

MONSTROUS LOVE

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D4

Phil Tippett Productions
Mad Chance Productions

BLACK SCREEN

A MURKY VIOLET PLASMA EXPLODES from the blackness. A deep, primal ORGAN BASS PEDAL BLASTS as we rocket forward through the plasma.

A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT reveals a distorted image: an OPEN HAND TATTOOED with an OPEN EYE. The hand dissolves back into the plasma as OTHER IMAGES FLASH like subconscious memories:

- A twisted CAR FENDER spins overhead in a sand storm.
- A STRANGE, HALF-EATEN FRUIT wobbles on a bed sheet.
- BIRDS circle through a cavern in an intricate pattern.
- A PHOTO of an 8 YEAR-OLD GIRL (OLIVIA)

A FINAL FLASH reveals a DISTANT LIGHT SOURCE shining through the plasma. We rush towards the light as the plasma BUBBLES, churns, HISSES.

Now -- we EXPLODE through the surface and into --

A WHITE ROOM

A BLINDING LIGHT is above us. We are lying on a metal table, GASPING as --

A WHITE SPACEMAN

leans over us in SLO-MO, blocking the light, speaking to us something we cannot quite make out.

SPACEMAN
(Slo-mo gibberish)

More spacemen hover over us. Where the hell are we?

REVERSE ANGLE - CLOSE - A PAIR OF BLOODSHOT EYES

Blinking, blinded by the glare.

SHOT WIDENS to reveal the body of a pale, sickly man. This is JACK FURLONG, 35, his left arm swollen and bruised, its muscles throbbing. Our surroundings come into focus...

INT. SURGERY ROOM

Jack is lying naked on an examination table, his swollen left arm shrouded with surgical linen.

On a table next to him, a WOMAN lies unconscious. This is RAPHAELA, 30, Mexican.

The "spacemen" are doctors. DR. HEATH, 30, leads a team performing frantic med procedures, scrambling to keep Jack alive.

Another lamp is pulled close to --

JACK'S SWOLLEN ARM

As the overhead lamp CLICKS on, a contusion on the arm throbs strangely in reaction to the light.

ON DR. HEATH AND A NURSE examining the wound, puzzled.

ON JACK MOANING

INT. ADJACENT OBSERVATION CUBICLE

MOWBRY, 65, a corporate v.p., alone in the cubicle, watches Jack through a window. A microphone connects Mowbry to the surgery room. Mowbry is speaking urgently on a cell phone.

MOWBRY

(on phone)

A chopper just brought them in. The girl's clean. Furlong's in critical condition... We're trying to determine that right now. Find MacBride. Have him call me immediately.

He hangs up as KESSEL, 60, another corporate v.p., enters with CHALMAS, 30, a doctor carrying a manila envelope.

KESSEL

Mr. Mowbry, this is Dr. Chalmas.

MOWBRY

What have you got?

CHALMAS

It's a strange one.

Chalmas removes two transparencies from the envelope and slides on a light box. Mowbry looks at --

THE TRANSPARENCIES

The photos show microscopic views of muscle tissue. Scattered through the tissue are strange ANGULAR CORPUSCLES.

BACK TO SCENE

Mowbry points to one of the corpuscles.

MOWBRY

What the hell is that?

CHALMAS

Unknown. Silica, magnesium, ferrous oxide compound. I'd guess it's man-made. But it reacts violently to light.

(points to second photo)

Direct light acts as a catalyst and causes it to reproduce.

MOWBRY

How's that possible?

CHALMAS

We don't know.

Mowbry punches the intercom to the surgical room.

MOWBRY

(to intercom)

Turn off those lamps. No direct light on the wound. Get some red lamps in there.

INT. SURGERY ROOM

The team shut down the lights; red lamps are rolled in.

INT. OBSERVATION CUBICLE

Mowbry stares at the corpuscles in the photos. He removes his glasses, rubs his face. He's under pressure.

MOWBRY (CONT'D)

Any estimate on how long he has?

CHALMAS

Could be a month, could be a minute. If those things keep reproducing, they'll eventually hit the bloodstream. Once they enter the brain, it's all over.

Mowbry's cell phone rings.

MOWBRY

Mowbry here.

Mowbry's demeanor changes. It's his boss.

MOWBRY (CONT'D)

Yes, Mr. MacBride...Yes. he's alive, but we don't know how long--

INTERCUT MACBRIDE

talking on phone. He's extremely old, asthmatic, uses a breathalyzer.

MACBRIDE

Did he have any papers or computer disks? Was he carrying anything?

BACK TO SCENE - Mowbry covers the receiver; to Kessel:

MOWBRY

(sotto)
Was he carrying anything?

Kessel shakes his head no.

MOWBRY (CONT'D)

(uncovers phone)
No, sir.

MACBRIDE

Then make him talk. Immediately.

MOWBRY

Yes, sir.

Mowbry punches the intercom to the surgery room.

MOWBRY (CONT'D)

(intercom)
Get him to talk. Do whatever it takes.

INTERCUT DR. HEATH hearing Mowbry over a speaker as RED LAMPS are clicked on over Jack. Dr. Heath examines Jack's eyes.

DR. HEATH

He's in shock. A stimulant now might cause death or induce coma.

MOWBRY

(on phone)
It might kill him, sir.

MACBRIDE

(on phone)
If he dies without talking, you'll be next. I need to know if he found the map.

MOWBRY

(intercom; to Heath)
Just make him talk. Do it.

INT. SURGERY ROOM

Dr. Heath glares at Mowbry through the window and angrily prepares a syringe.

INTERCUT JACK - His blurring eyes witness the syringe being prepped. Jack SCREAMS, rips free from the table, explosively tearing up everything.

Pandemonium as the med team wrestle Jack to the table. Jack throws them off. They force him down and jab the hypo into his good (right) arm. Jack spasms and slumps; his eyes glaze over. Dr. Heath points to Raphaela's unconscious body.

DR. HEATH
She'll recover. Wheel her out of here.

Raphaela is quickly wheeled out of the room.

INTERCUT MOWBRY WATCHING INTENSELY

MOWBRY
(intercom)
If he's conscious, ask him about the map.

Dr. Heath leans down close to Jack.

DR. HEATH
Jack... Jack, can you hear me?

CLOSE ON JACK

His eyes stare into space; his mouth begins to move, but no words come out. Then, faintly --

JACK
Where am I...?

INTERCUTTING DR. HEATH

DOCTOR
You're safe in the hospital.

JACK
Olivia...

DOCTOR
What?

JACK
My daughter... get my daughter...
I promised her...

INTERCUT MOWBRY AND KESSEL

MOWBRY
 (to Kessel)
 Track down his daughter
 and bring her here immediately.

Kessel nods and rushes out.

MOWBRY (CONT'D)
 (on intercom:)
 Jack, she'll be here shortly.

JACK
 Where's Raphaela?

DR. HEATH
 The girl is fine. Jack, did you
 find the map?

JACK
 Yes.

Mowbry leans forward, listening intently.

DR. HEATH
 Where is it, Jack?

EXTREME CLOSE - JACK

Jack faintly laughs.

BACK TO SCENE

MOWBRY
 Keep him talking.

DR. HEATH
 What happened, Jack?

MOWBRY
 They sent me... to find the
 map... the map of the coil...

SMASH-CUT TO:

FLASHBACK: INT. MOVING CAR - JACK DRIVING - DAY

We have flashed back to six weeks earlier. Jack, now
 tough and confident, is talking on his car phone.

JACK
 (to phone)
 Grady, my vacation is starting
 now... Forget it, I've got my
 daughter this weekend. I'm on
 my way to meet her.... What?
 Why do the Board of Directors
 want to meet me?... Well, if
 that's true, Grady, I could use

the money...All right, all right,
I'll be in at three. Later.
(hangs up)
Shit!

EXT. PHOENIX TECHNOLOGIES - DAY - FLASHBACK -
ESTABLISHING

A shiny sterile corporation. SCREAMING BIRDS eclipse the
shot and circle the building.

INT. PHOENIX TECH - OFFICE - DAY

Jack enters a room where GRADY, 20, an assistant wearing
a headset, is seated at a desk.

GRADY
I held them off, but they're
still waiting in the conference
room. They asked for all of
your files. All of them. I'm
supposed to buzz the second
you arrive. What'd you do,
anyway?

Jack shrugs. Grady buzzes the conference room.

GRADY (CONT'D)
(on headsets)
He's here, sir. Yes, sir
(to Jack)
The Board will see you now.

INT. PHOENIX TECH CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Jack is seated at one end of a conference table.

INTERCUT THREE ELDERLY MALE EXECUTIVES seated at the
opposite end of the table. They exude power despite their
advanced age.

In the center is MACBRIDE, 95, Phoenix's CEO. MacBride's
voice (which we heard earlier) belies bad lungs.
Standing behind him are Mowbry and Kessel. ATENABE, 85,
and YUKIKO, 85, both Japanese, sit on either side of
MacBride.

MACBRIDE
(scans a folder)
It's come to our attention that
you have requested a reassignment,
Mr. Furlong. That's too bad.
You have been quite successful
in your rather unusual position
here. Mowbry, what exactly is
Mr. Furlong's title?

MOWBRY

Officially, he's a materials consultant. Unofficially...

JACK

I'm a bounty hunter.

MACBRIDE

Yes, you've located a number of wayward employees for us. Why are you seeking another position?

JACK

Investigation requires a lot of time away from home. Right now I need a little time off to focus on my responsibilities --

MACBRIDE

Yes. We are aware of your situation.

(scans file)

Your wife died in an auto accident two years ago. Mr. Yukiko, Mr. Atenabe and I are sorry for your loss.

JACK

Thank you.

MACBRIDE

Mr. Furlong, you are up to your neck in debt right now, are you not?

Jack is uncomfortable. What are they getting at?

JACK

Right now I'm reorganizing my financial --

MOWBRY

(interrupting, reads notepad)

You owe the Phoenix credit union more than you earned last year. Your medical bills from your wife's critical care have eaten up your home equity. And the lawyer you've retained in case you have to fight your mother-in-law for child custody will cost you more than --

JACK

What's your point?

MACBRIDE

The point is, Mr. Furlong, we are in a position to help you. If you are disposed towards helping us.

JACK

I'm listening.

MacBride gestures to Mowbry, who slides a folder to Jack as Kessel dims the lights. Jack opens the folder as a PROJECTION SCREEN lights up. As Mowbry speaks, we see onscreen:

- DR. LAWRENCE ASH, 45, in a surgical amphitheater teaching students;
- DR. VERONICA LLEWELYN, 35, receiving an award;
- Clipping w/ photo of Llewelyn: PLANT DNA STUDY MAY FEED WORLD HUNGER.
- Clipping w/ photo: ASH'S MICROMACHINES CLEAR BLOCKED ARTERIES.
- Society page photo: DR. LAWRENCE ASH WEDS DR. VERONICA LLEWELYN.
- Science article w/ photo of the couple in lab: ASH AND LLEWELYN - MICROMACHINE-GENE TEAM HOLD KEY TO FUTURE.
- Business page w/ photo: PHOENIX TECHNOLOGIES FUNDS ASH RESEARCH CENTER.

MOWBRY

Phoenix Technologies is interested in the work of Dr. Lawrence Ash and Dr. Veronica Llewelyn. She was a geneticist working on accelerating plant growth in order to increase the world's food supply. Ash was a pioneer in nanotechnology. He designed micromachines which would cure disease. They were both visionaries.

JACK

Were?

MOWBRY

There was an accident. Llewelyn was killed.

The screen flashes the following:

- News clipping: EXPLOSION AT ASH RESEARCH CENTER.

• Grotesque POLICE PHOTOS of the devastated lab, of Veronica's charred leg, high heel still attached.

KESSEL

The consortium financed the rebuilding of Ash's lab. Against our wishes, he chose a location in the Sonoma Desert in Mexico. Totally isolated. Not even a telephone.

The screen goes out and the lights go on. As Jack scans the folder:

JACK

And?

KESSEL

And six months ago, he stopped sending us reports.

MACBRIDE

Instead he sent short notes about his wife, his loss, his grief. And his delay.

MOWBRY

The consortium invested fifteen million dollars in this project. The money was not properly accounted for, and now that we've lost contact --

MACBRIDE

Mowbry, we'd like to talk to Mr. Furlong. Alone.

Mowbry and Kessel nod and exit. As soon as they leave, MacBride takes out a cigarette. Atenabe lights it.

MACBRIDE (CONT'D)

Thank you, Mr. Atenabe.

MacBride inhales deeply despite his wheezing lungs.

MACBRIDE (CONT'D)

Dr. Ash is brilliant but unstable. He lost his wife, like you. We thought that you and he might have enough in common to "relate".

JACK

And what are Ash and I going to "relate" about?

MACBRIDE

Before the accident,
Ash and Llewelyn mapped the DNA
of lab rats and altered the genes
controlling the aging process.
Combined with micromachines to
repair damaged tissue, they
were able to double the lifespan
of male rats.

JACK

Only males?

ATENABE

In his experiments, all of
the females died. All of the
males survived and continued
to function.

JACK

And kept their rat empires.

MACBRIDE

That's what it's all about,
Mr. Furlong. Dr. Ash is the
only person in the world who
has mapped the gene sequence
which controls aging.
Deactivating these genes will
allow us to extend our lives
indefinitely. Unfortunately, Ash's
last report said he needed a great
deal more time.

ATENABE

More time is what we do not have.
That is why we require the map.

YUKIKO

We would also like an accounting
of our investment in Ash's lab.

MacBride takes out a checkbook and a pen. As he writes:

MACBRIDE

This will pay off your home,
medical and legal bills, and
allow a generous trust fund
for your daughter.

MacBride slides the check to Jack.

MACBRIDE (CONT'D)

Find the map, Mr. Furlong. And
bring it back to us. Then you
can retire comfortably.

MacBride coughs, inhales the respirator, then lights another cigarette.

JACK

And if I don't find it?

MACBRIDE

Then you'll come back to work,
for as long as it takes to pay
off this advance.
Jack eyes the check.

JACK

This could be a problem for me.

MACBRIDE

Find the map, Mr. Furlong, and
all of our problems are solved.

EXT. JAPANESE FLOWER ARBORETUM - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A glass-domed nature museum filled with flower exhibits and butterflies.

INT. ARBORETUM COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Jack is seated by the window drinking coffee. He checks his watch as he talks on his cell phone.

JACK

(to phone)

Just hold them till three-thirty.
...I know this is important...
Kessel?... What's he been asking
about me?

Jack looks up to see HARRIET, 65, entering the shop and walking to Jack's table.

JACK (CONT'D)

(to phone)

Gotta go. Remember, three-thirty.

He hangs up and looks at Harriet, who is not happy.

JACK (CONT'D)

Hi, Harriet. Thanks for pick up --

HARRIET

(interrupts)

I don't appreciate you changing

your day on such short notice.

JACK

I didn't get much notice
myself. Where's Olivia?

HARRIET

She's in the cab. I told her you and I had to talk first.

(sits)

I'm sure you know why I don't like you. You left my daughter and grand-daughter alone for months at a time. If you'd been home, maybe she'd still be alive.

Jack winces.

JACK

I loved Susan. You know that. And I'd do anything for Olivia.

HARRIET

Except be her father. She lost her mother. She needs you now.

JACK

I know and once I finish one more assignment, I'll take her on a long vacation.

HARRIET

You said that last year. It's meaningless.

(stands)

I'm moving to London and I plan to take Olivia with me.

JACK

What? You can't.

HARRIET

You heard me, Jack. You've got a month to change things. Either you arrange to take her with you when you're working --

JACK

I can't do that, Harriet.

HARRIET

-- or you get a new job, one where you can come home at night and be a father to your child. If not, you can visit her in London.

(gets up, checks her watch)

I'll send her in now. You have ten minutes.

INT. ARBORETUM - FLOWER ROOM - DAY

The flower room is filled with colorful exhibits of rare and exotic flora. Jack and OLIVIA, 8, are near a group looking at a rare orchid exhibit. Olivia seems depressed and uncomfortable. A MUSEUM GUIDE is addressing the group.

MUSEUM GUIDE

These rare phalaenopsis bloom for only three days each year. They are scheduled to bloom four weeks from tomorrow. I invite you all to join us then for a little celebration party.

JACK

That sounds like fun. How about if we go to the party together?

OLIVIA

(unenthused)

Sure.

Trying to stay upbeat, Jack leads Olivia on a walk through the rows of giant flowers.

JACK

I thought you might like to meet here. I know how much you love flowers.

OLIVIA

Here. I brought you something. She hands him a gift. He opens it.

