

**TEASER**

1

EXT. ROUTE 1 HIGHWAY - NIGHT

1

Beams of moonlight blanket the wooded floor. Thin, boney branches cast haunting shadows. No sound but the wind.

CAMERA TURNS TO REVEAL THE CLEARING OF THE WOODS AND THE LONELY HIGHWAY CUTTING ACROSS IT.

The soft HUM of a gently accelerating RED TRUCK swells into hearing. In the darkness it is obscured but for it's headlights. It drives alone until...MUSIC. The DRUMS of punk-industrial-rock breaks the serenity.

A second pair of headlights flares as a shoddy BLACK CAR swerves in front of the truck. The truck HONKS and breaks. The car carries on, speeding down the highway.

Inside it, TROI GARDNER (17) is at the wheel, with BROOKE GARDNER (17), her sister, beside her.

BROOKE

Jesus! Turn signal. Then merge.

They're twins, but easily distinguishable. Troi's hair is short with streaks of color. Her style is androgynous and nonconforming. Troi HONKS back at the truck. She's calm and antagonizing as ever.

Brooke by comparison appears feminine, stylish, and bright in both style and character. She's soft-spoken, in a sweet but cool way. Riding shotgun and overflowing with anxiety, she grips the grab handle even tighter.

TROI

Asshole!

(to Brooke)

Relax. We're good. We're so good.

BROOKE

Don't crash my car.

TROI

Our car.

BROOKE

Please don't crash my car.

TROI

Stop, you said you'd teach me to drive.

BROOKE  
You're a dumbass.

TROI  
Yeah, bitch, but I'm street smart.

Teasing Brooke, she floors it. The engine ROARS. Brooke grips the handle again as the momentum pushes her back in her seat.

TROI (CONT'D)  
Get it? It's a street....Driving...

BROOKE  
Dumbass.

TROI  
Wooo!

INT. ROADSIDE GAS STATION MART - DAY

Brooke and Troi enter and fan out through the mini-mart. There is a CASHIER (25), resting lazily behind the register.

BROOKE  
Text mom.

TROI  
What for?

BROOKE  
(sassy)  
'Cause we're gonna be late.

TROI  
(defensively)  
I need snacks.

Brooke SHAKES her head with frustrated amusement. She MUMBLE-SINGS along to the POP-JINGLE SONG playing inside and raps her thumb to the beat on the tops of passing shelves. Troi drops down to a bottom shelf and surveys the chip selection.

Far in the rear of the store, his back to the girls, stands PAT LANGI (40), an enormous, bearded man with the look of a perverted, internet slob or a sinister, light-house recluse.

Brooke, curious, focuses on the man. He stares profoundly into a rolling hot dog cooker. He licks his lips and scratches his fingernails gently back and forth on the counter.

Langi looks up, suddenly made aware he's being watched. He turns over his shoulder. His and Brooke's eyes lock.

From her hidden, squatted position, Troi looks up at Brooke. She cannot see Langi.

Politely, Brooke gives Langi a smile. He glares back dismissively. Discomforted, her expression sobers. At this change, Langi's eyes widen. He looks at her now with curiosity, then fear, then hate.

Langi looks back and up, over his own shoulder. To Brooke, it appears he's starting at nothing but open air. But Langi's eyes lock in place, as though staring at something only he can see, perched beside him.

He looks back and forth between Brooke and the emptiness. Whatever it is he sees, he believes Brooke can see it too.

Langi breaks into hurried action. He seizes a hot dog from the cooker bare-handed, lowers his eyes, chews the sausage frantically, and walks straight for the side hall of the mart, bending away towards the hidden restrooms.

LANGI  
(whispering as though  
under his breath)  
She sees. She sees.

Brooke watches him cross. Troi pops up just as he passes. She sees Langi, though he does not see her. The cashier rises from his seat and runs after Langi.

CASHIER  
Sir. Hey, you can't take products  
in there.

The cashier exits after Langi. Brooke and Troi can hear him POUNDING on the bathroom door.

TROI  
What was that? What did you see?

BROOKE  
Nothing. I just smiled.

TROI  
What are doing? Don't flirt at  
crazies.

BROOKE  
I smiled at him. What? It's polite.  
I thought he was like, a homeless  
guy or something.

TROI  
I bet that's exactly what he is.

They LAUGH.

CASHIER (O.S.)  
Come on, man. Let's go.

BROOKE  
The girls are hanging tonight.  
You're invited.

TROI  
What, Autumn and Sasha said they  
want me there?

BROOKE  
In fewer words. I want you there.  
And Lee wants you there.

TROI  
(blushing, trying to play  
it cool)  
That... st... I mean, that's nice  
of her.

BROOKE  
Uh huh.

Brooke arrives to the slushy station and pulls the lever.  
Nothing comes out.

TROI  
But if Autumn starts something I'm  
gonna kick her ass.

BROOKE  
Not everyone's out to get you.

TROI  
She called me a bitch last time we  
got drunk.

BROOKE  
No she didn't.

TROI  
She did. And I am, but it was still  
very telling.

BROOKE  
Well you've got nothing better to  
do so you're coming.

TROI  
I got plenty to do.

BROOKE  
Trolling incels on Facebook isn't a hobby.

TROI  
I'm not 40.

BROOKE  
Fine. On...Clog69, or...Suck-my-cog...

TROI  
(flips her the MIDDLE FINGER)  
Cog9.

BROOKE  
Whatever. It's not a hobby.

TROI  
(sarcastic)  
It's a calling. I'm a hero.

BROOKE  
You're a freak. Do you see the cashier? Blue Raspberry isn't working.

Troi looks over to the front counter. No one's there. She passes Brooke a conniving look. Troi investigates further.

She looks at the COMPUTER SCREENS behind the counter, each displaying a security camera feed. Troi follows their views and spots out the various cameras around the space.

BROOKE (CONT'D)  
Don't

Troi takes a few calculated paces back towards a particular aisle and stops.

TROI  
Blindspot.

BROOKE  
(deadly serious)  
Don't.

Troi snatches up random snacks and supplies from the shelf beside her and stuffs them into her jacket pockets.

BROOKE (CONT'D)  
(disappointed)  
You serious?

TROI  
What? I really need...  
(looking at the random box  
in her hand)  
...beard oil.

Brooke shakes her head and turns back to the machine. She settles for Red Cherry and starts filling her cup. Troi SNICKERS as she takes more stock from the shelf.

Her attention wanders at sound of WHEEZING coming from the entrance of a maintenance side-hall.

On the floor, lies the cashier. His head is bashed in, pulsing blood out onto the floor. Half of his face is burnt and blistered as though smacked with a red-hot frying pan.

His wide eyes stare into Troi's. She looks back in stunned horror. He EXHALES and dies.

CREAK. Troi whips her attention over to the footstep of Langi.

Langi stalks up to Brooke. He hasn't seen Troi. Troi drops to the floor and scampers to hide behind a shelf. Brooke SINGS along louder to the music, deafening her to Langi's approach.

INSERT OF THE SECURITY CAMERA MONITORS. THEY SHOW BROOKE SINGING, LANGI APPROACHING, AND - MOST CLEARLY - TROI HIDING.

Troi peaks around the shelf to see Brooke. She could alert her. Troi opens her mouth to yell but the words catch in her throat. The terror petrifies her. She cowers deeper from view.

Langi seizes Brooke. Brooke SCREAMS. She wrestles in his arms. Her red slushy falls and spills across the floor. Troi spies from her hiding spot but can barely see anything.

TROI'S POV. WE MOSTLY JUST HEAR RATHER THAN SEE LANGI AND BROOKE. WHAT WE DO SEE IS OBSCURED: THROUGH THE SLITS OF SHELVES OR IN THE REFLECTION OF A FISH-EYE STORE MIRROR.

Brooke writhes and breaks free from Langi. She sprints for Troi's hiding place.

BROOKE  
Troi!

INSERT OF THE SECURITY CAMERAS WHERE WE SEE BROOKE ENTER THE BLINDSPOT AND DISAPPEAR FROM THE VIEW OF THE CAMERAS.

LANGI  
 ("Seize")  
 Karāmu!

Brooke's movement suddenly stops. Her entire body freezes and straightens, limbs outstretched. She lifts three feet off the floor. It appears as though she's floating. Troi sees her dangling feet through the minuscule gap between shelves.

Brooke SCREAMS. Around each wrist, each ankle, and on her back, the clothes and skin begins to smoke and blister, as though the invisible binds that hold her are scalding.

In the overwhelming pain, Brooke faints. She goes silent and, a second later, collapses back to the floor, limp. Langi scoops up her body. He carries her off toward the store exit.

Troi waits. There is silence, but for the same SONG playing, until a BUBBLING sound takes Troi's attention. Down the aisle, where Brooke had floated just a moment ago, the wall of bottled soft-drinks begin to boil.

At first it is just the drinks closest to where Brooke had been, but then the bubbling spreads. Closer and closer to Troi, the columns of drinks boil. The plastic of the bottles melt and blacken. Closer and closer.

Troi peaks at the floor. Scorched, monstrosly-shaped FOOTPRINTS appear, stepping closer, in congruence with the bubbling liquids.

The source remains invisible, but the effect grows so close, Troi can feel the heat on her shoulder. Troi covers her mouth, holding in a scream of pain. The skin on her shoulder starts to blister. Closer and closer.

LANGI (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 ("Come")  
 Tehû!

The boiling ceases. The heat departs. Silence returns. Langi, with Brooke's unconscious body, exits. Brooke remains in her hiding spot. She doesn't move. She stares blankly in shock. No sound but the SONG.

TOTAL BLACK. CUT  
 TO INTRO.

TITLE CARD: "By Blood".

END OF TEASER



ACT I

3

INT. THE WESTPORT POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY

3

POLICE hurry this way and that around the open floor of the station. There's CHATTER and phones RINGING. At one desk, an OFFICER speaks to Troi and Molly. Troi helps her mother sign documents, too distraught to focus properly.

OFFICER 1

Once the State Medical Examiners finish their autopsy, Brooke will be transferred back here to the station where we can hold her until you find a mortuary you like. The process usually takes about a week. Do you know what you'd like to do with Brooke's remains?

Molly is anxious and distracted. She STUTTERS. Troi steps in.

TROI

Donation. She was screened last year. She's gonna be a cadaver for the medical school. She wanted...She was gonna go pre-med.

Troi trails off into silence as grief seeps in. Molly CRIES. The officer takes the signed documents and departs.

