MANIQUE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. OUTSIDE BURNING HOUSE - NIGHT

YOUNG SHANDEN HADD, an American boy of 15, his face a collection of bruises and scabs, watches a LARGE HOUSE become engulfed by FLAMES, the fire reflected off the mirrors of his eyes. He wears a knitted sweater with a lion on the front.

He stands against the backdrop of a forest shrouded in darkness, his arms dangling at his sides, his expression numb and pitiless.

A VOICE from beside him says meekly:

YOUNG TOMMY (O.S.)
You didn't have to.

Ever so slowly, he turns his head to the direction of the voice.

SHANDEN POV: It's his brother standing next to him - TOMMY, a boy of 8, wearing a knitted sweater with a tiger on the front. He looks well-nourished and cared for, not a scratch on him. A vague GOLD HUE radiates from his person.

He stares at his brother coldly.

YOUNG TOMMY (CONT'D)
They could have changed. We could have made them change. We can all change.

YOUNG SHANDEN
Not all of us.

They both turn back towards the burning house. The smoke expands and curls up from its shattered windows, the flames continuing to crawl across the roof and gnaw at the foundations. From the center outwards, it begins to collapse.

Young Shanden allows the faintest smile spread across his face. He slowly turns his neck back to Tommy.

SHANDEN POV: Tommy has been replaced by a child-size MANNEQUIN bearing his precise, uncanny likeness, still wearing the sweater and STARING AT SHANDEN/US, but with features made of wax and plastic.

A TEAR runs down Shanden's cheek. The reflection of the fire begins to INTENSIFY, growing so hot that it BURNS A SMOLDERING HOLE into his cheek as if it was made of paper.

INT. SHANDEN'S APARTMENT, ROME - NIGHT

TRISTA (30's, American) awakens in bed. She feels the pillow next to her, but no one is there.

Turning to her right, she sees that the bathroom door is ajar, and a light emanates from within. Slowly getting to her feet, she pulls on a robe and makes her way to the door.

INT. BATHROOM, SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Trista pushes the door open gently. There, her husband SHANDEN, (now in his 30's with grey-streaked hair), stands, SHIVERING in only his underwear, breaking out into cold sweats. He stares at the floor, oblivious to her presence.

TRISTA
Shanden? What are you doing?

No response. He appears fixated, lost adrift in his own mind. Trista grabs a bathrobe and wraps it around his shoulders. With a start, Shanden is suddenly brought back to reality.

SHANDEN
It's cold. I thought it was warm.

TRISTA
You're in the bathroom, it's all right. You had another bad dream.

SHANDEN
What time is it?

TRISTA
Around 4.

SHANDEN
Did I light the match yet?

TRISTA
I don't know what you're talking about, Shanden.

SHANDEN
Wasn't Tommy here?

TRISTA
Tommy? Your brother? I've never met him. Did you dream about him again?

SHANDEN
M-maybe.

TRISTA
Come on, let's sit down.

INT. KITCHEN, SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The kitchen is tiled with orange and yellow, with decoration belonging in the 80's.

Shanden sits at the table, now in a grey business suit and looking over a newspaper, as Trista pours herself a coffee behind him, now dressed in her own white business suit and blouse.

TRISTA
You have no idea how much these early-morning episodes worry me, Shanden.

SHANDEN
(distant)
Hmm?

TRISTA
I mean, that I think it might be time to get a professional opinion on this.

SHANDEN
Trista, I've already forgot about it. Don't worry yourself. I feel great today.

Trista takes her coffee to the table, but Shanden's eyes remain focused on his paper.

TRISTA
You clearly didn't feel great at 4 AM. Shivering, sweating, it can't be good. I just think we should talk about this. And what about your family?

SHANDEN
Things of the past should stay there sometimes. The lunch with my fosters is coming up, I can talk about it with them then.

TRISTA
I meant your real family --

SHANDEN
-- They are my real family. They took me in. They're good people.

TRISTA
And your brother?

SHANDEN
Tommy...Tommy is somewhere in the world. Fifteen years is a long time, he could be dead for all I know.

TRISTA
There are ways you could try to find him.

Shanden folds up his paper and stands up, kissing her on the cheek as he takes his leave.

SHANDEN
We'll talk later.

INT. OFFICE, SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Shanden enters his home office, a nicely decorated, wood-paneled space that looks to be tightly organized. Approaching his desk, he picks up his briefcase from the side, setting it on the table.

He retrieves various items for his work - a couple of files, pens, and his WEDDING RING from a ceramic holder. He handles these things delicately and efficiently packs for work. Trista appears in the doorway.

TRISTA
Have things been going well on production?

SHANDEN
Of course, everything is flowing nicely. Not much in the way of growth, as you know, but we're making the best of what we have. We're getting a shipment of the refined beeswax in today. And, I haven't forgot what we talked about. The business will expand abroad, I have been looking at new locations.

TRISTA
That's good. But right now, I don't want you putting any more stress on yourself.

SHANDEN
(checking his watch)
The business takes my mind off my little problems. I need that kind of stress. Anyway, I'm late enough as it is.

EXT. STREETS OF OSTIENSE, CITY OF ROME - DAY

Shanden walks through a crowd of TOURISTS gathering around the towering GASOMETRO in the industrial DISTRICT OF OSTIENSE, CITY OF ROME.

Holding his briefcase to his chest as he moves past them, as they seem utterly oblivious to his presence, snapping Polaroid pictures of the structure and speaking in various languages.

INT. SHANDEN'S MANNEQUIN FACTORY - DAY

The SOUNDS OF FURNISHING & SCULPTING WORK resound through the steel and concrete walls of a large factory with the specialty of assembling mannequins.

This corridor, strewn with MANNEQUIN LIMBS, is where the plaster casts are first poured: into LARGE VATS at the waist-level of a half dozen WORKERS in overalls, who stand over their stations attentively.

INT. HEAD OFFICE, SHANDEN'S MANNEQUIN FACTORY - DAY

Shanden sits at a Formica desk sorting paperwork. A Smith-Corona typewriter and a blocky word processor take up the bulk of the space. A shuffling noise is heard, and Shanden looks to the other side of the desk:

A WAX MANNEQUIN HEAD is slowly raised, peering up from the end of the desk at Shanden eerily. Its neck is LONG, like a stick being handled. A VOICE seems to come from it with a childlike whisper:

VOICE OF THE MANNEQUIN HEAD
Boss, boss - the rest of the shipment is here.

Shanden rolls his eyes at the mannequin head, but appears freaked out all the same.

SHANDEN
Cut it out, Bobby.

The puppeteer of the mannequin head stands up with a smile - it's Shanden's manager, BOBBY (late 20's, English). He proudly holds the mannequin's long, disembodied neck.

BOBBY
Never fails to get a chuckle.

SHANDEN
Only from the one doing it.

BOBBY
Come off it! Loosen up, boss. You know the game the lads have going on break - who can frighten the others best with the products we make.

SHANDEN
And I've told them before - it's extremely dangerous among the equipment, immature, and not at all what I'm paying them for. I guess I'll have to make another announcement.

Bobby holds up his hands in submission and sets the long-necked head cast down on his own desk in the corner.

BOBBY
No need boss, no need. I'll repeat the message myself.

SHANDEN
What about the shipment? Are they on it? Said it'll be here at noon.

BOBBY
Yes it will be, there's no need to trouble yourself. But, there is something else we need to discuss.

SHANDEN
Go on.

Bobby pulls up a seat to tell him the news, and lets out a little sigh. Shanden raises his eyebrows at the buildup.

BOBBY
There was a break-in last night...

Shanden frowns. Bobby extends a hand in a gesture for him to wait. He continues, slowly:

BOBBY (CONT'D)
We found that someone had cut the lock on the back gate with bolt cutters. Don't worry, we've replaced it immediately. But, when Antonio came in this morning, there was a small mess --

SHANDEN
-- What was damaged? Did they steal anything?

BOBBY
They only took three. Three male models from the refined beeswax storage. They left behind a few empty bottles, so I'm going with the theory of well, drunk kids. A classic one, right?

Shanden rubs his forehead.

SHANDEN
What use could any drunk teenager possibly have for a male mannequin?

Bobby lets out a short laugh. Shanden gives him a disapproving look.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
The insurance will cover them. Call my wife, please, and she'll make the report. And, sign for the shipment. I'm going to lunch with Susannah.

BOBBY
Oh, what are you seeing today?

Shanden stands up, buttoning his suit.

SHANDEN
The Roman pyramid.

EXT. STREETS OF OSTIENSE, CITY OF ROME - DAY

Shanden stands with his adopted daughter, SUSANNAH (early 20's, wears a pink beret hat and wool purse) looking at the PYRAMID OF CESTIUS behind the fence.

SHANDEN
How's your school?

SUSANNAH
Good.

SHANDEN
Good.

They both look at each other and laugh.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
Let's keep walking, maybe I'll get some more details in a minute.

SUSANNAH
It's actually been really interesting. They gave us these articles to study on different treatments, that are still listed as experimental.

SHANDEN
So, you're going to school to be a mad scientist?

SUSANNAH
Hmm, something like that.

SHANDEN
Tell me about one.

SUSANNAH
Well, for example, ketamine.

SHANDEN
That's an illegal drug, right?

SUSANNAH
Currently, yes. But they've been running these tests on patients with conditions like OCD, childhood trauma, severe depression, in safe, supervised environments --

SHANDEN
-- I should hope so.

SUSANNAH
Of course. Anyway, they're having a great success rate.

SHANDEN
How does that work exactly?

SUSANNAH
It's hard to describe. Let's say, in a patient that 'blacked out' certain events, or entire years, from their life, for whatever reason, because the memories were too horrible to live with. The drug might help them rediscover those memories from a completely different perspective, and with guided help, finally overcome them.
(beat)
It's classified as a psychedelic, so it can give people some pretty wild side effects, but if it helps people recover, who knows what possibilities it could have.

There's a pause. Shanden thinks this over.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)
Anyway, that's the idea behind it. I hope you're not too concerned about what they're giving us at Sapienza now.

SHANDEN
Not at all. I know you reach your own conclusions. And it is really interesting.
(beat)
How do you like your camera?

Susannah pulls out a pink Polaroid camera from her purse. She steps back from Shanden, and quickly snaps a picture of him.

He groans, not expecting it. Susannah laughs, taking the picture out and handing it to him.

SUSANNAH
So, we're on for next week?

SHANDEN
Of course.

SUSANNAH
What will we be seeing?

SHANDEN
We could go towards the river, see the Castel Sant'Angelo again.

SUSANNAH
That sounds perfect to me. Before it gets too hot.

INT. DINING ROOM, SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Shanden and Trista sit at their dining table, having a dinner of Chicken Cacciatore with red wine. Soft jazz plays in the background.

TRISTA
You two had fun?

SHANDEN
She still loves her camera. Got a picture of me before I could say no.

Trista smiles as she sips the wine.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
How did the report go?

TRISTA
They'll cover the three. I'm just thankful there wasn't other theft. They could've done anything to the place. Remind me again why we don't invest in full-time security?

SHANDEN
You're right. It makes no sense. We need a guard there. I'll look around.

They continue eating their meal.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
In the paper this morning, I was reading about this woman PI, a private investigator in the city, and the cases she's been able to solve. Most of it just sounds lucky --

TRISTA
-- Or fishy. I read about her too. Bianchi, right?
(MORE)

TRISTA (CONT'D)
She takes on some weird cases...like the woman who thought her mother's ghost was stealing from her.

SHANDEN
Yeah, maybe. But her quotes in the article sounded determined, at least.

TRISTA
You're still a little fuzzy on your Italian, honey.

SHANDEN
(smiling)
Maybe we should hire her to look into the accounts.

Trista pauses eating. She sets her knife and fork down on the plate with a clink. Shanden knows something is up. Even the jazz music seems to SLOW DOWN.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
What is it?

TRISTA
The last inventory fell quite a bit short than what the previous assessment would suggest.

SHANDEN
I know. We lost three mannequins.

TRISTA
Much more than three, according to what I've been seeing.

SHANDEN
What do you mean? We've had thefts I don't know about?

TRISTA
I'm not saying it's theft. But, on the last summary I worked on with Bobby, there are all these commissions that I wasn't made aware of. Commissions for a few mannequins at a time, spaced out over many months. They're all for different designs, different poses, and for different companies.

SHANDEN
We've started taking commissions abroad for a year now, Trista. At your suggestion.

TRISTA
Yes, but I had a look at Bobby's files, and they may all be going to the same place.

Shanden is completely confused. He starts rubbing his temples. A bead of sweat trickles down his forehead.

SHANDEN
You think Bobby is working with a rival company?

Trista remains silent. She eats her chicken calmly.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
Where are they going to?

TRISTA
Hard to say. It could be somewhere in The Netherlands, based on the tariffs.

SHANDEN
That doesn't narrow it down. We need to find out more.

TRISTA
You should ask him.