ANGLE ON GIFT

It's a framed school photo of Olivia.

BACK TO SCENE

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

It's a going away present. So you'll remember what I look like.

JACK

What do you mean, remember what you look like?

OLIVIA

I haven't seen you much lately.

JACK

Look, honey, I don't want you to go to London. I want you to stay with me.

OLIVIA

You don't have to say that, Dad.

JACK

I'm not just saying it. I'm trying to work it out now. As soon as I'm done with this job, we'll take a trip. How does Hawaii sound? You ever heard of the fire-eating surfers?

OLIVIA

The what?

JACK

These crazy Hawaiian guys who surf at night with torches and blow fire out of their mouths. You'll love it.

She's suspicious.

OLIVIA

Yeah? What about your job?

JACK

I'll quit. I'll get a new job and you can live with me. How's that sound?

OLIVIA

I've heard this before, Dad.

They hear a CAR HORN BEEPING. They look --

THEIR POV THROUGH GLASS - The cab's horn is BEEPING. Harriet waves at them impatiently.

BACK TO SCENE

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I have to go.

She starts towards the door and Jack follows her.

JACK

Olivia, this isn't like last time. Give me three weeks.

She lowers her eyes. She doesn't believe him. He takes her by her shoulders.

JACK (CONT'D)

Listen to me. In three weeks I'll come and get you. If there's a problem, I'll send somebody for you, OK? Either way we'll

see those fire-eating surfers.
I promise.

The cab is still BEEPING. She wishes she could believe him.

OLIVIA
Whatever. Have a good trip,
Dad, OK?

He lets go of her and she runs out and into the waiting cab. The cab drives away.

JACK'S REACTION watching her go. He looks down at --

THE PHOTO OF OLIVIA

staring at him.

EXT. DESERT - WINDSTORM - MEXICO - DAY

A raging sandstorm blows dirt and tumbleweeds at the camera. PAN to a VULTURE perched upon the face of a cracked, weather-beaten roadsign arrow, which reads: SONOMA. The vulture flies off as the wind blows the sign over.

Jack, driving a jeep, ROARS into view and stops. He lowers the bandanna from his face, takes a slug from a canteen, checks a torn road map and drives on.

EXT. VILLAGE OF SONOITA - DAY

Jack's overheating jeep chugs into town and grinds to a stop in front of a cantina.

INT. CANTINA - DAY

ANGLE ON CANTINA TV. A NEWS REPORT (in Spanish) warns of the big storm approaching in two days from the South. The report shows an entire VILLAGE BURIED IN SAND in the storm's wake.

The BARTENDER adjusts the TV's coat-hanger antenna. TILT DOWN TO JACK at the bar. An old man is passed out next to him. Jack slides the barkeep some money and a photo.

JACK
(broken Spanish;
subtitled)
Does this man live around here?
Dr. Lawrence Ash?

The bartender studies the photo, eyes Jack significantly.

BARTENDER
No, signor.

His body language hints for more money. Jack slides him another bill and the bartender leans closer.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

(Spanish; subtitled)

Because Signor Ash is dead.
I think. They say a snake
bite - here.

(shows spot on his
forearm)

Long time ago, he hired many
men. Built a big casa loco
in the middle of nowhere.

JACK

Donde?

The bartender points towards the desert.

BARTENDER

(Spanish; subtitled)

Stay on the main road until you
see the trees. Big estate.
Must have plenty of money.

He leans forward; sotto to Jack:

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Some men, they tried to climb
the wall and rob him. But they
saw some kind of weird things
he's got up there. They think
he made a deal with the devil.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DESERT - DAY

Jack's jeep roars through the storm and reaches a fork.
No signs. He takes out the map, but the winds rip it out
of his hands. Cursing, he turns left and vanishes into
the storm.

THE ROAD - LATER - SUNSET

Jack sees a strange sight through the storm: the road
ahead is lined with trees and bushes. As Jack drives
through the rows of trees, they form a canopy overhead.
Strange music suggests that we're moving into unfamiliar
territory.

THE ROAD - LATER - TWILIGHT

Full Moon on the horizon. He turns on the jeep lights,
takes a slug from his canteen. Peering ahead, he spots
something. Something strange.

JACK'S POV

With Jack, we glimpse -- almost subliminally -- two BIZARRE HEADLESS FIGURES moving through the bushes far ahead. (Note: These are the "Nub Creatures" we will meet later.)

BACK TO SCENE. He SCREECHES to a stop and looks again. Nothing. A hallucination? Driving on, he scans the bushes with a flashlight. Suddenly he CRASHES into something and slams on the brakes.

ANGLE ON ROAD AHEAD - The jeep has hit a small electric cart, crushing it. An old man holding a flashlight is caught underneath it.

BACK TO SCENE

JACK

Shit!

Jack jumps from the jeep and rushes towards the old man.

ANGLE ON ROAD

Jack yanks the tangled metal of the cart off the man and kneels over the body.

ANGLE ON THE BODY

It's a tall, muscular OLD MAN with a full beard, gray hair bunched in a pony tail, wearing a pancho. He appears to be unconscious. Jack puts his ear to the old man's chest.

We hear a metallic CLICK. Jack freezes.

PAN down Jack's body. The old man has aimed a double shotgun barrel directly into Jack's groin. Jack looks up at --

THE OLD MAN

his eyes open, his finger on the trigger. A hoarse, angry whisper:

OLD MAN

(in Spanish;
subtitled)

Get off me! Now!

Jack stands up, carefully pushing the gun barrel away.

JACK

Easy, old man. Take it easy.

The old man staggers to his feet with a cane, his hair wild in the wind, his eyes narrow with suspicion.

OLD MAN
 An American, of course! Idiot!
 You've destroyed my cart! Get
 out of here at once!

The old man suddenly clutches the arm under his pancho, GROANS and collapses in the dirt. Jack goes to help him up.

JACK
 Are you all right?

OLD MAN
 Get your hands off me!

The old man tries to stand, collapses again.

JACK
 You're coming with me. You
 need to be looked at.

Jack picks him up and puts him in the jeep as the old man tries to shove him away with his cane.

OLD MAN
 (clutching his arm in
 pain)
 No! Just ahead! Drive!

Clutching his arm in pain, the old man pulls a large blinking key from around his neck -- then he passes out. Jack checks that he's still alive, buckles the old man into the seat and drives ahead.

THE TREE-LINED ROAD DEAD-ENDS

at a large gate between massive granite walls covered with vines. There is a slot with a blinking light next to the gate. Jack take the old man's key and slide it into the slot. The gate WHIRRS open, revealing a long driveway cutting through thick bushes. Jack drives through.

CLOSE - TWO METAL SPHERES ON TOP OF THE GATE

Unseen by Jack, the SPHERES pivot towards the jeep and open like eyes, revealing camera lenses.

BACK TO SCENE. The gate whirrs shut behind them. Jack slows down as he sees something strange --

A GIANT WOODEN SCULPTURE, shaped like a thick tree root, stands by the gate. The red Root, covered with tendrils, is shaped vaguely like a human soldier.

FOLLOW THE JEEP

Jack drives on through the bushes and sees an even more astonishing sight ahead --

AN ELEGANT ITALIAN-STYLE VILLA,

utterly incongruous in the desert badlands, looms before him.

CLOSE - JACK DRIVING

Taken aback, he suddenly puts it all together.

JACK

Casa loco...

BEAUTY SHOT - VILLA FROM ABOVE

Jack drives the unconscious old man through the huge estate, surrounded by twenty-foot walls draped with razor wire, a bizarre fortress in the empty desert. The bushes are thrashed in the wind.

ANGLE ON JEEP

Jack pulls up to the steps of the villa. The old man is awakened by the jolt and tries to get out of the car. Jack unhooks the old man's safety belt. The old man jumps out and screams:

OLD MAN

Raphaela! Raphaela!

RAPHAELA BOOLE, 30, Mexican, mysterious, appears at the door.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Where's your brother! Did they find them or not?

Mute, she answers in sign language. The old man understands and is furious.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Those idiots! They haven't even harvested yet! Those trees must be stripped clean first thing tomorrow!

(angrily to Jack)

You must go now. The gate will close after you.

The storm rises in a powerful gust. Jack shines his flashlight in the old man's face. It looks like Ash. Jack yells through the wind:

JACK

You're Dr. Ash, aren't you?

ASH

Leave my property at once.

JACK

Look, I'm low on fuel. I'd appreciate it if you could put me up till morning.

ASH

It's out of the question.

The storm blows more fiercely. Raphaela "signs" something to Ash. Ash reluctantly agrees with her.

ASH (CONT'D)

All right, all right! But he must leave first thing in the morning! And see that he stays in his room!

The old man glares at Jack, then hops onto a second electric cart and drives around the huge mansion, screaming:

OLD MAN

Jimenez! Boole!

Raphaela gestures for Jack to follow her. He grabs his bag.

INT. VILLA - FOLLOWING RAPHAELA AND JACK - NIGHT

She leads him through the weird villa and up the stairs.

She opens a bedroom door and gestures for Jack to enter.

INT. JACK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jack enters, sets his bag on the bed. The room is large, musty, medieval. No clocks. Unusual artwork on the wall. Portraits of Shakespeare, Verdi, Poe. Significantly, A PHOTO OF ASH AND VERONICA PLAYING VIOLINS together. Dusty curtains over French doors.

JACK

Nice digs. Your name is Raphaela?

Nervous, she looks at him for the first time and nods.

JACK (CONT'D)

My name is Jack. You can't speak, Raphaela?

She shakes her head no and pulls her long hair away from her neck, revealing --

A SCAR RUNNING FROM EAR TO EAR

Someone had slit her throat years ago.

BACK TO SCENE. Surprised, Jack moves closer to look at the scar. Having him so close makes Raphaela nervous. Close up, he sees that she's actually very pretty.

JACK (CONT'D)

Who did this to you?

Raphaela displays her left wrist to Jack. We see that there are SYMBOLS TATTOOED on her hands. She points to a DEVIL TATTOO on her wrist.

JACK (CONT'D)

Is Jimenez your brother?
 (she shakes her head
 no)
 Boole?

She nods and displays her other wrist, revealing AN ANGEL TATTOO. She smiles.

JACK (CONT'D)

What about Ash, Raphaela?
 What's he like?

Raphaela stops smiling. She opens her left palm, revealing --

HER PALM - THE TATTOO OF AN OPEN EYE

BACK TO SCENE. Jack thinks, then gives her a card with the PHOENIX TECHNOLOGIES logo.

JACK (CONT'D)

Raphaela, give this to Dr. Ash.
 Tell him I'd like to talk
 to him. Tonight if possible.

Taking the card, she stares at it, then shakes her head and tries to hand it back.

JACK (CONT'D)

Show it to him. It's important.

She wants to warn him about something, but can't; she runs out of the room and closes the door. Jack tries the door knob. Locked.

He removes Olivia's photo from his bag and stares at it. He whips open the cobwebbed closet and finds a dusty bottle of Japanese liquor labeled Akira; also two books: Shakespeare's The Tempest and Capek's War with the Newts. He blows the dust off The Tempest and opens it.

INSERT - THE FLYLEAF - A sticker reads: EX LIBRIS -
 VERONICA LLEWELYN.

BACK TO SCENE

He tosses the book onto his bed and checks the French doors. The doors are locked and covered with thick curtains. He's about to part the curtains when there's a KNOCK at the door.

Raphaela unlocks the door and enters. She hands a paper bag to Jack. He looks inside and dumps it out on the bed -- several thousand dollars in crumpled-up American and Mexican money.

JACK (CONT'D)

What the hell is this?

She hands him a piece of paper. He reads --

INSERT - A NOTE FROM ASH: "Please accept this for your help. You must leave first thing in the morning."

BACK TO SCENE

JACK (CONT'D)

You gave him my card?
 (she nods)
 He's offering me money
 to leave?

Not answering, she lowers her eyes. Seeing the photo of Olivia, she picks it up.

JACK (CONT'D)

My daughter.

She points to the photo, then to the ANGEL TATTOO on her wrist, and smiles.

JACK (CONT'D)

Thanks.

She puts the photo down, looking nervous again, wanting to tell Jack something.

JACK (CONT'D)

Is there something wrong,
 Raphaela?

Avoiding his eyes, she nods. She points to Jack, then to the OPEN EYE in her palm.

JACK (CONT'D)

Keep my eyes open.

She nods again and exits, locking the door. Jack sprawls out on the bed on top of the money. He opens the bottle of Akira, and makes a little toast to the ceiling.

JACK (CONT'D)

To casa loco.

He drinks, then does a spit-take. It's terrible.

SAME SCENE - LATER - NIGHT

The lights are out. Jack is asleep in bed hugging a crumpled sports page. The money is now stacked in two neat piles of bills next to him. A beat.

Distant GUNSHOTS ring out.

Jack's eyes open. More SHOTS. Someone yelling inaudibly. Jack rushes to the French windows, pulls back the curtains.

THROUGH BALCONY DOORS - THE GARDEN - NIGHT

A medieval-looking garden is being blasted by the wind. In the center is a BROKEN FOUNTAIN. Next to it are TWO STRANGE-LOOKING FRUIT TREES inside a security fence. A bank of U-V LIGHTS attached to the fence weirdly illuminate the trees. Behind the fountain and trees is a large GARDEN MAZE composed of 8' hedges, its entrance locked with an iron gate. To the right of the maze is a path leading to a distant structure covered with wildly overgrown plantlife.

There's no one in sight. The balcony doors are locked tight.

He looks up to see A FLOCK OF NIGHT BIRDS circling the fountain. Swooping close to his balcony.

As he watches, two of the birds break off from the flock and fly in a strange spiraling path, out of control. One of the birds crashes into the fountain; the other bird careens towards Jack's balcony.

Screeching, the bird SMASHES through one of the French window panels. Jack jumps out of the way as the bird falls to the carpet, flails about strangely, then lies still, dead.

JACK AND THE BIRD

He gingerly picks up the bird. Shockingly, its head crumbles off in his hand, disintegrating into a mass of tiny, rootlike fibers. He takes the body to the desk, turns on the desk lamp and examines it under the light.

CLOSE - THE BIRD

It is not a bird as we know it. It is black with webbed, leaf-like wings. No feathers. No legs.

CLOSE - JACK REACTION

JACK (CONT'D)

Jesus.

BACK TO SCENE. He shines the light inside the neck cavity, revealing a weird, greenish, gelatinous mass, throbbing faintly and enmeshed with tiny root-like fibers. What the hell is it?

Jack takes out his swiss army knife and slides its blade into the neck cavity. After a few probes, a little glob of the gelatinous substance oozes out onto the desk blotter. Jack finds a magnifying glass and examines the substance.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Jack, having fallen asleep at the desk, is awoken by a shaft of light on his face and distant VOICES. He rubs his face and staggers to the balcony windows.

CLOSE - THE GELATINOUS GLOB ON THE DESK

The shaft of sunlight hits it. Instantly, the glob trembles and expands an inch. Tiny, plantlike tendrils begin growing from it. As Jack (at the window) accidentally cuts off the shaft of light, the growth abruptly stops.

OTS - JACK LOOKING THROUGH WINDOW

The storm has dissipated, revealing a glorious morning. Ash and TWO MEXICAN WORKERS are inside the fence harvesting black fruit from the two trees. One worker is a giant; the other is a dwarf. The U-V lamps on the fence are off.

ANGLE ON JACK

seeing something unexpected peeking at the men through the fence slats --

JACK'S POV - A LITTLE GIRL

Although Jack can't see her clearly, she looks about five years-old. Like the trees, she has a wild, unearthly appearance. Ash spots her, yells angrily and leads her down a path to the rear of the garden.

BACK TO SCENE. Jack is fascinated. There's a KNOCK at his door.

JACK (CONT'D)

One second.

He rushes to the desk and quickly cleans up the bird's "glob" without noticing the growth of tendrils.

He wraps the bird's body in a handkerchief and tucks it into his jacket pocket. He opens the door. It's Raphaela; she hands him another note. He reads --

INSERT - THE NOTE:

"YOU MUST LEAVE AT ONCE. YOUR JEEP HAS BEEN FUELED. GO EAST AWAY FROM THE STORM."

BACK TO SCENE

JACK (CONT'D)

Thanks. Raphaela, I'd like to speak to Dr. Ash before I go.

She shakes her head no.

JACK (CONT'D)

Well, then... I could use a bite to eat before I hit the road.

Raphaela shakes her head no. Jack shrugs and smiles.

JACK (CONT'D)

Just a cup of coffee. OK?

She sighs and signals him to follow her.