Troi's attention wanders to the huddle of DETECTIVES across the room. Reggie and MIKE FORD (40), his bulky, bald partner, look at an evidence board with photographs of the crime scene.

Troi stands and walks over to get a closer look. Reggie notices. He calls over OFFICER PEKOWSKI (30), a fat, uniformed beat cop.

REGGIE

(callously)

Pekowski, get the sister back.

Mike shoots a disapproving look. He steps in and approaches Troi before she's able to get too close.

MIKE

I'm Detective Ford. This is my partner Detective Linder. You did the right thing calling the police.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Whoever did this tried hard to  
erase the evidence but you got us  
out looking before the fire could  
spread, so, ya know, well done.

She looks past Mike at the board. She focuses on PHOTOS of  
Brooke's corpse.

TROI

What if I had called quicker?

MIKE

Listen, why don't you take care of  
your mom and we can...

TROI

If we had gotten there quicker  
would she be alive?

Reggie recognizes her desperation for assurance. He softens,  
barely.

REGGIE

Kid, he just told you, the fire's  
what got our attention. So no.

Troi is still unsatisfied by the answer. Reggie returns to  
the board. Troi remains, eyes locked on the PHOTOS of Brooke.

4 INT. GARDNER HOUSE - MOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 4

Molly and Troi lie asleep in bed. Molly's her arms wrapped  
around her daughter. Troi's eyes dart beneath her closed  
lids. Perspiration gathers on her furrowed brow.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE BEDROOM AND A SEQUENCE OF IMAGES:

4A INT. THE BOAT HOUSE - FLASHBACK 4A

Flashes of Brooke's corpse. The snake. The gentle SPASH of  
water on wood. The CREAK of the boat rolling back and forth.  
The BUZZ of flies around the animal carcasses.

4B INT. WESTPORT HIGH SCHOOL - FLASHBACK 4B

Troi walks behind Brooke. From her view, Brooke laughs,  
surrounded by FRIENDS, but her face is hidden.

4D INT. GARDNER HOUSE - FLASHBACK 4D

Brooke watches from the slit in her bedroom door. Down the hall, Troi and Molly argue aggressively. Troi yells. Molly slaps her and shouts back. Brooke closes the door.

4C EXT. TROI'S NIGHTMARE WORLD 4C

Flashes of iconography from the crime scene meld into new images: a dusty orange hell-scape; a small pyramid altar; a sarcophagus; carved on the lid is a coiled, winged serpent.

CUT TO BLACK.

5 INT. THE WESTPORT POLICE STATION - DAY 5

Reggie pins more PHOTOGRAPHS to the crime board: Brooke's body from the autopsy; the vases filled with various animal carcasses; the pentacle star; Brooke's wrecked car in a ditch by the highway.

Reggie stares at the photos, silent and disturbed, but laser-focused. His frantic energy makes him seem less mature and younger than he is. Mike goes over the evidence.

MIKE

Lacerations along the legs and up the torso. Language or iconography. Bruising around the wrist looks like a large male hand, probably sustained in an initial struggle pulling her from the car. No other signs of bruising. Punctured by four iron nails in the leg, hip, back and stomach, hitting nothing vital. Died from hemorrhage...God Almighty.

Mike trails off. The horror is overwhelming. Reggie's eyes land on one PHOTO.

REGGIE

And four toes missing.

MIKE

CSI found toes in four of the vases.

INSERTS OF THE CORRESPONDING PHOTOS AS REGGIE LISTS THEM.

REGGIE

Eleven vases. Two with snakes, one of which with an added pigeon wing in it. Three lost in the fire. We got forensics sifting whats left of those. One, a dead cat. One with a dead cat plus a toe. A scorpion, a fish, and a severed cow hoof, all plus a toe. And then a big ol' bowl of hair.

MIKE

Human?

REGGIE

Yes but it's a wig. Probably imported. And expensive.

MIKE

I don't remember that part in the Bible.

REGGIE

Huh?

Before Mike answers, SHERIFF EWING's (50-60) office door opens. A stout, severe woman, she steps out followed by MAYOR MICHAEL MADIGAN (40-50).

Though he tries to be subtle, this bright-smiled, charismatic politician can't help but draw attention. They shake hands and the mayor departs. Ewing makes her way over to the detectives.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

The mayor's making visits now?

MIKE

Word's spread. Especially 'bout the pentagram. People are spooked. My wife's terrified.

REGGIE

What? Like, satanic?

EWING

(walking up to them)

People get upset about religion. Mayor Madigan wants this resolved quietly and discretely. No spectacle. For everyone's sake.

REGGIE  
You gonna tell the family that?

EWING  
If you can't handle the delicate nature of case, Detective Linder, you'll tell me now.

REGGIE  
We'll give it the old college try.

Ewing nods and departs. Mike observes Reggie anger.

REGGIE (CONT'D)  
We find out who owns the boathouse yet?

MIKE  
Working on it. Reggie...

REGGIE  
We're gonna get him.

Reggie turns back to the wall with blind determination. He ignores Mike's concern.

6 EXT. GARDNER HOUSE - DAWN

6

The Gardner house sits off of a wooded road. Beside it sits a chicken coup, a small goat pen, and an old garage. The next house down is more than a couple football fields away.

Troi stands alone on the porch. She sneakily lights a cigarette and takes a drag, taking in the morning air.

CUT TO:

Troi scoops up dung from the coup floor and feeds a GOAT hay from her hand. For a moment, Troi stops and stares into a BLACK GOAT's freaky eye.

6A INT. GARDNER HOUSE - GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

6A

Troi pulls the big bag of feed into the garage and rests it in the corner. She looks up at the CAR, draped in a covering, sitting in the center of the garage.

She approaches it and pulls back the cover. It's Brooke's; the car from the crime scene photo. The left side of the car is dented in, as though another vehicle hit it hard. Troi's eye picks up on the subtle glisten of dust around the dent.

Troi runs a finger across the metal, picking up a fine black POWDER on her finger tip. She smells it and retracts from the putrid stink.

Troi takes out her phone and uses it's flashlight to follow the dust on the dent, which trails down beneath the underbelly of the car.

There she finds more damage, but these are cuts instead of dents. With her own hand, she traces the five deep lines that tear through the metal. It's as though a monstrous claw sliced through and gripped it.

INT. GARDER HOUSE - MOLLY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Troi enters her mother's room. She reacts to the immediate smell of vomit. Her mom is asleep, still fully clothed, half under the sheets. There's a trail of dried vomit from Molly's open mouth to a trash bin beside the bed.

TROI  
Jesus, Mom.

Troi approaches with disgust and pity. She picks up the bin and takes it to the bathroom. She washes it out in the shower. The commotion wakes Molly. She takes in her setting.

TROI (CONT'D)  
(from the bathroom)  
You need to sell the goats. They're Brooke's, not mine. I'm not scooping crap.

MOLLY  
(dolefully)  
Her goats.

TROI  
I need the car. Where is it?

MOLLY  
I couldn't drive.

TROI  
You could just drink at home and save the cost.

Molly CRIES.

TROI (CONT'D)  
I'll be home later.

Troi exits.

7

INT. THE WESTPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

7

Reggie enters the front door with a backpack over his shoulder and two morning COFFEES in his hands. He passes the front desk, where Office Pekowski's round, mustached face is buried a magazine.

PEKOWSKI  
(Without looking up)  
Visitor for you, Reg.

Reggie stops and looks around the waiting area. There's no one there.

PEKOWSKI (CONT'D)  
Oh. Huh. Weird.

REGGIE  
(Overtly sarcastic)  
Westport's finest, everybody.

PEKOWSKI  
(Not catching the sarcasm)  
Oh thanks!

Reggie carries on into the bullpen until he spots Troi across the room, alone, standing before the evidence board. She is staring intently on one particular photo from the crime scene. Reggie approaches.

REGGIE  
Jesus Christ. Alright, time to go.

TROI  
(re: in the photo)  
What's this powder?

REGGIE  
It's dust. It must have been on the other car. Let's go. You can't be here.

TROI  
Then how'd it get underneath but not all over the road. And, look.

Troi pulls up a page of paper from Reggie's desk. Reggie immediately snatches it away.

REGGIE  
Don't touch that.

TROI

It's not like house dust or saw dust or dirt. It's 80% sulfur. It's ash. Like volcanic ash. That's weird.

REGGIE

It's a weird case. Where did you get this?

TROI

The forensics lady, dropped it off earlier. I've been here a while. Do you always clock in at 10?

REGGIE

I do my best work at after lunch. Please leave.

TROI

Cops serve the community. Not the other way around.

Reggie has a theory. He sits down at his computer and types.

TROI (CONT'D)

What?

REGGIE

I'm new around here. But I'm betting you're not.

(he opens a file)

*Troi Gardner. Fighting at school - classic. Buying cigarettes. Brought a knife to school. There we go. Who was that for?*

TROI

(becoming agitated)

Self defense. Eat a dick.

REGGIE

You should be with your mom. She'll need your help.

TROI

I am helping!

Other officers turn and stare. Reggie tries to mollify her.

REGGIE

I know you're in pain but lashing out...



TROI

You guys have nothing, do you!?  
What about the dust?

REGGIE

What about the dust?! These things  
take time and the time I'm spending  
arguing with you is time I'm not  
spending investigating your god  
damn dust.

MIKE (O.S.)

Reggie! We got an name!

Mike emerges from down the hall.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Hey there. Uh, family visit?

REGGIE

While you were taking your morning  
dump, twin sister's been solving  
the case.

MIKE

I was finding the owner of the  
boathouse. Where were you?

REGGIE

I always get in at 10. Very  
consistently. Everybody knows this.  
(offers one of the cups)  
Take your coffee. You're welcome.

TROI

You found him?

MIKE

(gently)  
Miss, if you want to come back with  
your mom that's fine, but you need  
to let us work, okay?

Troi concedes. She turns and trudges toward the exit.

REGGIE

Little brat.

MIKE

Grief looks different on everyone.  
You know that.

That strikes a cord with Reggie. Mike pins a driver's license PHOTO to the board. It's PAT LANGI (40), a bearded man with the look of a sinister, light-house recluse.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I put out an APB on Pat Langi. He's been in and out of Max Security Prison for twenty years...

Just before she exits, Troi stops at the door to see and hear this last information.

8 INT. GARDNER HOUSE - DAY

8

Troi opens the door to reveal BETSY MCNEIL (17), her best friend. Betsy's style is quite plain compared to her colorful, moody friend. She stands uncertainly in the doorway holding an outrageous flower bouquet.

