

OF WOLF AND MAN

Written by

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OVER BLACK

TEXT: ONCE UPON A TIME...

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

TEXT: NEW YORK - 1905

Moonlight cascades across twisted branches creating scratchy shadows upon the woodsy terrain. Fog lingers and sheers through the sharp shrubbery.

CHAIN RUSTLING

A wolf cub tugs and fights for freedom from a trap. Blood seeps from the wound on its trapped paw caused by the trap's metal teeth.

WOLF CUB CRIES

With rifles in hand, three hunters circle and draw closer to the crying wolf cub.

HUNTER, JOHN DOE, 30s, pushes through the shrubbery until his foot sinks into a puddle. He looks down, pulls his foot out of the puddle, and realizes the puddle is an enormous wolf footprint.

WOLF GROWLS

A massive shadow bursts from behind him. A large claw rips into his back, latches onto his spine, and tears it out from his back.

John goes limp and collapses to the ground. His frightened eyes look up to what will be his final sight:

THE WEREWOLF.

Upon its two hind legs, The Werewolf stands eight feet tall. Shredded clothes dangle off its enormous frame. Visually the Werewolf is a cross between Joe Dante's 'The Howling' and Sam Keith art.

BLOODCURDLING SCREAMS

HUNTER, JACK DOE, 40s, looks across the terrain and catches a glimpse of The Werewolf ripping apart John.

The Werewolf's head quickly darts up toward Jack. His bleach white eyes lock onto Jack's.

As Jack aims his rifle, The Werewolf hastily closes the distance between them. He slashes Jack across the chest, knocking him down.

PAINFUL SCREAMS

Jack looks up as The Werewolf cocks back his arm. The Werewolf swipes and lacerates the top of Jack's head right off.

HUNTER, JAMES DOE, 40s, hears the screams of his poaching brethren. He cowardly flees through the foggy forest. He pants and screams as he desperately runs.

HARROWING HOWL

In a panic, James dashes over rocks and climbs over broken trees. As he climbs over a broken tree, The Werewolf suddenly leaps upon him. Instinctively, James turns around to witness his demise.

The Werewolf bites down on James' head, crushing his skull. He then viciously slices open James' torso with his claws.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

A CLOAKED PERSON approaches the trapped wolf cub. Her smooth yet scarred hands pry open the trap.

WOLF CUB CRIES

The Cloaked Person lifts and carries the injured wolf cub in her arms.

WOLF GROWLS

The Cloaked Person looks up toward the trees. The Werewolf stands, silhouetted by the foggy moonlight.

The Werewolf stares down the mysterious individual.

The Cloaked Person removes her hood to reveal herself to be:

LINA BELLE MONTGOMERY, 25, a raven-haired beauty that looks like a cross between Snow White and Winona Ryder.

Her brown eyes lock onto The Werewolf's bleach white eyes.

The Werewolf slowly retreats into the shadows of the forest.

Lina breathes a sigh of relief. She looks down at the wounded wolf cub in her arms.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONTGOMERY MANOR - NIGHT

Lina carries the wounded wolf cub up the manor stairs.

TASHA TALBOT, 41, stands atop the stairs at the manor door. Her harsh lifestyle is worn across her face in the form of baggy eyes, wrinkles, and blemishes. She has lived a tough forty-one years but her attire is attempting to make up for it. A pair of silver bracelets glimmer off her respective wrists.

Lina reaches the top manor step.

TASHA
I heard him.

Lina and Tasha exchange a morbid look.

LINA BELLE
I saw him.

Lina enters the manor. Tasha follows.

CUT TO:

INT. WOLF ENCLOSURE - NIGHT

With feeding bottle in hand, Tasha feeds milk to the wolf cub resting in her arms. Fresh bandages are wrapped around the wolf cub's injured paw.

INT. LINA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Framed paintings of beautiful birds are hung upon the walls of Lina's lavish living quarters. Lina's cloak hangs upon a coatrack in a corner of her room. A grand piano rests at the center of her room.

A music box sits upon the grand piano's music desk. Lina grabs and winds up the music box.

MUSIC UP: HUSH LITTLE BABY MUSIC BOX

Lina approaches the piano, pulls out her bench, and sits down. She looks out her window and sees the full moon burning bright.

Freshly written musical pages rest upon the piano's music desk.

Lina's fingers press the keys upon her grand piano. She carries the 'Hush Little Baby' tune over from the music box.

A red rock dangles off her necklace as she plays.

FADE OUT.

END MUSIC

FADE IN:

EXT. CARNIVAL FAIR GROUNDS - DAY

TEXT: NEW YORK - 1889

The tangerine light of a dusking sun shreds through crippled and twisted trees. Branches loom and cascade over a traveling carnival troupe. An array of mud-show wagons circle and park upon grassland.