INT. LARGE KITCHEN - MORNING

Jack is alone at the kitchen table having toast and coffee. The two Mexican workers enter, followed by a good-natured BLOODHOUND DOG. The workers look exhausted, as if they've been up all night.

JIMENEZ, 25, is a tough, tiny, Mexican dwarf. BOOLE, 30, is over 7' tall -- a fat, gentle, simple-minded, Mexican giant. Fairy tale characters, presented realistically.

Seeing Jack, Jimenez and Boole eye him suspiciously. Jimenez signals Boole to keep quiet. Keeping his eye on Jack, Jimenez opens the fridge, grabs a slab of steak, rips off pieces with a knife and tosses them one by one to the dog.

JACK (CONT'D)

(broken Spanish;
subtitled)

Out hunting last night, boys?

JIMENEZ

(in broken English;
to Jack)

Who wants to know? You American?

JACK

Yeah. I'm visiting the doctor.

JIMENEZ
You come at a bad time, signor.

JACK
Why's that?

JIMENEZ
The storm. She come every
twenty years. Killer storm.

JACK
You must be Jimenez.
(offers his hand to
shake)
Jack Furlong.

JIMENEZ
(not taking his hand)
How you know my name?

JACK
The doctor spoke very highly
of you.

JIMENEZ
He did?

Jimenez doesn't shake hands, but gradually lightens up.

JIMENEZ (CONT'D)
He's Boole.

JACK
Jack.

Jack sees that Boole is a gurgling idiot. Raphaela enters with a broom. Boole babbles to her.

BOOLE
(in Spanish;
subtitled)
Raphaela, we catch three
monsters and --

JIMENEZ
(re Jack's presence)
Shut up, tonto, babosa!

Jimenez hits Boole with his hat. Defending her brother, Raphaela swats Jimenez with the broom.

JIMENEZ (CONT'D)
OK, OK!
(under his breath to
Jack)
Grouchy bitch.

Raphaela swats Jimenez and gestures for him to get out. She pulls Boole down to kiss his cheek, then swats him out as well. As Jimenez curses her, they exit. Raphaela points to Jack and then to the door. Time to leave. Jack doesn't move.

JACK

I'm staying.

Raphaela shakes her head vehemently. Time to leave. Now.

JACK (CONT'D)

I'm afraid I have to see Dr. Ash.

Raphaela shakes her head and looks at him imploringly.

JACK (CONT'D)

Tell him, Raphaela.

Flustered, she signals him to wait and exits. After a beat, he sneaks after her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jack watches her exit through patio doors to the garden.

INTERCUTTING JACK'S POV THROUGH WINDOW / ASH AND MIRANDA

Ash is at the far end of the garden, yelling at an older GIRL, about eight years old. She looks like an older sister to the little girl we saw earlier. She's hiding something behind her back. Jack opens the doors a crack and listens.

ASH

Why? Why did you let them
out? Do you see what happened
because of your disobedience?

The girl answers, but inaudibly to Jack. Jack slips through the patio doors to eavesdrop.

EXT. THE PATIO - INTERCUTTING JACK / JACK'S POV

Ash has his back to Jack; the girl faces him.

ASH (CONT'D)

What do you have behind your
back? Show me!

She brings her hands in view, revealing one of the black fruits. Ash grabs it from her and screams:

ASH (CONT'D)

Don't ever touch these again,
do you hear me? Never ever!

INTERCUT JACK. Sensitive about how he treats his own daughter, Jack doesn't like to see this.

ASH (CONT'D)

Listen to me! You must never
disobey me again, Miranda!
Do you understand?

Raphaela appears and interrupts Ash, using sign language to convey Jack's message. As Raphaela signs, Miranda notices Jack watching from the patio.

MOVE IN ON MIRANDA

staring intensely at Jack over Ash's shoulder. She has piercing, spooky eyes.

JACK'S REACTION

Drawn to look in her eyes.

BACK TO SCENE

Noticing Miranda's stare, Ash spins around and sees Jack. Ash barks something at Raphaela who quickly leads the girl away down the path. The girl casts a curious look back at Jack before Raphaela pulls her out of view.

Ash angrily storms toward Jack. He's impressive now, with a flowing cape over his right arm. (Ash uses only his left hand.) Despite his cane, he now seems powerful and Prospero-like, unlike our first pathetic encounter with him. As Ash reaches the patio:

JACK

Kind of rough on the girl,
weren't you, Doc?

ASH

That fruit is poisonous.
However, it is no concern of
yours.

JACK

Well, I've got one daughter.
Hats off to you raising two
all by yourself.

Ash stops, as if momentarily puzzled, then storms past him.

ASH

I'd love to discuss fatherhood
with you, but I'm afraid
it is time for you to leave.

Ash walks into the house. Jack follows.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JACK

I'd guess Raphaela doesn't know sign language for "Phoenix Technologies".

Ash stops in his track and turns to Jack.

ASH

Did MacBride send you?

JACK

MacBride and his associates. My name is Jack Furlong. They said you've been a bad boy. By the way, about the bag of money? I'm not allowed to accept gratuities. I'm here to find out about your research and what happened to the funding.

ASH

The money is spent. I told MacBride that my reports would be late. I've been distracted by other matters.

Jack strolls around the room, being vaguely insolent.

JACK

Easy to get distracted with a set-up like this. Must've cost a pretty penny.

ASH

My own investments paid for this villa. The Phoenix grant was used exclusively to build my laboratory. My research, however, has produced nothing. I will send MacBride a report to that effect as soon as you depart. Which will be in five minutes. Good day, Mr. Furlong.

JACK

Your research produced nothing?

ASH

That's what I said. After my wife died, my inspiration died with her. We have nothing more to discuss. I want you out of here in five minutes.

Ash storms towards the door.

JACK

I've heard different, Dr. Ash.
Someone told me you've been
doing very advanced research.

Ash stops.

ASH

Who told you that?

Jack opens his handkerchief, revealing the headless
flying creature, and sets it on the table.

JACK

A little birdie told me.

Ash is shocked and flustered.

ASH

That's merely a - a meaningless
toy. I care only about my
daughter and keeping her alive.
Do you understand that both she
and I are extremely ill? Do you?

A gust of wind bursts open the patio doors. Ash angrily
slams them shut. He turns, trembling, to Jack.

ASH (CONT'D)

I'm in the middle of my most
important experiment. You've
come at the worst possible time.
I insist that you leave, Mr.
Furlong.

JACK

I'm not leaving.

Ash suddenly shrieks in an uncontrollable rage.

ASH

Then I'll have you thrown
out! This is my property!
I say you must leave! You
have no idea how precious my
time is and how little I have
left! I will not allow you
or Phoenix or anyone else to
interrupt me, do you hear me?

As he speaks, Ash unleashes his hidden right hand and
violently SMASHES it down on the table. For the first
time, we see that his right hand is massively and
frighteningly deformed.

At the powerful, almost superhuman blow, a slab of wood
splinters off and the table overturns.

The table slams into Jack, smashing his head against the fireplace, knocking him out.

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jack is unconscious in bed. His shoulder and leg are bandaged. Ash and Raphaela lean over him. Ash gently slaps Jack's cheek as Jack awakens.

ASH

Mr. Furlong. Wake up.
Forgive my outburst. I am suffering from a malady that heightens my temper at times and I must try to be more careful. You've dislocated your shoulder and bruised your knee. I myself have an illness in my right arm as a result of my research.

JACK

I noticed. What happened?

ASH

A rather unpleasant virus. However, I've developed a serum to treat it.

JACK

(checks his watch)
My watch broke. What time is it?

ASH

It's midafternoon. I have an aversion to clocks. There are none in the house. Now rest, Mr. Furlong.

(to Raphaela)

He may rest here for another day. Then Jimenez will escort him to Sonoita.

Ash turns to exit when Jack calls out:

JACK

Dr. Ash, I told you I can't leave without a report.

ASH

You can and will.

JACK

It's about the money, Doc. If I go back without a report, they'll just send somebody else. Somebody much meaner.

Ash thinks, then reconsiders.

ASH
That will not be necessary.
I will give you an accounting.

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - LATER - DAY

Jack is in bed. Raphaela, Jimenez, Boole bring a dozen cardboard boxes into the room and set them next to the bed.

JACK
What's all this?

JIMENEZ
Dr. Ash, he said to give you
this --
(hands Jack an old
adding
machine and rolls of
paper)
-- for your report.

JACK
Tell Dr. Ash this isn't what
I had in mind.

JIMENEZ
Too bad. It's what Dr. Ash
had in mind.

Jimenez laughs. He and Boole exit. Raphaela goes to Jack. She looks worried, wanting to tell him something.

JACK
What's wrong, Raphaela?

She points to Jack's forehead, then to the palm of her other hand, showing a TATTOO of a CLOSED EYE. Jack tries to understand.

JACK (CONT'D)
My eyes are closed.
(she nods)
There's something I don't know.
(she nods again;
sotto:)
Leave the door unlocked.

She hesitates, then shakes her head no and exits. Jack scans the old boxes.

HIS POV - THE BOXES are filled with stacks of dusty receipts.

BACK TO SCENE. Jack sighs. He hears something at the door and sees -

UNDER THE DOOR - A key slides across the carpet.

BACK TO SCENE. Jack sits up, wincing at the pain in his shoulder and knee. He hobbles to the door and unlocks it with the key.

THE HALLWAY

No one is in sight. He hears Ash's voice faintly in another part of the house. FOLLOW JACK as he sneaks down the stairs.

THE CLOSED LIBRARY DOOR

He hears Ash in the library and looks through the keyhole.

HIS POV - THROUGH KEYHOLE

Ash and Miranda are holding violins. Miranda is staring at a hypnotic pattern rotating on a computer screen.

CLOSE - ASH'S EYES

ASH
-- when you awaken, you
will remember everything
you have learned today.

CLOSE - MIRANDA'S EYES - hypnotized.

ASH O.S.
Now play the scale in E.
Slowly. 1 - 2 - 3.

BACK TO KEYHOLE VIEW - as Ash and Miranda begin slowly playing the scale together.

CLOSE - JACK KNEELING OUTSIDE DOOR

thinking. Why is Ash hypnotizing her?

Someone whispers fiercely behind him:

JIMENEZ O.S.
Surprise, gringo.

JACK'S POV - He spins around. Jimenez hits him on the head with a club. Jack drops and the room spins to blackness

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - LATER - NIGHT

Jack is alone and asleep with a bruise on his forehead. A haunting, distant MUSIC wafts eerily into the room.

Jack's eyes slowly open. He cringes, holding his head, which still hurts from the blow.

He staggers to his feet, hears the music again. Following the sound, he goes to the balcony doors and opens the curtains, revealing the moonlit garden. The music is somewhere outside. He stands back and kicks open the balcony doors, breaking the lock, and exits to --

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

The music is coming from the distant structure behind the maze. He goes down a stairway to the garden.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

He passes the fountain and the fruit trees lit up by the U-V lamps. He stops to stare at --

THE TREES

They've been cleanly picked of fruit. Strangely, buds of NEWLY FORMING FRUIT are already blooming on the branches. He reaches through the fence and touches the tree. There's weird, vein-like texture to the bark...

MOONLIT PATH AROUND THE MAZE - FOLLOWING JACK

go down the path, which becomes a tunnel of stalks and vines framing the path. Nearing the source of the music, he climbs over a fence, sneaks through some exotic-looking plants also lit by U-V lights, and peers through bushes into --

EXT. HIDDEN GROTTO - HIS POV - NIGHT

The grotto, overgrown with plants, consists of a small Victorian-style greenhouse with a cottage attached. In the front yard is a small bonfire.

Around the fire is a bizarre sight: Miranda is playing the violin with THREE NUB-SHAPED CREATURES, about 4' tall. (These are the "things" Jack glimpsed earlier on the road.) The "Nub Men" are playing rhythms on wood blocks, cans and glass jars while Miranda plays a strange melody.

Miranda, however, now appears to be much older -- about 16. Stunned, Jack peers closer through the bushes.

CLOSE - TENDRILS IN THE GRASS

slowly curling around Jack's leg.

BACK TO SCENE. Jack watches the girl, not noticing the tendrils. The weird music builds in intensity.

CLOSE - JACK'S LEG

The music peaks; the tendrils violently YANK Jack to the ground.

ANGLE ON JACK ON THE GROUND

More tendrils wrap around his wrists and neck. Other tendrils pull Jack toward the sticky jaws of a terrifying-looking MAN-EATING PLANT. His hands bound, he tries in vain to kick himself free as the weird music continues.

HORROR ANGLES ON THE PLANT

dragging him into its jaws. It "bites" his hand with rows of sharp, thorn-teeth. The plant undulates him into its mouth. Jack SCREAMS as his head is sucked into the plant --

ANGLE ON HANDS GRABBING JACK'S ANKLES

The hands yank Jack out of the plant's jaws. He tumbles backwards into the grotto.

ANGLE ON JACK FLAT ON THE GROUND

His clothes are ripped; he has a bleeding gash in his right hand. He looks up at --

JACK'S POV - MIRANDA AND THE NUB MEN

standing over him, having pulled him out. The Nub Creatures blink in curiosity at Jack. Miranda kneels over him.

BACK TO SCENE

Miranda's long wild hair cascades over his chest. She touches his face, eyeing him strangely. She has an eerie, alien beauty. She stares into his eyes with real feeling and whispers:

MIRANDA

I was hoping you'd come.
(to the Nubs)
Help him to the fire.

They help Jack over to a log by the fire. Miranda takes Jack's wounded hand.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

You should stay away from
father's special plants.

She rips a piece of cloth from her dress and wraps it around his hand.

JACK

I'm all right. But thanks.

He stares at the Nub Men, who begin SNIFFING him up and down. When they reach his groin, he pushes them away.

JACK (CONT'D)

Easy guys.
(whispers to Miranda)
What the hell are they?

MIRANDA

They're the Nubs.
(to Nubs)
Say hello.

The bumbling creatures GRUNT and shake their heads "no". They are timid, with primitive intellects.

JACK

The what?

MIRANDA

Father named them. He keeps them in the maze.
(whispers)
But I let them out at night to play. Don't tell father. He has a terrible temper.

JACK

You're Ash's daughter. Miranda.

MIRANDA

Yes.

Jack peers at her.

JACK

You're older than I thought.

She suddenly stands up and turns, showing herself off.

MIRANDA

Do you like me?

JACK

(nods, confused)
Yeah... sure.

MIRANDA

Do you think I'm beautiful?

JACK

You're a very beautiful young girl. Where's your sister? The little girl who was --

MIRANDA
 (ignoring him; to
 Nubs)
 I told you I was beautiful.

The Nubs inanely shake their heads "no", obviously not understanding her. Miranda sits next to Jack and takes his hand again.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
 Father told me to stay away
 from you. I knew he was lying.
 (intensely)
 I hate him.

JACK
 Why? What has he done to you?

She pauses, trying to remember.

MIRANDA
 He asks me strange questions.
 I have to stop him.

There's a mechanical WHIRRING sound behind them. Miranda and the Nubs immediately react.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
 The spies!

She grabs the Nub Men's hands and pulls them into a hiding place in the bushes.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
 (to Jack)
 Hurry!

Jack ducks into the bushes with them. The WHIRRING becomes louder as two small FLYING OBJECTS burst through a hedge and hover eerily over the grotto.

ANGLE ON THE FLYING OBJECTS (THE "SPIES")

These are the two spheres we saw earlier atop the front gate. The spies pivot and focus like mechanical eyes, scanning the grotto. Several turbine-like propellers at the base propel each sphere.

ANGLE ON JACK AND MIRANDA HIDING

JACK
 What the hell is that?

MIRANDA
 (whispers)
 Shh! Father sends them out
 when the Nubs get loose.

Or when he feels like
spying on me.

Jack pulls aside a branch for a better view. The branch
SNAPS.

INTERCUT SPIES - The hovering spheres immediately pivot
in place, zeroing in on the sound. The spies CLICK
ominously and descend towards them.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

(whispers)

They've found us. Run!
But promise you'll come
tomorrow. Promise.

JACK

I promise.

She and the Nub Men hurry away through the bushes.

ANGLE ON JACK RUNNING

onto the garden path. Glancing over his shoulder, he
sees the spies chasing him through the tunnel of vines.
He bolts around a corner and dives into a bush to lose
them.

ON JACK

peeking out to see the spies flying past, losing him. He
jumps out of the bushes and finds himself facing --

THE MAZE ENTRANCE

The maze hedges are eight feet tall. Curious, he checks
the iron gate to the maze entrance. It's locked. He
hears a faint MOANING somewhere inside the maze. Now he
hears a cart approaching and ducks into the bushes.