BETSY

These are from my mom.

Betsy hands it over. They smile, both knowing how hollow a gift like this is to Troi.

Betsy peeks inside over Troi's shoulder to see that the living room is overflowing with condolence flower arrangements from other neighbors.

TROI

It's gonna get real sad when they wilt in two days. Get me out of here.

9 EXT. ROUTE 1 HIGHWAY - DAY

9

Betsy's car zooms along a highway through rural/coastal Rhode Island. The road is enclosed by thick woods on either side.

They pass a clearing that reveals a small fishing bay, flowing to the Atlantic Ocean, expanding into the horizon.

Turning down an off-ramp, they drive through wide tracks of farm land: fields of corn; cows grazing behind stone fences.

They enter Westport, a small town where modern meets the nautical historic. 17th century houses beside Chevy dealerships. While Betsy drives, Troi applies some eye shadow in the sun visor mirror.

TROI

God, I'm a mess.

BETSY  
You look hot. Sleeping okay?

TROI  
Super smooth way of saying I look tired.

BETSY  
I didn't say that out loud.

TROI  
Freaky dreams. Is this what trauma feels like?

BETSY  
Please get yourself in therapy.

TROI  
You don't have eyedrops, do you?

BETSY  
Eyedrops are not a viable replacement for therapy. And no I don't carry spare eyedrops on me.

TROI  
It's just pressure. It's not even tears. I wish I could cry. I swear I'm broken.

BETSY  
Miss Ice Bitch.

TROI  
Ahhhh.

Troi gives a semi-sarcastic EXCLAMATION of dissatisfaction at her appearance and flips up the sun visor.

10

EXT. THE WESTPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

10

Troi and Betsy are surreptitiously parked, staking out the entrance of the police station. They have large coffee cups and baggies of pastries, casually snacking while they wait.

BETSY  
This isn't healthy, is it?

TROI  
(re: the snacks)  
So? It's seasonal.

BETSY

No. Stalking the cops and - what? -  
Catching the guy who...

TROI

You can say it.

BETSY

Are you okay?

TROI

I'm stalking the cops and catching  
the guy who ritual murdered my  
sister and pinned her to a Britney  
Spears snake. I'm not doing okay.

BETSY

Why can't you just let them handle  
it?

TROI

47 minutes. After Brooke's first  
call, it took me 47 minutes to call  
the cops.

Before Betsy can answer, her attention turns to the police  
station.

BETSY

Yo, is this it? Are we doing this?

Troi looks and sees Reggie and Mike burst from the police  
station. They CONVERSE, rush to their car, and drive off.

TROI

Go. Go.

Betsy turns on the car and follows after them.

11

EXT. ROADSIDE GAS STATION MART - DAY

11

Reggie and Mike pull off the highway and into the lot. Behind  
the gas station is a convenience store attached to a closed  
car wash. They park inconspicuously and emerge. Reggie  
presses ahead toward the mart.

MIKE

Discretely.

REGGIE

Yeah, yeah.

MIKE

That's his plate.

They pass a dark colored sedan. Its unassuming with no visible damage. Reggie confirms the plate number, but furrows his brow at the lack of evidence of any collision.

REGGIE

Not a scratch.

They enter, just as Troi and Betsy pull into the lot behind them. Betsy follows Troi's instructions while Troi cranes her neck to look in through the mart windows.

TROI

Circle around. Slower. Park here.

11A INT. ROADSIDE GAS STATION MART - CONTINUOUS

11A

Reggie and Mike fan out in the store. Mike goes to the TEEN CASHIER (17), flashes his badge, and gestures for him to be quiet and to crouch to the floor. The cashier's eyes go wide and he complies.

Reggie winds through the aisles, carefully approaching the back of the shop, where Langi stands, back to the rest of the mart.

Langi looks even more haggard than in his photo. His face sags with dark, shameful, emotion. He stares deeply into a rolling hot dog cooker. He licks his lips.

CU ON LANGI'S HAND ON THE COUNTER TOP.

TATTOOS of black Sumerian script, just like those found on Brooke's corpse, circle Langi's left hand in a fluid, geometrical pattern. They extend up until his sleeve.

11B EXT. ROADSIDE GAS STATION MART - CONTINUOUS

11B

Betsy parks the car along the side of the mart.

BETSY

I think...I think this is dangerous.

TROI

Wait here.

BETSY

No! Troi!

Before Betsy can stop her, Troi unbuckles, exits the car and sneaks over. Betsy watches Troi peer through the windows.

11C INT. ROADSIDE GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS 11C

Mike gestures again to a couple of PATRONS. They crouch and make their way silently to the exit. Reggie approaches Langi, still a dozen feet away. He slowly unholsters his gun.

CU ON LANGI WITH REGGIE OVER HIS SHOULDER.

Langi snaps up from the hot dog cooker, as though suddenly made aware of Reggie behind him, despite not turning to see. His eyes are wide with panic. Langi's head cocks and his eyes focus as if there were someone or something there beside him.

PAT

How many?

He speaks to someone, though there is no one there. He reacts to some inaudible answer. Langi breaks away from the counter and sprints for the back exit.

REGGIE

Westport PD! Freeze!

Reggie draws and fires, but the shot misses, exploding a wall of potato chips.

11D EXT. ROADSIDE GAS STATION MART - CONTINUOUS 11D

Troi drops lower at the sound of gun fire. She watches Langi disappear out the back exit. Troi hurries back and flanks around to the abandoned car wash behind the store.

11E INT. ROADSIDE GAS STATION MART - CAR WASH - CONTINUOUS 11E

Reggie moves into the dark, abandoned car wash, past rows of heavy machinery that obscure his vision. Out from the shadow he can hear Langi's mad ramblings.

LANGI (O.S.)

(to his invisible  
companion)

It's not my fault. I'm a good  
person. Get me out of here. You  
obey me! No! Shut up! You obey me!  
Ahh!

Langi SCREAMS in pain.

REGGIE

Pat Langi. You're under arrest for  
the murder of Brooke Gardner.

LANGI (O.S.)

(to Reggie)

Oh god! I'm so sorry!

(to the companion)

Shut up!

(to Reggie)

They made me do it! Please!

Mike enters in behind Reggie.

REGGIE

(whispered to Mike)

He's not alone. Circle around.

Mike ducks behind some machinery while Reggie presses  
forward.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

We can help you, Pat. I need you  
and your friend to come out with  
your hands raised.

PAT

My friend. So alone. They told me  
I'd never be alone again.

Through the web of washers and abandoned cars, Reggie spots  
Langi, standing still as stone, tears running down his face.

LANGI

You can't stop us.

Langi looks up, extends his tattooed hand, and fires out a  
gust of MAGICAL POWER. In an instant, a cone of shadow and  
dust erupts out, blasting machinery away, lifting Reggie off  
his feet, and throwing him back.

The cloud and debris settle. Langi flees out an exit.

11F EXT. ROADSIDE GAS STATION MART - CAR WASH - CONTINUOUS 11F

Troi rounds the corner and Langi steps outside. A hundred  
feet from one another they lock eyes. Troi freezes. Her  
boldness turns to terror. Pat's eyes narrow with clear  
recognition. He looks at her with fear and shame.

LANGI

The sister.

Troi turns to run. Langi extends a hand again. This time, he cause Troi's body to freeze. Mid run, Troi's entire body is held in place. She can't move a muscle - only her eyes, which dart wildly.

CU ON LANGI'S ARM.

From the epicenter of the pattern in Langi's palm, the archaic letters undulate and pulse outward and up his arm.

Troi is helpless as Langi stalks up and circles her with malignant fascination. As he goes, wisps of shadow and dust diffuse out of the ether around Troi's limbs.

Langi SPEAKS steadily in an ancient language, CHANTING some ritual Troi cannot understand. The wisps of magic grow and form a humanoid torso that clings to her. It shifts between substance-less ash-cloud and exposed flesh.

A FACE appears from the shadow. It's demonic and smiling with large sharp teeth. It is LANGI'S DEMON, which holds Troi in place. The demon chants along with Langi, completely in synch, until the prayer is finished.

The demon disappears, returning to formless dust and spilling onto the ground. Troi is released from the paralysis just as Langi seizes her by the throat and pulls a knife out from his pocket.

LANGI (CONT'D)

The Mother of Monsters cannot  
return.

Langi raises the knife above his head, but stops when a sustained HONK blares out from off screen. Betsy speeds around the corner and drives into Langi. She clips him just enough to send him flying off Troi without hitting her too.

Betsy brakes to a halt. Troi is left frozen in shock. There are only three bloody nail mark around her neck where Langi's hand grasped just a second ago. She doesn't move. She doesn't speak.

**END OF ACT I**



ACT II

EXT. ROADSIDE GAS STATION - DAY

An EMT draws a sheet over Langi, who lies dead on the concrete. Reggie, with his arm in a sling, stands over them, deep in thought.

POLICE and EMTs run this way and that blocking off the crime scene from aggressive NEWS REPORTERS and CAMERAMEN. Among the crowd, several TOWNSFOLK crowd around to gawk at the "satanic killer" they've been hearing about.

Troi sits off the open back of an ambulance, with a blanket over her shoulders and Betsy beside her. Mike interrogates them. Betsy, ridden with anxiety, struggles to lie. Troi doesn't listen. Her mind races.

MIKE

And you just happened to be in the neighborhood?

BETSY

Yeah. Yeah. I wanted snacks. And, Troi, she also wanted snacks. And so I was like, or maybe it was your idea, "let's get snacks."

MIKE

Troi?

Troi doesn't answer. Mike knows Betsy is lying. He turns away in a huff and crosses to Reggie. An EMT steps in and applies a bandage pad to the cuts on Troi's throat.

MIKE (CONT'D)

She's in shock.

REGGIE

(observing Troi)

Nah.

Reggie approaches the girls.

BETSY

(re: Langi)

Is the guy okay?

As Betsy and Reggie talk, Troi looks out to notice a woman, JUIITH SHEOL (50-60), cross the caution tape uninterrupted. She has a strong, salt-of-the-earth-look to her. She wears a disheveled, simple blazer over a flannel and jeans.

REGGIE

Oh, no, he definitely died on  
impact. Nice driving by the way.  
Hey, can you give me a second with  
Troii?

Betsy's eyes go wide. She silently rises and walks away,  
grappling with what she's done.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Hey, Troii.

Troii watches Judith crouch down to Langi's corpse and  
examines his tattoos.

TROI

(distracted)  
Wassup?

REGGIE

Langi say anything to you?