MR. REINHARDT, 50s, a thin and tall mustached man exits one of the wagons. He looks around the grassland and loudly claps his hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARNIVAL FAIR GROUNDS - DAY

A bearded woman drapes a red and white striped tarp upon a massive support pole. She ties the ropes of the tarp taut. Twin burly circus strongmen hoist up the support pole. With sheer strength, they stake the support pole into the ground.

A group of female belly dancers latch onto the ends of the tarp. Their bare-feet swiftly stroll across the dry grass as they pull the tarp.

INT. CARNIVAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

Gymnasts climb up the support pole and connect the cross beams to it. Little people climb atop each others' shoulders. They connect the cross beams to their respective tent joints. Other oddities set up their wooden sideshow booths within the tent.

EXT. CARNIVAL FAIR GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

The belly dancers tie the tent ropes to wooden pegs. They hammer the pegs into the ground.

One of the belly dancers, TASHA TALBOT, 26, ties the rope to its peg. She holds it in place. Tasha combs back her curly red hair and looks over her shoulder, her green eyes twinkle. As she waits, an impatient scowl dawns upon her face.

EXT. WOODS NEARBY - CONTINUOUS

DANTE TALBOT, 10, a doe-eyed, shaggy brown haired boy stands before a large tree. He beams an enormous smile while he looks up to the tree.

A gecko looks back at Dante with its enormous eyes. Dante sweetly extends his hands toward the gecko.

The gecko cocks its head left and right. It jumps into Dante's hands. Dante's smile grows as he cups the gecko in his hands. The gecko crawls within the palms of his hands.

TASHA (O.S.)

Dante!

Dante quickly pats the hammer jetting out of his pants' pocket. He places the gecko upon his shoulder.

DANTE

(to the gecko)

Come, my friend.

Dante darts across the grassy field toward...

EXT. CARNIVAL FAIR GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

Dante arrives and stands besides a knelt Tasha.

DANTE

Hello, mother.

While holding the wooden peg, Tasha looks at Dante and shakes her head.

TASHA

Why, hello, son. Now, you wanted to help, yes?

Dante swiftly pulls out his hammer and nods. Tasha smiles at her son. Dante kneels beside his mother. He grabs and holds the wooden peg. Tasha releases the peg and rises to her feet.

Dante hammers the wooden peg into the ground. As he hammers, Tasha notices the gecko upon Dante's shoulder.

She shrieks and attempts to smack the gecko off of Dante's shoulder.

Dante drops his hammer and hastily protects his gecko with his hand.

DANTE
Mother! Stop!

TASHA
Dante! I've told you time and time again! Stop toying around with animals!

Dante rises to his feet.

DANTE
They're my friends!

TASHA
They're wild and can be sick!

Tasha reaches for and grabs the hammer from the ground.

TASHA (CONT'D)
Kill it before it gets us sick!

Dante shakes his head.

DANTE
No, I won't kill it!

Tasha's grip tightens on the hammer. She slightly raises it.

TASHA
If you won't, I will, Dante.

Dante and Tasha lock eyes. He succumbs to her fervid fear.

DANTE
(softly)
Okay, mother.
(pause)
I'll just let him go.

Dante cups the gecko in his palms. He walks away from his mother, kneels to the ground, and places his hands upon the grass.

The gecko crawls out of Dante's hands, into the grass, and scampers away.

With a slumped demeanor, Dante rises to his feet and walks back toward his mother. He cautiously takes the hammer from Tasha's hand. Dante quietly kneels on the ground and continues hammering the peg.

Tasha looks down at her son, continuing to hammer. Her eyes sink.

Dante concludes his hammering. With tears in his eyes, Dante stands up.

DANTE (CONT'D)
Where else can I help, mother?

Tasha hugs her son.

TASHA
I'm sorry, Dante.

BELLY DANCER #1 (O.S.)
Dante!

Tasha releases her son. Carnival performers scurry around constructing the tent and their sideshows. Dante runs over to Belly Dancer #1 holding her rope and peg.

Tasha watches along as Dante hammers pegs into the ground for her fellow belly dancer.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARNIVAL TENT - NIGHT

With top-hat in hand, flamboyant ringmaster, Mr. Reinhardt, stands atop a metal pedestal.

Patrons arrive in and exit their horse and buggies.

REINHARDT
Come one! Come all! Feast your eyes
upon this superb spectacle! Worth
the money and worth the memories!

Mr. Reinhardt cracks his whip.

REINHARDT (CONT'D)
We'll show you something you've
never seen! You'll experience
things you won't believe! Come one!
Come all!

He twirls his massive mustache as he riles up a crowd of patrons with enticement and enthusiasm.