JACK'S POV - THROUGH BUSHES

Jimenez drives a cart up to the maze gate. The dog is
beside him. In the cart are baskets of harvested fruit.
Jimenez unlocks the gate and drives through.

BACK TO SCENE - Jack climbs out of the bushes. Still
hearing the strange MOANING, he sneaks into the maze.

INT. MAZE - DAWN

Jack follows the dwarf to the center of the maze and
hides behind a hedge. In the center is a METAL BUILDING
(the Compound). The MOANING is coming from inside the
Compound.

By the building is a SHED and a large iron furnace labeled WASTE INCINERATOR. The incinerator HUMS and smoke trails from its chimney.

Next to the compound is an amazing sight: a GIGANTIC FRUIT TREE, resembling the smaller trees in the garden, but vast and magnificent. Scaffolding surrounds the tree, suggesting it is harvested regularly. On the scaffolding is a bank of powerful U-V lights illuminating the tree.

Jack watches Jimenez park next to the compound, open a fuse box and pull a large SWITCH, turning off the U-V lights. Then he dumps the baskets of fruit into the incinerator, unlocks the compound and enters with the dog. Jack hears the MOANING again. He goes to the compound and puts his ear to the wall. He sniffs, smelling something acrid in the air.

JACK (CONT'D)

Ammonia...

The MOANS inside grow louder, then stop. Suddenly, Jack hears a metallic CLICK.

JIMENEZ O.S.

Surprise, gringo.

Jack turns to find Jimenez pointing a shotgun at his chest.

JIMENEZ

This is the second time
I catch you sneaking around.
(shoves gunbarrel at
his nose)
You got a nose problem?

JACK

I heard something weird inside
and wondered what it was.

JIMENEZ

I was inside. You calling
Jimenez weird?

JACK

Jimenez, the girl told me
Ash keeps those "Nub Men" in
the maze. I need to know what
the hell is going on.

Jimenez shoves the gun in Jack's neck.

JIMENEZ

You don't need to know nothing.
Except that Ash he is crazy.

And the girl, stay away, man.
She is hija del demonio.

Jimenez makes the sign of the cross.

JACK
If you don't like it here,
why don't you leave?

JIMENEZ
I need the money. But next
payday, I quit. Not like Boole
and Raphaela. They are stuck
here.

JACK
Why?

JIMENEZ
Because they owe the crazy
man, bigtime. One day Boole
he brings Raphaela to him. She
was raped by borrachos, her
throat slit. Ash he sewed her
up. Saved her life.

JACK
Jimenez, if Ash is crazy, I
need your help to put him away.

Jimenez shoves the gun deeper into Jack's face.

JIMENEZ
I don't help no american
corporation gringo, see? I
just want my money. You want
help? Help yourself. Get
out, signor, before the storm
blows you away.

A gust of wind swirls around them. Jimenez shoves Jack
away with his gun barrel.

JIMENEZ (CONT'D)
Vamos!

Jack backs away and exits the maze.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JACK'S ROOM - MORNING

Jack wakes up and goes to the window. There's a KNOCK at
the door and Raphaela enters with a breakfast tray.

JACK

You run a first class joint,
Raphaela.

She sets the tray on the table. He takes her hand and makes her sit next to him at the table.

JACK (CONT'D)

Raphaela, the doctor has something that doesn't belong to him. I was hired to find it and bring it back. I need to get into his lab.

She shakes her head no and gets up to leave. He doesn't let go of her hand.

JACK (CONT'D)

Calm down, it's OK. Look, I know you want to tell me something. I want you to write it down for me.

Jack gives her an encouraging look and pushes a pad and a pen towards her. She hesitates. Then she pushes away the pad, removes some cards from her apron and hands them to Jack.

CLOSE - THE CARDS

It's a tattered pack of TAROT CARDS (the English Waite deck).

BACK TO SCENE. She gestures for him to shuffle them. He plays along. She takes the shuffled deck and closes her eyes. Then she slowly places five cards face down on the table, three above, two below. She points to each of the three cards and "signs" an explanation. Jack guesses:

JACK (CONT'D)

The past, the present, the future?
(she nods)
Raphaela, I'm not into card games.
I need you to write --

She puts her finger to his lips to silence him. She points to the first card. Jack decides to humor her.

JACK (CONT'D)

OK. The past.

She nods and he turns over the first card. It's a HEART PIERCED BY THREE SWORDS over a background of storm clouds. INTERCUT JACK skeptical.

JACK (CONT'D)

That's everyone's past.

She shakes her head and gestures emphatically: this is Jack's past. She points to the second card.

JACK (CONT'D)

The present?

She nods and he turns it over. It's the EIGHT OF SWORDS, showing a bound, blindfolded figure imprisoned by swords.

JACK (CONT'D)

So I'm blind...

(she points to a
castle behind the
figure)

...and there's something in
the castle...

(she points to the
blindfold)

...but I can't see it...

She nods and points to the third card.

JACK (CONT'D)

The future...

He turns it over. It's THE TOWER, an explosive, violent image: a tower rent by a lightning storm, blasting a man and a woman into an abyss.

JACK (CONT'D)

Raphaela, this isn't telling
me anything.

She shushes him and points to the remaining two cards. She gestures to explain its meaning:

JACK (CONT'D)

This card is me?

She nods. He turns it over. It's the FOOL CARD, showing an oblivious traveler about to walk over a cliff. He sighs:

JACK (CONT'D)

"The Fool". I can buy that.

She points to the last card and gestures outside. Jack guesses.

JACK (CONT'D)

Ash?

She nods and he turns over the card. It shows THE DEVIL, a beast shackled to flesh. Raphaela stares at the card. She's afraid.

JACK (CONT'D)

Raphaela, it's just a card.

She shakes her head, grabs the cards and bolts out of the room, slamming the door behind her. After a beat, he sighs, he picks up one of the boxes and begins going through the receipts.

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME SCENE - LATER THAT NIGHT

The receipts and adding machine are now set up on the desk. Jack, his arm in a sling, is typing at the machine; he's gone through several boxes. Raphaela enters and gestures for him to follow.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Raphaela leads Jack into the library -- a large, torchlit, medieval den with a vast, roaring fireplace. The room is filled with books, antiques and oddities. There are diplomas and plaques on the walls; there's a TV and VCR.

Raphaela gestures for Jack to sit and exits. In a corner is an artist's easel covered with a sheet. Jack peeks under the sheet and sees --

AN UNFINISHED PAINTING ON EASEL

It's a portrait of Veronica Llewelyn, age 40, looking regal and beautiful, but with a haughty stare, against a background of black storm clouds.

On a table by the easel are paints, brushes and photographs of Veronica being used for the portrait study.

ANGLE ON PHOTOS

as Jack examines them. Veronica, like Miranda, is hauntingly beautiful. He opens a photo album and begins flipping pages.

ASH O.S.

Put that down, please.

BACK TO SCENE. He turns to see Ash entering.

JACK

How's your arm, Doc?

ASH

Luckily I have been able to stabilize the infection. And yours?

JACK

Oh, fine, fine.

Jack lifts the cloth revealing the painting.

JACK (CONT'D)

Your wife was quite a woman.

ASH

Yes. She was beautiful, charismatic, brilliant. And with a very strong will.

JACK

(gestures to plaques
on wall)

These diplomas and awards. They're all for your wife. Looks like she had the brains in the family.

ASH

You're wearing on my patience, Mr. Furlong. My wife is dead and my daughter Miranda has a debilitating heart condition. I'm sure that you will understand when I ask you to take care of your business here as quickly as possible and then be on your merry corporate way.

JACK

Doctor, I came for the map.

Ash stares at him, sizing him up.

ASH

The map is incomplete. I told MacBride I needed more time.

JACK

MacBride is a candidate for an iron lung. He doesn't want a rain-check. What he wants is a return on his money.

Ash glares at him darkly, turns away and thinks, holding his temper. He decides:

ASH

Very well, Mr. Furlong. Follow me.

Ash exits the patio doors and Jack follows.

EXT. THE GARDEN PATIO - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Jack follows Ash through the garden. They pass the two fruit trees illuminated by the U-V lamps. The fruits (which were small buds earlier) are now fully grown. Jack stops.

JACK

This fruit. It wasn't here yesterday. What kind of tree is this?

ASH

A new species. Genetically altered to accelerate its growth. This way.

He leads Jack to a storm shelter built into the ground. Ash opens the storm doors; they descend an underground stairway. At the bottom, Ash unlocks a door and flicks on a light, revealing --

INT. CAVERN LABORATORY - NIGHT

Jack scans the room, amazed. The lab, built into a large natural cavern, is unlike anything we have ever seen. Although high-tech equipment lines the walls, the design looks medieval, like the workshop of a sorcerer.

A row of computers flicker on with the lights, one with a five-foot monitor. There is an operating table with something on it covered with surgical linen. There are computer designs for biomechanical creatures on the wall and, shelves filled with computer discs and video tapes.

JACK

Quite a set-up.

On one wall is a freight door on rollers with the sign "HIGH VOLTAGE - DO NOT ENTER".

JACK (CONT'D)

What's in the other room?

ASH

High-voltage generators and transformers. My power supply.

Jack wanders over to the shelf with rows of video tapes. He grabs one.

JACK

What are these? Party tapes?

ASH

Those are technical records,
of no interest to anyone but
myself.

JACK

Records of what?

ASH

If you must know, of a serum
I've developed to treat the
swelling in my arm. If you
don't mind?

Ash takes the tape and puts it back.

JACK

Doc, I'm going to level with
you. I met your little Nub Men.
I saw the birds, a man-eating
plant and those flying eyeballs.
And I saw Miranda.

Ash tries to play it cool.

ASH

And don't forget the fruit.

JACK

I don't get it. What are you
doing here? What does all
this have to do with finishing
the map?

Thinking, Ash goes to the surgical table and lifts the
linen, revealing --

ON SURGICAL TABLE - THE HEADLESS BIRD

that smashed through Jack's window.

BACK TO SCENE

Not looking at Jack, Ash puts on spectacles and leans
close to examine the bird.

ASH

Give me your word that you
will tell no one at Phoenix
what I am about to tell you.

JACK

All right. Talk.

Ash begins using surgical tools on the dead bird. Jack
moves closer as the old man begins "repairing" the bird:

ASH

Very well. Before the accident, Mr. Furlong, Veronica became pregnant. We were alone when the the explosion occurred in the lab. My arm was injured and my wife was dead. But I was able to perform the surgery necessary to save our unborn child.

JACK

That was eight years ago. I met your daughter. She's at least sixteen.

ASH

In the explosion, the child's heart was severely damaged. She would be dead within a week. Veronica and I had already designed self-replicating micromachines which would internally strip away degenerate tissue. From these, I designed a fluid of micromachines to inject into Miranda's heart and eat away the scar tissue.

JACK

That doesn't explain why she's sixteen, Doc.

ASH

I'm getting to that! Pull that lamp closer --

Jack pulls the lamp closer. Jack watches Ash attach a head to the body and make each wing spasm with an electric probe.

ASH (CONT'D)

There were terrible, unforeseen side effects. The micromachines reproduced faster than I had expected. They ravaged her body. Her pituitary was damaged, which regulates growth hormones. Perhaps this is why she seemed older to you.

JACK

Dr. Ash, yesterday I saw a five year old girl in the garden.

CLOSE - ASH

turned away, his eyes burning, thinking of how to answer.

ASH

Five? What are you talking about! Where did you see her?

BACK TO SCENE

JACK

From my room. She was peeking through the bushes.

ASH

Then, of course, I can only surmise that you fell victim to tricks of perspective. A girl Miranda's age can sometimes appear younger from a distance.

JACK

I suppose so.

ASH

She is a very sick girl, Mr. Furlong. And the purpose of all of my experiments...

ANGLE ON ASH

as he takes the bird in both hands and throws it up into the air.

ASH (CONT'D)

...is to make her well.

ANGLE ON BIRD

The bird flaps its wings and flies in a slow circle above them.

BACK TO SCENE. Jack's impressed.

ASH (CONT'D)

As for the bird and the other creatures, these experiments were offshoots of the mapping process. Using micromachines, I spliced together the genes of various plant and animal cells.

He points to a model of the double helix.

ASH (CONT'D)

The DNA helix, Mr. Furlong. The coil which maps our mortality. By manipulating

it, I developed these experimental creatures, some of which can be directed remotely. Observe.

To demonstrate, he uses his computer mouse to "awaken" a dozen dormant mechanical birds (like the one already flying) that are attached to a metal grid on the wall.

ANGLE ON THE GRID OF DORMANT BIRDS

The birds begin buzzing. The grid releases and the birds rise as one into the air.

BACK TO SCENE. Ash sets spatial parameters with the mouse, then puts on a computer-data-glove and moves the gloved hand. The birds respond by swooping around the cavern ceiling.

JACK

Impressive.

ASH

In the process of mapping the coil, I've produced diversions such as these toys, which could be marketed for the masses.

Four of the birds begin side-swiping the cavern walls.

ASH (CONT'D)

Blast!

Ash quickly clicks the mouse to adjust their movements, but the birds begin careening wildly, dive-bombing Ash and Jack. They smack away the creatures, which crash into equipment, twitch on the ground, then lay still.

JACK

You might want to reevaluate your marketing plan.

Ash turns off the system and scoops up the birds in disgust.

ASH

Shut up.

JACK

You're out of control, Doc.
(re Ash's infected arm)

Your experiments are starting to control you. Look, I'm sorry your daughter's sick, but I need that map, finished or unfinished. So hand it over and I'll just get the hell out of here, OK?

Ash laughs unpleasantly.

ASH

Did you actually think I'd give it to you? After ten years, having come this close? Did you think I'd let someone else finish the map and take all of the credit? Tell that cadaver MacBride he'll get the map when it's completed and not a moment sooner.

(opens the lab door)

Now you know everything, Mr. Furlong. You must leave tomorrow. Before the storm arrives.

He turns out the lights and they exit.

INT. PATIO DOORS - NIGHT

Ash enters followed by Jack. Raphaela is sweeping.

ASH (CONT'D)

Raphaela, please see Mr. Furlong to his room. He leaves at sunrise. Pack him a breakfast to go.

Ash exits as Raphaela escorts Jack up the stairs.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Raphaela opens Jack's door.

JACK

Raphaela, Dr. Ash explained about his daughter. I know you're afraid. But it's going to be all right.

To his surprise, Raphaela gives him a soulful look and shakes her head -- no! She jabs her finger at the TATTOO OF A DEVIL on her hand.

JACK (CONT'D)

He's not a devil, Raphaela. He saved your life. Now he's trying to save his daughter.

Frustrated, she shakes her head no, points again to the devil tattoo, then angrily slams the door behind her.

Jack rubs his face in frustration. There's a flash of light at his window and looks out to see --

THE FRUIT TREES

Jimenez is switching on the U-V lights which weirdly light up the trees. Jimenez, Boole and the three Nub Men are harvesting the fruit into a cart. Jack sees someone sneaking through the bushes behind them.

JACK'S POV - MIRANDA IN THE BUSHES - NIGHT

It's Miranda, crouched in the bushes. Jack watches as Boole the idiot spots her; she puts her finger to her lips to shush Boole.

ON JACK CREEPING ONTO THE BALCONY FOR A CLOSER LOOK

JACK'S POV - BOOLE AND MIRANDA

Miranda signals Boole to hand her one of the fruits; he does, secretly slipping it to her through the fence. Then he innocently touches her face and hair with his big clumsy hands. Disgusted, she pushes his hand away and hurries off through the bushes with the fruit.

ANOTHER ANGLE ON FRUIT TREES - Jimenez, high on a ladder, yells at Boole in Spanish to get back to work.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT - CONT'D

Jack sneaks down the steps, out of view of the workers. FOLLOW JACK as he sneaks towards the grotto.

EXT. PATH TO GROTTTO - NIGHT

Jack spots the FLYING SPIES approaching and hides under a plant. The Spies hesitate over him, then move on. He jumps out and hurries down the path.

ANGLE ON THE FLYING SPIES

They suddenly stop, sensing movement in the opposite direction. They both rotate in place, then slowly fly after Jack.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

The greenhouse is dark. The cottage has one window lit up. He goes to the window, but the glass is fogged over.

HIS POV - INSIDE COTTAGE

Barely visible through the clouded glass, he sees Miranda's bedroom, strangely crowded with plants. Miranda is sitting on her bed. She appears to be rocking back and forth as she eats voraciously...