Pause. Troii focuses her attention to Reggie. Each tries to  
gauge what the other knows

TROI

Little bit.

REGGIE

He do anything ... spooky?

TROI

Little bit.

REGGIE

Something like...blasting a dust  
devil out of his hand?

TROI

Something like freezing me in  
place. And a monster made of ash.

REGGIE

Well how about that.

Troii LAUGHS to herself.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

What?

TROI

Brooke got murdered by a wizard.

REGGIE  
I don't think Langi did this alone.

TROI  
(amusement turns to anger)  
Why would you say that?

REGGIE  
He talked about others.

EWING (O.S.)  
(happily)  
Detective!

Ewing cross the caution tape line and approaches. Reggie steps over to meet her. Just then, Molly's car pulls up to the scene. She gets out and rushes in distress toward Troi.

MOLLY  
That's my daughter! That's my  
daughter!

Police step in to intercept but let her pass. She runs up and embraces Troi. The two conversations occur simultaneously across the scene.

EWING  
Well I wouldn't call this delicate  
but damn quick work.

MOLLY  
Are you hurt? Oh god, Troi, what  
were you doing out here?

TROI  
I'm sorry.

REGGIE  
I think this is just the tip. I'd  
like to follow up with...

EWING  
It's done. You got him.

MOLLY  
(crying, hugging and  
kissing Troi)  
You stupid girl. What is wrong with  
you?

REGGIE  
The killers are still out there.

EWING

The killer is dead. He's right there. Take the win.

MOLLY

Promise me you'll be careful. Promise me.

REGGIE

(under his breath)  
You're a coward.

EWING

(as a challenge)  
Say it again.

REGGIE

You're wrong on this one, Sheriff. This isn't what your think.

TROI

I promise.

EWING

I will not hesitate to remove you if you continue jeopardizing the reputation of this department.

REGGIE

I'll need get a statement from the sister.

EWING

Finish your paper work. It's over.

Ewing departs. Reggie looks back at Troi. She looks up from her mother's embrace to meet his eyes.

INT. THE WESTPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Reggie and Troi sit across one another at his desk. Troi is on the edge of her seat, ready to get to work. Reggie can't bring himself to tell her the case is closed. He holds a pencil and paper but takes no notes.

TROI

I think he knew Brooke. He recognized me. The tattoos all up his arm. That's, like, where the power came from. It's the same language they carved on Brooke.

Troi notices Reggie's inactivity.

TROI (CONT'D)

What's up? You getting all this?

REGGIE

We put this in your official statement, people are gonna think we're crazy.

TROI

Then put it in my unofficial statement. "People" can blow me. We both saw a beach bum use magic.

REGGIE

Would you shut up?

TROI

What happened in the last 30 minutes that made you such an asshole? You're the one who said there was more to this.

REGGIE

It's not up to me. The case is closed. The sheriff, the mayor... look they wanna keep people calm.

TROI

But you said...

REGGIE

You got your sister's killer. You did it.

TROI

It's not about that at all. Brooke didn't die just so these satanic nut-munchers can do it again to someone else's sister!

JUDITH (O.S.)

Babylonian.

Reggie and Troi look back to see Judith. She beams a bright, confident, motherly smile.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Zealots to the Babylonian Pantheon, not satanist, hun.

(gesturing to the letters  
in Brooke's photographs)

That's Sumerian cuneiform, circa 3000 BC. Think of this as Satan's granddaddy.

REGGIE

You looking for someone, m'am.

JUDITH

Professor. Call me Judith though.  
All my students do.

TROI

You were at the mart.

JUDITH

I was. I'm betting you're Troi. I'm so sorry, child. You look enough like your sister, I clocked you like that. Not too much, but it's there. Just the right amount for twins, in my opinion. She got a bit more on the looks but I can see you got all the fire.

(to Reggie)

Your Mr. Mayor's an old colleague. He asked me to fly out from California soon as I could to lend an anthropological eye. I think it's you for whom I'm looking, Detective. I'm here to help you catch these cultists.

REGGIE

*Cultist.* He's caught.

JUDITH

There's no cameras here detective.  
We can speak honestly.

Reggie has had enough. He gives a frustrated LAUGH.

REGGIE

Jesus Christ, when did I become the buzzkill? Professor, I'm sorry, but if you'd like to help, I think you should talk to you friend Mayor Madigan and ask him to make up his goddamn mind. Excuse me.

(to Troi)

You. Go home. Be with your mom. I guess you're fine, sure, but she's grieving. She's burying your sister in four days. Go be a good sister.

Troi lunges and shoves Reggie. Pause. There is quiet in the station. Troi reins back her emotion. She turns to go.

TROI  
(under her breath)  
Dickhead.

REGGIE  
Classy. Real classy, kid. You  
interfere in this case again, it'll  
be your ass.

Troi storms out. As she exits, she passes Mike entering. He looks to Reggie with confusion.

JUDITH  
I'll go.

REGGIE  
No. No, you're going to tell me  
everything you know about this  
cult.

INT. GARDNER HOUSE - GARAGE - DUSK

Troi stands in the doorway, haloed by the light of the setting sun. She stares at the car.

The REVVING of an engine comes into hearing as Troi's memory is triggered.

INT. GARDNER HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

The flashback ends. Troi sits in the passenger's seat looking at the empty driver's seat. Brooke's final words echo into silence.

The porch lights shine a dim glow onto Troi. It's diffused by the thick fog that has accumulated across the lawn while Troi reminisced.

Troi looks out through the windshield. She perceives a SHADOW pass through the fog outside the garage. It's obscured, but appears to be someone approaching the house.

EXT. GARDNER HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Troi steps out from the garage. Standing at the foot of the porch steps she sees a WOMAN, still hidden in fog.

TROI  
Mom?

The woman turns. The fog clears. It's Judith.

JUDITH  
Good evening, Miss Troi.

TROI  
Professor. If you're hoping to talk to my mom, she's out. You can come back tomorrow.

JUDITH  
Why did you follow the police to the mart?

Pause. Judith's tone is more sober and enigmatic than before.

TROI  
What's Detective Dickhead been telling you?

JUDITH  
The police have given up. They're satisfied remaining ignorant.

TROI  
I went to the mart because... I had to. What do you want me to say? They're monsters.

JUDITH  
No, no, I understand. It's hard to put into words when it feels so obvious, doesn't it?. Many mythologies are built on a dichotomy of good and evil. Most often we see the good as passive and the darkness to be active, consuming and ambitious. But it is light that is the active counter force to the passive, self-sustaining darkness. Good must actively compete with evil or else we will all lose.

TROI  
Are you really a Professor?

JUDITH  
I am.

TROI  
Are you really a friend of the mayor?

Judith SHAKES her head "no."



JUDITH

The people you are dealing with are murders. And they will continue to murder until they are stopped. I want to stop them. I have as much reason to hate them as you.

TROI

I don't hate them.

JUDITH

Whom do you hate?

TROI

She called me. She died alone.

JUDITH

Visit me tomorrow. 34 Willow Way.

Judith turns and walks toward the road, deeper into the fog.

TROI

You Uber here?

JUDITH

Nice night for a walk.

Troi watches Judith disappear into the fog.

EXT. JUDITH'S CABIN - DRIVEWAY PATH - DAY

Troi rides a beat-up bicycle, slowing to a stop along the road. There's nothing but thick wood around them, except for the solitary driveway.

Troi trudges up the long, bending, dirt path. The further she walks, the more the road behind her becomes obscured behind gray trees.

SCREECH! AN OWL flies over Troi's head. Troi jumps and shrinks away from the bird. She watches it fly up the road. Troi takes a breath and follows.

EXT. JUDITH'S CABIN - DAY

Troi approaches a shingled cabin, lived-in, but not inviting.

All around the porch are both rural pleasantries and heathen statuettes, made of twigs, clay, and small animal bones. Troi looks up at a hanging decoration of rusty wind chimes and hollow cow ribs, TINKLING and CONKING in the breeze.

Troi tries to look in through the front door of the house. Through the outer screen door, beyond the small glass window, the house inside looks dark and empty.

Troi KNOCKS. No sound of movement from inside. Troi looks around the yard. Maybe it's a lost cause.

SCREECH! Troi jumps at the OWL's sound. She looks over to the far end of the porch and sees bird. Its yellow eyes are staring right back into hers.

The front door opens. Troi whips back around to turn face-to-face with Judith. Troi stumbles back in surprise, stepping off the porch and falling to the dirt. Pause. Troi sits up.

TROI

You see that big ass bird?

Judith's expression is humorless. Troi stands.

JUDITH

Go home. Forget everything you saw.  
Live your life.

TROI

Wait. No, wait, what? Are you joking? Screw you, it's a little late for that. Cat's out of the bag. I know magic is real and it's exclusively in the hands of kid-killers.

JUDITH

You are a child dipping your little toe in depths you cannot begin to comprehend.

TROI

They killed my sister. She was good and they nailed her to a snake.

JUDITH

You want them to die? Like she died?

TROI

That's a 'lil extreme. But they're obviously evil, so finding them, stopping them, is...good...and right. I...I mean, magic is real so...I just want her back.

JUDITH

I don't possess the power that you want. Nor do I know a ritual or spell to grant clairvoyance such to gift you their identities. I cannot give you satisfaction.

Pause. Troi exhales. She turns to go.

JUDTH

But - if you have the stomach for it, I can give you power of a different kind. The means to find the truth yourself. To take control.

TROI

I want it.

Judith smiles.

INT. JUDITH'S CABIN - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Judith leads Troi to a small, candle-lit room. She kneels down to an altar, with a TIAMAT STATUE, a winged-dragon. Troi watches as she rises and turns, holding a thick, leather-bound BOOK with old, yellowed pages.

Judith steps towards Troi. Troi reaches out to take the book, but Judith pulls it back.

JUDITH

Remember why you're doing this.  
It's not meant to be easy. In fact,  
it's meant to be quite painful.

Judith hands the book to Troi. Troi accepts it and looks down at the cover. It is designed with a blood red downturned PENTAGRAM STAR.

**END OF ACT II**

ACT III

INT. JUDITH'S CABIN - DAY - LATER

Troi sits on an old couch in the den. Her hand rests on the ritual book. In front of her is a coffee table with a stone carved chess set. She fidgets with one of the pawns. Judith emerges from the kitchen carrying a mug coffee.

JUDITH  
12th century Ottoman.

Troi, confused, looks at the table beneath the board.

JUDITH (CONT'D)  
The empire, hun, not the furniture.