Patrons flock around Reinhardt. They line up and purchase tickets at the booth. Group by group, the patrons file into...

INT. CARNIVAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

Patrons fill the tent and they scurry to the different sideshows.

Dante weaves around patrons toward the belly dancers' stage. He stands at the stage's barricade amongst the adult patrons.

Dante spots his mother along with the other belly dancers. They dazzlingly dance to the small live band beside their stage. Tasha sashays her body as her silver bracelets glimmer in the bright lights with her every movement.

A little person, ELAINE, 40s, walks around the barricade with a bucket upon her head. Patrons place dollars and coins into the bucket.

DANTE

Hi, Elaine!

Dante waves and smiles. Elaine stops in front of Dante.

ELAINE

(smiling)

Hello, Dante!

DANTE

Is my mother's routine almost over?

ELAINE

I don't think so. We've got a hot crowd tonight. She might be busy for a while.

Dante and Elaine look back to the belly dancers as they begin dancing to a new song.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

What'd you want to talk to her about?

DANTE

I wanted to ask her...

A patron tosses a coin into Elaine's bucket.

ELAINE

Sorry, Dante. Hot crowd, son.

Elaine leaves Dante in mid-sentence. She beams a smile at the patrons as she collects their money in her bucket.

Dante notices the money piling up in Elaine's bucket. That's the name of the game here.

Dante's eyes sink.

CUT TO:

INT. CARNIVAL TENT - LATER

Dante stands before a sideshow booth which reads:

BERTHA THE BEARDED LADY

This sideshow is barren of patrons.

Dante enters...

INT. BERTHA'S SIDESHOW BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Dante slowly enters the booth.

DANTE

Bertha?

BERTHA THE BEARDED LADY, 50s, looks up at Dante as she pauses from counting her money.

Dante notices her counting her money. That's the name of the game here.

BERTHA

Dante!

Bertha extends her thick arms in a hugging motion.

BERTHA (CONT'D)

There's my little strongman!

Dante smiles, walks toward Bertha, and warmly hugs Bertha's rotund body. She holds Dante.

BERTHA (CONT'D)

How are you, son?

Dante's smile lessens.

DANTE

...good.

Bertha notices Dante's lie and grins.

BERTHA

I don't believe you. Come on, you can't lie to your Aunt Bertha. What's bothering you?

DANTE

I'm not sure. I don't think I can put it into words.

Dante releases Bertha and paces before her.

BERTHA

Just talk it out, son. Aunt Bertha can help you put together what you want to say. Your Aunt Bertha knows.

DANTE

Well, I just help set up the tent. Nothing more, nothing less.

BERTHA

I don't see many ten-year-olds doing what you do.

Dante stops his pacing and stands before Bertha.

DANTE

Yes, but setting up a tent isn't much of a spectacle like Mr. Reinhardt talks about.

BERTHA

Ah, so you want to be part of the show, Dante.

DANTE

Yes. Exactly.

BERTHA

Dante, you are normal. There's nothing wrong with that.

DANTE

Being normal is not special.

BERTHA

It can be. You just have to find what makes you special. You will, I know it.

DANTE

I will?

BERTHA

Your Aunt Bertha knows.

In sulking fashion, Dante smiles.

BERTHA (CONT'D)

If you don't, I'll shave this beard.

Bertha tugs at her beard.

BERTHA (CONT'D)

Deal?

Bertha extends her hand toward Dante.

DANTE

Deal.

Dante and Bertha shake hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARNIVAL TENT - NIGHT

Dante exits the carnival tent. He walks toward and into...

EXT. WOODS NEARBY - CONTINUOUS

Dante stops in his tracks. He hears twigs snapping. He looks around and hears erratic footsteps. The moonlight cascades and blankets the woods. Fog creeps and streaks across the trees. In the distance, Dante spots a four-legged silhouette. He's drawn to it and approaches cautiously.

The silhouette notices Dante and frantically limps away. Dante hastens his pace toward the silhouette. The silhouette seems to disappear into the ground.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARNIVAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

Tasha stands outside of the carnival tent. Elaine approaches her.

ELAINE
Tasha, did you get to talk to
Dante?

TASHA
No. Why?

ELAINE
He was looking for you.

Bewilderment dawns upon Tasha's face.

EXT. WOODS NEARBY - CONTINUOUS

Dante reaches the area where the silhouette disappeared. He looks down and inspects the ground.

VICIOUS GROWL

Dante's lip quivers.

From the ground, a shadow emerges and blankets Dante.

EXT. CARNIVAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

HARROWING HOWL

Tasha and Elaine hear the bloodcurdling howl in the distance. Fear streams across their faces as they look across the thicket.