INT. SHANDEN'S MANNEQUIN FACTORY - NIGHT

Shanden, searching and uncertain, wanders the dark halls of his factory after hours. He passes open doors to warehouses and a number of cluttered workbenches with MANNEQUIN LIMBS.

SHANDEN POV: Looking ahead, he sees a room with large double-doors. Inside, it is nearly pitch black, but HANGING PLASTIC SHEETS can be seen, all in a row.

He grinds his teeth, and continues forward.

INT. STORAGE, SHANDEN'S MANNEQUIN FACTORY - NIGHT

Shanden enters among the lines of hanging plastic on hooks. They each cover a MANNEQUIN, wired to the hooks, the features obscured by the dust cover. Shanden stares at them as he passes along down the line, still searching.

He pauses as he approaches one of the hanging body molds. He turns his neck to the side to look at it.

SHANDEN POV: The mannequin stares back at HIM/US, through the plastic, soulless.

Shanden's hand reaches out. He RIPS the plastic from the mannequin's face.

SHANDEN POV: It's BOBBY underneath, the rest of his body covered in the plastic, his shirt collar wired to the hanging hook. He looks FRIGHTENED.

He speaks with the same strange voice he used earlier:

BOBBY
Shandy -- Shandy -- what use could I have for mannequins?

Shanden's face twists into an ANGRY FROWN.

INT. BATHROOM, SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Shanden AWAKENS, standing once again in his bathroom, shivering and sweating. It takes him a moment to gather his bearings, remembering where he is and that he was only dreaming. He SIGHS.

EXT. STREETS OF OSTIENSE, CITY OF ROME - MORNING

Shanden takes his daily walk to work. He wears his grey suit, holds his briefcase, and looks determined. He passes another CROWD OF TOURISTS, taking more pictures of the Gasometro. There seems to be an even bigger crowd than last time.

On instinct, Shanden STOPS, and turns to see what they're all so excited about. A SENSATION OF DREAD HITS HIM.

A MANNEQUIN - the same as the ones in the factory - HANGS SUSPENDED from the top of the industrial tower. Its bendable arms have been TWISTED behind its back, where the rope has been tied. Its head hangs, its legs dangle lifelessly.

It wears CLOTHES - a knit sweater with the design of a lion, and blue jeans. The same clothes from Shanden's dream.

A few POLICE OFFICERS have gathered around the base of the structure. They speak in ITALIAN to a small crew of FIREMEN, who have raised a crane up towards where the mannequin hangs. The tourists continue TAKING PICTURES and gossiping.

Shanden starts to SHIVER. He steadies himself, unable to take his eyes off the bizarre display. Gritting his teeth once more, he turns and resumes his pace, but in the opposite direction of where he was headed. It's time to go home.

INT. SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Shanden enters his apartment, clearly still in a daze. He sets his keys down on the bench, where he sits to remove his shoes. He soon stops, staring at the floor.

Trista is in the kitchen, visible from the entrance, making lunch.

TRISTA
You're home early. Did you forget something?

SHANDEN
(distant)
Yes. Yes, I must've.

Trista approaches him, placing a hand on his shoulder. She gives it a squeeze.

TRISTA
What's the matter? Did you talk to Bobby?

SHANDEN
Last night, I did. He's - he's not sure. The mannequin was out in public.

TRISTA
What? In public --

SHANDEN
-- I need to go.

He gets to his feet, not looking directly at her.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
Lunch! I have the lunch with my fosters today. I'll see you later.

He makes for the door. Trista is left bewildered.

I/E. SHANDEN'S CAR, HIGHWAY - DAY

Shanden DRIVES on the ROMAN ROAD, hands glued to the wheel, staring deep in thought.

He turns, seeing a LARGE BILLBOARD set up next to the highway leaving the city: it depicts two children, both looking sad, being separated from each other by disembodied white-gloved hands. It reads in big block letters:

“DOV'È TUO FRATELLO?”

Shanden takes in a deep breath as he SPEEDS past it.

EXT. FOSTER COUPLE’S ESTATE - DAY

Shanden gets out of his car parked in a wide dirt driveway that curves toward a VILLA-STYLE HOUSE with terracotta roof - not massive, but a peaceful estate.

BETHANY, 50’s, an American woman with red hair, comes rushing out from the back of the house upon seeing Shanden.

BETHANY
Shanden! How good to see you again my dear!

SHANDEN
Hi, Beth.

She gives him a tight embrace and messes his hair as if he were still a child. Taking him eagerly by the hand, she starts leading him to the house.

BETHANY
(fussy)
Come with me, Richard is just fixing the sandwiches right now. We have so much to talk about!

SHANDEN
Yes, we do. And how are you both?

BETHANY
Oh, you know. Richard is counting pennies again, and I feel guilty, cause I’m the one who told him to invest in the surgery after all!

SHANDEN
Oh. And where was it done?

BETHANY
Some place in Amsterdam. They’re famous for their cosmetics over there!

EXT. BACK PATIO, FOSTER COUPLE'S ESTATE - DAY

Bethany appears leading Shanden to the estate's lovely back patio - complete with umbrella, glass coffee table, and wicker chairs. Waiting for them is her husband RICHARD, 50's, sitting in a chair with BANDAGES on his cheeks.

BETHANY
Richard! Look who turned up!

Richard turns his head slowly to look at them. He looks like a friendly father figure, but there is an overly-excited flare to his eyes that isn't helped by the bandages covering surgery scars - they seem to be DAMP with GREENISH SWEAT.

RICHARD
Hey, buddy! We've been missing you!

SHANDEN
So I've heard...

Bethany continues leading him by the hand down into his seat in a circle with them. She looks at the bare coffee table with indignation.

BETHANY
Richard! Now just where are the finger sandwiches?

Richard starts stuttering.

BETHANY (CONT'D)
I really do have to do everything myself around here, don't I?

RICHARD
Hun, those sandwiches have mayo. It's not good for my scars.

Shanden looks positively puzzled. Bethany starts wringing her hands and cracking her fingers.

BETHANY
Oooh, ohhh, Richard - one of these days, I tell you!

She bustles off through a sliding panel door into the house. Richard turns back to Shanden with a 'what can you do?' look.

SHANDEN
So, you two haven't changed at all, I see.

RICHARD
That's us, my boy. But come now, tell me everything! Especially everything you wouldn't want to share with Beth!

Shanden gives a nervous laugh. He gestures at his own cheeks.

SHANDEN
What was the surgery for? I didn't think you needed anything done --

RICHARD
-- Wasn't a necessary thing in the strictest sense, I've always looked good, but Beth and I kept getting these vouchers for this clinic in Amsterdam that's quickly becoming world-renowned for their surgeries: age-reversal, you name it. So, I thought, couldn't hurt!

Bethany comes out with a plate full of finger sandwiches, placing it on the coffee table and taking her seat. She starts eating from the plate, savoring every bite.

BETHANY
I'm real curious to see the results when they come off.

RICHARD
Me too hun, me too. And the surgeon I had, the owner, what a gentleman. He's American too. Ah, you have to love self-made people, especially in foreign countries. It's what we always encouraged you to do, and see how it pays off!

Shanden nods. He regards the sandwich plate with a nervous look.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
How's the factory doing, anyway?

SHANDEN
It's been good. We're getting plenty of orders on a regular basis.

BETHANY
Oh, and how is Trista? We love that woman, don't we, Richard?

RICHARD
Sure do. She was the one for you, buddy! A real professional dame, that one.

SHANDEN
She's fine as well. Susannah is coming along in her studies, and --

BETHANY
-- Oh, how wonderful. Not a bad thing in the world, is there?

SHANDEN
Now look, I had a question I need to ask. It's about Tommy.

There is a pause. The couple's ever-present smiles fade. They look at each other, then back at Shanden, like he just dropped a bomb on their sunny day.

RICHARD
Tommy, eh? Well Shand, we umm...lost contact with his fosters a while ago.

SHANDEN
How is that?

BETHANY
It's like he says, dear. We haven't heard hide nor tail of them for at least...jeez, how long do you think it's been, Richard?

RICHARD
Definitely before our retirement. Most definitely before your aneurysm.

SHANDEN
It's very important that I find out where he is. This whole thing...it's lingered too long. You both can understand, right? He's my brother, and I need to face things.

Bethany lays a hand on Shanden's shoulder and starts massaging it with great concern.

BETHANY
Don't get flustered dear, please! We're here to help.

RICHARD
That's right, son. We both figured this day would come, sooner or later. If now's the time to find Tommy, then we'll be with you all the way.

Shanden takes a deep breath. He seems to dislike the faux sympathy, and gently pushes Bethany's hand away. Richard leans in closer.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
But, why this sudden determination?

He picks up two finger sandwiches, and stuffs both into his mouth, licking his lips, not breaking eye contact with Shanden.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
I mean - why now? How long has it been, Bethany?

BETHANY
Eighteen years.

RICHARD
Wow, eighteen years. We were different people before then, too. You had all that time, why didn't you do something sooner?

His words, whether harmless or not, cut Shanden like a knife. He gets up out of his chair, straightens his suit, standing over both of his foster parents, almost intimidating. Richard smiles, noticing his clothes for the first time.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Oh, you're all dressed up for us! Grey really is your color, isn't it?

Shanden stares at Richard for a moment - he might be preparing to strike him, or shake his hand. Instead, he says:

SHANDEN
Please look through your books and try to find Tommy's fosters' address. I would be thankful.

Richard winks at him. Bethany nods robotically.

RICHARD
You got it, son.

Shanden turns to leave. Richard and Bethany both turn their heads to watch him go, eating more of the sandwiches. Shanden then stops, turning back.

SHANDEN
What was the name of that place in Amsterdam?

RICHARD
(to Bethany)
What was it, hun?

BETHANY
Something like the Man - the Clique - oh, you know how my memory is!

Richard shrugs at Shanden, scratching under his bandages.

RICHARD
No luck, we're not as sharp these days as you!

Shanden continues walking away.

I/E. SHANDEN'S CAR, HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Shanden is back in his car, driving across the same highway. It is SUNSET now, and the scenery is bathed in REDDISH LIGHT. Shanden grips the wheel tightly, still lost in thought.

The BILLBOARD from before approaches, visible through his windshield. The reverse side can be seen: the image of a lion behind bars, looking pissed off. The text reads:

"NIENTE PIÙ GABBIE"

Shanden speeds on past it, flooring the gas.

INT. HEAD OFFICE, SHANDEN'S MANNEQUIN FACTORY - AFTERNOON

Shanden hurriedly enters the office. He looks around, no sign of Bobby or anyone. Going to Bobby's desk, he picks up a NOTE that was left for him, reading:

"Had to run to the locksmith - back in a flash!"

Shanden tears the note in two. Then, the TELEPHONE on his desk RINGS LOUDLY.

He looks at it warily, letting it RING a second and third time. He paces to it, and picks up the receiver.

SHANDEN
United Mannequins, CEO Shanden Hadd speaking.

INT. ROME POLICE STATION - SAME TIME

OFFICER AMADEO, 30s, an Italian policeman, calls Shanden from a busy precinct - telephones RING, papers are shuffled between desks, and a bevy of OFFICERS stroll across the room.

OFFICER AMADEO
(into telephone)
Mr. Hadd, this is Officer Amadeo of the Polizia di Stato. I'm calling about a disturbance this morning in the Ostiense Quarter. If you are not aware, a mannequin was found hanging from the Gazometro structure, which is currently owned by a subsidiary company of the city.

INT. HEAD OFFICE, SHANDEN'S MANNEQUIN FACTORY - SAME TIME

Shanden grinds his teeth. He starts twisting the telephone cord around his fingers in tension.

SHANDEN
Yes, I may have heard something about that.

INT. ROME POLICE STATION - SAME TIME

Officer Amadeo flips through a file on his desk while he continues speaking into the phone.

OFFICER AMADEO
Your manager called in last night with a report that your factory had been broken into, and three of your - mannequins - was stolen. Is that correct?

SHANDEN (V.O.)
(distorted, from phone)
That is correct.

OFFICER AMADEO
The mannequin that was used in this display was from your factory.

INT. HEAD OFFICE, SHANDEN'S MANNEQUIN FACTORY - SAME TIME

Shanden takes a pencil from a jar of supplies and starts scribbling on a piece of paper as they talk.

SHANDEN
That is disturbing to learn, Officer.

OFFICER AMADEO (V.O.)
(distorted from phone)
Yes, and there are few leads for who did it, or what it could mean. Do you have any ideas, Mr. Hadd? What was the purpose for this public demonstration?

SHANDEN
I'm as much in the dark here as you, Officer.

OFFICER AMADEO (V.O.)
We will drop by your factory soon to investigate the theft further.

SHANDEN
That would be considerate of you, but we are insured here and have already tightened our security. If you have further questions, please call me at a later date.

Shanden hangs up the phone. He sits back in his chair, nerves jangled. Looking down at the paper he wrote on, it reads: "Where is Alessandra Bianchi?"