She sets the mug down for Troi and reclines into a large chair across from her. Troi returns the pawn and takes a sip.

JUDITH (CONT'D)  
You've at least heard of Sumer,  
Akkadia, Babylon?

TROI  
That one's familiar.

JUDITH  
The ancestors of the Babylonians  
were among the first. They remember  
what came before. What you saw at  
the mart, it isn't magic tricks.  
It's gods and demons. And it's very  
real. These people, their faith is  
a primordial queen.

Judith places a finger on the DARK QUEEN CHESS PIECE.

JUDITH (CONT'D)  
Tiamat. A mother serpent; rock and  
salt water. She birthed life into  
the abyss. The elder gods, her  
first children, were twisted and  
chaotic, like her. Eleven monsters  
of cosmic terror.

CU ON DARK PIECES.

TROI  
"The mother of monsters cannot  
return."

JUDITH

The younger gods, her second children, were noisy and treacherous.

CU ON LIGHT PIECES.

JUDITH

A war in the cosmos. Order triumphed. They tore her apart and made the earth with her body.

Judith knocks over the dark queen piece.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Now the victors slumber in the Cedar Forest, leaving their lesser lieutenants, the Demon Kings, to vie for scraps in the Netherworld.

She picks up a LIGHT PAWN and dances it through her fingers.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

But while they squabbled, birthing legions to fight their battles, humanity evolved. It learned to reach out to the Netherworld. To steal those legions for their own purpose.

INT. GARDNER HOUSE - NIGHT

Troi enters with a determined smile, carrying the ritual book tucked beneath her arm. She starts down the hall when...

MOLLY

Where have you been? I was about to call the police. You can't do this!

TROI

I'm sorry.

MOLLY

(re: the book)

What is that? Give it to me.

TROI

No!

Molly tears the book from Troi's arms. She SLAPS Troi. Troi silences and stops. Molly studies the book.

MOLLY

This is what you do when I'm not home?

TROI

You're never home.

MOLLY

You followed that killer! That's why you were there! Didn't you?

TROI

I could have stopped him and I didn't! I didn't save her!

Troi cries. She tries to hold it in but can't.

MOLLY

Oh, Troi. You couldn't...

TROI

She called me. She...she...

Troi chokes on the words. She tries to steady herself.

MOLLY

It's okay. I miss her too. So much.

TROI

No, it's not about Brooke. I'm crying because I don't like arguing with you and it makes me upset and I can't help it. This doesn't mean you win.

(she wipes away the tears)

I couldn't do enough before. Or worse, I could but I didn't. But now I can! I can do enough!

MOLLY

You can't blame yourself.

TROI

Well I do.

(pause)

Don't you?

MOLLY

No.

Molly embraces Troi. Then, she steps back and takes the book from Troi's hands.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

But this - playing detective - this  
isn't the answer. Please.

Troi concedes. Molly walks to the fire place and tosses the book on the pile of cold logs, landing open. Troi watches her take lighter fluid from the mantel and douse the pages. Molly lights a match and tosses it in. The ritual book ignites.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

I love you, Troi.

TROI

I love you, mom.

Molly exits. Troi stays. Her eyes remain on the burning book, watching, waiting to see the pages curl and crumble into ash. But...they don't.

DEEP DEMONIC CHANTING FILLS THE ETHER. SHADOWS GROW IN THE CORNERS OF THE ROOM.

Troi approaches to look closer. The flames dance around the book, spreading to the logs beneath which burn and darken. But the book is untouched.

Troi's eyes widen. She checks that Molly has left the room and uses the nearby prod to pull the book from the fire. It lands closed on the floor and instantly the flames around it disappear. But the crimson PENTAGRAM now glows like embers.

Troi grabs a different book from the nearby shelf and tosses it onto the burning logs, covering her tracks.

INT. GARDNER HOUSE - TROI'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Troi stashes the ritual book beneath her bed. She runs her fingers across the downturned-pentagram cover.

JUDITH (PRE-LAP)

This is not *the pentagram* as you  
may understand it.

INT. THE WESTPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY - MORNING

Mike arrives to work. He sees Reggie and Judith across the bullpen at the evidence board. He checks his watch, pleasantly surprised by Reggie's unusual presence at 8 o'clock in the morning.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

(re: the pentacle star in  
the crime scene photos)

This is the upturned pentacle star. The alignment of the vases, and this cuneiform here, the direction in which they placed the girl's body; the fifth point is on top. It is a ritual of warding. 5000 years ago the cities of Sumer would employ Asipu, exorcists, to ward off dark forces.

Reggie is listening intently. He barely acknowledges Mike walk up to his desk.

REGGIE

Coffee.

Reggie gestures to their usual two cups of coffee on his desk. Mike takes one and sips as he listens. He reacts to the lukewarm drink.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

(to Judith)

What are they warding?

(to Mike)

What? Is it bad?

MIKE

No, no, just kinda cold. No, hey, you're not two hours late, I'm not complaining. Please continue.

JUDITH

These are effigies of Tiamat and her eleven monsters, each labeled with their True Names. A spell like this requires a sacrifice, either something representative, or of equal substance. Animal sacrifice is most common. But Tiamat is not common.

REGGIE

That god, you said it was already dead in this religion. Why would they need to protect against it?

JUDITH

I don't know. But depending on translation, certain letters here could mean that this ritual is a response.

(MORE)



JUDITH (CONT'D)

It could be a counter to some other simultaneous ritual to bring her back.

REGGIE

(exasperated)

So we've got more players. And when the hell did Rhode Island become the battleground for Mesopotamian crusades.

JUDITH

The other ritual could have been anywhere. It wouldn't be bound by geographical proximity.

MIKE

Theoretically.

Mike looks between Reggie and Judith, both amused and confused by how literally they seem to be speaking. They each correct themselves.

REGGIE

Yeah, yeah.

JUDITH

Theoretically.

MIKE

Right. When you're done, Reggie, we got a new case so let's wrap it up, all right?

REGGIE

Right, yep. Right behind you.

Mike steps away and sits at his desk. Reggie steps closer to Judith and lowers his voice.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

These exorcists, they ward off demons. What about summoning them? They don't have that kind of power, right? Theoretically.

JUDITH

Asipu invoked good demons, Udug Saga, as spirit guardians against their evil siblings. The pentacle star symbolizes the sacred door between worlds. It's the five elements; the five celestial bodies. It is the door. Upturned, it closes. Downturned, it opens.

EXT. GARDNER HOUSE - DAY

HONK HONK. From the driver's seat of her car, Betsy pulls up at the bottom of their driveway. Troi, wearing a backpack, exits the front door, followed by Molly.

TROI  
Love you. I'll see you tonight.

MOLLY  
Troi. You feel ready?

TROI  
I need to be out of the house.

MOLLY  
Why not wait till Monday? The med-school people pick Brooke up tomorrow and then things will be less...y'know.

TROI  
There's a party tonight too. I wanna go.

MOLLY  
I... I don't know if I'll be...

TROI  
Betsy can drive me.

MOLLY  
(hesitantly)  
Okay. I love you.

Troi carries on down the sloped drive way to her friend.

TROI  
On the bright side I'll be way too faded to think about murder cults so...

MOLLY  
Normal kids are smart enough not to tell their parents that.

Troi shoots her a pair of sarcastic finger guns and departs.

INT. WESTPORT HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Troi and Betsy move down the hall. Students hurry this way and that. Eye's turn to Troi as they pass.

TROI  
They're staring.

BETSY  
No they're not. Everyone knows what  
you're going through.

TROI  
Great.

BETSY  
It's not gossip. You lost your  
sister.

TROI  
I didn't lose her, Bets. A psycho  
hobo killed her.

Betsy and Troi stop at Troi's locker. Brooke's locker is beside it. It's covered in a memorial collage of photographs, flowers, ribbons, and notes of love.

There are several pictures of Brooke with her best friends, AUTUMN, SASHA, and LEE (17). Other pictures show her spiking the winning point in her volleyball uniform; dancing in the pep rally; leading a church prisoner-outreach charity.

Troi spots a photo of Brooke posing with her prom date, AJ. In the photo with them are Molly and Mayor Madigan, AJ's dad.

BETSY  
I heard AJ's been totally  
depressed. Like hasn't come out of  
his room. His dad made a really  
nice memorial post on the town  
site. You read it?

TROI  
No, I don't care what Mayor Madigan  
or any Madigans have to say about  
Brooke.

BETSY  
I put one up.

Troi is broken from her deep thinking. Betsy points out a photo partially buried among the collage. Troi uncovers the PHOTO of her and Brooke, freshman year, side-by-side in front of their lockers, smiling.

## INT. LOCAL DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Reggie sits in a little nook of a dingy bar. Documents and evidence photos from the case are spread out on the table. Reggie takes them in. He collects the pages into a folder and closes it. Maybe it's best to just let it rest.

A WAITER (20-30, woman) places a fresh whiskey glass down beside the empty first on Reggie's table. Reggie thanks her with a NOD, raising his eyes enough to notice Molly enter.

Molly sits down at the bar and strikes up a friendly, familiar conversation with the BARTENDER (50-60). He serves a tall drink and departs. Once he's gone, Reggie sees the grief seep back into Molly's face. Darkness comes over his own.

## EXT. THE BOAT HOUSE - NIGHT

Reggie ducks under the police tape and enters the crime scene. All that's left is the dinghy, traces of the pentagram and cuneiform scribbles, and some police evidence markers. Most of the walls and beams are badly scorched from the fire.

The light is dim in the house. The light of the moon shines in from the water port ahead of him and the door way behind. Reggie peers up at the mast where Brooke was previously hung.

CAMERA TURNS OVER REGGIE'S SHOULDER TO REVEAL...

A WOMAN (20-30) stands in the doorway, haloed by the moon. She wears a fitted black suit. Her hair is long and jet black, hiding her face in shadow. Reggie turns.

REGGIE

Sorry, ma'am, you can't be here...

He trails off as he perceives her arms in the light. Each jacket sleeve is rolled up the elbow. Covering both hands and forearms are CUNEIFORM TATTOOS, just like LANGI. Reggie's eyes widen. He reaches for his gun, but stops in shock.

Reggie watches in horror as the right forearm of the ASIPU ASSASSIN splits open like a zipper.

Veins and tendons stretch out from the gash. They extend and twist like enchanted roots. They shape and solidify into the shape of an axe. Reggie GAGS.

The assassin charges. Reggie pulls out his gun and fires. The assassin puts up her left arm, from which two fins of fleshy bone erupt, creating a surfboard-shaped shield. The bullets ricochet off.