They charge toward the woods and suddenly stop in their tracks. They spot a silhouette in the distance walking toward them.

The silhouette emerge from the moonlight to reveal itself to be...

Dante holding a battered wolf cub in his arms.

Tasha locks eyes with Dante for a moment.

CUT TO:

INT. WAGON - DAY

A wounded wolf cub lies upon a bed of hay. Dante's dainty hands pet the cub's head. Its eyes flutter and look toward Dante. A sigh seeps from the wolf cub's snout.

Tasha looks over at Dante with a frantic look upon her face.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Tasha opens the wagon door.

TASHA
(surprised)
Mr. Reinhardt.

EXT. WAGON

Mr. Reinhardt stands outside of the wagon.

MR. REINHARDT
Tasha. How's the boy?

TASHA
He's well. A bit shaken.

MR. REINHARDT
May I enter?

TASHA
Of course.

INT. WAGON - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Reinhardt removes his hat and enters. He approaches Dante.

MR. REINHARDT
How are you, son?

DANTE
I'm fine.
(looks at the wolf)
I hope he will be.

MR. REINHARDT
This beast could've killed you,
Dante. It's a sheer miracle you're
alive, son. If it didn't kill you
now, it will when it gets older.
Bigger. Stronger.
(pause)
I believe it would not be wise to
keep this animal around the
carnival.

Dante continues petting the wolf.

DANTE
No, it is wise.

MR. REINHARDT
I beg your pardon?

Dante chillingly looks at Mr. Reinhardt.

DANTE
This is what makes me special. I
know I can fix him.

Mr. Reinhardt's face and demeanor become more stern. Dante
looks back at the wolf cub and pets tears from its eyes.

MR. REINHARDT
Dante...

DANTE
We can make you money. Is that not
wise?

Tasha's jaw drops as she looks on. Mr. Reinhardt looks at
Dante with intrigue.

DANTE (CONT'D)
I'll be the Wolf-Boy.

MR. REINHARDT
(rising)
First sign of distress and that
wolf is being put in the ground.

Dante extends his hand toward Mr. Reinhardt. Surprise streams
across Mr. Reinhardt's face.

DANTE
Deal.

Mr. Reinhardt shakes Dante's hand.

MR. REINHARDT
Deal, Wolf-Boy.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARNIVAL TENT - NIGHT

TEXT: NINE MONTHS LATER

Mr. Reinhardt stands atop his pedestal before and above a
slew of patrons.

Horse and buggies arrive as more patrons exit them.

MR. REINHARDT

Come one! Come all! This way into
mystery!

He points at the easels displaying their sideshows within the
carnival tent.

MR. REINHARDT (CONT'D)

Witness the Bearded Woman! Feast
your eyes upon the Belly Dancers
from Heaven! Observe the little
people! Lock arms with the
Herculean Strongmen!

(pause)

And now, The Wolf-Boy!

CUT TO:

INT. WOLF-BOY'S SIDESHOW BOOTH - NIGHT

Wolf bursts through the paper barrier of a flaming hoop.

Patrons circled around their sideshow cheer and applaud them.
They toss money into the nearby buckets.

Dante holds the shredded hoop and tosses it into the air.
Wolf stands on its hind legs while the hoop collapses around
him.

A bow is strapped across Dante's chest. A quiver of arrows
hangs off Dante's shoulder. Dante circles around a wooden
cask sitting at the center of the sideshow.

Wolf steps out of the hoop as Dante pulls out a makeshift
plush man from his pants back-pocket.

Dante nods at Wolf and tosses the plush man into the air.
Wolf leaps into the air and catches the plush man with his
mouth.

Patrons ecstatically toss money into the nearby buckets.

Dante pulls the bow off his body and extracts an arrow from
his quiver.

Wolf leaps atop the cask. Dante arms his bow, closes one eye,
and nods. Wolf tosses the plush man into the air.

The plush man falls toward the ground until...

An arrow swiftly rips through the plush man's chest and
punctures the center of the cask below Wolf's feet.

Dante waves his hands and points upward. He cocks his head back. Wolf follows his motions.

DANTE AND WOLF HOWL

The patrons erupt in applause. The buckets begin to overflow with money.

Wolf hops off the cask and walks over to Dante.

Dante looks down at Wolf with a smirk. He nods as Wolf stands before him.

They turn to the audience. Dante takes a bow as Wolf bows his head.

CUT TO:

INT. BERTHA'S SIDESHOW BOOTH - LATER

Bertha finishes twining a necklace collar. A red rock dangles at the center of the necklace collar.

With Wolf on a leash, Dante strolls in with a satchel full of their earnings.

DANTE
Hello, Aunt Bertha.

BERTHA
Dante, my boy!

