turns to the bodies. She knows where this is going..

BEN
Then..

Ben spins to Sam, points at her.

BEN
..Big Mother comes crashin' in,
don't ya?

Sam can't answer..

BEN
Don't ya?!!

SAM
Yes!! Yes. I come in.

BEN
And then what?

SAM
I..I..

BEN
You, you..

Ben makes an over-gesture of 'sniffing'.

SAM

I, I sniff the air for her scent.

BEN

At which point..

Ben spins to Holly.

HOLLY

I stand up and shoot her.

BEN

Exactly! What an ending! Ok Holly,
skip to it. First position..

Ben reaches for the chainsaw whip, threatens to tug it..

BEN

Don't make me cut you from *this*
movie.

Ben advances on Holly. She back-tracks, steps in blood.

BEN

The torch. Drop it.

Holly drops her torch. Ben picks it up, stuffs it into his
chainsaw hand.

Unnoticed, Sam maneuverers towards the work lamp..

Ben forces Holly to squeeze into the bodies. She gags, slots
herself amongst the blood and guts as best she can..

BEN

Give me that..

Ben pulls Holly's arm through a gap in the bodies. He pops
open the barrel - it's empty. Holly seems surprised. Ben
whispers to her.

BEN

I'm not crazy Holly.

Ben retrieves a pair of shells from his pocket, slots them into the gun.

BEN

You won't be able to load until you stand. When I yell action, pump your arm forward and back, and fire. Do not think, do not hesitate. Do what a Final Girl does, act.

Ben flicks the first-person rig down over his face so that it once again has the appearance of a mask. He turns to Sam.

BEN

Ok Sam, you know where to be..Sam?
Sam!

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: Sam's standing by the work lamp. She doesn't budge.

SAM

Fuck you Ben.

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: Sam pushes the work lamp. It and its projected light topple over - SMASH! The lamp shatters - the concrete room plummets into darkness. We can't see a thing..then, the chainsaw whirs into being. We turn on the torch we're holding.

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We spin around, searching for Sam.. ..we slash blindly in the torchlight. The chainsaw blade cuts concrete wall - sparks fly. We swing away.. ..and CRACK! The blade cuts bone and flesh! Sam screams! We push through Sam's torso - more cracking, ripping, gurgling..and then, we drop the torch.

Total black.

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We stop the chainsaw. Sam's obliterated body falls to the ground - THUMP.

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We scrimmage around in the dark for the torch..we find it, turn it on, see the remains of Sam's body. We spin towards the pile of corpses - Holly's not there!

BEN

Holly?

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Guess again.

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: We whirl around, surely that wasn't..Charlie?! But it is! He punches us square in the face! We fall in a hazy blur to the ground. All sounds immediately cease except for a sudden, loud ear-ringing..

EXT. BEN AND CHARLIE'S FLAT - DAY

Back in the shed, the loud-ringing continues..

KATE

Ben!

Ben steps to the shotgun shells, opens the box..

KATE

Your story has no ending. You have a contract. You have to finish.

Ben pops two shotgun shells into the forearm weapon..

KATE

Ben?! Hey! Look at me! What happens?!

Ben pumps his arm - loads the gun..

KATE

What happens to my character?!

Ben spins, squeezes the trigger - 'BLAM!'

The shed wall immediately behind Kate shatters.

Kate instinctively flinches, grabs her ringing ears in agony.

KATE

What the fuck Ben?!

Ben lowers the forearm shotgun, unstraps it, throws it to the workbench..

The loud-ringing stops.

BEN

There is no ending. I won't write it.

KATE

Are you fucken mental?! You could have killed me!

BEN

Believe me, I thought about it. I won't finish your script Kate.

Ben bends down to pick up Sam's script.

BEN

I'm not telling that story anymore.

KATE

Ben. No, that's not...

BEN

I never did get you that grasshopper.