INTERCUTTING JACK OUTSIDE/ MIRANDA INSIDE

Puzzled, Jack moves to a clear patch in the fogged window. There he sees that Miranda is eating the fruit she got from Boole. She fondles the fruit strangely as she eats it, her eyes closed. It's disturbing, frightening.

Jack taps on the glass, startling her. Dropping the fruit in a panic, she looks around dazed.

Seeing her face clearly, Jack is stunned: Miranda now looks about twenty years old. Spotting Jack, she wipes her mouth with her sleeve and opens the cottage door.

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack enters. The bedroom is completely overrun with plants. She stares at him with wide, wild eyes. Although sensual and beautiful, her eyes look haunted and mad.

MIRANDA

You came.

JACK

I said I would.

MIRANDA

What's your name?

JACK

Jack.

MIRANDA

I like that name. There's Jack the Giant Killer. And Jack and the Beanstalk.

JACK

You like fairy tales?

MIRANDA

Father gives me videos.

She gestures to a television and VCR in a corner and a box of videotapes. Jack looks at the tapes. Puzzled:

JACK

These are all kids tapes. Miranda, how old are you?

MIRANDA

Why?

JACK

How old are you?

MIRANDA

Why are you asking me questions?
All my father does is ask
questions. I'm sick of it.

JACK

Miranda, your father told me
that your pituitary is affecting
your growth, that your heart
was damaged in the accident and --

She smiles disdainfully.

MIRANDA

Accident? What accident?

JACK

He's lying?

MIRANDA

Don't believe anything he says.
He tells lies to get me to
answer his questions.

JACK

What questions?

A WHIRRING sound is heard over the greenhouse.

MIRANDA

The spies!

They rush through the adjoining greenhouse door and see --

ANGLE ON THE GLASS CEILING

The spies are hovering ominously above the greenhouse and
slowly moving down the side of the wall.

BACK TO SCENE - Miranda pulls Jack behind a large plant
and shushes him.

MIRANDA

Watch this.

She grabs two pails and tiptoes through the greenhouse
door. Jack watches through the glass as she sneaks up
behind the Spies and slides the buckets over them.
Blinded by the pails, the spies fly in chaotic circles
and then plummet comically into the bushes. Miranda
enters the greenhouse.

JACK

Miranda, we need to talk
about your father.

MIRANDA

My father...

She stares into space again, trying to remember something.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

He's trying to steal something from me.

JACK

Steal what?

Miranda suddenly remembers something, but is confused.

MIRANDA

The map... he wants the map.

JACK

You have the map?

MIRANDA

I - I don't even know what it is. But he thinks I have it. And I have to stop him.

She moves closer.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

With you, Jack. Help me stop him. If you do, I promise I'll do anything you ask. Anything.

She takes his hand and gently kisses it, then kisses his arm, his shoulder. He grabs her shoulders.

JACK

Stop it, Miranda.

She smiles and moves closer.

MIRANDA

Help me, Jack... please...

Her body slowly presses up against him. Her eyes are inhuman and magnetic.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

Boole sneaks up to the glass and begins watching them through the window with childlike curiosity.

INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

Miranda leans seductively closer... her smile now predatory... her lips part... Jack moves back to resist... but her piercing eyes are hypnotic...

Just as she is about to kiss him, something catches Jack's eye --

CLOSE - JACK NOTICING SOMETHING ON THE BED

Something strange.

JACK'S POV - MIRANDA'S HALF-EATEN FRUIT

is lying on the bedcovers. Its black pit is exposed. The pit is moving.

CLOSE - JACK'S EYES NARROW watching the fruit wobble.

JACK'S POV - CLOSER - THE PIT

The black pit wriggles strangely, then shudders and CRACKS... exposing something tiny, black and monstrous trying to squeeze out of the shell...

ON JACK - HORRIFIED

Shocked, he pulls away from her.

JACK
What the hell is that?

She follows his gaze to the fruit, then quickly pulls his face towards hers.

MIRANDA
(intensely)
It's nothing.

JACK
There's something in the pit!

Jack pulls away and grabs the fruit.

MIRANDA
No! Give it to me!

She grabs the fruit from him and runs into the greenhouse, slamming the door behind her. Alone, Jack grabs his hand and cringes in sudden pain. He examines -

CLOSE - THE CUT ON HIS HAND

In the tug of war, a layer of fruit pulp and seeds covers the wound in his hand (from the man-eating plant).

BACK TO SCENE. The pain is intense. He grabs a pillow and wipes the fruit off his hand, but it still stings. He rushes to the sink and washes it off. Clutching his hand, he staggers outside.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

Boole ducks into the bushes as Jack exits the greenhouse.

EXT. PATH - NIGHT

Jack hurries towards the villa, his hand stinging.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

Jack sneaks past Jimenez and the Nubs, who have finished loading the last of the fruit into a cart. The Nubs trip over each other getting into the cart. Jimenez angrily scans the garden and calls:

JIMENEZ

Boole!
(no answer)
Puerco gordo!

He hops in the cart and drives off with the Nubs. Clutching his hand, Jack sneaks up the balcony stairs and into his room.

INT. JACK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jack enters, turns on the desk lamp and examines the cut under the light.

CLOSE - HIS HAND - The cut is strangely festering.

BACK TO SCENE. He goes into the bathroom, washes the wound carefully. Sitting on his bed, he wraps a bandage around his hand. He notices a photograph tucked among the receipts and pulls it out.

INSERT PHOTO. It's a recent-looking PHOTO OF MIRANDA wearing the same white gown, looking about 20 years old.

BACK TO SCENE. Jack flicks the photo with his finger.

JACK

Miranda...

Staring at the beautiful girl, he rubs his face, trying to piece it together. He turns the photo over and is stunned to see the words: "VERONICA LLEWELYN - AGE 20 - 1976". It's not Miranda. Jack turns it over and stares at the photo in amazement.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

ANGLE ON BOOLE - The giant is still peering through Miranda's bedroom window.

BOOLE'S POV THROUGH FOGGED WINDOW

Miranda peeks out; Jack is gone. She enters the bedroom and resumes hungrily eating the fruit like an animal.

CLOSE- BOOLE WATCHING

puzzled. He's worried, confused. Is she all right?

ANOTHER ANGLE - BOOLE

He goes to the greenhouse door, hesitates, then knocks. No answer. He knocks louder.

BOOLE'S POV THROUGH WINDOW IN DOOR

Miranda wipes her face of fruit and sees Boole at the door.

MIRANDA

What do you want?

BOOLE

You sick?

MIRANDA

Go away.

Boole starts to open the door but she jumps up and pushes it shut.

BOOLE

Boole help.

MIRANDA

No, Boole!

Frustrated, the idiot forces the door open and stares at her.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

What are you doing? Go away!

Boole enters, gently reaching for Miranda.

BOOLE

You sick. Boole help.

MIRANDA

Get out, Boole! Go!

He touches her face and hair again, fascinated by her. Frightened, Miranda screams. Wanting to stop her screaming, he tries to cover her mouth with his hand.

BOOLE

No! Boole help!

Screaming, she struggles to free herself.

EXT. COMPOUND IN CENTER OF MAZE

Miranda's SCREAMS are heard in the distance. As if in response, the unseen creature locked inside the compound begins MOANING loudly. Now the creature inside pounds against the ceiling and walls of the compound, denting them as if with sledge hammer blows. We hear Jimenez inside the compound yelling in Spanish.

JIMENEZ O.S.

No! Stop it, dammit! Get
back! GET BACK!

Jimenez rushes outside, trying to lock the creature inside. But the beast inside ROARS and punches holes in the corrugated roof. Electrical wires SNAP and ZAP as the Beast inside (still unseen) thrashes in a monstrous rage.

INT. JACK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jack is still staring at Veronica's photo as he hears noises outside. He opens the balcony door, hears Miranda's screams and quickly runs down the balcony stairs.

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

Boole is still trying to stop Miranda from screaming. Panicking, he's almost suffocating her. She wrenches herself free and screams loudly.

EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

The hideous Beast explodes through the roof of the compound. As parts of the shattered building hit him, Jimenez runs for his life through the maze.

ANGLE ON BEAST

shaking off the ruined compound like a snake shedding skin. We reveal the monster -- a huge, hideous, female, twenty foot tall mound of raw flesh with a distorted head and a lipless slit for a mouth. She has two fleshy pincers for arms and three grotesque legs oozing with lumps of gore. Connected to the base of her spine is a long, leathery UMBILICAL CORD which trails off into a hole in the center of the floor of the compound. (Note: The creature's umbilicus has enough slack to follow it wherever it goes.)

Exposed in the moonlight in all her hideousness, the Beast cocks her head and listens. Miranda SCREAMS echo from the grotto. In response, the Beast tears free from the compound and rips a path through the maze hedges, stomping in a beeline towards the grotto, her leathery umbilicus trailing after her.

INT. CAVERN LAB - NIGHT - SAME TIME

Ash is in the middle of recording notes on a video camera attached to his computer. He is feverish and angry.

ASH

-- The metastasizing continues and I can do nothing about it. Containment of the expanding culture in the vats and stopping the cells from replicating has become so time-consuming that I am unable to focus on the fundamental problem -- to extract the Map from the girl. But I will get it --

Suddenly he cries out in pain and clutches his bad arm. He staggers to a cabinet and pulls out a medical pack. Inside it is a syringe and six small bottles of serum. He shakily loads the syringe with serum. As he does, he hears the ROAR of the Beast in the distance. Startled, he drops a serum bottle, which smashes on the floor.

ASH (CONT'D)

Damn it!

Sweating, his eyes wild, he hears the ROARING again. What is going on out there?! Putting off his injection for the moment, he feverishly activates the large computer screen.

EXT. THE FRONT GATES - NIGHT

THE SPIES on the top of the gate begin HUMMING. Their metal "eyelids" slide open.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

The POVs of both SPIES appear onscreen. Ash slips on the data-glove. Watching the screen, Ash controls the spies with the glove. INTERCUT SPIES detaching from the gate and flying over the villa. Ash watches as the Spies fly over the wreckage in the maze.

ASH (CONT'D)

No!

He rips off the glove rushes out of the lab.

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

Miranda is fighting off the panicking giant as a SHADOW looms over them. Boole looks up to see the Beast CRASHING through the roof, ROARING down at him. Snarling, the Beast snatches up Boole in its pincer claws and plucks him out of the shattered greenhouse.

EXT. GROTTO - NIGHT

Jack arrives in time to see the Monster dragging poor Boole through the bushes and into the maze. Jack bolts into --

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

Miranda is curled up on the floor, shaking. Jack rushes to her and takes her in his arms.

JACK
He's gone, Miranda. Are
you all right?

She nods and holds him tightly, trembling. In the distance, they hear the monster ROAR and Boole scream for help.

JACK (CONT'D)
Come on.

Jack takes her hand and they rush towards the maze entrance.

EXT. REAR OF VILLA - NIGHT

Ash drives off in his cart as the monster screams hideously. FOLLOW HIM to --

EXT. MAZE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Ash squeals the cart to a stop at the gate. Jimenez jumps out of the bushes in a panic.

JIMENEZ
She escaped!

ASH
You stupid ass! What did you
do to her?!

JIMENEZ
Shit, I didn't do nothing!
She just smashed through
the goddamn roof!

BOOLE
(screaming in
distance)
Help!

JIMENEZ
Boole!

ASH
(re his cart)
Get in!

The dwarf hops into the cart and they drive into the maze. A beat behind them, Jack and Miranda appear, see them driving in and follow them.

EXT. THE COMPOUND - NIGHT

Ash stops the cart in front of the wrecked compound. The Beast is gone. The side of the building is ripped out, revealing --

THE BEAST'S UMBILICAL CORD

coming out of the hole in the compound floor and trailing off into the torn-up maze.

ANGLE ON JACK AND MIRANDA

secretly watching them through an opening in the hedge.

BACK TO SCENE. Ash and Jimenez hear a ROAR somewhere in the maze and spin towards the sound, scanning the tops of the hedges, seeing nothing.

ASH (CONT'D)

Follow me. The umbilicus
will lead us to her.

Ash clutches his bad arm as he unlocks the shed. As the door opens, the three Nub Men stick their heads out, sniffing, anxious to get out.

ASH (CONT'D)

Back inside, you idiots!

The Nubs retreat inside. Ash enters the shed and emerges a shotgun and an axe. He locks the door and gives the axe to Jimenez. As he loads the shotgun, he whispers:

ASH (CONT'D)

Listen to me, Jimenez. When we
find the creature... do not hurt
her. She must not be harmed.
She's afraid. But she'll kill you
if she has to. Be careful. You'll
know she's near by her scent.

Ash and Jimenez begin following the umbilicus through the maze. Jack and Miranda sneak after them.

SERIES OF SHOTS - FOLLOWING THE UMBILICUS

We intercut our characters listening intently, tracking the Beast. The suspense builds as Ash follows the umbilicus around a corner --

ANGLE ON THE BEAST

When we least expect it, the monster suddenly appears in front of them. The Beast HOWLS while it waves Boole in the air like a rag doll.

BACK TO SCENE

Staring in horror at the creature, Ash hobbles up to the Beast, his voice cracking, barely able to stand.

ASH (CONT'D)
Stop! Put him down! Do you
hear me? Please! PUT HIM DOWN!

Ash's cries anger the Beast, who now goes completely berserk. Still clutching Boole, the yowling creature begins tearing up the hedges.

Ash stares up at the Beast in despair. Boole shrieks as the Beast crushes him.

BOOLE
Raphaela! Raphaela!

JIMENEZ
(to Ash)
Shoot! Shoot the bitch!

Feverish, Ash raises the shotgun, but hesitates. He drops the gun to the ground.

ASH
I can't! I can't!

Jimenez grabs the gun and fires twice, blowing the monster's hand off (the one holding Boole) at the wrist.

BACK TO SCENE

The monster's severed hand plummets to the ground, still clutching Boole tightly in its talons. The beast screeches as her severed muscles weirdly distort and expand. She tears insanely at the hedges, bellowing in a paroxysm of horror, then stomps towards Jimenez. The dwarf fires at the monster, but the gun clicks, out of shells.

JIMENEZ
Shit!

Jimenez throws the shotgun at the beast, which ROARS and grabs the dwarf in its remaining claws.

ON JACK

As Jimenez screams, Jack sees the axe on the ground. Instinctively, he grabs it and WHACKS the umbilicus, severing it in two.

The monster SHRIEKS and drops Jimenez. The severed cord, spewing effluvia, slides back through the hole in the floor of the compound.

The monster crashes to the ground, screeching a horrifying death rattle. Ash falls to his knees in shock.

ASH

No!

ANGLE ON THE GROUND - CAMERA SHAKE

as the earth vibrates and quakes briefly in resonance to the Beast's death cries.

ANGLE ON JACK HOLDING AXE

Hearing a choking sound behind him, he turns to see --

ANGLE ON MIRANDA IN PAIN - JACK'S POV

She clutches her chest and falls to her knees, as if there is a psychic connection. (Jack is the only one who sees this.)

ON ASH

Defeated, the old man kneels by the dying monster.

ON SEVERED CLAW

Jack rushes to Boole, whom Jimenez is trying to free from the severed claw. They pry the claws from Boole. Boole is gasping, his chest crushed and bloody.

ANGLE ON RAPHAELA

running into the center of the maze. Seeing Jack and Jimenez kneeling over Boole, pushes between them and takes his crushed, bloody body in her arms.:

BOOLE

Raphaela...

Boole touches her face with his big, clumsy hand, moans and shudders, then dies.

ON JIMENEZ

Tears stream down Jimenez's face. Incensed, the dwarf points accusingly at Ash.

JIMENEZ

You had the gun! Why didn't
you kill that bitch when you
had the chance?!

ON ASH

not seeming to hear him as he stares, trembling, at the dead monster.

ON RAPHAELA

sobbing over Boole's body.

ON JACK

Jack spots the end of one of the Beast's severed fingers lying on the ground. It's still writhing. Jack reaches down and secretly tucks the claw into his pocket.

CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE - JACK'S RASPY LIPS

back in the SURGERY ROOM, telling the story in the present:

JACK
 ...needed proof...or they'd
 never believe me...

INT. MOWBRY'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Mowbry and Kessel are observing Jack and listening via the intercom.

MOWBRY
 (turns to Kessel)
 Was he wearing a coat? Was
 there anything in his pockets?

KESSEL
 I'll check.

Kessel rushes out as Mowbry grabs one of photos of the virus, stares at it, tries to think. He clicks the intercom.

MOWBRY
 OK, Jack. The Beast and
 Boole were dead. Go on.