A smile beams off of Bertha's face. The necklace collar hangs within the palm of her hand.

Wolf stands beside Dante. Bertha looks at Wolf with a grin.

BERTHA (CONT'D)
I have to thank you, Wolf, because
of you I got to keep this.

Bertha tugs at her beard with her free hand. Dante chuckles.

BERTHA (CONT'D)
I have that necklace you asked for.

Bertha holds the necklace collar out to Dante.

DANTE
Thank you so much, Aunt Bertha!

Dante reaches into his satchel, grabs a few coins, and presents them to Bertha.

BERTHA

Oh, Dante, you don't have to pay me.

DANTE

No, I must.

Dante looks down at Wolf.

DANTE (CONT'D)

It's the right thing to do.

Bertha and Dante exchange the coins and necklace collar. Dante kneels down and clips the necklace collar on Wolf.

Dante pets Wolf.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARNIVAL TENT - NIGHT

Dante and Wolf exit through the tent's back crevice. They walk along the tent's exterior.

HIP SCARF CHARMS JINGLING

DRUNKARD #1 (O.S.)

Now, come on, lady. I'm not asking for much.

Dante hears an argument unraveling. He looks past the tent to discover...

Tasha being manhandled by a DRUNKARD, 30s.

Dante nervously looks down at Wolf. He looks back at the altercation.

TASHA

Let loose of me!

Dante looks back down at Wolf. His grip on the leash tightens.

DRUNKARD #1

How much?! I can pay it!

The drunkard holds up a wad of cash.

TASHA

I said let go!

Dante scowls. He looks down at Wolf, who is baring his teeth.

WOLF GROWLS

Tasha and the drunkard look back to discover Dante and Wolf.

DRUNKARD #1
What in the hell?

Dante releases his grip on Wolf's leash.

Wolf quickly charges at the drunkard. He lunges and leaps at the drunkard. His fangs bite onto the drunkard's arm.

DRUNKARD #1 (CONT'D)
Ah! Ah! Son of a bitch! You son of
a bitch! Bastard!

The drunkard collapses onto the ground. Wolf continues his attack.

Dante approaches his mother and pulls her to safety.

DANTE
Are you okay, mother?

Tasha nods.

As the drunkard attempts an escape, Wolf viciously pulls the drunkard to the ground by his clothes.

Dante sternly looks at Wolf.

DANTE (CONT'D)
Wolf!

Wolf halts his attack and returns to Dante. He stands between Dante and Tasha. The drunkard fearfully escapes into the night.

Dante looks in the distance at the fleeing drunkard.

DANTE (CONT'D)
You're the son of bitch.

Dante sits next to his mother. Wolf lies down between them.

DANTE (CONT'D)
Did that bastard hurt you?

TASHA
I'll be fine, son. Thank you.

DANTE
(looks at Wolf)
Thank him.

Shaken with tears in her eyes, Tasha looks at her son. She then looks down at Wolf.

TASHA

It's said that animals are drawn to pure hearts.

DANTE

That won't be enough once Mr. Reinhardt hears about this.

TASHA

Don't worry, it'll be fine. Nothing will happen to...

Tasha pets Wolf. The moonlight shimmers off her silver bracelets.

TASHA (CONT'D)

What's his name again?

DANTE

Wolf.

Tasha smirks. Dante joins his mother in petting Wolf.

TASHA

A wolf named Wolf, not much else needs to be said.

(pause)

A boy named Dante, not much else needs to be said.

(pause)

Wolf-Boy.

Tasha smiles at Dante. He grins back at his mother.

EXT. CARNIVAL FAIR GROUNDS - NIGHT

After business hours, the mud-show wagons are scattered around the grassy fair grounds.

INT. WAGON - CONTINUOUS

Dante sleeps upon a pile of hay. Wolf lays beneath him. Tasha sleeps across the wagon upon her own pile of hay.

EXT. CARNIVAL FAIR GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

A SHADOWED THIEF, 30s, creeps upon the fair grounds. He quietly approaches the wagons. He cautiously attempts at opening the wagon doors.

He eventually reaches the Talbot wagon door. The thief's hand slowly latches onto the door handle.

INT. WAGON - CONTINUOUS

Wolf rises from the hay pile. His eyes see the wagon door slowly crack open.

WOLF GROWLS

Dante's eyes flutter open.

EXT. WAGON - CONTINUOUS

The thief continues opening the door.

Wolf viciously bursts through the door.

The thief collapses down the wagon stairs, he quickly rises, and flees.

Dante and Tasha stand at the wagon steps.

DANTE

Wolf!

Wolf is in hot pursuit as the thief runs toward and through...

EXT. WOODS NEARBY - CONTINUOUS

Wolf chases the thief to the edge of the woods. His paws streak across a flattened patch of dirt, a road.