Shanden closes his eyes, falling asleep in his chair. The noises of the factory continue ringing in the background, reaching a LOUD PITCH...

CUT TO:

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Shanden waits in a sparsely-decorated lounge area, with fluted lamps and floral tiled walls. He looks at a coffee table in front of him, cluttered with magazines.

Picking one up to inspect it further, it reads "La Sensazione del Detective Privato!" in large letters.

A door to his side opens, and ALESSANDRA BIANCHI (30's, in trenchcoat and fedora) steps out, a wry smile on her face.

ALESSANDRA
Mr. Shanden Hadd?

SHANDEN
Yes, that’s me. I called about --

ALESSANDRA
-- I know what you called about. Actually, I think all of Ostiense knows at this point. Step into my office.

INT. ALESSANDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Alessandra guides Shanden into her office, to a desk with various awards and mementos. They take their seats.

ALESSANDRA
Tell me, what does the ‘man of mannequins’ want here, hmm?

SHANDEN
You like cutting right to the chase, it seems.

ALESSANDRA
I’m sure you’ve done research on my methods.

SHANDEN
Yes, I did. ‘The Mystery in the Psychic’s Gem’ and all that. Do you also find it amusing that people still love the tabloids’ tales?

ALESSANDRA
The truth can sometimes be hidden under all that, but with my cases, I assure you Mr. Hadd, the truth does not need extra color.
(beat)
Tell me, from your own stance, why mannequins?

SHANDEN
Excuse me?

ALESSANDRA
You heard me. What is your game concerning the display everyone is talking about?

SHANDEN
That wasn't me. It is clearly someone who is stalking my factory, and my life, for that matter.

ALESSANDRA
If I was the police, I would pass it off as performance art. But, I'm guessing you have something else to say deep down.

Shanden pauses. Alessandra studies his face, for an awkward moment.

SHANDEN
Listen, I came here to hire you for two reasons. First, there is the break-in --

ALESSANDRA
-- And, you have a phobia of police?

SHANDEN
It's not about if I trust them or not to find out who did that. I believe that the break-in was done by the same person, either within my company or abroad, who has been working on commissions for another business outside of Italy.

ALESSANDRA
Which business?

SHANDEN
Another company. Perhaps in The Netherlands, or...I don't know. Everything is unsure right now.

ALESSANDRA
What is your proof that all this is linked?

SHANDEN
That's what I need you to find. It's what you do, isn't it? Or am I right to trust the police around here?

ALESSANDRA
Hmm. My reasonable side says that is still your best option.
(MORE)

ALESSANDRA (CONT'D)
But, my prospective side says...you were right to come to me. The 'great' Alessandra Bianchi. Even psychics cannot fool her.

She holds out her arms in a proud, exuberant gesture.

ALESSANDRA (CONT'D)
One more thing then, before we get down to details. There is something in your eyes, when you speak of this display. It was something personal. I may become convinced it wasn't you who did it after all. So, tell me. What is personal about this game?

SHANDEN
It's just like that, you've said it twice now. It's a game. I don't appreciate being toyed with.

ALESSANDRA
Spoken like a true businessman. Very well, I won't press any further on that, at least for now. Is there anyone in particular in your company who you would suspect of engineering this?

SHANDEN
Yes. My manager, Bobby Lind. He seems to have been handling these shadow commissions. According to my wife, they were all under different titles.

ALESSANDRA
Hmm. And your wife? What does she do?

SHANDEN
She is the factory's bookkeeper.

Alessandra raises one eyebrow coyly.

INT. DARK HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Shanden walks through his family's house - the same that was on fire - the space is almost pitch-black, bathed in twilight and shadows. Wandering the space, he enters a living room lounge area situated across from the foyer.

Ahead, we can see the KITCHEN. His MOTHER, a woman of 40, toils on a meal at the sink, her back faced to us.

YOUNG SHANDEN
Mother? Mother, is that you?

He begins approaching her.

YOUNG SHANDEN (CONT'D)
What is for dinner?

SHANDEN POV: His hand reaches out to grab her shoulder, and moves her gently away from the counter. There, sits a LARGE GRILL, RED-HOT, and on it a pair of PIG'S FEET SIZZLE TO A CRISP.

A distant SCREAM is heard, either from somewhere in the large house or from inside Shanden's own mind.

INT. KITCHEN, SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Light floods the kitchen of Shanden's flat. He shambles in from the right side, in his robe.

SHANDEN
Trista?

He turns, seeing Trista sitting in their own lounge space, past the dining table. She looks up from checking over a binder with a pencil and ruler.

TRISTA
Honey? Good morning. A package arrived from Richard and Bethany. It's on the bench.

Shanden walks toward the entranceway, seeing a pile of mail there on the bench, one large envelope with the shape of a book. He picks it up, tearing at the foam and revealing the contents: an old, leather-bound PHOTO ALBUM, with a NOTE.

The note reads: "We dug this up! On Page 7 there's a photo of Tommy that they sent us from the States!"

Shanden eagerly opens the album to Page 7. On the bottom right, he spots it: a POLAROID PICTURE of a WHITE-SUITED YOUNG MAN, with SMOOTH BLACK HAIR and a wry little smile. He also has BANDAGES on all 10 of his fingers.

Shanden stares at the picture, trying to make sense of it.

TRISTA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Don't forget - Susannah is coming over for dinner tonight! We're having bacon, right?

Shanden is snapped out of his daze by this, and closes the photo album. His voice reflects his next attempt at maintaining normalcy:

SHANDEN
That's right! Breakfast for dinner, her favorite.

He looks back down to check the rest of the mail. A flyer brochure sticks out from the rest. He picks it up to examine it, and sees the fancy logo of a company called "The Manique Boutique".

Below, in cursive letters, it advertises "Vasectomy Reversal Surgery". Shanden quickly hides it in his robe.

INT. ALESSANDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Alessandra sits at her desk, on the telephone. She speaks on the phone with Officer Amadeo, in SUBTITLED ITALIAN.

ALESSANDRA
(into phone)
Yes, I'm telling you, he seemed completely paranoid.

INT. ITALIAN POLICE STATION - SAME TIME

Officer Amadeo is at his desk as before, sipping a cup of coffee as he talks casually.

OFFICER AMADEO
Let's be honest here Alessandra, you are like a magnet to them. And, you had to have desired this in some measure.

ALESSANDRA (V.O.)
They go to me when they feel that they can't go to people like you.

OFFICER AMADEO
Police?

ALESSANDRA (V.O.)
Lack of faith. Too easily seen in the public eye.

INT. ALESSANDRA'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Alessandra rolls her eyes as their conversation continues.

OFFICER AMADEO (V.O.)
We have rules around that too, Alessandra. You should keep us up-to-date on this one.

ALESSANDRA
I'll take it under consideration.

She hangs up the phone. Looking across her desk, we settle on a printed SPREADSHEET, reading: "PLASTIC SURGERY CLINICS - AMSTERDAM", and several names of businesses in alphabetical order.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY - DAY

Susannah makes her way down the steps of the SAPIENZA UNIVERSITY with a small group of FRIENDS her age. They make chit-chat, the crowds around them too loud for us to hear anything.

Susannah absently looks to where the crowd is the largest - they have gathered around the right corner of the building, staring at something on the ground.

She gestures for her friends to follow as she walks toward the scene, taking out her Polaroid camera from her bag.

The crowd parts as they move through it, closer to the source, as she raises the camera...

It is ANOTHER MANNEQUIN, of the same small-frame make as the previous, wearing a similar KNITTED SWEATER, its feet tied, and being burned on a PORTABLE GRILL. The wax is melted through, curling its toes and reducing the feet to puddles.

Susannah TAKES ITS PICTURE, a BLINDING FLASH scorching the frame.

INT. LIVING ROOM, SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Susannah unlocks the apartment's door with her own key. She comes in, dropping her bag. From the kitchen, we can hear the sounds of cooking.

SUSANNAH
Hey! Anyone here?

Shanden approaches from the kitchen, trying his best to smile.

SHANDEN
Hey Susannah, how was it?

SUSANNAH
Classes were fine. But, I saw the weirdest thing leaving the school, and I thought you might be interested...

SHANDEN
Oh, and what’s that?

Susannah presents the photograph. Shanden stares at it deeply, recognizing the mannequin.

SUSANNAH
Its feet were being burned on a grill! How crazy is that?

SHANDEN
(stammering)
V-very crazy Suze, very crazy.

SUSANNAH
That wouldn’t be one of your mannequins, would it?

SHANDEN
No Suze, I don’t recognize it. Must be a different company.

Shanden touches his forehead, pulling his eyes away from the picture.

SUSANNAH
Are you alright?

SHANDEN
Just a headache. Would you like some coffee? Your mom will be getting back in an hour.

SUSANNAH
Yeah, sure.

INT. KITCHEN, SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Shanden lurches back to the kitchen and grabs a mug and coffee pot. Susannah follows him in.

SUSANNAH
You've been seeming really odd lately, Shanden.

SHANDEN
You can call me Dad, sweetie.

SUSANNAH
Sorry - Dad - but that day at the pyramid too...is something wrong?

Shanden stops what he's doing and turns to face her. He is unsure of how he wants to approach this conversation, but takes a deep breath, knowing it has to happen.

SHANDEN
All right, I'll tell you a secret. There's a big day coming up for me. It's an...anniversary. Long before I met your mother, I lived in the US with my family.

SUSANNAH
Uncle Richard and Aunt Bethany?

SHANDEN
No, not them. My real family. We had a house in the States. It...burned down.

Shanden pauses briefly. He studies Susannah's reactions, she looks invested. He continues:

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
It's important for you to know that I can't remember much from that time, at least everything before the fire. My parents died inside.

SUSANNAH
Have you ever tried to find out more?

SHANDEN
No. I needed to start fresh. The people they sent me to thought the same. Once I was out, they gave me to Uncle Richard and Aunt Bethany.

He hands her the coffee and lets her digest these facts. Susannah's mind spins as she sips.

SUSANNAH
There must be something we can do to find out more about them.

SHANDEN
Well, with the anniversary of the fire coming up, I thought the same. Don't tell your mother, but I've hired a PI.

Susannah spits out a little of her coffee.

INT. DINING ROOM, SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Trista and Susannah sit at the table as Shanden lights candles for dinner. As with the earlier dinner scene, soft jazz PLAYS gently.

TRISTA
The master chef at work again?

SHANDEN
I do my best.

He leaves for the kitchen as the ladies converse.

TRISTA
I'm sure he already asked, but how's school?

Susannah leans in to speak more quietly to her, immediately starting to gossip.

SUSANNAH
Did he tell you about this anniversary coming up?

TRISTA
I see you've learned how to gossip at Sapienza. Yes, of course I know.

SUSANNAH
He never told me anything about that. Did he tell you that --

TRISTA
-- It's a bit of a sore point for him. He has memory gaps --

Shanden returns, holding two plates, and impressively balancing the third on top of his head. Trista and Susannah can't help but laugh.

SHANDEN
For our darling daughter -
breakfast for dinner!

He lets them take the two plates from his hands, and carefully reaches up to take the third from his head. They all get ready to eat - the meal consisting of poached eggs, bacon, and brown bread.

They begin a happy topic of conversation as the scene FADES...

TIME CUT:

They have now finished their meals, and Shanden and Trista have got out the red wine. They sit listening to Susannah discuss her school.

SUSANNAH
These studies are so interesting, you guys, it's a wonder that ketamine hasn't had more clinical tests --

TRISTA
-- That's enough about drugs. I think we've heard enough.

SHANDEN
Your mother's right, Suze. Especially when we're both enjoying the only drug that matters.

He takes a long sip of wine to illustrate that. The laugh, and pause in conversation, allows Trista to ask:

TRISTA
Have you called the police yet about the break-in?

Shanden looks to Susannah with a pained expression. He didn't want Trista to mention that.

SUSANNAH
There was a break-in? Where?

TRISTA
I thought you had told her! Shanden, what are we going to do about it?

Shanden sighs. There's no good in hiding it.

SHANDEN
The factory was broken into. I had hoped to avoid telling you, but the mannequin display you saw today...was one of mine.

SUSANNAH
Why keep it a secret?

SHANDEN
I saw a similar display not long ago. You know the Gazometro, near the office?

Susannah nods eagerly.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
The same person, I would guess, hung another one of the mannequins he stole from the top of that structure.

SUSANNAH
Why? Why are they doing this?

Shanden pauses, thinks and mulls it over. Trista is about to answer for him, when he speaks:

SHANDEN
Whoever it is, they're insane. The police called me -

TRISTA
- They called you? Do they think you did it? Why are you just telling me this now?

Shanden is about to snap, overwhelmed by the unending questions. He starts grinding his knife into the leftover egg yolk on his plate.

SHANDEN
Please. I need both of you to calm down. This isn't some disastrous event. Three mannequins were stolen, and they are being used in performance art. I'll keep in touch with the police investigation, and soon, the whole thing will be behind us.