The assassin reaches Reggie, swing the shield out and knocking his gun from his hand. She retracts the shield and swings the axe up, slamming Reggie off his feet and back onto the boat.

She attacks, swinging with wide strokes, but Reggie squirms and dodges. Finally, the assassin lands a blow knocking Reggie off his feet again and sending him crashing into a brittle wooden beam.

The beam breaks. As Reggie falls and rolls off the dock and into the water, part of the ceiling collapses. Wood and tile tumble down into the water.

The assassin searches through the turmoil and the dark waters but in the poor light, she loses sight of Reggie. She turns and departs.

Hidden beneath the surface, Reggie swims out from the boathouse. He surfaces, now a few dozen yards from the shore. He gasps for air, fighting against waves he can barely see, and clings to a nearby piece of flotsam. He's safe...for now.

**END OF ACT III**

ACT IV

EXT. A HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

MUSIC. The beat drops.

CAMERA TURNS TO REVEAL...

Beyond the clearing, the backyard leads up to a house. Colored lights flicker and strobe from the windows. It's a house party. There are TEENS scattered around the backyard: drinking, making out, smoking pot.

Troi and Betsy emerge from the back woods and trudge up the hill toward the festivities.

TROI

What's the occasion?

INT. A HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

As if to answer her question, Troi and Betsy stare up in disbelief at the "WE MISS YOU, BROOKE" banner, adorned with glitter hearts and ribbons, hung across kitchen ceiling.

TROI

I literally want to kill everyone here.

Troi hears mean CHATTER from off to her side. She looks and sees Autumn, Sasha, and Lee, Brooke's best friends, grouped around the foot of the fireplace.

Autumn and Sasha stare daggers at Troi, then return to consoling Lee who is softly crying. Fare looks back, confused by their hate.

Lee looks up at Troi through tears. Troi averts her eyes with both coyness and puzzled shame.

BETSY

Ignore them.

TROI

Well that's a super suspect thing to say.

BETSY

It's literally bull. It's disgusting.

TROI  
 (Jokingly)  
 Why's Brooke's clique looking at me  
 like I just murdered someone?...

Troi makes a realization. She begins to pant. She turns, as though to charge at the girls. Betsy holds her.

<p>BETSY</p> <p>Don't. Don't turn around. Autumn's dad heard from AJ's dad that - Yes, the mayor's a gossipy bitch - Don't turn around. She's spreading that the mayor's saying you didn't call the police as quickly as you maybe could have and yeah.</p>	<p>TROI (CONT'D)</p> <p>Are you kidding me?! Those bitches!...</p> <p>Oh my god. The mayor? That mother f-...</p> <p>What? What is she saying?</p>
---	--

TROI (CONT'D)  
 Has Lee said anything about it?

BETSY  
 I don't know.

Troi settles, still panting softly. Behind her, the three girls rise and head to the table of alcohol across the room. On their way, they pass AJ, emerging from the crowd.

Troi catches his eyes. As though his presence wasn't unexpected enough, to Troi's surprise, he gives a sympathetic smile. Troi retreats back to Betsy.

TROI  
 What happened to depressed in his room? Couldn't miss a party?

BETSY  
 Come on, dude. He lost his girlfriend.

TROI  
 I'm getting a drink. Want anything?

Troi walks over to the table where Autumn, Sasha, and Lee are gathered.

AUTUMN  
 (re: AJ)  
 ...'cause he's honestly being so weird now.

SASHA

When is he not totally Mr. Issues?  
Like, he needs to get over himself.

Lee sees Troi first. Autumn and Sasha notice her reaction and turn.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Could you back up?

TROI

I'm in line.

AUTUMN

(coldly)  
Sorry for your loss.

TROI

(To Lee)  
Hey, Lee.

SASHA

Don't talk to her.

TROI

I'm trying to...

SASHA

You didn't *try* to do anything. If Brooke had called someone who actually loved her, like me, like us, we would have answered. The world's lost Brooke. And it's *stuck* with you.

Lee and Sasha pull Autumn away. Troi seethes. She looks down at the table. Among the red solo cups and plastic bottles is an empty beer bottle.

SASHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(through the ambient  
chatter)  
...Monster...

Troi grab the bottle. She makes her way toward the clique, readying the bottle at her side like a weapon until... AJ steps in front of her.

AJ

Didn't think I'd see you around.

AJ is smiling, as though genuinely happy to see her. Troi hide the bottle behind her. She peaks over his shoulder at the girls, but they're gone.



AJ (CONT'D)  
 (laughing, holding back  
 tears)

Brooke woulda liked this. You know,  
 having her death be a reason for  
 the people she loved to come  
 together and remember her. She  
 woulda torn that cheap-ass sign  
 down herself though.

Pause. Troi's rage boils up so much she can't help but start  
 LAUGHING.

TROI  
 I've never been in a situation that  
 non-sarcastically warranted a "how  
 dare you," but, dude, how dare you,  
 you piece of sh--

In her anger, Troi squeezes the bottle so tightly it breaks  
 in her hand. She YELLS and grips her hand, now sliced and  
 dripping blood.

AJ  
 Oh my god! Yo, where are the paper  
 towels?!

Everyone looks over at the commotion. Troi storms out. AJ  
 follows with a handful of napkins.

EXT. A HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Troi emerges onto the back lawn, shoving aside partiers in  
 her path. AJ runs after her, but she won't let him near her.

AJ  
 What's your problem, you psycho?

TROI  
 I saw her wrist. I know what you  
 did. You're an abuser and the only  
 reason I'm not putting your ass in  
 prison is 'cause Brooke loved you  
 and I'm a good sister. I'm a good  
 sister!

Pause. AJ registers what he's heard. He's beyond offended but  
 maintains a controlled expression.

AJ  
 I never hurt Brooke.

TROI

The day she died, she came home  
from seeing you and I saw her  
wrist. I saw what you did to her.

AJ

I didn't see her the day she died,  
dumbass. Get your facts straight  
before you make up crap like that  
again.

TROI

She was at your house all day.

AJ SNORTS and shakes his head angrily. He pulls out his cell  
phone, opens the texting app, and hands Troi the phone. Troi  
reads. Her ferocity subsides.

AJ

I was surfing at the point. We  
texted all day.  
(his angry softens too)  
Would you let me cover your damn  
hand?

Troi hands the cellphone back and surrenders her sliced hand  
to him. He puts the napkins in her palm. She squeezes her  
hand tightly. Troi's eyes dart as she tries to piece all the  
clues together.

TROI

She was covering her hand.  
Not her wrist. She was wearing  
gloves that night.

AJ

To hide the bruise?

TROI

Or a tattoo.

AJ

What tattoo?

TROI

Langi knew me. He knew her. And she  
knew them.

EXT. GARDNER HOUSE - EVENING - ESTABLISHING SHOT

The sun sets on Westport. Troi storms up the drive way.  
Molly's car isn't there. She's still out.

## INT. GARDNER HOUSE - EVENING - MONTAGE

1. Troi pulls the ritual book from beneath her bed. She stares. She opens it.

2. Troi chants in Akkadian from a page in the middle of the book. The yellowed, leathery, animal skin pages are covered in icons and ink-written passages.

TROI  
Rakāsu maškittu. Askuppu  
nagabbiš.

JUDITH (V.O)  
Prepare the altar. A doorway  
to abyss.

3. Troi throws her carpet back to reveal the bare wood floor of her bedroom. She takes a charred log from the fire place. She uses it to draw lines on the floor of her room.

TROI (CONT'D)  
Eperu. Muāti walādu balātu.  
Hapūtu patū pūti.

JUDITH (V.O) (CONT'D)  
Ash. Death begot life. Ruin  
will open the door.

4. Troi places candles in specific positions on the floor. We cannot yet see what she has drawn or where the candles sit within the design.

TROI (CONT'D)  
Gīru. Danānu abrātu. Katrū  
erinnu gitmālu.

JUDITH (V.O) (CONT'D)  
Fire. The power of man. A  
gift of the Cedar Gods.

5. Troi stands out by the goat pen. She stares at the black goat, with guilt and dread.

TROI (CONT'D)  
Amānu. Mašhulduppū.

JUDITH (V.O) (CONT'D)  
Blood. A sacrifice.

6. Troi holds the goat in her room. In struggles in her arms for just a moment before she cuts its throat with a kitchen knife. The goat's blood pours out onto the floor, revealing the altar.

A pentagram drawn in ash. Troi at one point. A candle at each other point. A dead goat in a pool of blood at the center.

END MONTAGE

Troi reads from the ritual book in an ancient language.

TROI (CONT'D)  
Addānika, Hasbisag! Habālu  
muqtablu!

INSERT SUBTITLE: Hear me, Hasbisag! Lend me your warrior!

The flames of the candles swell. The light on Troi's face brightens, while the shadows at the corners of the room blacken. Troi reads the last line, written in English.

TROI (CONT.) (CONT'D)  
Wet the earth of this sacred altar.  
Drown it in your passions.

Troi doesn't understand. She flips to the next page but it's blank. That's the end of the ritual. Troi thinks.

JUDITH (V.O)  
Pain. The door shall open only to  
the truly desperate.

Troi unwraps her bandaged hand and smears the blood. On the ground. It barely makes a stain.

She takes the knife. She slices across each of her palms. We see the excruciating pain on her face. Blood flows. Troi holds her hands over the floor and lets the blood drop.

Nothing. The candles start to die down. The ritual is failing. Troi rubs her hands over the altar before her, smearing the blood. She rubs more and more violently.

TROI  
No. Come on. Come on. Open. Open!

Troi kneels at the altar. Her hands are shaking from the pain of the cuts. Her head hangs.

TROI (CONT'D)  
(begging)  
Open.

The candles burn lower and lower. The flame of one candle dies, leaving only a little orange ember on the wick. Pause. Troi has failed again. She thinks of Brooke.

FLASHBACK SHOT OF TROI AND BROOKE IN THE CAR LAUGHING.

Troi lets herself cry. She cries for her sister. And she cries for herself. Tears rolls down her cheek to the tip of her nose. A single tear drop falls. It hits the pool of blood...and SIMMERS, as though hitting a hot stove.

CU ON THE RITUAL BOOK: DROWN IT IN YOUR PASSIONS.

Troi opens her eyes. She sees another tear drop fall to the blood. Smoke rises from the spot. The blood begins to bubble. Then stops. Everything goes quiet.