Two harrowing headlights gleam and rush toward Wolf.

Wolf's eyes dilate in the light, blinding him. He stops in his tracks as the lights barrel toward him.

HAUNTING THUD

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS NEARBY - CONTINUOUS

Dante and Tasha run across the woods. They reach the dirt road to discover...

Wolf lying in a pool of his own blood.

Tasha catches sight of Wolf and weeps.

Dante slowly approaches his fallen friend. He kneels beside him. Dante's eyes scroll across Wolf's crushed body. He notices for the first time in his life, tire tracks. Dante seems bewildered by their presence.

As Tasha continues to cry, Dante pets Wolf.

Mr. Reinhardt, Bertha, and a few of the carnival acts emerge from the woods. They witness the tragic scene.

Bertha approaches and holds onto Tasha as she cries.

Dante continues to pet Wolf as he breathes his final breath.

After witnessing his first encounter with death, Dante closes Wolf's eyes. His dainty fingers caress the red rock tied around Wolf's necklace collar.

Dante weeps.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREETS - DAY

TEXT: NEW YORK CITY - 1904

Fog and industrial steam hover upon the streets. Twentieth century automobiles steer along the damp streets while pedestrians stride along.

Paperboys carry newspapers in their leather satchels as they shout their sales pitches. Pick pockets linger amongst the pedestrians seeking targets.

Some pedestrians shuffle up concrete stairs toward the doors of...

EXT. UNIVERSITY - CONTINUOUS

They shuffle through the doors and into...

INT. UNIVERSITY - CONTINUOUS

The pedestrians stroll past the doors of an auditorium. A booming voice seems to seep, reverberate, and quake the auditorium's wooden doors.

DR. MONTGOMERY (O.S.)
Listen and remember this!

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The creaky wooden seats of the auditorium are filled by university students. The seats cascade toward the professor's pit below. Every student listens attentively to...

DR. CREIGHTON MONTGOMERY, 60s, a portly, balding man who resembles Donald Pleasance. Extremely well dressed, he stands front and center upon the auditorium pit. With hands clasped behind his back, he gracefully paces across the stage.

Macabre instruments and specimens of biological instruction litter the table behind him.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Nature is one with us. We are one
with nature.

He stops in his tracks. His piercing blue eyes scan across his students.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Remember that.

Dr. Montgomery returns to his molasses-like pace.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
As we have previously discussed,
Charles Darwin's recent theories of
natural selection and evolution are
controversial to say the least.
(pause)
However, we must also understand
how groundbreaking these theories
are.
(pause)
This leads me to my hypothesis --

Seated amongst the students is:

DANTE TALBOT, 25, he sports a short pony-tail with bangs, studious attire, and resembles a young Johnny Depp.

DR. MONTGOMERY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Nature is a chain.

Dante's large brown eyes are fixated upon Dr. Montgomery and his scientific address.

DR. MONTGOMERY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Humanity is simply a link to that
chain of existence.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

At the seminar's conclusion, students shuffle amongst each other and toward the exit. Meanwhile, Dante walks down the auditorium stairs toward the pit.

Dr. Montgomery collects his materials and places them within his leather satchel. Dante quaintly approaches Dr. Montgomery.

DANTE
Hello, Dr. Montgomery.

Dr. Montgomery turns around, acknowledges Dante, and grins.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Ah, Mr. Talbot. What is it you
seek, my dear boy?

DANTE
Knowledge, mainly, Dr. Montgomery.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Admirable, Mr. Talbot. Very
admirable.
(pause)
Knowledge becomes wisdom for anyone
who obtains it. It becomes power
for anyone who utilizes it.

DANTE
And that power can mold the world.

Dr. Montgomery nods.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Or unmask it.

Dante kindly smiles.

DANTE

The love for all living creatures
is the most noble attribute of man.
That attribute is something I long
for.

Dr. Montgomery sternly looks at Dante.

DR. MONTGOMERY

And a man who dares waste one hour
of time has not discovered --

DANTE

-- the value of life.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)

-- the value of life.

Dr. Montgomery smirks at Dante's well read interjection.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)

I admire your attentiveness, Mr.
Talbot. I can see you've studied my
old friend and colleague, Charles
Darwin.

DANTE

Chapter and verse. I'm fascinated
and concur with your theory of the
chain of nature.

Dr. Montgomery shuts his leather satchel.

DR. MONTGOMERY

I've taken notice, my dear boy.
Your enthusiasm radiates throughout
your exam results. I am proud to
call you my student.

Awe washes over Dante.

DANTE

Thank you, Dr. Montgomery.

DR. MONTGOMERY

No need to thank me. Your
determination and fascination has
made you the star pupil. Give
yourself some credit, please.