Trista leans forward. She is suddenly dead serious, almost intimidating.

TRISTA
Three were stolen, Shanden. The first was outside your work. The second was outside our daughter's school. Where do you think the third will turn up?

Shanden leaves the table, silent. Trista and Susannah look at each other, then back to where he left. Sounds of things being moved around abound from the hallway.

TRISTA (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

Shanden returns with a toolbox, making hastily for the front door. Trista and Susannah get up, following him.

Shanden kneels in front of the entrance, tinkering with the placement of a padlock on the door.

TRISTA (CONT'D)
Shanden, stop this.

SHANDEN
You said it yourself, Trista. If we can't feel safe in our own home, then what are we to do?

He picks up a power drill and screw, and begins DRILLING the padlock straight into the door. Trista and Susannah cover their ears as Shanden stares at his work, wide-eyed. The drilling rises to a cacophony, as we CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM, SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Shanden and Trista lie in bed, both awake. Shanden stares at the ceiling, Trista lies on her side, an unspoken distance between them.

The moment holds for a painfully long span of time.

SHANDEN
Why mannequins?

No answer.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
There's an infinite number of factories that all produce a different thing. Why did I choose that place?

TRISTA
You’re asking me? This? Now?

SHANDEN
I’m sorry. We should be sleeping.

Shanden rolls over on his right side away from her. Trista waits a moment, then sighs, turning over to ask:

TRISTA
Why a PI?

SHANDEN
Hmm?

TRISTA
Why did you hire a Private Investigator without telling me?

SHANDEN
Oh. She told you.

TRISTA
Please, answer the question.

Shanden turns back over. They look lovelessly at each other with inches between their faces.

SHANDEN
I thought it would be best. The theft...seems to have personal connotations.

TRISTA
What does that mean?

SHANDEN
I don’t know. The mannequin that I saw hanging, it struck me in a way that I didn’t expect. I can’t put my finger on why it did, and that’s affecting me deeply. I felt I needed someone that could report directly to me.

TRISTA
What’s their name?

SHANDEN
Alessandra Bianchi. We were just talking about her --

TRISTA
-- So, to keep the case more private, you go to a celebrity detective. How does that work?

SHANDEN
She'll get results. I need someone on my side.

TRISTA
And, I'm not on your side?

SHANDEN
You know I didn't mean --

Trista reaches up to touch his cheek. She rests it there for a brief tender moment, then SLAPS HIM.

She rolls back on her other side and leaves her husband there, dejected.

INT. HEAD OFFICE, MANNEQUIN FACTORY - DAY

Bobby whistles in his chair as Shanden organizes files at his desk. He looks up at him, frustrated.

SHANDEN
Do you mind? These orders are important.

Bobby ceases making noise. He gives an innocent expression. Shanden regards him for a moment, then thinks of something. He reaches down for his briefcase, setting it up on the table and opening it.

Taking something from it, he approaches Bobby with an almost foreboding gait, and sets the brochure from earlier right in front of him, from the 'Manique Boutique'.

Bobby looks it over, chuckling.

BOBBY
What's this? Vasectomy reversal? What exactly are you trying to say here, boss?

SHANDEN
Not that. Do you recognize the name of the clinic?

BOBBY
Sheesh. Manique Boutique, eh? Can't say I do.

SHANDEN
What business have we been doing in The Netherlands?

BOBBY
(shrugging)
Can’t say if we’ve ever shipped there. It’s a bit of a way’s away.

SHANDEN
Bobby - I want you to tell me straight now. Have you been taking commissions from a business without my knowledge?

BOBBY
Where is this coming from? I don’t know anything about that!

SHANDEN
Trista told me that we’ve been sending large shipments abroad for months now, and that they’re all going to the same location. As manager, what do you know of it?

BOBBY
Honest, boss, I don’t know what you’re telling me here. Yes, we’ve been shipping abroad, but you approved all the orders!

Shanden snaps. He LUNGES at Bobby, grabbing him by his shirt collar and hoisting him out of his chair. He SLAMS him against a wall, knocking over a few prototype MANNEQUIN LIMBS.

SHANDEN
What does this clinic want and what do they know about me?

BOBBY
(frantic)
Shandy, please! That company contacted me a while back, but I asked your wife and she said we couldn’t afford to do the designs they wanted, we turned them down! Why is this so important?

Shanden stares deeply into Bobby’s frightened eyes.

SHANDEN
It was you who stole the three mannequins. You're the one who's doing this. I don't know how you found out about my childhood, but you're trying to get to me.

BOBBY
W-what?!

Shanden throws Bobby to the floor. He starts crawling away toward the door, like a wounded child.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Boss, please!

SHANDEN
Bobby, you're fired. You'll be hearing from me soon. I expect to be compensated for --

Shanden picks up a foam-wrapped mold of a MANNEQUIN ARM. He approaches Bobby, brandishing it like a club. He WHACKS Bobby's leg with it, shouting:

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
Three mannequins!

Bobby's not injured by the blow, but YELPS anyway. Shanden hits his leg again.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
For the stalking of my family!

He hits him once more...Bobby cries out.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
And for bringing up the past.
(beat)
Get out of my sight.

BOBBY
What planet are you on, Shandy?!

Bobby staggers to his feet and runs out of the office. Shanden stands fuming, then THROWS the arm at the door.

INT. ENTRANCE, SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Shanden returns home, taking more effort than usual because of the extra door lock. Once he gets inside, a voice greets him:

TRISTA (O.S.)
Shanden, we're in here!

Curious, he follows her voice...

INT. LOUNGE, SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Four chairs have been positioned for an impromptu family meeting: Trista and Susannah sit across from an EMPTY CHAIR, and a new person sits at the head of the gathering. This is DR. ELLISON, 50s, a balding psychiatrist.

Shanden stares at the trio with an unimpressed frown.

TRISTA
Sit down, honey.

SHANDEN
Who's this?

He gestures at Dr. Ellison. The doctor stands, going over to shake his hand.

DR. ELLISON
I'm Dr. Gerald Ellison, Mr. Hadd.
Your wife --

He pauses to suddenly COUGH, making a gross hacking sound. Then, resumes:

DR. ELLISON (CONT'D)
-- Excuse me. Your wife contacted me to mediate this intervention, as an English-language psychiatrist.

SHANDEN
Inter-vention?

DR. ELLISON
Please, take your seat.

Shanden looks uncomfortably at Trista. Susannah looks like she's beaming, eager to stretch her legs as a psychology student.

Shanden and Dr. Ellison settle into his chairs as Trista leans forward to hold Shanden's hand.

TRISTA
Please, give this a chance.

Dr. Ellison HACKS and COUGHS again.

DR. ELLISON
Now, Mr. Hadd, upon speaking to your wife and daughter, I must say we've agreed that your behavior of late could be described as quite paranoid.

SHANDEN
I have reason to be. I assume they've told you the details --

DR. ELLISON
-- Yes, and your actions of hiring a Private Investigator instead of trusting in the police, drilling an extra lock on your front door, and Susannah here has detailed that you only just told her of a traumatic incident in your early life last night.

Shanden looks at Susannah, betrayed.

DR. ELLISON (CONT'D)
Your family and I agree that it's best we try and get to the bottom of this now, and cut through what seems to be gnawing at you.

Shanden pulls away from Trista's grasp, and hides his face in his hands.

DR. ELLISON (CONT'D)
Mr. Hadd, do you remember your biological parents?

No response but a sigh.

DR. ELLISON (CONT'D)
What we are trying to do is open the floor so that you feel comfortable in sharing these feelings with the ones that love you most.

SHANDEN
No. I can't recall my biological parents.

DR. ELLISON
Now, this could indicate a pronounced case of repressed memories.
(looks to Susannah)
(MORE)

DR. ELLISON (CONT'D)
We find this often in some patients.
(back to Shanden, COUGHS)
The crucial thing here will be to find the pathway to unlocking what you have fought against recalling for so long.

Shanden lifts his head. He gives each of the three a different look - contempt, sorrow, and sympathy.

SHANDEN
And, if I refuse to try this?

Dr. Ellison shuffles in his chair. Susannah and Trista start holding hands.

DR. ELLISON
Of course, that is your right. But, it may be to your eventual detriment, and for your family, as well.

SHANDEN
Just who the hell do you think you are?

Dr. Ellison starts HACKING again.

DR. ELLISON
I-I am a licensed psychiatrist.

SHANDEN
Seems like they're giving it out to just anyone these days.

He briefly glances at Susannah. She SHRUGS. Back to Ellison.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
Rest assured, my family and I do not need your assistance at this time, or any time in the near future.

Shanden stands up. As he turns to walk off, Ellison, glancing at Trista and Susannah, tries to come up with something to make him stay.

TRISTA
Shanden, Susannah and I might go away for a while.

Shanden stops in his tracks and turns back to face them. On cue, Ellison CHOKES.

SHANDEN
And I thought you would be here for me. Do you remember our vows, Trista?

He turns his back on them, leaving down the hallway for the bedroom. We stay with the living room group, Trista wiping away tears from her eyes. Susannah keeps it together, more interested in hearing what Dr. Ellison has to contribute.

DR. ELLISON
My condolences to you both. We can often see this in family dynamics where one isn't quite ready to evolve. It's important to remember the mantra that we can only grow through exposure.

SUSANNAH
Is there anything we can do for him, Doctor?

DR. ELLISON
In my professional opinion, it may be best to give him space, and use gentle --

He HACKS up a lung.

DR. ELLISON (CONT'D)
-- Encouragements, to keep pushing to find his equilibrium.

TRISTA
I think we need our own space. I can't help feeling this is the start of something serious.

DR. ELLISON
It would be good if there could be someone to watch him. To make sure he doesn't do anything rash.

SUSANNAH
I'll be around. I'll keep an eye on him.

TRISTA
You can't do that all alone, Susannah. He's our responsibility.

Susannah acquiesces to nod. Ellison is struck by his worst coughing fit yet.

INT. RICHARD AND BETHANY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Inside their suffocatingly maudlin home, Richard stands at a pink plastic kitchen counter, preparing more FINGER SANDWICHES. As he squirts some mayo onto the plate, he SCRATCHES under his face bandages.

BETHANY (O.S.)
Richarrrrrd! Where are the sandwiches? The show is starting!

RICHARD
They're coming, Beth! You want them gourmet-style, don't you?!

Richard takes the plate in hand and maneuvers himself to the sound of her voice. He passes stained glass lamps with floral patterns, tables with doilies and teapots, and orange shag carpets on his way to the living room.

Bethany is there, sitting in an enveloping purple couch drinking tea from a bowl. Across from her, the TELEVISION SET plays an Italian mystery show.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
You get more impatient the older you get.

BETHANY
Hmm, don't we all? Put down the plate.

Richard sets the plate down on the coffee table and they both tuck into the sandwiches, not taking their eyes off the show in front of them: IMAGES FLASH across the screen:

A BLACK-GLOVED KILLER breaking into a house.

A SCREAMING WOMAN.

A man running down a Roman street.

Meat-hooks in an attic.

Richard and Bethany appear captivated by the program.

RICHARD
They finally gonna find out who did it?

BETHANY
Ssh, ssshhh!

RICHARD
Well, I'm just sayin'. They sure do love drawing it out.

There is a LOUD KNOCK. Richard and Bethany both jump in surprise, thinking the sound came from the show. They slowly turn their heads to the right, where a HALLWAY leads to the FRONT DOOR.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Why, who could that be?

BETHANY
Shanden?

RICHARD
Now, why would he come here at this hour?

Richard stands up to make the long walk to the door. Bethany anxiously watches him as he goes at a snail's pace.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE - NIGHT

The cold dim twilight outside their house. In the midst of a few CYPRESS TREES beside their driveway, a DARK FIGURE stands. We only see his hands, and all 10 of his fingers are TIGHTLY BANDAGED.

He dons a pair of BLACK LEATHER GLOVES, and cracks his knuckles.

INT. RICHARD AND BETHANY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Richard is at the door now. He approaches like a scared child, scratching at his own bandages. Behind him, Bethany persists:

BETHANY
Well, who is it?! Go on and check, then get back in here to keep me safe, Richarrrrd!

RICHARD
Will you hold it?!

Richard OPENS THE DOOR. The only thing on the stoop is SHADOWS.

Richard peers around for a moment, to be sure of their security. He gives an expressive SHRUG, then steps back in to close the door.

Not turning to face Bethany down the hall, he shouts:

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Nothing out there! It's 11:00 and all's well!

He steps back, turning to the other hallway on the right to proceed towards the kitchen. We TRACK with him, as he returns to the pink counter, beside which is an AQUAMARINE FRIDGE that he opens to search for snacks.

Taking out a bowl of gorgonzola, he begins his walk back to the living room, WHISTLING as he goes.

As soon as he steps into the room, he sees it: Bethany, sprawled on the couch, DEAD, her mouth and eyes COAGULATED with a WAX-LIKE SUBSTANCE. She has been SUFFOCATED.