CLOSE - JACK'S LIPS

JACK
 (croaks)
 Yeah... poor Boole...

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTER OF THE MAZE - (BACK TO FLASHBACK)

Ash, regaining his strength, clutches his hidden arm.

ASH
 (to Jimenez and Jack)
 Help me with the boy...

Jimenez and Jack help him lift Boole's body into the back of the cart as Raphaela weeps.

ASH (CONT'D)
 (to Jimenez)
 Raphaela, we'll make arrangements for him tomorrow. Jimenez, bring him back to the house. At sunrise, I want you to hook up the trailer flat and tow the creature back to the lab. Now take Raphaela with you.

Muttering angrily at Ash in Spanish, Jimenez puts his arm around Raphaela and escorts her to the cart.

ANGLE ON MIRANDA

She runs through the scene of horror and hugs Jack. Jack pats her back.

JACK
 It's all right, Miranda.

ON ASH

Ash sees Miranda holding Jack and is shocked. He roars at her, his voice cracking:

ASH
 What are you doing?!

He staggers towards them, his eyes widening insanely. He picks the shotgun from the ground and shoves a shell into it.

ASH (CONT'D)
 Have you been talking to this insolent slug?! Have you?

BACK TO SCENE

MIRANDA
 I told him you were a liar.

Ash's trembling hands level the shotgun at Jack's head.

JACK
 Put down the gun, Ash.

ASH
 Shut up! Miranda! Get in the house! Now!

MIRANDA

No.

ASH

(livid; cocking
shotgun)

Go or I'll kill him!

She stares at him blackly for a beat. Then she gives Jack a kiss for the benefit of Ash and runs away through the maze. Jack wipes off the kiss.

JACK

Look, doc, she's giving you
the wrong --

Ash suddenly BASHES Jack on the head with the shotgun. Jack goes down hard. As Jack tries to get up, Ash brutally hits him again. Jack passes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK SCREEN

Click. A cigarette lighter illuminates in Jack's hand. He rubs his throbbing head and looks around, wondering where he is. Turning, he comes face-to-face with the three Nub Men, who yelp in fear at the sight of him and scatter into the darkness. Startled, Jack also yelps and drops the lighter. He feels around for it, curses, finds it again. Click. The lighter goes on again. Jack sees that he is locked inside --

INT. SHED - DAY

He examines the shed which is set up as living quarters for the Nubs, with water and food troughs and hay beds. Outside, he hears the storm rising, making the walls of the shed shudder. He finds a light switch, but it doesn't work. (The compound wiring was torn apart by the Beast.) He checks the shed door, which is locked. Jack finds the Nubs trembling together in a corner. Jack tries to make friends.

JACK (CONT'D)

Listen, don't be afraid of
me, guys. You're the monsters;
I'm the human.

The Nubs are terrified as he comes closer. He reconsiders:

JACK (CONT'D)

Well... maybe you got a
point there.

He reaches out his hand in peace.

JACK (CONT'D)

Friends.

He touches one of them on the shoulder. The creatures slowly move closer to Jack, touching his face experimentally with their hands.

JACK (CONT'D)

See? I'm a good guy.

(to himself)

Jesus is this weird.

(to Nubs)

Hey, can you guys understand me?

The Nubs shake their heads no.

JACK (CONT'D)

Well, then, how did you know what I just said?

The Nubs shake their heads no.

JACK (CONT'D)

Nice chatting with you.

He suddenly grabs his infected hand in pain.

JACK (CONT'D)

Shit.

(to Nubs)

Do you guys understand anything I'm saying?

The Nubs shake their heads no. The lighter goes out. In the darkness, Jack sees a thin horizontal strip of dusty light near the floor. He follows the strip of light to see --

ANGLE ON CORNER OF SHED

The wall and the foundation are partially uprooted by the damage to the compound. A strip of light shines through.

BACK TO SCENE. Jack kneels next to the thin strip of light. He can barely fit his hand through. Maybe if he had a tool.

He finds a kerosene lamp, lights it and looks around. He finds an automobile jack and brings it over to the slit in the wall. He shoves the jack's lift bar into the slit and begins jacking up the wall. Slowly, the side of the stable rises off its foundation. At the jack's maximum lift power, the slit is almost wide enough for Jack to slide through. But before he does --

JACK (CONT'D)

I need a brace...
 (looks around, sees
 nothing)
 C'mere, you guys.

The nubs come closer. He tries to explain what he wants by signals.

JACK (CONT'D)

Listen, you - hold jack -
 me - slide through.

(Translation: brace the jack so the wall doesn't crush him.) They don't understand. One of them licks his hand. Jack wipes it off on his shirt. He pats the nub on the head and rewords his explanation.

JACK (CONT'D)

Me - slide through - you
 - hold jack.

One of them suddenly understands and holds the jack tightly, bracing it. The others join him.

JACK (CONT'D)

Perfect.

Jack gets on his back and starts to slide under the wall.

EXT. SHED - DAY

Halfway through, Jack gets stuck. Suddenly Jimenez's dog appears next to him and licks his face. When his knees are almost through, INTERCUT the Nubs inside losing their grip on the jack, which begins CLICKING down at light speed. Jack yanks his legs free just before the wall SLAMS to the ground. The dog barks and licks his face again.

JACK (CONT'D)

Shhh!

Jack jumps to his feet, grabs a metal bar from the wreckage and WHACKS the lock off the stable door. Opening the door, he signals the Nubs to come out.

JACK (CONT'D)

Tit for tat, guys. You're
 free. Go. Go!

The Nubs stick their heads out cautiously. The dog runs to the Nubs, who pat him affectionately. The Nubs and the dog run away through the bushes. Jack's hand hurts. He examines it in the light.

CLOSE - INFECTED CUT

It's now much worse, badly festering and swollen.

ZOOM IN ON JACK'S FACE -- THEN QUICK FLASH CUT TO ROW OF VIDEO TAPES WE SAW IN ASH'S LAB

as Jack remembers...

BACK TO SCENE

His face flushed and feverish, Jack quickly exits up the path to the villa.

EXT. REAR OF VILLA - DAY

Jack descends the stairway to the lab.

INT. DARKENED LAB - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Jack enters and turns on the lights. He's woozy, his face covered in sweat.

INTERCUT JACK'S POV - DISTORTED VIEW

due to his fever. On one corner, the BEAST'S CORPSE lies on a trailer flat connected to an electric cart. The Beast's body has been dissected, the gore exposed. Right now Jack has one thing on his mind and rushes to --

SHELF OF VIDEOTAPES

The tapes are numbered 8-20. He grabs Tape 8, clicks on the big screen and plays the tape.

ON SCREEN

The tapes are narrated by Ash and accompanied by visuals of the experiments, computer models, etc. They are not slick productions, but rough home-made records for Ash's use.

Note: The following stylized MONTAGE intercuts with Jack impatiently fast-forwarding through the material.

ASH ONSCREEN

looking healthier, his right hand not infected. Ash is in the lab by the screen we are watching and speaking quickly. 3-D models of micromachines rotate on the monitor and show how they resemble organic cells in a plasma fluid.

ASH ON TAPE

April 2nd, continued from Tape 7.
The plant DNA has been a catalyst
for accelerated growth in the
human tissue sample.

The catalyst was modeled after bamboo, which can grow in one day as much as a child grows in five years.

ANGLE ON JACK

Impatiently ejecting tape and shoving in TAPE #9, which begins to play:

ASH ONSCREEN (TAPE #9)

We see a closeup of a 6" culture of human flesh with small, plantlike growths.

ASH ON TAPE (CONT'D)

Not only do the engineered plant genes keep the human cells growing indefinitely, but it causes the human tissue to sprout plant-like tendrils.

JACK IMPATIENTLY FAST-FORWARDS TO:

ASH ONSCREEN measuring the flesh culture, which has grown larger with several fleshy stalks sticking out, each stalk having a small "bulb" at the end.

ASH ON TAPE (CONT'D)

Day 22: The culture has doubled in size. The plant genes have sped up growth to an enormous degree.

JACK

(clutching his arm)
The infection, asshole. Get to the infection.

ANGLE ON JACK ejecting tape, shoving in TAPE #10.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO VILLA - DAY

Raphaela and Jimenez, followed by the dog, are carrying their bags down the steps. They load the bags in the jeep, obviously sneaking out. He whispers:

JIMENEZ

(Spanish; subtitled)
Wait here while I get the body.
I'll be right back...

Jimenez and the dog run around the corner of the villa.

PAN TO ASH hiding ominously behind the steps, watching them.

INT. CAVERN LAB - JACK WATCHING TAPE

Onscreen the cavern is now darker and lit by a red light source. The flesh culture has grown to three feet in diameter. Ash is holding a powerful flashlight.

ASH ON TAPE

I've discovered that the maturing culture must be kept in the dark. The sample reacts violently with light. Observe...

He signals and one of the Nub Men shines a powerful flashlight beam on the culture. Where the light hits, the flesh quivers, then expands in a burst of fleshy, plantlike tendrils. Ash signals the Nub, who turns off the light. The flesh immediately stops growing.

ASH ON TAPE (CONT'D)

The leaves and fruit, however, favoring the plant DNA, grow best in the ultraviolet wavelength. I may be forced to separate them --

His arm stinging him again, Jack feverishly fast-forwards the tape and hits PLAY.

Now ONSCREEN, the flesh sample is much bigger, measuring six feet in diameter. The Root Man is clumsily carrying a large steel vat and setting it in place. The flesh sample now has several four foot stalks, some bearing six-inch fruits like the ones in the garden. Ash is giving the largest pod a sonar-gram (such as a pregnant mother is given) as he watches the sonarscope:

ASH ON TAPE (CONT'D)

-- the splicing of plant and human DNA results in transgenic cells which reproduce through fruit-like pods. The fruit yields a half-human, half-plant embryo, four of which have survived.

ANGLE ON JACK WATCHING IN REVULSION

JACK

Jesus...

EXT. ENTRANCE TO VILLA - NIGHT

Jimenez, his bloodhound riding next to him, drives an electric cart carrying Boole's body to the jeep. Seeing the body again, Raphaela's eyes fill with tears. Jimenez rubs her back comfortingly.

JIMENEZ

(Spanish; subtitled)

Help me get him in the jeep.
We'll take him to the Federales.
Ash will be sorry.

As they remove the body from the cart --

MOVE IN ON ASH

He's heard enough. He's feverish; his eyes look psychotic. Ash clutches his diseased arm in pain and rushes off unseen around the corner of the villa.

INT. CAVERN LAB - JACK WATCHING TAPE

Onscreen, is an incredible sight: the flesh culture has grown ten feet and is in a larger vat and wired to a bank of electronic equipment. Three large bamboolike stalks have sprouted and grown so high, the ends disappear through holes in the cavern ceiling. (Note: These three stalks are the trunks of the three fruit trees.) Behind Ash, the Nubs are playfully prodding the vat of protoplasm with their fingers.

ASH ON TAPE

-- thus I've funneled the stalks through holes in the cavern ceiling and out into the garden. Banks of U-V lamps are used at night to stimulate growth and --

Amazed at this bizarre revelation, Jack ejects the tape, shoves in TAPE #19 -- and finds what he's looking for.

ASH ONSCREEN grimly displays his infected arm; a series of photos edited in show different stages of the infection. The Nub Men are waving at the camera behind him as he speaks:

ASH ON TAPE (CONT'D)

The infection has become serious. The snakebite had not fully healed when my careless handling of the fruit resulted in the micromachines entering the blood. The micromachines are now distorting the muscle tissue. Ironically, I designed them to resist human antibodies. The result: the infection is incurable.

MOVE IN ON JACK WATCHING

in horror as his gaze shifts from Ash's wound onscreen to his own festering cut and swollen arm.

JACK

My God.

EXT. THE REAR OF THE VILLA - NIGHT

Ash hurries around the villa, heading for the lab stairs.

INT. CAVERN LAB - JACK WATCHING TAPE #19

Onscreen, Ash is addressing the camera as he displays serum vials. On the computer are diagrams of artificial antibodies. Jack listens intently.

ASH ONSCREEN

The test is successful. The micromachines will slow down the disease's progression. If I had developed the serum earlier, a complete recovery would have been possible. But at this stage, I must keep it under control as long as possible. Until I can extract the map.

The tape suddenly cuts to static.

ANGLE ON JACK

his arm throbbing.

JACK

The serum.

Jack ejects Tape #19 and grabs the last tape, Tape #20.

JACK (CONT'D)

(to tape)

You. Show me where he keeps it.

He notices the label on the tape:

INSERT TAPE LABEL: Scrawled on the label is "TAPE #20 - RECORDS ON MIRANDA".

BACK TO SCENE. Jack is obviously curious. He shoves Tape #20 into the VCR. The tape jams and he tries to pry it out of the machine.

INT. STAIRWAY TO LAB - NIGHT

Ash descends the stairs to the lab.

INT. CAVERN LAB - NIGHT

Jack hears Ash's footsteps. He manages to eject the tape, stuffs it into his jacket pocket, snaps off the lights and ducks behind a crate. The door opens and Ash enters. Ash turns on the lights, opens his pancho and examines his arm.

ANGLE ON ASH'S INFECTED ARM

It is now even more horribly deformed and distended than before, the musculature throbbing grotesquely.

ANGLE ON JACK WATCHING

horrified. He looks at his own wound and is worried. It's in bad shape, and now has the same strange pulsating lesions we see on Ash's arm.

BACK TO SCENE. Ash staggers to the cabinet, removes and unzips the med kit. He takes out the syringe and quickly injects himself in his infected arm. The effect of the serum is immediate and visible: it reduces the swelling of the infected arm by 30%. Ash screams in pain as the arm pulsates and stabilizes in reaction to the drug.

INTERCUT JACK WATCHING as Ash falls to his knees, screaming in agony. In a moment, the pain subsides. Ash recovers, leaving the syringe and open med kit on the table. Feverish, he mutters as he staggers to his computer:

ASH

It's right that I do this...
I cannot let them stop me...

The big monitor crackles on.

EXT. THE FRONT GATES - SAME TIME

THE FLYING SPIES activate and pivot atop the gate. As before, their metal "eyelids" slide open, dilate and WHIRR.

INT. LAB - SAME TIME

Ash slips on his VR gloves and, guided by the monitor, detaches the Spies from the gate. He directs the Spies to fly to the front of the villa; they hover over Jimenez and Raphaela loading Boole's body into Jack's jeep.

INTERCUT JACK WATCHING ASH

EXT. VILLA FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Jimenez and Raphaela slide Boole's body into the jeep, looking around to make sure they're not seen. Jimenez starts up the jeep and they speed down the driveway.

INTERCUT SPIES POV ONSCREEN / ASH making them follow the jeep.

THE JEEP stops in front of the gate. Jimenez points a remote device at the blinking light and the gates WHIRR open.

ASH quickly uses his mouse to pull down a program: ACTIVATE GUARD. Now Ash gestures with the gloves, and in response --

EXT. THE FRONT GATES - NIGHT

THE ROOT STATUE at the gate activates by remote control, a red focal orb now blinking in its stumplike head. The Root, also a biomechanical creature, blocks the road, stopping the jeep with its powerful arms.

INTERCUT ASH GESTURING violently.

In response, the Root lifts the jeep into the air. Jimenez and Raphaela, still inside it, scream as the monster twists and crushes the jeep.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

ANGLE ON JACK, horrified. He jumps up and tackles Ash. Ash swings his massive and frightening-looking arm at Jack like a cudgel. Jack ducks and jumps to his feet. Ash gets up and begins stalking Jack around the lab.

FIGHT SCENE - And as they face off with each other:

ASH (CONT'D)

They were about to betray me,
Mr. Furlong. They are
responsible, not I.

JACK

Just like Boole was responsible?

ASH

Boole was the victim of a
failed experiment.

JACK

I'm starting to catch on, Doc.
You're a lousy scientist. Your
wife was the one with the brains.

ASH

You know nothing! I created
an entirely new species! I've
succeeded where everyone else
has failed!

JACK
(points to dead
monster on slab)
You call that a success?

ASH
More than you can comprehend!
She was perfect at birth! Until
I stupidly fed her the fruit!

Finding himself near the med kit, Jack defiantly grabs the syringe and serum bottles and stuffs them in his pocket.

ASH (CONT'D)
Put those back!

Ash swings fiercely at Jack, who is forced down a narrow corridor with lab tables on each side.

JACK
What's in the fruit, Doc?

ASH
Thousands of micromachines!
They reproduced by the millions
and caused her body to expand!
From the inside out! I had
to keep her umbilical cord
intact or she would have died.
I could barely look at her,
but I could not bring myself
to destroy her. I had to keep
her attached! ATTACHED!!