Dante is shocked by his mentor's approval. Dr. Montgomery
pulls out his pocket-watch from his coat pocket.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)

I must bid you adieu, Mr. Talbot. I
have some prior commitments to
attend to.

Dr. Montgomery grabs his satchel, walks toward the exit, and turns back to Dante.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)

However, I would like to extend an invitation to my manor. There we can continue this conversation with my like-minded colleagues and associates. I'm sure you'll grow a liking to them.

(pointing to his head)

Brilliant minds must stay in good company. Healthy source of knowledge that goes beyond graduation gowns.

(pause)

What do you say, my dear boy?

Dante stands stock still. A smile slowly dawns upon his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - LATER

Dante walks amongst the pedestrians within the crowded streets of New York. People loudly argue in the streets while others profess their sales pitches of their products.

Dante approaches a fish merchant stand and purchases a portion of fish. A trio of pickpockets eye and cautiously approach Dante.

Dante pockets his change from the fish merchant. He returns to the sidewalk and continues his walk home. He slips past an alley entrance.

The trio of pickpockets emerge from the alleyway shadows. They latch onto Dante and drag him into...

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

The alley shadows seem to envelope them.

The trio struggle in mugging Dante.

THIEF #1

Damn, this bastard's hard to get ahold of!

Dante breaks away from their clutches. Dante punches Thief #1, 20s, in the face.

The impact of Dante's fist sends Thief #1 into a pair of trashcan barrels and to the ground.

THIEF #2

Bastard!

Dante rushes and pushes Thief #2, 20s, into the wall, slamming his head against the stained bricks. Dante pummels Thief #2's face with numerous roundhouse punches.

The third thief grabs a nearby trashcan barrel and slams it over Dante's head. Dante collapses to the ground. The trio swarm Dante and pummel him. Thief #3, 20s, pickpockets Dante's money.

THIEF #3

Let's get the hell outta here,
boys!

The trio of thieves quickly slip out of the alley and disappear into the crowded streets.

Dante rises to his knees and spits out blood.

DANTE

Sons of bitches.

With a concerned look, Dante searches his pockets. He pulls out the wrapped fish portion from his pocket. Relief washes over his face. He sighs.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Hurt, Dante walks up the stairs toward his apartment building. The apartment building is impoverished and dingy.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Dante shuts the entrance door behind him. He eyes the hallway of doors before him. He trudges down the hallway.

A black cat gleefully sashays from the other end of the hall toward Dante. He rubs his head against Dante's shin.

DANTE

Sebastian, my friend.

Dante kneels and pets his feline friend. Sebastian's purrs echo.

Dante retrieves the wrapped fish portion from his pocket. He unwraps it and feeds Sebastian. He pets Sebastian a few more times as the cat feasts.

Dante rises to his feet and walks toward his loft's door. He opens it and enters...

INT. DANTE'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Dante walks over to his desk and sits upon the worn chair before it. He bites into the fish leftovers in his hand.

His living quarters showcase relics from his youth as part of the traveling carnival. A weathered poster of Bertha the Bearded Lady is nailed upon his wall. A tattered piece of the red striped tent dangles off his ceiling and in a corner of his loft. His child-sized bow and quiver of arrows are nailed upon his wall.

While seated, Dante removes his boots. He rises from his seat. In pain, he removes his garments to reveal his old scars and newfound bruises.

A pair of mice peak out of a hole within the wall. Dante notices them. He opens his desk drawer, retrieves a cardboard wafer box, and closes his drawer. Dante extracts wafers from the box and places the box upon his desk.

DANTE
(approaching the mice)
Don't think I forgot about you two.

Dante drops the wafers before the mice. The tiny duo feast upon their meal.

Dante smiles, walks over to his bedroom window, and opens it. He turns around, kneels, and reaches under his bed. He extracts a bag of birdseed mixed with peanuts from beneath the iron bed frame.

Dante spreads birdseed and peanuts outside of his window sill. He closes his window. As Dante places the bag beneath his bed, a crow lands upon the window sill and eats the birdseed peanut mix.

In his undershirt and pants, Dante sits upon his bed. He removes his necklace and places it upon the bedpost. A red rock dangles at the necklace's center.

Dante lies upon his bed and shuts his eyes. He slumbers.

The red rock necklace hangs off his bedpost.

FADE IN:

INT. STAGECOACH - DAY

The red rock necklace hangs around Dante's neck. The stagecoach trots through the crisp Autumn wind beneath the overcast sun.

Dante looks out the window as the stagecoach rumbles down a cobblestone road. With his fingers, Dante twirls the red rock of his necklace.