Richard drops the bowl of food. It SHATTERS into a HUGE MESS. He gasps, running to her on the couch.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Bethany!!

Behind him, the BLACK GLOVES appear, reaching out for his neck, forming a claw-like grasp.

Richard breaks into sobs, oblivious to the threat.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Bethany -- how could this happen to you?!

The gloves grab the back of his neck, TIGHTENING! Richard doesn't even fight back -- he continues staring at Bethany, tears streaming down his face into his bandages, as the figure chokes the life from him.

The other hand wraps around, shoving a napkin leaking HOT YELLOW WAX into Richard's nose and mouth. He GURGLES faintly, his eyes glazing over...

Then, the Dark Figure lets him fall, slumping over DEAD.

The Figure gathers his napkin of wax into his pocket, breathing heavily from exertion. He walks away from the scene, leaving the TWO BODIES of Richard and Bethany there, to be seen by whoever might enter the house first.

INT. SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Shanden sits alone at the dinner table, filling out a PAPER STATEMENT for Bobby's severance package. He pushes his pencil down hard on the paper, full of tension.

There is a KNOCK at his door. He rises, and makes his way to the entrance.

Opening the door cautiously, he comes face to face with Officer Amadeo, flanked by two other ITALIAN OFFICERS.

SHANDEN
What do you want?

OFFICER AMADEO
Mr. Hadd, we are calling on you because of the recent displays and - -

SHANDEN
-- I already told you. I had no idea who's doing it.

OFFICER AMADEO
You...had...no idea?

Shanden sighs, shaking his head.

SHANDEN
And I still don't. I didn't realize my address was so easily on-record. Do you have anything for me on the break-in?

OFFICER AMADEO
No, but we have some tragic news. May we come in?

A pause. He's waiting for a reaction. Shanden looks to be fearing the worst, but after a moment's thought, gestures for the three police to enter.

They step inside, and Shanden leads them to the living room, where the chairs are still set up as per the intervention.

SHANDEN
You can have a seat if you want. My family won't be barging in anytime soon.

OFFICER AMADEO
(confused by that)
Thank you.

The officers take their seats and Shanden slumps into his own chair. Amadeo leans forward and gives him the news:

OFFICER AMADEO (CONT'D)
Your foster parents, Richard and Bethany Hadd, were found dead this morning.

Shanden chokes a little. He lets him continue.

OFFICER AMADEO (CONT'D)
There looks to be foul play. We are considering all options, and have sectioned off their house.

SHANDEN
You - you have no leads?

OFFICER AMADEO
Not at present, but our departments are working on it, do not worry.
(beat)
We wanted to ask you in person about the beeswax used in the production of your mannequins.

SHANDEN
Come again?

OFFICER AMADEO
Mr. Hadd, Richard and Bethany seem to have been forcibly asphyxiated with a melted beeswax compound used on a napkin.

SHANDEN
That's horrible. Why are you telling me this?

OFFICER AMADEO
We wanted to ask you for a sample of the beeswax used at your factory. I understand your company is sought after for the refined material used to make the mannequins more durable, correct?

Shanden's eyes betray his paranoia.

SHANDEN
Yes, our beeswax is made from a refined process that bonds the chemicals --

His voice trails off.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
Am I a suspect? Richard and Bethany raised me!

OFFICER AMADEO
No, Mr. Hadd, but we are not ruling out any possibility. The murderer who invaded their home, and attacked and killed your foster parents, may be the same culprit as the one who broke into your factory. We would also like to follow up on the case that has been opened for that incident, and look for more evidence.
(beat)
We understand that you hired Private Investigator Alessandra Bianchi to aid you in your own investigation --

SHANDEN
-- I've already figured out who it was.

Officer Amadeo looks at his two men, stoic, then back to Shanden with a doubtful curiosity.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
It was my manager, Bobby Lind.

OFFICER AMADEO
Mmm-hmm.

SHANDEN
Sounds ridiculous, I know. But I know it was him.

OFFICER AMADEO
You have proof?

SHANDEN
Bobby deliberately made it look like a break-in in order to cover his tracks. He used bolt cutters on the back gate, left bottles to make it seem like it was done by drunk kids.

OFFICER AMADEO
This is a very serious allegation.

SHANDEN
I've fired him, and will be pursuing legal action in the future. At the moment, I need to sort things out with my family...

OFFICER AMADEO
We will need to follow up on this further, and hear your manager's own statement.

SHANDEN
Of course. And, Richard and Bethany, where can I see them?

OFFICER AMADEO
They are at a morgue outside the city currently. Mr. Hadd, we know it may be hard for you, but we need to pursue our own investigation and may not be able to keep you updated.

SHANDEN
Alright. Just find Bobby. He may try to flee.

Suddenly, something catches Amadeo's eye. He looks past Shanden, to a box on the floor placed below an end table. Inside, there is a FOLDED WHITE SUIT, with jacket and pants.

OFFICER AMADEO
There is one more thing. We took a witnesses' statement when the second display was found, who claims he saw the person who arranged it.
(beat)
They were wearing a white suit.

Shanden frowns.

SHANDEN
Yes?

Amadeo and Shanden's eyes meet for an extended moment of uncertainty. The intensity of their look continues without a single blink from either. Then, the silence is broken.

OFFICER AMADEO
We'll contact you, Mr. Hadd. My condolences for your loss.

SHANDEN
Thank you, Officer.

The three cops stand to leave, and Shanden leads them back to the door. Amadeo and Shanden shake hands, and Amadeo gives him a pat on the shoulder. Could be reassuring, could even be threatening.

Amadeo regards the fixed padlock on the door as they step out and Shanden closes the door behind them.

He stands there, heavy with sorrow and confusion...

EXT. ROMAN PYRAMID, STREETS OF OSTIENSE - DAY

Early morning. A thin, humid fog settles on the ROMAN PYRAMID OF OSTIENSE, the district street still beset by blue lighting.

There, propped up lazily against the stone, is the THIRD MANNEQUIN. It holds SURGICAL TOOLS, clean and shiny in the light. The blade of a scalpel in its right, and the jaws of forceps in its left.

Both tools are angled down at an awkward slant towards the mannequin’s own crotch area.

An OLD WOMAN in a black shawl walks past the pyramid. She stops to see the mannequin there, and approaches it for a closer look.

Shanden walks in from the right, holding his briefcase, on his daily walk to the office. He stops too, and sees the display set up.

At this point, it doesn’t even phase him. Another one, and the last of the three that were stolen.

EXT. SAPIENZA UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

Susannah’s proud university has been cloaked in darkness. A few STUDENTS pass along their way, chattering to themselves.

The STATUE OF MINERVA that stands tall in the courtyard looms like a vengeful deity. Across, behind a ROMAN COLUMN, Shanden stands, waiting, concealing himself like a spy.

A STUDENT WEARING A BLACK HOODIE walks towards him, nonchalant and holding his hands in his pockets like a real shady character. Shanden flags him down to hurry it up.

The Hoodie Student takes out a small, rolled-up plastic bag, and gives it to Shanden, palming a fold of cash Euro in exchange.

Shanden walks away, now with a most curious bag indeed. He scans the vicinity for any witnesses, then continues out from the grounds.

EXT. OVERLOOKING THE COLOSSEUM - NIGHT

Hours later. Shanden stands on the road that winds up across from the great COLOSSEUM, leaning on a sidewalk railing.

He stares across the district from here, watching the myriad lights of the cars and buildings TWINKLE in the hot evening air.

SHANDEN
You and me, Tommy. How did I lose you?

He reaches in for the plastic bag, taking it out. It contains a white powdery SUBSTANCE resembling cocaine. Shanden dumps a small bit of it out onto his palm. He braces himself a moment.

He figures he’s got nothing to lose. He leans in, and SNORTS that amount right to his head.

Whimpering, he draws back from his hand and dusts off his hands, SNIFFLING and rubbing his nose.

It won’t be long now before the effects take hold.

Time to go for an adventure.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COLOSSEUM - NIGHT

It’s the same night, but an undetermined number of minutes or hours has passed. The world is still dark.

Shanden stands at the very base of the Colosseum, scanning his surroundings in a fevered sweat.

His hands fidget and his feet move in place like he’s rehearsing a dance.

Is the coast all clear? He hears DISTORTED NOISES from every direction. Where are his enemies? Where is his family? Where is his mind?

All around him are more and more shadows. He doesn't seem to know how he got so close to the building, and where he might be going.

ORANGE LIGHTS in the columns of the Colosseum GLEAM overhead. Their glow is too intense for his state, and Shanden shields his eyes. He must take cover within.

Shanden hops up a little FENCE that allows him a springboard to climb onto a low section of stone of the Colosseum's base. He pulls himself up, and rolls into the structure, standing up, and finding himself in a DARK ALCOVE.

I/E. THE COLOSSEUM - CONTINUOUS

Ancient, broken stonework surrounds him. His vision becomes further DISTORTED, full of wavy and bright SHAPES AND PATTERNS that hang floating in the air.

Dazzling geometrics are on full display as Shanden continues down a hall, staggering, stoned...

An ETHEREAL FEMALE VOICE begins singing in Italian from some other corner of the Colosseum, the notes driving Shanden forward with a hypnotic quality.

He breathes heavily, his throat feeling tighter. The music and the shapes in the air are leading him towards where the orange glow is the strongest.

Out from under a high ceiling, Shanden emerges into the nearly blinding ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE.

The exceptional carving of the Ancient Romans envelops him completely. The brown jagged ruins of the structure meet with the pitch black night sky, illuminated by the now fading glow of the industrial lamps set up in various corners.

SHANDEN POV: Stretching out before him, and continuing to STRETCH FAR AWAY from where he/we stand in a most disturbing hallucination, is the GREAT PIT OF THE ARENA. On either side of it, is the HYPOGEUM, or the BASEMENT TUNNELS.

Shanden tilts his head to peer at the tunnels as his sweats seem to worsen. They are like BLACK CREVASSES now, any detail of ground beneath them falling away into NOTHINGNESS.

In his delirious state, he snaps his head back into place.

SHANDEN
I've got to reach the other side.

One foot at a time, he begins that endeavor.

He walks down the steps, onto the narrow walkway that bridges the entire length of the immortal site. On his left, the edge of the floor seems to be MELTING. On his right, the edge of the floor seems to MELTING. They are being melted away, like the wick of a candle, like WAX.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
Steady now.

He holds out both arms in an effort to steady his path across. It's a ridiculous balancing act, but he presses on...

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
If you could see me now, Mom and Dad --

He didn't mean to say that. His face changes immediately after those words, surprised at what he just said. Something hit him there, perhaps a recollection from the delirium.

Then, he hears a LOW GROWL...

SHANDEN POV: From the black crevasse of the hypogeum, a STRANGE LION SPRINGS OUT to SWIPE AT HIM.

Shanden falls back, and is immediately attacked on the other side by a STRANGE TIGER that POUNCES UP FROM THE NOTHINGNESS.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
Aahhhh!!

Falling on his back, he looks up to see the sight of both ravenous hallucinatory animals staring him down with mean intent. But they're not composed of fur and meat.

They are made of WAX PLASTER - glistening and melting as they live, and dripping into pools around their paws and tails.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
What do you want?!

Shanden's voice catches. Before his eyes, the words he just uttered *"what - do - you - want?"* drift up from his open mouth, in a HAZY MANIFESTATION, soon evaporating in the air as quickly as they appeared.

The Wax Lion and Wax Tiger menacingly continue their approach, SEETHING WITH JAWS OF WAX. Their eyes are DARK PITS that swirl like a melting pot of clay.

Staring into the recesses of his mind, Shanden begins to scream:

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
I know! I know now! Enough, enough!

The lion and tiger both ROAR at him, their primal, scratchy cries joining as one, and plunging Shanden into DARKNESS. He blacks out.

INT. MOTHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Young Shanden sits in a waiting room that vaguely resembles Alessandra's office seen earlier. The same tilework, chairs, and lamps furnish a space that feels clinical and calculating. Young Shanden stares lifeless at a magazine on the table - with Alessandra Bianchi displayed on the front.

MOTHER'S VOICE (O.S.)
Shanden! You can come in now.

He slowly rises, and goes to the door into her office. Pushing it open, he gazes into another dark abyss:

The only source of light within is a STROBE that FLASHES on a set of SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS placed neatly on the ground.

MOTHER'S VOICE (V.O.)
You will never spread your seed.
You are not worthy of procreation.

Young Shanden's eyes close in despair, as his head lowers in submission. The strobe's flash gets brighter and brighter with every flicker, until it FLARES INTO A DISSOLVE:

INT. ROME POLICE STATION, HOLDING CELL - DAY

Shanden slowly opens his eyes, coming to in an unfamiliar place. He lies upon a mattress in a small rectangular HOLDING CELL. The sounds of busy people can be heard outside, noticeably distorted. *He may still be under-the-influence.*

Sitting on the edge of his bed is Alessandra, with a concerned look. Shanden sits up with a start.