Then. As though by an invisible force, Troi's body contorts back. Terrible pain shoots through her body. Her arms fly up, as though chained parallel to the floor, aimed towards the two candles further from her. Her body has been taken over.

The candle flames shoot up into streams of fire, peaking level with Troi's arms into balls of flame. Outside, dark clouds converge over the house. The wind picks up into a violent storm. The shutters CLACK against the windows.

A stream of blood needles out from each cut on Troi's hands. It looks like a thread pulled slowly from an unraveling garment. Troi SCREAMS in pain. Her body is weakening. She's going to pass out.

JUDITH (V.O)

Remember why you are doing this.

Troi buckles down. Her screams turn to determined GRUNTS, like she's baring an incredible weight. She can do this.

The steams of blood from each hand reach two of the fire balls, then turn and pull towards the next two, drawing a pentagram shape, mirroring the one on the floor.

The streams of blood meet in the center to complete the pentagram. The wind HOWLS.

TROI

Addānika, Hasbisag! Habālu  
muqtablu!

The blood pentagram ignites in flame. A wave of energy bursts out, throwing Troi's head back and thrusting her into her nightmare.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. TROI'S NIGHTMARE WORLD - NIGHT

Troi opens her eyes. CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL a dusty, orange hell-scape around her. There are far-off CRIES of miserable souls. In the distance eleven shadowy BEHEMOTHS float through the sky or march across the horizon.

Troi steps lightly up the path to a pyramid altar. She takes in the space around her as though a passenger in her own entranced body. HOWLING WIND and DEMONIC CHANTING swells.

Up the steps, Troi sees two figures facing away from her. It's Reggie and Brooke. They stare, without movement or emotion, at the STONE SARCOPHAGUS before them.

Troi climbs the steps. She sees the sarcophagus is wrapped in metal chains, drenched in inky tar. The lid is carved with Sumerian cuneiform and a coiling, winged SERPENT as a centerpiece.

Troi stares down in fear. The lid to the sarcophagus JOLTS. Whatever is inside wants to get out, but the chains hold it in. It JOLTS again.

Troi is drawn to grasp a chain. She reaches out. Her view moves past her hand to the floor. She sees a broken ROAD SIGN: "WELCOME TO WESTPORT." This world isn't a hell. It's her town.

Brooke's HAND slaps down onto Troi's own. Troi looks up into Brooke's eyes. They are pitch black, like those of a demon.

INT. GARDNER HOUSE

Troi recoils. She is thrown back from the altar by an invisible force, crashing into the wall behind her. The flaming pentagram falls to the floor, lying over the ash, and igniting the goat corpse. A bonfire erupts.

Then the fire evaporates. All the candles go out. The wind stops. Only moonlight streams through the window, falling on the burnt altar. Pause. Stillness. Silence. Darkness

Troi stares at the center of the altar: a pile of ash and scorched animal bones in a pool of blood. The bones shift. Something pushes them aside. A HAND crawls out from the pile, as though emerging from beneath the floor boards.

A BODY pulls itself out from the altar. It's covered in hard, dried blood, which covers any distinguishable features. The blood shell cracks when it moves.

Troi watches in awe and horror. The body stands to its feet. It claws the dried blood from its body, piece by piece revealing the person underneath.

It's a woman, unclothed. Long, straight hair covers its face, until it looks up at Troi. SOROMAEUS, a demon from realms beyond, appears in the body and voice of Brooke Gardner.

SOROMAEUS

Master.

**END OF ACT IV**

ACT V

INT. GARDNER HOUSE - TROI'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Soromaeus stares at herself in a floor length mirror. She poses as though the nude body is stiff and foreign to her, but pleasing to her eye. She looks back at Troi, still on the floor, staring, in shock.

Soromaeus looks Troi up and down, eyeing her clothes. Suddenly, Soromaeus' form shimmers, with lines of shadow cutting and displacing it. Soromaeus reforms, now wearing clothing identical to Troi's.

Soromaeus smiles. She speaks maniacally and seductively, savoring Troi's horror.

SOROMAEUS

Why does this form cause you pain?  
My lord would not have chosen it  
for me unless it hurt. She was your  
sister?

Soromaeus steps forward. Troi immediately crawls back.

SOROMAEUS (CONT'D)

(Entertained)

Easy, ya freak. Don't piss  
yourself. I can't hurt you.

Soromaeus disappears in a shudder of shadow and teleports to Troi's side, right in her face. As she speaks, her skin appears to decay, her eyeballs catch fire and melt, and spider crawl out of her mouth and spread over her head.

SOROMAEUS (CONT'D)

My powers of more incorporeal. More  
illusory. Nothing permanent but  
still very, very fun.

The illusion ends. Brooke's face returns.

TROI

No! Change your face. Not her face!

SOROMAEUS

I can't.

TROI

You are my servant. By the  
laws of Sebettu you are bound  
to...

SOROMAEUS (CONT'D)

I can't change it. Shut up.  
Shut up!

Soromaeus rises in the air. Her limbs become inky tendrils which latch to the corners of the room. She becomes a leathery, grey-skinned, black-eyed version of Brooke. Her voice becomes demonic.

SOROMAEUS (CONT'D)

I could fill your mouth with tar  
and feces and let you drown in it  
for eternity. I could make you  
think your snatch grew teeth and  
let it eat you alive, if it pleased  
me.

Soromaeus returns to her normal Brooke form and voice. She continues to teleport freely around the room as he speaks.

SOROMAEUS (CONT'D)

If I am constantly wearing a mask I  
will become tired and then I am  
useless to you.

(She sees the bloody,  
burnt goat carcass)

Yummy.

Soromaeus looks for either fear or a laugh, but Troi is focused only on her appearance.

SOROMAEUS (CONT'D)

I did not chose this form. You can  
blame my master Hasbisag, the many  
faced terror, wife of Namtar. And  
she's far beyond complaint letters,  
so let's be a big girl, eh? If it  
were easy, everyone would do it.

Troi nods in acceptance.

SOROMAEUS (CONT'D)

I cannot return home to my siblings  
until you will it. But I don't  
gotta do diddly if it don't suit  
me. I've been caught up to speed on  
your end. Revenge plot?

TROI

What do you want?

SOROMAEUS

I am a soldier. The Sebettu, the  
Seven Demon Kings, fight a cold war  
for rule of the Netherworld. Some  
want order. Others want chaos.  
Humanity's actions up here make a  
difference down there.

(MORE)



## SOROMAEUS (CONT'D)

Hasbisag and Namtar are agents of order, fate, and just deserts. You help me torture some pedo-s or turn weak men to their vices, and we just tip the tides of war.

TROI

You are my servant.

SOROMAEUS

This is my final offer. Don't you want this to end? Don't you want to catch your sister's killers, Troi?

INT. GARDNER HOUSE - THE GARAGE - NIGHT

Troi pulls back the tarp off of her and Brooke's busted car. Inside, Troi turns on the engine. Soromaeus sits in the passenger seat beside her. The engine sputters for a moment, then roars to life. The headlights flare.

TROI

(to the car)

'At a girl.

Troi pulls out and swerves down the driveway.

EXT. ROUTE 1 HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Troi and Soromaeus zoom down the highway.

SOROMAEUS

I've got the magic fingers. But you've got to tell me where to point them.

Troi thinks of where they need to go.

EXT. WESTPORT POLICE STATION - NIGHT

They pull up and park outside the station.

TROI

She'll be gone by the morning. We need to get to her body.

(Pause)

What do I call you?

SOROMAEUS

My *Real Name*? You think I'd give you that kind of power over me?

TROI

Jeez, okay, how about your false name. I don't care about you nearly as much as you think I do.

SOROMAEUS

I once knew a dead soul named Soromaeus.

TROI

Soromaeus. Here's the plan...

CAMERA PULLS BACK from their car, across the street, to reveal Reggie's car pull up and park at the front entrance. He exits his car and enters the station.

INT. THE WESTPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Camera Turns to the Front Door of the station.

EXT. THE WESTPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Troi creeps up to the foot of the station steps. She looks for a way in, spying through the glass doors. She can see the main room is filled with police, including Reggie. Soromaeus walks past Troi, right up to the door, not crouched at all.

TROI

What are you doing?

SOROMAEUS

They can't see me. I'm visible only to you.

TROI

Can you get to her body?

SOROMAEUS

Not unless she's already out on the slab.

(sticks her hand in and  
out of the closed door on  
each phrase)

In-cor-poreal.

TROI

Then what are you good for?!

Frustrated, Troi stands to confront Soromaeus when Mayor Madigan and Sheriff Ewing turn the corner up towards the station.

Troi whips around to face them and freezes, certain that she's caught. Soromaeus lifts an open palm behind Troi's head.

CAMERA REVOLVES AROUND TROI. IT PASSES THE PLANE IN FRONT OF HER. THERE IS A SHIMMER, AS IF PASSING THROUGH A LIQUID WINDOW. AFTER PASSING THROUGH THE ILLUSION, WE NO LONGER SEE TROI OR SOROMAEUS, AS THOUGH THEY WERE INVISIBLE.

The detectives climb the stairs. Soromaeus and Troi step aside to let them pass, shifting the illusory wall to hide themselves. Once the detectives enter, Soromaeus drops the illusion. A sinister smile breaks over Troi's face.

Inside the Station - hallway

SHERIFF EWING (50-60), Ferreira, and McKenzie escort Reggie to the archives.

Main Office Space

Sitting at his front desk reading a magazine, Pekowski looks up at the sudden sound of WHISTLING WIND outside. A gentle gust pushes the front door open. Pekowski stares in confusion.

Then suddenly the sound disappears. The door closes. Pekowski thinks nothing of it and returns to his magazine. He looks back down to see a COCKROACH crawling over his hand.

Pekowski shakes the cockroach onto the desk, rolls up his magazine, and slams down on the insect. When he removes the magazine from the spot, the cockroach is no longer there. Not even a splatter. It's gone. He sits back. Pause.

The cockroach crawls over Pekowski's shoulder. Then another cockroach crawls over the other. Then another. As Pekowski realizes what's happen, hundreds of cockroaches swarm over him. Pekowski shoots up from his desk and SCREAMS.

Across the office, thousands of COCKROACHES burst from file cabinets, from ceiling tiles, from coffee cups, everywhere. They cover up security cameras. Some WINGED-COCKROACHES fly, filling the space and obscuring vision in a disgusting cloud.

Every officer SCREAMS and retreats from the swarm. They fall out of chairs. They tumble over water coolers. Its mayhem.