Ash begins to lose it, sobbing as he swings his arm back and forth at him, smashing equipment on the tables as Jack ducks desperately. As the narrow corridor dead-ends against the freight door, Ash feverishly moves in for the kill. Jack wrenches the freight door open slightly, squeezes behind it, then clangs the door shut after him. Through the door, we hear Jack panting as he yells through the door.

JACK O.S.
(muffled)
One question, Doc. What was
that thing's umbilical cord
attached to?

Ash leans against the door panting, and his face breaks out in a demonic grin. He grabs a bicycle lock from a shelf and quickly locks the door shut, trapping Jack inside.

ASH
You'll find out.

Ash turns and exits

INT. DARK TUNNEL BEHIND FREIGHT DOOR

Jack finds himself in an earthen tunnel. FOLLOW JACK as he walks through the tunnel, which opens into --

INT. A VAST DARK CAVERN

dimly lit with red light. A row of turbine generators hum quietly in a corner.

ON JACK SUDDENLY STUNNED

as his eyes refocus to reveal a shocking --

ANGLE ON TWENTY HUGE METAL VATS

in the reddish dark, each overflowing with MOUNTAINS OF FAINTLY PULSATING FLESH. We hear the ominous PEDAL BASS CHORD we heard before...

ON JACK

Amazed, he approaches the vats.

CLOSER ANGLE ON VATS

The mountains of meat are interconnected from vat to vat. The flesh HISSES as it rises and falls, slowly "breathing". Plantlike tendrils have sprouted all over the surface.

TWO THICK STALKS of cartilage-like meat grow up and vanish through holes in the cavern ceiling; these are the trunks of the two "fruit trees" in the garden.

ON JACK

his eyes following the stalking up to the ceiling. He begins to understand... He sticks his face over the vats, sniffs something acrid and mutters:

JACK

Ammonia...

He moves through the blood-red shadows to --

THE REAR VATS

SIX STALKS ENDING IN FOOT-LONG PODS are attached to life support equipment. The largest pod is hooked up to a sonarscope.

FOLLOW JACK to sonarscope. He turns it on. The screen lights up, showing a radarlike image of the pod interior - revealing a Nub Man EMBRYO inside. Jack is fascinated and repulsed.

A SEVENTH POD is cracked open, and a THICK FLESHY UMBILICUS rises to the ceiling from the pod's empty shell.

JACK'S POV - FOLLOWING STALK TO CAVERN CEILING

The top of the umbilicus is clamped to the ceiling; the other end of the umbilicus has been cut (by Jack with the axe) and hangs down from the ceiling clamp, dripping ooze into the vat below. Where the stalk has been cut, there is a empty HOLE in the ceiling emitting dusty sunlight.

BACK TO SCENE. Jack touches the stalk, verbalizes it:

JACK
The umbilicus...

ON THE LAST TANK

The thickest stalk of all rises from it and vanishes through the last hole in the ceiling; this is the trunk of the huge tree by the compound.

ON JACK

He hears a SCRAPING SOUND above and sees debris falling into a vat. He looks up.

THE HOLE BY THE UMBILICUS

Jimenez's bloodhound is squeezing its snout through the hole, sniffing the cave and making more debris fall down. The dog sees Jack, whines, barks, then pulls its head out for good.

BACK TO SCENE. Jack gets an idea. He grabs a hammer from a hook, stuffs it under his belt and hoists himself up onto the edge of vat. He yanks the umbilicus to test its strength. It seems secure.

FOLLOW JACK CLIMBING THE STALK

When he's near the top, his weight loosens the ceiling clamp from its moorings. As he reaches the top, the clamp gives way. Jack dives upward, catches the edge of the hole and hangs precariously from it. He looks down.

ON THE FALLING UMBILICUS

The cord crashes into the mountain of meat. The surface is volatile, and immediately engulfs the cord with hundreds of tendrils.

ON JACK

Hanging by one hand, he grabs the hammer and whacks at the hole until it's big enough for him to squeeze through. But when he tries to hoist himself up, he loses his grip. As he begins to fall --

ANGLE ON LEATHERY HANDS FROM ABOVE

grabbing his hand, saving him, and hoisting him up through the hole.

EXT. THE DESTROYED COMPOUND - SANDSTORM - DAY

The three Nub Men pull Jack up to the surface. They all tumble together in a heap. The bloodhound barks and licks Jack's face.

JACK (CONT'D)

Thanks, guys. I owe you one.

A powerful gust of wind blows. Jack looks up.

THE STORMY SKY

is darkening. Overhead an old CAR FENDER arcs through the sky, rattling in the wind with other debris. In the distance, a vast, black torrent of sand is approaching the villa.

BACK TO SCENE

JACK (CONT'D)

Follow me, guys.

Jack runs towards the opening which leads towards the maze entrance. Not understanding, the Nubs and the dog immediately run in the opposite direction. Jack stops and signals them, exasperated.

JACK (CONT'D)

No, this way.

The Nubs stop, puzzled, then follow Jack.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO MAZE - DAY

Jack and the Nubs peek around the hedge to see --

THEIR POV - ASH IN HIS CART

pulling up by the fruit trees. In the back of the cart are dead bodies partially covered. Ash, his bad arm under a pancho, loads a basket of fruit onto the cart.

ON JACK AND NUBS

Jack signals the Nubs. Jack, the Nubs and the dog exit the maze and hurry down the path to the grotto.

ON ASH

Without seeing them, Ash drives the cart with the bodies and fruit into the entrance of the maze.

EXT. GROTTO - DAY

Jack and the Nubs run into the grotto and freeze, finding themselves face to face with --

THE ROOT MAN

guarding the cottage, the red light blinking on its head. Seeing them, the creature immediately stomps forward. With the sound of crackling wood, the Root attacks, swinging its rootlike arms at them like hissing whips.

BACK TO SCENE

The monster's arms snap around the Nub Men, choking them. Jack grabs his pocket knife and hacks off the filaments as the Root gives a wood-crackling "shriek". Now the Root snaps its arms around Jack as the Nubs try to free him. Using his knife, he hacks himself free, gets an idea and yells at the Nub men.

JACK

Follow me, guys!

Jack runs towards the cottage.

ON NUBS

As Jack hoped, the Nubs (followed by the dog) immediately bolt in the opposite direction towards the path. Drawn away from Jack, the Root begins stomping after them.

ON JACK

Jack kicks in the locked cottage door, splintering it open.

INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

Miranda is asleep on the bed, a half-eaten fruit in one hand, fruit smudged on her chin and lips. Her hair covers her face. He shakes her awake. She jumps up, startled, and stares at him strangely.

CLOSE - MIRANDA

She's much older, about thirty years old.

JACK - STUNNED REACTION

BACK TO SCENE

Jack takes the fruit away from her.

JACK (CONT'D)
Don't eat the fruit.

MIRANDA
No!

Disoriented from sleep and acting like an animal, she fights him over the fruit, but Jack finally flings it smashing through the window. She struggles in his arms hysterically. He shakes her and yells:

JACK
Listen to me. I've got to get you out of here.

MIRANDA
No!

He drags her to a mirror, grabs her chin and makes her look at her face.

JACK
Look at yourself. Look!

She looks. Her eyes widen as she sees her face. She whimpers and touches her face, still hysterical.

MIRANDA
What has he done to me... what am I... what am I?

She sobs and SLAMS the mirror with her hand, cracking it. Jack grabs her by the shoulders and makes her listen.

JACK
Miranda, there's something wrong with your pituitary. You're getting older. That fruit is filled with things that make it worse. You're coming with me. I'll take you to a hospital.

She looks uncertain, dazed.

JACK (CONT'D)
That's what you want, isn't it?

ON MIRANDA

staring into space, her expression spooky, hateful:

MIRANDA
I want to kill him.

BACK TO SCENE

JACK

The hell with him. You need
a doctor, Miranda. I saw
him hypnotizing you. He's
screwed you up royally.
You're coming with me.

He grabs her arm and drags her outside.

EXT. GROTTO - THE RISING STORM - DAY

As they hurry down the path, Jack releases her and
clutches his arm in pain.

JACK (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ.

He falls to his knees in agony and rips open his sleeve.

ON HIS ARM

The infection has crept up his forearm. The muscles are
red and faintly throbbing.

BACK TO SCENE.

MIRANDA

What is it?

JACK

It's nothing.

He grabs the syringe and serum bottle from his pocket.
He drops the syringe; it hits the ground and the needle
breaks off. Jack curses. With Miranda's help, he
manages to stand and puts the broken syringe and bottle
back in his pocket.

JACK (CONT'D)

Never mind. Come on.

Taking her arm, he leads her toward the villa.

INT. MAZE - AT THE COMPOUND - DAY

Ash pulls the cart up to the incinerator, his long white
hair blowing in the blasting wind. Muttering crazily, he
throws the fruit into the incinerator.

ON BODIES COVERED IN BACK OF CART

He uncovers the dead bodies -- revealing only Jimenez and
Boole. He yanks Boole's huge body halfway off the cart
and tries to drag him towards the incinerator. But the
dead giant is too heavy.

BACK TO SCENE. Ash needs help. Muttering, he activates a laptop computer in the cart, puts on the data glove and gestures with it.

EXT. A GARDEN PATH - DAY

The three Nubs and the dog, chased by the Root Man, turn a corner and jump in bushes. The Root Man turns the corner and notices the DOG'S TAIL sticking out of the bushes.

INTERCUT NUBS IN BUSH/THEIR POV THROUGH BRANCHES

The Nubs tremble nervously as the Root Man approaches their hiding place. Just as the Root is about to grab them, its Focal Orb begins BUZZING and blinking. The Root freezes, then stomps off towards the maze. The Nubs react excitedly.

INT. HALLWAY BY LIBRARY - DAY

Jack and Miranda run through the hall to the staircase.

JACK (CONT'D)

Wait here, I have to get something.

As he rushes up the stairs, he doesn't notice the MIRANDA TAPE fall out of his jacket pocket. Miranda picks it up and reads the label.

ON TAPE LABEL - "RECORDS ON MIRANDA"

ON MIRANDA

Her face twitching strangely. She opens the library door and walks to the television.

ON TELEVISION

She slides the tape into the VCR.

INT. JACK'S ROOM - DAY

He bursts through the door, grabs his bag, frantically stuffs the adding machine rolls inside, sees the stacks of money, shoves it back into the paper bag and into his jacket pocket, then rushes out. STAY ON DOORWAY as he runs back in, forgetting something.

ON OLIVIA'S PHOTO

He picks it up; before stuffing it in the bag, he stares at her face. Regretfully.

JACK - REACTION

He's resolved to make things better.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

MOVE IN ON MIRANDA'S FACE

watching something shocking on the TV. She is shaking, sweating, her face twitching. We hear the TV out of frame.

ASH ON TAPE O.S.
 (breathless)
 ... a lateral incision in the
 pod...no signs of deformity...
 cutting the umbilicus...

EXTREME CLOSE - HER MOUTH

opening in a silent scream of horror.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

The bag over his shoulder, Jack vaults down the stairs.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Jack runs in to see the TV now HISSING with STATIC. Next to the blazing fire, Miranda is facing away from Jack. She's staring at the painting of Veronica.

JACK
 Miranda, let's go now!

MIRANDA
 (in a deeper, harder
 voice)
 I'm not Miranda.
 Breathing hard, she spins around.

ON MIRANDA AND PAINTING

Miranda is now 45, shockingly older. Nightmarishly, she looks exactly like the painting of Veronica.

ON JACK staring in disbelief.

CLOSER - MIRANDA AND PAINTING

She takes on the same eerie, hateful expression as the painting. As before. her voice is deeper, older, powerful.

MIRANDA
 You know who I am.

She picks up a remote control, punches PLAY and exits as the TV monitor crackles to life.

JACK

Wait!

As she storms out of the room, he is drawn to look at the screen.

ANGLE ON MONITOR

Onscreen is his worst nightmare. CLOSEUP of a large pod, still attached to its stalk, pulsing faintly on a surgical table by one of the vats. The pod begins to CRACK down the middle as we hear:

ASH ON TAPE

(breathless)

Here is the final result...after salvaging a piece of her flesh from the fire...splicing her DNA with plant material... making them grow ten times their normal rate... cloning an organism from her cells...

The pod CRACKS wide open, revealing inside a normal-looking FEMALE BABY surrounded by a sticky web of plant/animal gore.

JACK - REACTION

JACK

Jesus Christ.

ANGLE ON TV SCREEN

The baby cries as Ash's gloved hand gently scalpels the infant out of the oozing webs of the pod.

ASH ON TAPE

... a lateral incision in the pod...no signs of deformity... cutting the umbilicus from the center of the fruit... her breathing is normal...she's perfect...I've learned from my failure with her sister...

CLOSE - JACK

JACK

It was all a lie... Veronica wasn't pregnant...

ANGLE ON TV SCREEN

We see Ash on tape wrapping baby in swaddling.

ASH ON TAPE

...if she survives, hypnosis
will extract the sequence... I
will access the mother's memory
through the daughter...

CLOSER - JACK

JACK

(whispers)

She has the map...

He turns to Miranda -- but she is gone. He hears the patio doors SLAM. Jack grabs his bag and runs out of the library.

EXT. PATIO - VIOLENT STORM - DAY

Jack exits to the patio and meets the sandstorm full in the face. He squints ahead but sees no sign of her. FOLLOW JACK into the garden. Calling for her, his voice lost in the wind, Jack runs into the maze.

JACK (CONT'D)

Miranda! Miranda!

INT. MAZE - THE COMPOUND - DAY

Ash, his long white hair and his pancho blowing crazily in the wind, watches grimly as the Root Man is about to slide Boole's body into the incinerator.

ON JACK

turning the corner to the compound, finding himself face to face with Ash.

ASH

You've become quite a nuisance,
Mr. Furlong. I'm going to
have to hurt you now. Or
rather, my friend is.

He gestures with the data-glove. The Root creature drops Boole's body and stomps towards Jack, whipping its arms. The creature backs Jack towards the opening in the floor. Jack looks behind him at --

JACK'S POV - THE HOLE INTO THE CAVERN

emitting an eerie red glow.

ON HEDGE NEAR COMPOUND - THE NUBS

Hiding, they stick their heads timidly around the corner.

BACK TO SCENE. The Root snaps its whips around Jack, trying to tear him apart. Jack grabs a lawnmower blade from the wreckage and hacks himself free. The Root "shrieks", and yanks the blade out of Jack's hand. Jack defends himself as the Root whips him back to the edge of the pit.

INT. ASH'S LAB - DAY

POV VERONICA - walking quickly and ominously down the cellar stairs, through the lab, through the freight door into the red glowing cavern, approaching the electrical generators.

UPSHOT ON VERONICA, now cold, hateful, very much in control, throwing switches on the turbines.

QUICK SHOTS: DIALS, AMPS, FUSES overloading and EXPLODING. Equipment ringing the vats begins blowing, chemical containers igniting, bursting, overturning, the VATS BUBBLING, the lab now in sheets of flames.

ON VERONICA

surrounded by flames. She looks above, hearing a commotion through the hole in the cavern ceiling.

EXT. HOLE IN COMPOUND - DAY

The Root is whipping Jack back to the edge of the hole.

ON ASH

controlling the Root with his data-glove.

ON JACK

about to fall into the pit.

ON ASH

as a splintered 2x4 suddenly WHACKS him hard in the gut. WIDEN to reveal RAPHAELA clutching the board and SMASHING the laptop.

ANGLE ON THE ROOT

freezing as the computer crashes.

ANGLE ON THE NUBS

They rush forward and push the Root. Jack rolls out of the way as the Root plummets through the pit and into the cavern.

ANGLE ON HOLE

The Root crashes into one of the vats. On impact, the volatile surface rumbles and expands violently, shooting out pseudopods of gore.

ON ASH

Ash brutally WHACKS Raphaela on the head. She goes down, out cold. Jack dives at Ash. They fall over, fighting dangerously close to the hole. Jack punches Ash hard. Ash unleashes his expanding arm - which has grown grotesque beyond belief - and shoves Jack over the edge of the pit.

Jack catches the edge with one hand and hangs on. Ash smiles and is about to stomp Jack's fingers, when --

A POWERFUL HAND grabs Ash, wheeling him around. It's --

VERONICA

backlit by the blast. Her features are hidden from Ash by her long hair blowing across her face. She's holding a piece of the fruit. In her "new" older, cynical voice:

VERONICA

Bringing me back, Lawrence.
Bad idea.