SHANDEN
Where --

ALESSANDRA
You're in a holding cell at the precinct's station. I know it's probably a dubious idea that you might have any memory of what happened last night, but here I sit, waiting for your recounting.

SHANDEN
They just let you in here?

ALESSANDRA
Officer Amadeo and I go back a number of years. We worked on a case of a wine merchant playing with poison. He pulled some strings.

SHANDEN
The Colosseum guards need to be better at their job.

Alessandra laughs.

ALESSANDRA
What?

SHANDEN
How else could they let me traipse in there like that? They must be totally oblivious.

ALESSANDRA
(confused)
Shanden - were you inside the Colosseum last night?

SHANDEN
(frustrated)
Y-yes! I must have blacked out there, right in the middle of the amphitheater. That's how you found me, right?

Alessandra sits back from him. She doesn't have the slightest idea what he's talking about.

Shanden shakes his head and brushes it off.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
Well, that might be in my favor. Least I won't have to worry about a huge lawsuit. Where did you find me?

ALESSANDRA
You were sprawled out at a park bench, raving to yourself. Do you remember the doctor having a look at you?

He shakes his head again.

ALESSANDRA (CONT'D)
What were you on?

SHANDEN
An experiment. It was an experimental drug - ketamine. I heard of these tests they do, from my daughter. I thought it could help me remember.

ALESSANDRA
Remember your past. Unlock the mental box.

Yes, he nods. She gets it.

ALESSANDRA (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
Che cavolo!

That was unexpected. Shanden isn't sure what to make of it. As he looks away from her, the patterns he saw earlier begin to make their reappearance, DANCING and FLOATING, bouncing off the surfaces in the cell.

He frowns at the lingering hallucinations.

SHANDEN
When will they let me go?

ALESSANDRA
I think it's best I tell you that you are still a person of interest. Amadeo told me on the side that they saw a white suit in your house that matches the one the person wore who put the display up at the university.
(beat)
Now that another has been found...

SHANDEN
I just want it to be over. What about Richard and Beth?

ALESSANDRA
He hasn't shared anything with me, and I wouldn't be in a position to tell you.

The patterns intensify in SHANDEN'S VISION. He remembers again what the epiphany he had in the night may have been.

SHANDEN
(softly, in fear)
I think I know what they wanted to accomplish with me.

A hand reaches over from Alessandra, suddenly stroking his face. He breathes deeply, turning to face her.

She is smiling, gently touching his cheek and hair with an affection like they've known each other for years. Shanden smiles back, feeling reassured...

Then, he SNAPS BACK INTO AWARENESS.

Alessandra's hand remains on her own leg. Shanden sits away from her, a distance wedged between them.

ALESSANDRA
What is it?

SHANDEN
I have to see my wife.

He stands up, and makes for the door.

ALESSANDRA
They don't want you to leave without a proper checkup.

SHANDEN
I'll make my own way now, thank you.

He pauses a moment.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
You can forget about our contract. The last mannequin has been found. I'll get back to my life now.

He signals for an OFFICER outside to open the door, and departs, leaving Alessandra there in continual bewilderment.

INT. ROME POLICE STATION, HALLWAY - DAY

Shanden continues his exit from the crisp halls of the station. In his way, stands Officer Amadeo.

OFFICER AMADEO
Leaving already?

SHANDEN
Yes.

OFFICER AMADEO
Mr. Hadd, let us help you. In my book, you are a -- deeply troubled person.

SHANDEN
I heard Rome was a good place for deeply troubled people.

He gently pushes past him. Amadeo watches him leave.

OFFICER AMADEO
We will see you again soon.

Shanden WINCES. More PATTERNS, more lingering effects.

INT. SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Another night, another visit home. Shanden opens the door, kicking off his shoes loudly.

TRISTA (O.S.)
He's home.

He stops in his tracks. Step by step, he enters the lounge.

Trista and Susannah are there, packing up some more of their things.

SHANDEN
Couldn't wait, right?

TRISTA
It's like I said, Shanden.

He breaks, raising his voice to a spittle-flying pitch:

SHANDEN
Why the fuck are you doing this?!

TRISTA
(venomous)
You have no idea how long this has been stewing for.

SHANDEN
So, you both hate me and always have, is that it?

TRISTA
We didn't hate you. But we can't make any sense of what you're doing, or what the hell your plan is. Where were you last night?

SHANDEN
Remembering.

SUSANNAH
Remembering what, Shanden?

SHANDEN
Why don't you ever call me Dad, Sus? Can I ask you that?

Silence.

TRISTA
Because she's not ours, plain and simple. Because you never got me pregnant.

SHANDEN
Do you have any concept of what was done to me?

SUSANNAH
What *was* done to you, *Dad?*

He smiles, sickly. Finally, he knows enough to spill the beans.

SHANDEN
My mother gave me a forced vasectomy when I was twelve. She was a trained urologist, and did the surgery herself.

This floors Trista and Susannah. It is also so incredibly random that they inadvertently pull grossed-out expressions at the same time.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
She and my father wanted to perform the first experiment of its kind with my brother and I. We were the ideal test subjects.

INSERT: Shanden's brother Tommy, eight years old, standing against a wall in their old house, wearing a child's white suit and tie. He smiles brightly.

SHANDEN (V.O.)
Spoil the younger...

INSERT: Shanden himself, twelve years old again, locked in a CLOSET, curled up in the fetal position.

SHANDEN (V.O.)
Abuse the older.

Young Shanden SOBS and SHIVERS.

SHANDEN (V.O.)
So they burned my feet, hung me up to dry. Fixed me so I could never have a child of my own.

BACK TO THE SCENE.

SHANDEN
That's what was done to me.

Trista and Susannah are speechless.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
And, now you're both leaving.

Trista nods slowly, but is unsure of that plan now.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
Couldn't we give it all one more try?

The ladies look at each other. *What are they supposed to say to that?*

TRISTA
F-fine Shanden, fine. We'll stay, all right?

Susannah nods hastily, clapping her hands oddly.

SHANDEN
I'll do better. I promise. I won't let the past get in the way of our future any longer.

They rush to HUG him. It's a nice display of affection, but also forced and sterile.

INT. SHANDEN'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Trista and Shanden both read magazines as they lie in bed, in a strange domestic frame. Everything remains uncomfortable.

After she gets fed up with the silence, Trista sets her reading material down and turns over.

TRISTA
I'll go to sleep now.

SHANDEN
Okay, hun.

She switches her light off, Shanden keeping his on.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
Just so you know, the police might come by later.

Trista opens her eyes wide, caught off-guard. She elects not to say anything, swallowing and closing her eyes again.

SHANDEN (CONT'D)
Just thought I'd let you know.

INT. SAPIENZA UNIVERSITY, LIBRARY - NIGHT

Susannah sits in the modern university library, a textbook open in front of her. A silence permeates the school, and no other students are to be found.

The text in front of her reads, in English: "UNEARTHING CHILDHOOD TRAUMA AND AVOIDANT BEHAVIOR, BY DR. GERALD ELLISON."

Susannah's eyes focus on a passage: "*You will not do the stricken any favors by blindly staying by their side. You must establish boundaries with their other friends and family by allowing them suitable distance to deal with their problems on their own.*"

Susannah nods thoughtfully as she reads that.

Across from her, she suddenly notices someone else, standing behind a BOOKSHELF. A student in black hoodie, the same as seen earlier, who sold Shanden his ketamine.

He slowly approaches Susannah's table. As he gets closer, we can see that he has bad acne scarring all over his face.

STUDENT IN BLACK HOODIE
Psst. Hey, I saw your dad the other night.

SUSANNAH
How do you know my dad?

STUDENT IN BLACK HOODIE
He’s been hanging around here, looking for someone to sell him good shit. I sold him three grams of K.

SUSANNAH
Of K?

STUDENT IN BLACK HOODIE
If he ever needs anything else, tell him he knows where to find me.

The Student leaves. Susannah is understandably freaked out.

INT. OSTIENSE CAFE - DAY

A classic Italian cafe. Trista and Susannah are in the middle of a conversation at their corner table.

TRISTA
He said that he knew Shanden?

SUSANNAH
Yes. Came up to me completely out of nowhere. Mom, I think we need to reconsider staying with him at this time.

TRISTA
We have to. Despite how we feel, he needs us.

SUSANNAH
That’s exactly what the book by Dr. Ellison says: to help the afflicted, sometimes distance is best. We could leave for a trial period and come back to find him with a new lease on life. He’s clearly been resorting to taking drugs instead of dealing with this head-on.

TRISTA
Oh, I don’t know...

SUSANNAH
Come on, Mom, we’ll do it together. The best outcomes take sacrifice.

TRISTA
I can’t leave him, Susannah. He needs at least one of us, and I’m not ready for this. You do what you want, but I’m staying.

Susannah appears to be genuinely hurt by that.

TRISTA (CONT’D)
Look, let’s talk more tonight. Shanden will be catching up on his missed work at the factory. We can have the place to ourselves.

INT. SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment seems to be empty. We remain focused on the front door, still and secure.

Then, it JANGLES slightly, as if someone is behind it trying to push it in.

It JANGLES again.

And is suddenly still once more.

INT. MANNEQUIN FACTORY, HEAD OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Shanden sits in his office looking through the photo album from before. The picture he has open is that of his brother Tommy, in that white suit with wrapped fingers.

His telephone RINGS. He picks it up.

SHANDEN
Hello? Officer?

GARBLED VOICE (V.O.)
(distorted, low, and robotic)
No. Not this time. This time you have somewhere to go. We should see each other, now.

SHANDEN
Who is this? Are you the one?

GARBLED VOICE (V.O.)
Go to the site of Caesar’s murder at midnight tonight. I will be there to dispense answers.

The Voice hangs up. Shanden rubs at his chest, near his heart. He is hit with a FLASHBACK HALLUCINATION before his eyes: appearing there, in the center of his office, is a STATUE OF ROMULUS & REMUS, hazy and shimmering.

The statue lingers as Shanden watches it move slowly across the room, and then fade into thin air.

INT. ALESSANDRA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Alessandra sits at her desk looking over a plate with a MAGNIFYING GLASS. Her phone RINGS as well. She picks it up.

ALESSANDRA
Ciao.

GARBLED VOICE (V.O.)
Go to the house of Shanden Hadd, at midnight tonight.

It hangs up. Alessandra looks most concerned. She dials another number, and holds it to her ear.

ALESSANDRA
Amadeo --

INT. SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Trista and Susannah sit at the kitchen table, each with a cup of tea.

TRISTA
I was working in fashion design back then, and there he was, showing up in a little truck full of his own mannequins, that he was selling to different stores. He had a business card at the ready and everything.

SUSANNAH
And you were interested?

TRISTA
Hmm, not immediately. He was persistent, outgoing, and wanted to make his own way. The more I learned about him, the more I became interested.

SUSANNAH
Why did we move here?

TRISTA
He needed a change. The States wasn't doing us any favors. He wanted to be closer to Richard and Bethany for one. And now, they're gone.

SUSANNAH
That's the part that doesn't add up. It's horrific.

TRISTA
Not much of this does, Susannah. We're all he has. We need to help him find the spark again.

A KNOCK at the door.

INSERT: The time on the clock. It is 7:30 PM.

TRISTA (CONT'D)
I'll get that. Enjoy your tea.

She stands up, Susannah watching. Heading to the front door past a vase on an end table, she opens it.

A MAN IN WHITE stands there. His face is obscured from this angle positioned behind his shoulders.

TRISTA (CONT'D)
Can I help you?

MAN IN WHITE
Hello, Miss Hadd. You don't know me, but I am the owner of the Manique Boutique, a clinic based in Amsterdam.

He produces a business card. In another INSERT, we see the Manique Boutique logo with an M shape made of surgical forceps, and its address listed as being within De Wallen, Amsterdam.

TRISTA
You're one of our clients. What's your name?

MAN IN WHITE
We have put in a great many orders, you are correct. My name is Theo Masterton, I'm in Rome on a visit of business. Your husband called me earlier today and invited me to your house for a quick meeting.

TRISTA
Oh, isn't that nice of him? I'm afraid he might be hung up at the office today, he's catching up on a lot of work.

MAN IN WHITE
I'm fine with waiting. If I'm not mistaken, yourself and his manager were the ones I was mostly dealing with for my orders?

TRISTA
That sounds right, unfortunately Bobby has left the factory.

MAN IN WHITE
Then, may we talk in the meantime? I know this is unusual, but I have a new proposition for you and your husband. It should prove quite lucrative.

Trista looks back at Susannah, through into the kitchen. They exchange an uncertain glance, but Trista acquiesces.

TRISTA
All right, you can come inside. We can figure out some of the details before Shanden gets back, right?

MAN IN WHITE
Thank you so much, it's reassuring having such personable partners.

He enters. We can now see his face. It's TOMMY HADD, older now, but still Shanden's brother. He wears brown moleskin gloves on his hands. Trista closes the door behind him. LOW PIANO MUSIC PLAYS.