Ben lights a cigarette. Sam races through the shed door, panicked. She takes in the shattered wall - her eyes widen..

Ben tucks Sam's script up under his arm, collects his Jack Daniels and chugs at it. Ben walks past Kate - she trembles. He stops to speak to Sam.

BEN

We should go see Charlie now. You know he said something to me..

Ben raises Sam's script, smiles sincerely..

BEN
..something I think we could try,
if you're keen?

Ben turns to regard Kate for the last time, turns back to Sam.

SAM
As long as it means something.

BEN
This needs a happy ending.

Ben grins.

BEN
Movies have happy endings.

TITLE CARD: 'MOVIES HAVE HAPPY ENDINGS'

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Charlie sits awake in his hospital bed. Without an oxygen mask, we can see that his face is badly damaged, but healing. A slender, feminine hand reaches to stroke his face. Charlie smiles..

..the hand belongs to Holly! Sitting in the bedside chair, she smiles back at Charlie.

CARRIE (O.S.)
How's he doing?

Charlie and Holly turn to see Carrie standing in the doorway. She's holding a takeaway coffee - she looks as though she hasn't slept in some time.

CHARLIE
He, is doing good. How are you?!

HOLLY
Should I..you guys want some time?

CARRIE

Not it's Ok. I'm here to collect
Jason. Just wanted to check in.

HOLLY

How is Jason?

CARRIE

Better. Surgery was..mostly
successful. Ok, well, good to see
you. Both of you.

CHARLIE

Bye Carrie.

Holly smiles at Carrie as she leaves. Once she's certain
Carrie's out of earshot, she spins to Charlie.

HOLLY

Do you think she knows? About us?

Charlie reaches for Holly's hand.

CHARLIE

Don't worry sweetheart. I'd say she
knows as much as Ben.

FLASHBACK: INT. HOLLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

(IMAGE BLOWN-OUT/OVER-EXPOSED):

BEN

He's a lucky man, whoever he is.

HOLLY

But, I want you to be that man.

Ben smiles, doesn't turn around.

BEN

No, not what I mean. He's lucky I
didn't find him. If I did, there'd
be nothing left.

Ben leaves Holly's room. She calls out after him.

HOLLY

Ben? Ben?!

A moment passes, then..

..Charlie steps out from Holly's closet! He sits beside Holly on her bed.

CHARLIE

You Ok? God, he's an fucken animal.

Holly reaches for Charlie's hand.

HOLLY

He's a monster.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Charlie continues to hold Holly's hand. He smiles..

CHARLIE

We had fun you and me.

Holly smiles back..

HOLLY

Yeah, we did.

INT. ABANDONED BUNKER - NIGHT

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: In a brief repeat of our last abandoned bunker moment, we whirl around only to have Charlie punch us square in the face! We fall in a hazy blur to the ground.

Ben's torch spins to the corner of the room - its beam comes to rest on Charlie as he pounces on Ben and wrestles him on the concrete.

Holly steps into the light. She picks up the chainsaw, considers it..

Charlie gets in few good punches - SMACK!, SMACK!, SMACK!
Ben's out cold.

Charlie turns to Holly. Drenched in blood and armed with a chainsaw, she looks every part a 'Final Girl'.

CHARLIE

You Ok?

Holly says nothing. She tosses the chainsaw aside, raises her shotgun arm. She loads the weapon, trains it on Ben.

CHARLIE

Sweetheart?

Holly fires. BLAM!

Ben's blood splatters across Charlie's face. Charlie keeps his gaze on Holly, he doesn't dare look at Ben - he's shocked, but not altogether surprised..

Holly steps to Charlie - says nothing..

CINEMATIC FIRST-PERSON: From Ben's fallen, first-person perspective, we see Charlie and Holly standing together. We recognize this moment from the opening sequence..

Covered in blood, Charlie turns to Holly, Holly to Charlie. They embrace.

Black.

Heavy breathing.

END.