Unseen through all the confusion and chaos, Troi and Soromaeus sneak cubicle to cubicle, heading deeper into the station.

Archives

Ferreira operates the computer. Reggie, Ewing, and Ferreira stand around him. The printer next to them is half way through printing the report.

McKenzie

I told you, there were no tattoos, no other abnormalities on her.

Reggie

Where's the body being kept?

Ewing

Now hold on. I can take you to the morgue but we need some clarification first...

SCREAMS and CRASHES suddenly echo into the room. All turn. Reggie steps away from the computer to investigate. While he's distracted, McKenzie carefully snatches a certain few REPORT PAPERS from the printer. Ferreira sees.

Ewing (CONT.)

Now what the hell is this?

Evidence Locker

Troi and Soromaeus sneak in and shut the door behind them.

Troi

Watch the door.

Soromaeus

Got it.

Soromaeus turns to keep watch. Troi pauses and smiles. It's not her sister, but Brooke listening to her for once is satisfying.

Troi searches the shelves of plastic sealed evidence. She finds her sister's possessions, including her CELLPHONE. Troi takes it.

Just outside the door, Reggie, Ewing, Ferreira, and McKenzie round the corner, one after the other, to see the main floor at the end of the hallway. They see no insects, just officers flailing around in terror. Reggie stares in excited awe.

Reggie

to himself

Yes.

Behind them, the door to the evidence locker opens and Troi and Soromaeus step out. Troi sees the four people in her way.

TROI (CONT'D)

Fire.

A WALL OF FLAME, another of Soromaeus' illusions, burst up from the floor to the ceiling. Reggie, Ewing, Ferreira, and McKenzie turn and retreat in fear.

The wall obscures their view of Troi, but she can still see them. She recognizes McKenzie, closest to her.

TROI (CONT'D)

Burn, asshole.

The wall of flame traces a line on the floor that zig-zags it's way to McKenzie's foot. McKenzie ignites in flame. He SCREAMS and tears at his body. The flames do nothing to him, but the psychological effect is excruciating.

Ferreira rushes to help her partner. Reggie falls to the floor and stares. The wall of flame continues its path, cutting a path down the hall for Troi and Soromaeus to escape through unseen. Time goes SLOW MOTION as Troi runs, smiling.

She looks over at the man lying on the floor. Reggie looks up at the wall of flame, and for a moment the illusion blurs and opens up to his vision. He sees through the flame and looks directly at Troi. Their eyes meet in a moment of recognition.

As soon as Troi and Soromaeus exit, the illusion drops. The insects and fire evaporate. The officers continue SCREAMING for just a moment till they recognize the horror has ended.

McKenzie HEAVES and shakes in Ferreira's arms. Reggie looks around, and then towards the front door.

EXT. WESTPORT DOWNTOWN STREETS - NIGHT

Troi and Soromaeus fly down the main drag. Troi is energized. Beside her, Soromaeus breathes deeply and droops her head with fatigue.

TROI

Cover us from the cameras. We're almost clear.

Soromaeus puts up a hand and the windows tint with one-way magical darkness.

Behind them, a pair of head lights emerge, joined by a ROARING engine. They look back. Reggie is behind them, accelerating quickly, gaining on them.

SOROMAEUS

Lose him!

EXT. ROUTE 1 HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Troi swerves onto the vacant high way. She accelerates but she can't shake Reggie behind her. Soromaeus's energy fails her. Her arm drops and she falls back into her seat. The window cover drops.

TROI

Soromaeus? Come on, man! He's gonna see!

SOROMAEUS

I'm spent.

TROI

What?

SOROMAEUS

I told you, I can't!

Reggie pulls up beside them. Through the adjacent side windows, Troi and Reggie stare at one another. From Reggie's view, Soromaeus is still invisible.

Pause. Troi and Reggie lock eyes. Troi thinks. She slows and swerves into Reggie's car, hitting his rear with her nose.

Reggie's car turns and flips off the road. It tumbles down the grassy divider strip. The car lands and stops. It's completely wrecked.

A hundred feet ahead, Troi stomps on the brake. The car stops. Troi looks in horror through her rear view mirror. She sees no movement from the car. Pause.

SOROMAEUS (CONT'D)

Leave him. If he lives, you're done. You'll never find the truth...

Troi puts the car in reverse and drives back to the crash. She exits and runs down the slope.

She looks inside the overturned car and sees Reggie, unconscious, bleeding down his arm.

Troi pulls herself in. She cuts herself on broken glass but pushes through the pain. She reaches him, unbuckles him free, and pulls him out. She lays him on the grass and listens for breath.

Soromaeus appears beside her. Soromaeus is confused but moved by Troi's selflessness.

SOROMAEUS (CONT'D)

He's nothing to you.

TROI

He's still breathing.

Troi starts searching Reggie's pockets for a phone. She opens the emergency call. It rings.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

911. What's your emergency?

SOROMAEUS

He'll turn you in.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

Can you hear me? What's your emergency?

TROI

There's been an accident on Route 1 by exit 22A. The driver's hurt.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

An ambulance is on its way. Tell me your name...

Troi hangs up. She leaves the phone by Reggie. Troi and Soromaeus drive off.

**END OF ACT V**

ACT VI

INT. GARDNER HOUSE - TROI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Soromaeus LAUGHS in celebration, jumping around the room. Troi paces, putting on a smile, but deep in thought.

SOROMAEUS

That was great! Creepy crawlies, you twisty little bitch! Points for creativity. Woo, I'm pooped!

TROI

Do you think he'll be okay?

SOROMAEUS

He'll be fine. You got to your sister and kept a zero death count. Take the win.

TROI

But I was wrong. She didn't have the tattoo. We're back to square one.

SOROMAEUS

Then we'll just have to think a little harder. I'll hold up my end of the bargain.

Soromaeus holds Troi's shoulder. It feels...sisterly. Troi stares at her twin's face and smiles in agreement. She steps away and begins unwrapping her cut up hand. She passes over the ash, blood, pentagram, and dead goat around her.

TROI

We gotta clean this up.

SOROMAEUS

("sorry, can't help")  
Incorporeal.

Troi CHUCKLES but stops. Her expression twists as she perceives something beneath the last of the bandage. The cuts are gone. She looks closer. Out from skin, emerges a black ink letter. Troi's first CUNEIFORM LETTER TATTOO appears.



INT. WESTPORT HOSPITAL - NIGHT

NURSES push Reggie, unconscious, through the ER on a rolling stretcher. Fluorescent lights pass over head. Reggie is beaten and bloodied but stable.

They enter a triage room with operating beds, several of which are filled with officers from the station. Some have gashes to the head or a broken arm from falling over in the chaos. Some are heaving, still in shock.

They transfer Reggie to a bed and attend to him. In the adjacent bed Madigan lies unconscious. Ewing and a DOCTOR stands over them.

DOCTOR

No burns. Whatever he saw triggered the heart attack. He'll need to rest but other than that, he's healthy.

EWING

(still in disbelief)  
Call the station when they wake up.

INT. WESPOT HOSPITAL - NIGHT - AN HOUR LATER

The room lies quiet. The few patients that remain, including Reggie and Madigan, sleep in their beds. Only one NURSE monitors the room.

The nurse is reading a health report when she suddenly freezes. Her body stiffens. Her expression goes blank. Her EYES shine golden as a charm falls on her.

Unblinking, walking slowly, as though mind controlled, the nurse leaves the room and walks down the hall to the nearest window. The hall is deserted.

The nurse opens the window. Outside there is only darkness until a white, porcelain face presses out of the shadow. DOLLFACE climbs in through the window, twisting acrobatically and landing gently on the linoleum.

Dollface looks at the nurse. The nurse falls magically to sleep, collapsing unconscious to the floor.

Dollface enters the triage room. It stalks up to the foot of Reggie's bed. It gives another curious head tilt. Dollface moves closer and places a gloved hand on his cheek. There's a GOLDEN GLOW beneath the palm. Reggie's wounds begin to heal.

Dollface leaves Reggie and steps to McKenzie's bed. It places a gloved hand again, but this time squeezing his jaw. McKenzie's skin begins to tighten, as though the water were being sucked out. His veins turn black.

For a split moment, McKenzie awakes to see the porcelain face. His eyes bulge red. He can't speak. Dollface squeezes a second more and lets go. McKenzie shudders and dies.

POV of Hospital Room Security Camera on Dollface.

Dollface turns to go. Halfway out the door, it looks up to the corner of the room at a SECURITY CAMERA, marking it but doing nothing else. It wants to be seen. Dollface departs.

Ext. Judith's Cabin - Night

Dollface walks steadily down the middle of the road. Only the bright full moon behind it halos its figure and illuminates its path.

Dollface walks up a familiar path, past a familiar statue of a monstrous woman, up to a familiar cabin.

Int. Judith's Cabin

Dollface sits down on the couch. She removes her mask to reveal Judith's face. She tosses the mask aside indifferently. She sits, tired and contemplative.

The fireplace light glows upon her face. She picks up a DARK QUEEN from chess set before her. She plays it through her fingers.

Camera pushes in to a close up.

Judith smiles.

MOVED SCENE

2 EXT. THE BOAT HOUSE - DAWN 2

OUT OF THE DARKNESS, BLUE AND RED POLICE LIGHTS FLASH,  
REVEALING A CU OF TROI.

Troi stands at the top of the hill, staring far down below her. POLICE and FIREFIGHTERS run past her down the slope. Troi is still with shock. She holds Molly, who cries and WAILS, beyond consolation.

At the bottom of the hill, sitting along a beach which leads out to the Atlantic Ocean, is a large, half-burnt boat house. Pillars of smoke billow from it as firefighters douse the flames.

2A INT. THE BOAT HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 2A

Troi enters the crowd of police, many of whom are recoiling from the putridness and desecration of the scene.

She passes REGGIE LINDER (35), a scruffy, hardened detective and jaded asshole. Reggie stands firm. He can take the horror. Of everyone, only he notices Troi with a pitying glance.

The rising sun shines through to reveal the aftermath of a ritual sacrifice. All stare.

There are TOTEMS, SLAUGHTERED ANIMALS, and TORCHES systematically distributed around the space. A large PENTACLE STAR is drawn in charcoal across the floor.

At the center of the ritual, tied by her wrists high up on the mast of the lone sail boat, is Brooke, dead.

Her clothes are torn. Her head hangs so that her hair covers her face. Her skin is sliced and marked with strange archaic ICONOGRAPHY. Coiled around her body, pinned to her by thick iron nails, is a long, dead SNAKE.