TOMMY
You have a lovely home.

TRISTA
Thank you, we find it very cozy here.

Tommy sees Susannah in the other room.

TOMMY
Oh, hello there!

Susannah waves shyly. Trista appears to introduce them.

TRISTA
This is our daughter, Susannah.

Tommy's eyebrows perk up. He wasn't expecting that.

TOMMY
Daughter, indeed. Must be thrilling.

TRISTA
Yes, we are very proud of her. She's attending studies at Sapienza.

TOMMY
In what capacity?

SUSANNAH
Psychology.

TOMMY
I couldn't imagine anything with as much relevance in our current landscape. So many people, so many problems. They have a word for every troubled state under our sun now.

Everyone shares an awkward laugh.

TRISTA
Would you like some tea? And then we'll discuss your commission.

TOMMY
That would be divine, thank you.

She gets a cup for him and fills it from the steamy teapot.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Does Mr. Hadd often work so late into the evening?

TRISTA
No, not often. Recently we've been very...busy.

TOMMY
That season of the year. In my line of work, we have our ups and downs as well. We mainly cater to women, you see. Some are looking for enhancement, others for repair.

She hands him the tea. Tommy smiles, nodding, and reaches into his suit jacket, taking out a small liquid vial.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
This is a little honey seasoning. I always take it in my tea.

EXT. CURIA OF POMPEY - NIGHT

The great stone site of Julius Caesar's pained demise is cloaked in growing twilight shadows. Shanden stands waiting beside a column of RUINED PILLARS.

The occasional PASSERBY drifts past in the background atop the road next to the enclosure. Other than that, it is deathly silent.

Shanden stares ahead, through the half-remained walls and crumbling gardens. He looks at his watch.

Time: 9:00 PM.

INT. SHANDEN'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Trista crawls across the floor of the hallway, CHOKING. Tears stream down her face, traces of liquid wax have collected around her nose and mouth. She desperately scratches her way forwards, in a last effort to escape the horror.

In the other room, Susannah's death throes can be heard:

SUSANNAH (O.S.)
Mom!!

They are cut off by the sound of a HEAVY BLOW. Trista continues weeping.

Tommy steps out, approaching from behind her. He stands still, we can only see his legs as he looms over her.

TOMMY
What did he ever see in you?

A pause. He bends down to one knee beside her as she tries crawling past him.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
I had to see you both for myself. I could've had Bobby do this, but it needed a personal touch.

He reaches into his suit, and takes out the same napkin he used on Richard.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
I don't hate you.

Next, the vial of wax. He spreads some out on top of the napkin. Smoke drifts off from it. It's red hot.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
But you helped take my brother away from me. Swept him off his feet, and helped him to forget.

He grabs hold of Trista's head, and wraps the napkin around her face, holding it there as she weakly struggles.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
And to my end, he can't have any more distractions. He can never forget.

Trista's thrashes are of no use. Tommy pushes down roughly, SUFFOCATING her as the wax drips down onto the floor and BURNS MARKS into the tiles.

EXT. STREETS OF OSTIENSE - NIGHT

Alessandra Bianchi PARKS HER CAR on a quiet curb outside the small APARTMENT COMPLEX housing the Hadd flat. She gets out, gazing up at the building with some trepidation overshadowed by a morbid curiosity.

Mirroring Shanden's own current wait far away from the scene, she stares at the place as night gets ever darker.

INT. SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Tommy stands up from TRISTA'S CORPSE. He looks around, checking if he missed anything. He pockets the bloodstained napkin, and makes his way back to the kitchen.

There, SUSANNAH'S CORPSE lies half-strewn across the countertop. Her head was also hit with the metallic teapot, and her bloody hair has fallen into the sink.

Tommy walks past the brutal display nonchalantly, to wait closer to the front door. AS he goes, he takes out a larger BOTTLE OF LIQUID WAX from his inner suit.

EXT. STREETS OF OSTIENSE - SAME TIME

Alessandra takes out a HANDHELD PHONE, raising the antenna and quickly dialing a number. Holding it to her ear, she asks:

ALESSANDRA
I'm there. Seems quiet. Where are you, Amadeo?

A VOICE from behind her startles her enough to close the phone immediately. It's Bobby, also waiting, with a smile.

BOBBY
Hello, what can I do for you?

ALESSANDRA
Do you live in this building, sir?

BOBBY
Oh, I'm afraid I do not. But my boss does, you see.

INT. SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Tommy watches both Alessandra and Bobby from the living room window.

TOMMY
Hook, line, and sinker, Bobby. We discussed this at length.

He checks his watch. 9:45 PM.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
I have an appointment to keep.

EXT. STREETS OF OSTIENSE - SAME TIME

Alessandra points toward the building. Bobby searches his pockets.

ALESSANDRA
Look, I'm a private investigator. Can you help me get in there?

BOBBY
I have a key on me somewhere --

He finds it, and jangles an old set of rusty keys before her eyes.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
There we are!

ALESSANDRA
It's important that I get inside to check up on a man and his family.

BOBBY
I understand. Follow me.

Bobby leads Alessandra toward a BACK GATE that leads to a throughfare against the side of the block. He unlocks it, and she follows him, keeping one hand inside her trenchcoat.

ALESSANDRA
Who is your boss?

BOBBY
A local entrepreneur.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tommy stands in the hallway outside the Hadd flat, pressing himself against a wall. He goes to the far end, and peers out another window where a TREE'S BRANCHES scrape and claw at the glass.

Below, Bobby can be seen leading Alessandra down the throughfare toward a set of stairs.

TOMMY
Good. Away from prying eyes. I'll see you in a short while, Lind.

Tommy turns, and begins his walk in the other direction, with a focused purpose. He's been waiting for this moment, and everything has lined up.

As he walks, he passes something newly TAPED to Shanden's apartment's front door, at Unit 214. A ROW OF FIVE MATCHES, at the base of the door, where it opens.

EXT. BACK STAIRS - NIGHT

Bobby leads Alessandra to a metallic staircase. They are hidden from sight here.

BOBBY
Who are you seeing here?

ALESSANDRA
I'm afraid I can't talk about that right now.

BOBBY
Can I ask you a question before I take you up? Who am I to know that you are who you say you are?

Alessandra sighs, and takes out her wallet. As she does that, Bobby reaches into his back pocket.

ALESSANDRA
Here.

She shows the identification. ALESSANDRA BIANCHI - LICENSED PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR.

ALESSANDRA (CONT'D)
Good enough?

BOBBY
Splendid. After you.

He steps aside to allow her to take the lead. At the top of the stairs, a door awaits.

Alessandra begins to approach Bobby, suddenly suspicious.

ALESSANDRA
Can I ask you what your name is?

Bobby hesitates, put on the spot. She notices that.

BOBBY
Freddy Tomlin.

Alessandra nods slowly. She goes ahead of him, and we see her unclip a hidden GUN HOLSTER within her trenchcoat. Bobby follows her, unblinking. They scale the stairs, the sound of each STEP RINGING IN OUR EARS WITH DREAD.

Once they reach the top, she stands aside for Bobby to unlock the door. He gives another smile, and reaching into his back pocket once more, DRAWS A FLAT-HEADED SCREWDRIVER.

He LUNGES at her with the tool. In quick motion, Alessandra moves to the side and DRAWS HER GUN.

Bobby attacks again with the tool, STABBING her in the shoulder just as she SHOOTS HIM IN THE GUT. He TOPPLES HEADLONG back down the stairs.

Bobby lies in a BROKEN, BLOODY HEAP at the foot of the staircase, HIS NECK TWISTED. Alessandra is left with a screwdriver WEDGED IN HER SHOULDER, CRYING IN PAIN.

She takes it in hand, and YANKS OUT THE TOOL. Then, KICKS THE DOOR OPEN.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Alessandra staggers into the hallway, BLEEDING. She has her gun in hand, now ready for anything else that may be waiting for her.

Looking to the floor, she spots a curious TRAIL OF VISCOUS LIQUID. She follows it along down the hallway --

And comes to Shanden’s front door at Apartment 214, holding her shoulder wound tightly.

No time to wait. She first knocks on the door with the butt of her gun, nothing.

ALESSANDRA
Mr. Hadd! It’s Alessandra, please open the door!

One of the apartment units near her opens, and an OLD ITALIAN COUPLE come outside, curious at the noise. She turns, and tells them in SUBTITLED ITALIAN:

ALESSANDRA (CONT’D)
Please, get back inside your flat!

They hurriedly do so. Alessandra KICKS SHANDEN’S DOOR OPEN. This nearly catches the matches, but one of them breaks instead of lighting. She doesn’t notice.

INT. SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The apartment reeks with the stench of death. Susannah and Trista’s bodies remain in the places Tommy left them. Alessandra immediately spots the gruesome displays, and closes the door behind her with a GASP.

She takes out her handheld phone and starts dialing Amadeo again. Holding that to her ear as she waits for him to pick up, she has another look at the floor. The trail of liquid STARTS HERE, with a very large pool of the wax stagnant, where she just put her feet at the entrance.

ALESSANDRA
(into phone)
Amadeo?! I’m inside!

EXT. STREETS OF OSTIENSE - NIGHT

Officer Amadeo and his CAR OF ITALIAN OFFICERS appear on the street outside the complex. Amadeo speaks on the phone with Alessandra, also in ITALIAN.

OFFICER AMADEO
(into phone)
We’re here. Which unit is it?

INT. SHANDEN'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Alessandra paces the floor to the kitchen, trying to wipe the liquid from her feet with any towel she can find.

ALESSANDRA
214. There’s something on the floor...

She knows she can’t linger any more. She rushes to the front door, and SWINGS IT OPEN obliviously....

The remaining matches at its base CATCH FIRE.

It IGNITES the pooled wax trail.

And Alessandra’s feet as well.

A scream, and she is on fire.

EXT. BACK STAIRS - NIGHT

Amadeo leads his two men, the Officers seen earlier, down the back alley towards the staircase. Bobby’s corpse is still there.

They EXCLAIM when they see him, and, looking to the top of the stairs, a BURNING ALESSANDRA comes BURSTING OUT from the building entrance.

She FALLS, ROLLING down the stairs straight towards the officers. They push out of the way, and there is nothing more to be done. Alessandra in flames falls against Bobby, and Amadeo SHOUTS IN HORROR.

EXT. CURIA OF POMPEY - NIGHT

Shanden, meanwhile, is STILL WAITING at the Curia. He looks ahead, and a WHITE-RIMMED SHADOW steps behind a shadowy alcove. *Was that just his imagination?*

He decides to take a few steps closer.

Tommy steps out, and Shanden lets out his own gasp.

SHANDEN
Tommy?

TOMMY
I'm pleased that you do remember something about me.

SHANDEN
My *brother* --

TOMMY
Don't start that now. Can you really call yourself my brother? You killed our parents, burned our home, and didn't even send a single letter.

This is like a gut punch to Shanden. He looks at his feet.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
The last time we saw each other, we were boys. Same parents, radically different treatment.
(beat)
You remember all that, I trust?

SHANDEN
Yes. It took me enough time.

TOMMY
That it did, Shanden. The years you spent repressing what could never be forgotten, I spent it making a new life for myself as well.

Shanden didn't hear that last part. He is just too captivated by seeing him in the flesh after all this time. He tries to move closer, but Tommy steps backward.

SHANDEN
It's really you? I'm so sorry it took this long.

TOMMY
Yes, I can see that you're full of regret. You've lived a comfortable life without me, it seems.

SHANDEN
If I could do it over, I would've searched for you so much sooner. We're brothers, Tommy. We should never have gone our separate ways.

TOMMY
And, is there anything *else* you would care to change about our past?

SHANDEN
I can't face that. Not now. The house burned, they died inside it, and there's nothing I can say that will change that.

TOMMY
You were euphoric when you did it, I always knew.

SHANDEN
It was an accident, Tommy --

TOMMY
-- No, we both know the truth. It was you.

Tommy reveals his BANDAGED FINGERS. He slowly unwraps them, revealing them to be RED AND RAW, SKINLESS, and CROOKED.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
I refused the skin grafts. I kept them like this, as a reminder. To never forget the flames of your making.

SHANDEN
Oh God, Tommy. What has happened to you?

TOMMY
I know I'm being too harsh. After all, I simply dropped you right into this, didn't I? You haven't had the boon of fifteen years of spying on the other, like I have.

SHANDEN
You've been --

TOMMY
-- Watching you, yes. No more than I had to. I got no enjoyment from it. I did what I had to do, to prepare this entire game.

SHANDEN
So, then...the mannequins?

TOMMY
Yes, now you're paying attention. I stole them, set them up, in the places where I knew you would see them.

SHANDEN
Who helped you?

TOMMY
Bobby, of course. You don't make for a very good boss, apparently.

SHANDEN
Why? Your displays have humiliated me, the poses, the things you watched me suffer! Is watching all you're capable of doing?