PUSH IN as the wind blows her hair away, revealing...

ON ASH - SHOCKED

ASH

Veronica...

BACK TO SCENE

She takes a bite, shudders with ecstasy and tosses the fruit. With almost supernatural strength, she knocks Ash violently to the ground.

INTERCUT JACK HANGING OVER VATS - TRYING TO HOLD ON

INT. ASH'S LAB - DAY

Aflame, about to blow.

EXT. CENTER OF MAZE - ASH AND VERONICA

SUDDENLY - THE LAB EXPLODES!

The ground shakes violently as the explosion rips through the ground and spews balls of fire, setting the hedges aflame. Ash staggers to his feet and screams in a fury at Veronica:

ASH (CONT'D)

My lab! You did this!

She steps closer to him with a cruel smile.

VERONICA

You knew that I would. You were always a second-rate scientist, Lawrence. You couldn't duplicate my work, so you created this sideshow of incompetence. You botched everything!

Feverish, he wants to impress her.

ASH

That's a lie! Don't you understand what I accomplished? I discovered how to tap the cellular memory! Through music, Veronica! Releasing the music was the key! The cells in Miranda's brain released your musical ability into her mind... priming the pump... soon the information stored in your cells burst into the child's mind... into your mind... making her mind yours... she would remember the sequence of the map! This is how I would bring the map to me...!

She WHACKS him.

VERONICA

That's not why you brought me back. I destroyed the lab the first time when I found out you were selling my work to an elite club of immortals.

ASH

You were a fool, Veronica! They would pay billions to stay alive!

VERONICA

And to keep the map secret. To keep it for themselves.

(moves towards him)

(threateningly)

You destroyed everything we worked for. You failed and you knew that there was only one way to redeem yourself. By bringing me back so that I could do what you were too cowardly to do. To kill you.

ASH

No!

VERONICA

You brought me back knowing that I would kill you. You wanted me to kill you. To put an end to this.

She WHACKS him again.

ASH

No! It's a lie!

Filled with insane rage, he dives at her neck with his distorted arm and begins choking her.

ASH (CONT'D)

You're not Veronica! You're a clone! You don't exist! And I can bring you back, again and again, until you give me the map!

ON JACK STILL HANGING ON

Tendrils from the bubbling vats shoot up and wrap around his legs. He yells up at Raphaela, still lying unconscious near the edge of the hole.

JACK

Raphaela! Wake up!

ON RAPHAELA

coming to and seeing Jack's hand slipping from the edge. She grabs his hand just as he falls. He's heavy; it's all she can do to hold on.

ON ASH AND VERONICA

Hysterical, Ash chokes Veronica. Gasping, her face begins to discolor. She opens her mouth wide.

CLOSE - VERONICA

She gives out a PIERCING SCREAM. It is answered in kind by the THUNDEROUS BASS PEDAL we've heard before, a rumbling tone which shakes the ground.

ANGLE ON VATS BELOW JACK

bubbling as if enraged, shooting more pseudopods around Jack. With a burst of adrenaline, Raphaela yanks him out of the hole as the earth around them begins to vibrate and fissure.

CLOSER - VERONICA SCREAMING

as she's strangled.

ON THE VATS

In telepathic sympathy, the flesh begins to shoot twisting pseudopods up at the walls and ceiling.

ON THE NUBS

huddled together as a chunk of the floor gives way and tumbles below into the cavern. Terrified, the Nubs run away.

ON JACK AND RAPHAELA

The floor gives way, sliding them down towards the pit. They grab onto electric wires from the wreckage and hold on as --

THE BANK OF U-V LIGHTS (NOT illuminated) on the fruit tree scaffolding topple and CRASH through a huge crevice in the ground.

INT. CAVERN

The rows of U-V lights plummet into the cave and dangle over the vats.

ON JACK AND RAPHAELA

clawing their way up the wires, trying to pull each other out of the crumbling hole.

ON ASH STRANGLING VERONICA

Tendrils quickly slither around his body to his neck and begin choking him. He gasps and releases his grip on Veronica's neck.

ON VERONICA

Breaking free, she sees the rest of the huge U-V lights sliding below. She staggers to the large electrical switch on the wall of the wreckage.

DRAMATIC ANGLE ON VERONICA

As she reaches the switch, hundreds of tendrils from the vats wrap sensuously, unthreateningly around her ankles, calves, thighs, abdomen, breasts, neck and come to rest in a crown of fleshy thorns, a headdress for a high priestess. She stares eerily at Ash as he's choked by the vines, puts her hand on the switch, and smiles at Ash.

CLOSE - HER HAND

She pulls the switch.

INT. CAVERN

The banks of U-V lights emit BLINDING LIGHT which saturates the vats.

ON THE VATS

The twenty tanks of protoplasm suddenly EXPLODE in a monstrous chain-reaction -- two hundred tons of expanding flesh erupting, filling the cavern, exploding it to pieces.

ON JACK AND RAPHAELA

The ground beneath them erupts in a major earthquake, topping the maze around them.

SHOTS OF THE VILLA

as the ground opens up. The walls and towers shake and fall.

ON JACK AND RAPHAELA

Jack pulls Raphaela out of frame as the earth beneath them caves in.

INTERCUT ASH AND VERONICA / JACK AND RAPHAELA

The flesh erupts cataclysmically. The estate crumbles around them. The mountain of flesh rises out of the ground, nightmarishly doubling in size.

SHOTS OF DEVASTATION

as the storm covers everything with blasting sand.

ANGLE ON JACK AND RAPHAELA

They tumble into a gory crevice in the erupting mountain of meat. Pulled away from Jack, Raphaela is sucked into a deep crevice and covered with thorny vines quickly sprouting from the flesh.

Jack grabs a broken piece of metal from the ground. Wielding it like a sword, he hacks through the vines and pulls her free. They claw their way out of the roiling protoplasm and tumble into a sand dune. A gust of wind knocks them over. Clutching each other, they are blown across the sand and into a gully.

ON ASH AND VERONICA

As the estate falls away around them, Ash and Veronica are lifted higher and higher by the vast churning blob.

JACK AND RAPHAELA IN THE SAND

struggle to their feet, now five hundred yards away. They see Ash and Veronica perched atop the expanding flesh.

ANGLE ON VILLA

The flesh engulfs and dwarfs the entire villa, reaching apocalyptic proportions as the storm rages around them.

ANGLE ON ASH AND VERONICA

rising with the metastasizing blob. Now -- Veronica SHRIEKS as her musculature expands and nightmarishly bursts through her skin, now resembling the She-Monster, her meat enveloping Ash in pseudopods of gore. Sinking deeper into the folds of his wife's flesh, his eyes wide, Ash screams --

ASH

VERONICA!

Her flesh engulfs his body as she merges into the blob. Tendrils cover them together, slowly pulling them down below the surface of the churning sea of protoplasm.

ANGLE ON JACK AND RAPHAELA watching, horrified, 500 feet away.

THEIR POV - THE CATACLYSM OF FLESH

rips through the foundation of the villa. It pulsates and distorts to an enormous size in a preposterous orgy of horror.

With a deafening SCREECH, the Veronica-Creature engulfs the entire estate, pulling it into the earth and disappearing beneath a vast whirlpool of sand. The whirlpool shudders, then stills. The few remaining bits of debris are covered over by the rising sandstorm.

Everything is obliterated as if it had never been.

ANGLE ON JACK AND RAPHAELA

huddling together as the sand blinds them. Suddenly a figure approaches them, limping.

It's Jimenez's DOG. They grab the dog and hold him close, protecting him from the blasting sand.

A powerful gust blows Jack, Raphaela and the dog backwards over the edge of a steep dune. They roll together into a deep gully. At the bottom, they fight to keep themselves and the dog from being buried.

A cataract of sand slides over them. The sandstorm howls into the camera, burying Jack, Raphaela, the dog, as we --

SHOCK CUT TO:

JACK SCREAMING IN SURGERY ROOM

at the top of his lungs, his body convulsing. The med team quickly sedate him and strap him down.

DR. HEATH

His vitals are going down.

INT. MOWBRY'S CHAMBER

MOWBRY

Shit!

(rubs his face; to
intercom)

Keep him alive!

Kessel enters briskly with Chalmas and hands Mowbry three manila envelopes.

KESSEL

You were right. They found these in his pockets.

Mowbry rips open the first envelope and pulls out the stack of money. He rips open the second envelope and pulls out a plastic bag. Inside it are the last two bottles of Ash's serum and the broken syringe. Mowbry gives the serum to Chalmas.

MOWBRY

Give Furlong an injection of this immediately.

CHALMAS

Shouldn't we test it?

MOWBRY

Just do it!

Chalmas rushes out. There's a commotion in the surgery room.

DR. HEATH ON INTERCOM

He's going into cardiac arrest.

MOWBRY

Get that serum in him! Now!

An Assistant ENTERS.

ASSISTANT

Sir, we've got his daughter.
Should I bring her --

MOWBRY

Not now! Keep her outside.

But Olivia has peeked in the door and sees her father through the glass surrounded by surgeons.

DR. HEATH ON INTERCOM

He's going into cardiac arrest.

OLIVIA

Dad!

She peers through the glass, terrified, as --

INT. SURGERY - DAY

Chalmas rushes in and hands the serum to Dr. Heath, who immediately loads a syringe.

CLOSE - THE INJECTION

Heath injects the serum into Jack's swollen arm. The effect is almost instantaneous. Jack cries out in pain as the distended muscles in his arm cramp up, and then begin to shrink. The swelling goes down as Dr. Heath scans the equipment.

DR. HEATH ON INTERCOM

The injection is working. His
vitals
have stabilized.

ON OLIVIA

She hears this; tears fill her eyes.

FOLLOW HER as she rushes out of the observation cubicle and bursts into --

INT. SURGERY ROOM

Olivia, tears in her eyes, pushes through the doctors to her father's side. She takes his good hand in hers.

OLIVIA

Dad! Are you all right?

Jack's eyes flicker open. He holds her hands tightly and croaks through raspy lips:

JACK

Olivia... I told you I'd send
for you...

DR. HEATH
He's going to make it.

ON JACK AND OLIVIA

Tears stream down Olivia's cheeks as he smiles at her.

INT. OBSERVATION CHAMBER

Mowbry, watching all of this, rips open the second manila envelope, pulls out a plastic bag and holds it up to the light.

ANGLE ON PLASTIC BAG

It holds a piece of the Beast's clawed finger.

BACK TO SCENE. Mowbry's face hardens. Furlong's story must be true.

MOWBRY
(to the assistant)
Get MacBride on the phone.

INT. SURGERY ROOM - JACK AND OLIVIA

JACK
(to Olivia)
It's going to be all right,
Olivia.
(to Dr. Heath)
Where's Mowbry?

DR. HEATH
He can hear you on the intercom.

JACK
Mowbry!

MOWBRY ON INTERCOM
Yes, Jack?

Jack wipes Olivia's tears with his hand.

JACK
I quit.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ARBORETUM - FLOWER ROOM - DAY

The flower room is packed with well-dressed people holding champagne glasses in a party atmosphere. A banner: BLOOMING PARTY.

Jack, his arm in a sling, stands with Olivia at the front of the group looking at the rare orchids. The orchids have already opened and are very beautiful.

People are snapping photos. The Museum Guide holds up his champagne glass.

MUSEUM GUIDE

Thank you for coming to our little celebration. And may the phalaenopsis bloom forever.

Everyone toasts. Olivia whispers to Jack.

OLIVIA

Are these guys taking these plants a little too seriously?

Olivia raises her coke bottle to Jack.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

To the fire-eating surfers.

They clink glasses and drink. Jack sees someone entering the room and whispers to Olivia.

JACK

That's her! Raphaela!

Jack and Olivia meet Raphaela, now looking healthy and beautiful. She and Jack hug.

JACK (CONT'D)

Raphaela, this is my daughter Olivia.

Raphaela takes Olivia's hands warmly. Jack hands Raphaela a manila envelope from his jacket.

JACK (CONT'D)

This is for you.

She opens it and takes out the stack of money from the villa. She shakes her head and tries to give it back. Jack gently makes her take it.

JACK (CONT'D)

Take it.

She points to the angel on her hand and to Jack, and kisses his cheek. Then she hands him an envelope, gestures a warm farewell, and exits.

ON JACK AND OLIVIA

OLIVIA

What is it?

Jack rips open the envelope and pulls out --

A TAROT CARD - "THE FOOL" CARD

showing the traveler holding a flower and followed by his dog. The fool looks heavenward in trust as he steps towards a precipice.

ON JACK

smiling, putting it into his pocket.

JACK

It's a souvenir.

ON JACK AND OLIVIA

She shrugs. PULL BACK as they walk arm in arm through the crowd of people and giant flowers.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PHOENIX TECH HELICOPTER - FLYING - NIGHT

MacBride, Mowbry, Yukiko, Atenabe and the pilot.

EXT. HELICOPTER - FULL MOON - NIGHT

They are flying towards a hundred foot square excavation site in the middle of an empty desert. The site, illuminated by arc lights, is filled with teams of men scanning the sand with equipment.

ANOTHER ANGLE - THE HELICOPTER

lands next to the site. The old men exit the chopper and are met by Kessel.

KESSEL

I found the dog, sir.

MACBRIDE

Let him loose.

Kessel signals two men, who carry out a dog carrier.

ON THE OLD MEN

ATENABE

Why the dog?

MACBRIDE

It knows what we're looking for.

BACK TO SCENE

The men open a cage. Jimenez' dog steps out and runs into the middle of the site, sniffing the sand intently.

Suddenly, one of the MEN yells:

MAN

I got a reading here.

Kessel runs over.

ON SITE

Kessel checks the scope.

MAN (CONT'D)

It's big. Looks like some
kind of wreckage.

Kessel signals the old men, who excitedly walk into the site. Kessel and the team suddenly sniff something. Puzzled, Kessel mutters:

KESSEL

Ammonia...

ANGLE ON THE SAND

A half dozen weird, plantlike tendrils quickly emerge from the sand, growing waist-high in ten seconds.

BACK TO SCENE

Kessel, amazed, yells.

MAN

Sir! Look at this!

MacBride and the old men reach the team as more tendrils emerge around them.

ON THE DOG

whining and backing away from the plants. Terrified, the dog runs off the site and into a crevasse of rocks.

ON THE SITE

vibrating. We hear the LOW BASS PEDAL.

CLOSE ON MACBRIDE

Seeing the vibrations, the dog's reaction.

MACBRIDE

Get away! GET AWAY QUICKLY!

BACK TO SCENE

Puzzled, the men quickly begin wheeling the equipment away. Suddenly a THORNY TENTACLE emerges from the sand and violently impales Atenabe through the chest, whipping him into the air.

ANOTHER TENTACLE

appears and slices Kessel in two as the sand under them rises up monstrously.

MOWBRY

MOVE! MOVE!

WIDE SHOT - THE SITE

Too late. The VAST MONSTER OF PROTOPLASM instantly emerges with VAST JAWS filled with thousands of thorny teeth.

As the men scream, the monster, dwarfing the site, SNAPS its hundred-foot jaws over them in one enormous bite, grinding up the men and equipment and engulfing them in its gore.

THE DOG

watching from the crevasse of rock, whines in terror.

ON MACBRIDE

screaming as he is chewed horrificly by the huge thorns.

THE MONSTROUS JAWS

engulf the entire site, then instantly submerge back into the sand, disappearing as if it had never been.

THE SITE

The desert looks perfectly normal as the winds blow over the empty dunes.

THE DOG

is the only one left. Whining, he lies down in the crevasse, waiting.

ANGLE ON THE EMPTY SITE

The sand to one side of the site begins to stir faintly.

CLOSE - THE SAND

stirring, being pulled down...

ON THE DOG

seeing the sand move. Sniffing something, the dog crawls from the crevasse.

THE MOVING SAND

becomes more agitated, as if a hole is being dug from underneath. The dog reaches the spot, sniffs the shifting sand intensely, then begins to dig furiously.

NUB-MEN FINGERS

suddenly emerge from the swirl of sand, digging their way up.

THE DOG

barks and whines and digs faster, revealing the arms and head of --

A NUB MAN

who hoists himself up out of the hole. He reaches down and pulls out the two other Nub Men.

WIDE SHOT ON THE SITE

The dog barks as the Nub Men stagger to their feet and hug and pet the dog.

Then one points to distant mountains on the horizon. Exhilarated, the Nub Men begin running across the desert towards the mountains, casting long shadows across the sand.

As the dog follows them into the distance, barking happily at their escape to freedom, we slowly --

FADE OUT