TOMMY
Oh no, far more. *Caring* is the other. You blocked things out, Shanden. Repressed things. You couldn't continue like that.

SHANDEN
I was doing fine before you started this.

TOMMY
You could've continued sleeping through life. I'll leave right now, and you'll never see me again. But I'm worried for you, brother. Can you go back to the way things were, before I set it in motion? How is your family?

SHANDEN
(venomously)
Do not even speak of them.

TOMMY
We'll get there soon enough. Right now, I want you to recall one more thing.

Shanden knows what he means. He falls to his knees in surrender.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE - NIGHT - 15 YEARS AGO

We're back in the opening DREAM SCENE. Only, it isn't a dream, but a FLASHBACK. The gothic house of Tommy and Shanden's parents BURNS in front of them.

The BROTHERS stand side by side, watching it COLLAPSE. Little Tommy, and Teenage Shanden. One looks clean and nurtured, the other starved and bruised.

Little Tommy however has noticeably BURNED FINGERS, that in this vision he appears oblivious to.

It CUES a MONTAGE of the duality of ABUSE and SPOILING:

- Teenage Shanden is LOCKED inside his closet, in the fetal position.

TOMMY (V.O.)
They gave you nothing.

- Little Tommy is at a deluxe dining table with their PARENTS, whose faces are OBSCURED.

TOMMY (V.O.)
And gave me everything.

- Teenage Shanden HANGS from the ceiling, his arms TWISTED behind his back. He CRIES, and his body gradually TURNS INTO A MANNEQUIN.

TOMMY (V.O.)
They hung you from the ceiling.

- Little Tommy rides on a ROLLERCOASTER at a bright theme park.

TOMMY (V.O.)
And I rode on rollercoasters.

- Teenage Shanden WRESTLES violently with his FATHER, who BURNS his feet on a portable grill.

TOMMY (V.O.)
They burned your feet.

- Little Tommy is given a bath by his MOTHER.

TOMMY (V.O.)
And they washed my hair.

- Teenage Shanden enters a SURGICAL ROOM with despair.

TOMMY (V.O.)
They made it so you could never have a child.

- Little Tommy is homeschooled by his Mother with her own blackboard setup.

TOMMY (V.O.)
And I was taught letters and numbers.

- Little Tommy watches Teenage Shanden sit alone, staring out a window in the prison house.

TOMMY (V.O.)
I was fascinated by you. My sad older brother. Why were they doing this to you? What had you done to deserve it? There was no answer. They wanted to see how you'd grow up.

- Teenage Shanden sits in a room with glass windows as the BLURRED FIGURES of other adults discuss unknown matters.

TOMMY (V.O.)
Given the difference in our respective treatments, they made a special allowance in our case. We weren't meant to be together. Did we still love each other? That was irrelevant.

- Little Tommy wanders down a white hallway, in a nondescript house. His fingers are now bandaged.

TOMMY (V.O.)
We were separated. And unlike your approach, I never once let you leave my mind.

- Teenage Shanden is seated on an AIRPLANE next to Richard and Bethany, who squabble amongst themselves.

TOMMY (V.O.)
Richard and Bethany. The most inane couple on the planet, the only family you would now know.

- Shanden, now his OLDER SELF, stands outside his FACTORY with Trista by his side. They look at their building with pride.

TOMMY (V.O.)
You truly did make a new life for yourself.

- Tommy, now his OLDER SELF, walks through a street of the DE WALLEN RED LIGHT DISTRICT, Amsterdam, passing neon windows with sensual silhouettes, dirty canals, and crowds of faceless men.

TOMMY (V.O.)
And so did I. I found my element.

- Shanden carefully sculpts a waxy mannequin's features using the tools of his trade - fine-point picks and scrapers.

- Tommy stands by a YOUNG WOMAN sitting in a surgical chair. He arranges his own set of tools, including hoses, scalpels, and syringes.

TOMMY (V.O.)
We both learned our trades. Remarkable how similar they wound up being.

- Tommy meets with Bobby at a Roman cafe. Bobby looks to be uncomfortably enthusiastic.

TOMMY (V.O.)
I was one business trip away from you. Bobby was far too easy to recruit.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. CURIA OF POMPEY - NIGHT

Shanden moves his fingers into the fresh dirt that he kneels upon, his world breaking inside his head.

SHANDEN
Why did he help you with everything?

TOMMY
He was abused himself, Shanden. That can be the cycle that we're dealing with here. It was all strictly business at first, I used an alias, and went to him in-person about acquiring some of your products.

Tommy kneels down and grabs the sides of Shanden's face, holding him tightly with his smoked digits, barbecued palms.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
I needed to see your work first-hand. My own brother's hands, his own machines, making these sculpts. Bobby was so useful. When the plan took shape, he remembered his own past, and he wanted to *help you* alongside me.
(beat)
Why did you hit him that day in the office? That wasn't very sporting of you.

SHANDEN
I thought he had stolen from me.

TOMMY
You were right. We did, to make all this happen.

Shanden lifts his head, narrowing his tired, red eyes.

SHANDEN
Did you kill Richard and Bethany?

Tommy is silent. He stands up, pacing in a circle around his brother.

TOMMY
I've wanted you to stand up for yourself, Shandy. That's what I've wanted from the start, watching what they did to you day after day.

SHANDEN
And burning them in that fucking house wasn't enough?

TOMMY
No, no, no. You have it all wrong. That was necessary.
(MORE)

TOMMY (CONT'D)
I won't begrudge you for it anymore. We're even now, you see.

Shanden pulls himself to his feet and speaks with more authority.

SHANDEN
How do you see that we're even? Since, you clearly have this all figured out, don't you?

TOMMY
I won't speak out of turn. Bobby will be here soon, and we'll help you through it together. It's always best to have more friends there to support you.

Shanden rushes at Tommy, grabbing him by the collar and YELLING in his face. Tommy remains calm.

SHANDEN
Did you kill Richard and Bethany?!

As he SHAKES him violently, a dozen POLAROID PHOTOGRAPHS fall from his suit and spread across the ground. Shanden pauses, letting his brother go with a SHOVE, and falling to his knees again to look at the photos.

INSERT: A fast-moving SLIDESHOW EFFECT shows each of the photos: most display mannequins, WIRED-TOGETHER to form BIZARRE SCULPTURES, hard to see in the dim light. However, there are also photographs of TRISTA AND SUSANNAH standing in Shanden's kitchen, looking CONCERNED at the camera flash.

TOMMY
Most of those were taken at my Boutique, they're old now. I much prefer the newer ones.

Shanden is interrupted from flipping through them by a CAMERA FLASH at his face. He flinches, and turns to see Tommy holding SUSANNAH'S PINK CAMERA.

SHANDEN
Where did you -- get that?

Tommy lowers the camera as he takes the Polaroid from it and shakes it nonchalantly.

TOMMY
This is my camera.

SHANDEN
It looks like my daughter's...

TOMMY
Oh yes, it might, but you're mistaken. I just wanted to commemorate this moment we are sharing.

Tommy bends down to show Shanden the picture he took of him. As he does so, Shanden grabs him by the shoulder, and PULLS him down into the dirt. The camera falls away from them and SMASHES against a chunk of stone, the Polaroids scattered.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
(ecstatic)
That's my big brother!

Shanden gets hold of Tommy's throat.

SHANDEN
What have you done to my family?

TOMMY
I'm your family, Shanden.

Shanden PUNCHES him square in the jaw.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
I'm the only family you deserve.

Tommy produces the gleaming blade of a SURGICAL SCALPEL from his suit, and Shanden grips his hand in a struggle of life or death - only, Tommy isn't fighting back. He just holds the blade, keeping it centered as Shanden tries to wrestle it from him.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
(grunting in exertion)
After this is over -- go to the Boutique, Shanden --

Shanden KNEES Tommy in the groin, catching him off guard long enough to PLUNGE the scalpel into TOMMY'S HEART, his own hand still wrapped around it beneath Shanden's vicious grasp.

Tommy GASPS IN PAIN. The air has been taken out of him, the cold metal edge protrudes from his body.

Shanden immediately RECOILS from his brother, shocked at the sensation it had given.

SHANDEN
I want it to be over, Tommy, I want it to be over.

Tommy GURGLES on his own bloody saliva.

TOMMY
Me too.

Tommy reaches a SHAKING HAND into his bloodied and dirtied suit. He takes out a SET OF KEYS, rusted and iron, like the keyring to a medieval dungeon.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
You have to understand me, it's my life's work...

He gestures for Shanden to take them. He does, cautiously crawling over to him and snatching the keys, wary of any last tricks he might pull.

Pocketing the keys, Shanden stares deeply into his brother's glazing eyes.

SHANDEN
You're a madman.
(beat)
I wish we could have stuck together, and made different lives side by side. Their experiment worked too well...

TOMMY
It was brilliant. Now, you can make your own.

Tommy CHOKES on more blood and bile. Shanden leans down to EMBRACE HIM, crying, his brain fried by the events.

He takes hold of the scalpel. He WEDGES it out from Tommy's heart with his bare hands, and looks over it carefully. Maybe he isn't done after all.

Tommy SMILES up at him. The smile disturbs Shanden visibly, whose face gets angrier and angrier, becoming intensely strained and red.

He grabs Tommy by the collar and arms, standing up to begin DRAGGING HIM across the ground, towards the shelter of a CIRCLE OF ANCIENT COLUMNS.

EXT. STREET BESIDE THE CURIA - NIGHT

Amadeo's Italian police vehicle pulls up against the railing overlooking the Curia. He gets out, signaling for his two backup Officers to spread out to the other sides.

The columns loom large in the center of the enclosure. Even from here, Amadeo can spot a RED TRAIL leading towards them.

He draws his GUN and descends a flight of switchback stairs into the site.

EXT. CURIA OF POMPEY - CONTINUOUS

Amadeo swiftly makes his way towards the red trail.

AMADEO POV: His HEARTBEAT can be heard RESOUNDING, as his gaze drifts to the blood on the ground and ahead to the spot where it is strongest. He nears the columns...

Turning around the corner of a pillar, he sees TOMMY'S CORPSE, now with a multitude of fresh STAB WOUNDS. Shanden has flourished him with wounds in every spot of his body -- shoulder, chest, stomach, and groin.

A blood pool collects around his legs. It is horrible and a startling act of impulsive revenge all at once.

Amadeo SHOUTS in shock, calling in ITALIAN for his men:

OFFICER AMADEO
Here! Here, we have a body!

Focusing on Tommy's remains, we slowly FADE TO:

INT. TRAIN (MOVING) - DAY

Shanden sits on a EUROPEAN TRAIN en-route to an uncertain destination. He has nothing to his name - no briefcase, wearing the same shirt and pants as he did at the Curia. Dirt and dried blood stain his clothes.

PASSENGERS sit in their own seats, oblivious to him. He stares at nowhere in particular, with a ROME NEWSPAPER across his lap.

Opening the paper, we see the INSERT of one of the top headlines: "TRIPLICE OMICIDIO A OSTIENSE!".

Shanden closes the news and looks up at the ceiling of the train, reaching his hand in his pocket and JINGLING the keys.

EXT. DE WALLEN, AMSTERDAM - NIGHT

We find ourselves suddenly in The Netherlands. The sights seen earlier are now in full, living colors of neon, and crowds circulate around the shops and canals of the district. Shanden appears as a tiny speck wandering through them.

Passing down an alleyway, he stops at an identifiable window. The name of the shoppe: “THE MANIQUE BOUTIQUE - PLASTIC SURGERY AND BOTOX CLINIC”.

Shanden takes a deep breath and enters.

INT. THE MANIQUE BOUTIQUE - NIGHT

Shanden walks through a suffocating pink and green tiled reception area, where a SECRETARY sits behind a desk filing her nails. Formica and plastic chairs and end tables are at every corner.

He moves through to an adjoining hallway, completely in a TRANCE-LIKE STATE.

And down a flight of stairs, where a PINK LOCKED DOOR awaits. He produces Tommy’s key, and OPENS IT.

INT. THE MANIQUE BOUTIQUE BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Shanden flicks a switch, and overhead FLUORESCENT TUBES flicker on, to reveal: a MASSIVE SCULPTURE OF WIRED-TOGETHER MANNEQUINS. This is Tommy’s masterpiece - every mannequin attached to the other, one on top of the other, all male models with cold features.

Shanden hears the voices of the deceased, ghostly ECHOES within his mind:

TRISTA (V.O.)
We’ll be with you, every step of the way.

SUSANNAH (V.O.)
This is the perfect therapy for you, Dad.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Way to go, Shanden.

BETHANY (V.O.)
And I’ll make some finger sandwiches!

ALESSANDRA (V.O.)
You did it. You're a real sensation, too.

Shanden looks around, as if searching for the source of the whispers. But, he is ALONE. As he approaches the sculpture, a final whisper coincides with a FADE TO BLACK:

TOMMY (V.O.)
We can be the same, brother dear.

Shanden SMILES.

THE END