EXT. MONTGOMERY MANOR - CONTINUOUS

The stagecoach's horse slows its pace as it draws near the Montgomery Manor. Dante peeks out of the stagecoach window and sees the Montgomery Manor. He is awestruck as the stagecoach driver pulls the reins of his horse.

STAGECOACH DRIVER

Montgomery Manor, Mr. Talbot.
You're in silk-stocking territory
now, son.

Dante opens the stagecoach door and bounds out of the stagecoach. He looks up at the manor and then back at the stagecoach driver.

DANTE

(at the driver)
Thank you.

The stagecoach driver tips his hat, whips the reins of his horse, and drives off with his stagecoach.

Dante looks back up toward the manor. He notices the granite statues in the shape of angelic-looking animals sprinkled throughout the manor's exterior.

Dante's fascination is broken when the front doors to the manor begin to open.

Dr. Montgomery emerges from between the immense dark pine doors.

DR. MONTGOMERY

Dante, my dear boy, I'm delighted
you could make it. Welcome to my
home.

DANTE
 (walking up the front
 steps)
 Happy and honored to be here, Dr.
 Montgomery.

Dr. Montgomery waves and welcomes Dante into the manor.

DR. MONTGOMERY
 (placing his hand on
 Dante's shoulder)
 Please, be my guest.

Dr. Montgomery leads Dante into...

INT. MONTGOMERY MANOR - CONTINUOUS

They enter the manor's living quarters. HERBERT, 30s, a burly
 house servant sternly stands by the door.

Dr. Montgomery nods at Herbert.

DR. MONTGOMERY
 Make yourself at home, Mr. Talbot.

Herbert approaches Dante.

HERBERT
 Your coat, Mr. Talbot?

DANTE
 (removing his coat)
 Thank you. Mister?

HERBERT
 Herbert.

DANTE
 Thank you, Mr. Herbert.

Dante hands his coat to Herbert. As Dante follows behind Dr.
 Montgomery, Herbert hangs Dante's coat upon a nearby
 coatrack.

DANTE (CONT'D)
 (looking around the manor)
 You have a beautiful home, Dr.
 Montgomery.

DR. MONTGOMERY
 It's livable. One should always be
 grateful and humble about such
 luxuries.

Dr. Montgomery strolls across the living quarters toward a pair of immense, lavish curtains. Dante follows.

DANTE

Agreed. Those who are not, are
blind to the casualties they sow.

Dr. Montgomery stops before the curtains and turns to look at Dante.

DR. MONTGOMERY

There's my star pupil.

DANTE

(with a smile)

Even amongst your associates and
colleagues?

(looking around the manor)

Which brings to mind, where are
they?

Dr. Montgomery beams a smile. He latches onto the curtain's tassel string and pulls it to reveal...

Sun rays shine through enormous glass doors and onto Dante. As his eyes adjust, his jaw drops at the sight before him:

Beyond the manor glass doors, a lush contained, wilderness inhabited by a menagerie of animals.

DR. MONTGOMERY

(looking out the glass
doors)

Meet my colleagues and associates.

Dante's eyes remain fixated on the flourishing menagerie.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MONTGOMERY MENAGERIE - DAY

Dante and Dr. Montgomery walk down a cobblestone walkway. Dr. Montgomery reaches into his pocket, retrieves a handful of birdseed, and tosses it across the plentiful pasture.

DR. MONTGOMERY

How natural is humanity? How humane
is nature?

(pause)

Those are questions that should be
bubbling within our minds. I'm
hoping to one day have definitive
answers.

As they stroll, Dr. Montgomery holds his hands behind his back. Peacocks and other feathered fowls scamper across the abundant terrain.

DANTE

I don't have any clear answers to those questions.

(pause)

I just try to be as naturally humane as I can. Especially with any creature that crosses my path.

Dr. Montgomery confidently nods.

DR. MONTGOMERY

Commendable response, Mr. Talbot.

They continue walking down the cobblestone path and reach a massive domed aviary enclosure. Dr. Montgomery opens its door for Dante.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)

Please.

Dante proceeds.

INT. AVIARY DOME - CONTINUOUS

Dante enters. Dr. Montgomery follows and closes the door behind them. Beautiful birds fly freely past Dante and across the aviary.

Dante looks around in awe.

DANTE

Wow.

DR. MONTGOMERY

I knew you'd grow a liking to my colleagues.

(handing Dante some
birdseed)

Here, my dear boy.

Dante cups the birdseed. He follows the flying flock up a small cobblestone bridge.

As he walks up the bridge, his eyes fall upon the birds flocking around and upon the shoulders of --

LINA BELLE MONTGOMERY, 25, a raven-haired beauty that looks like a cross between Snow White and Winona Ryder.

She stands at the peak of the bridge as she feeds the array of colorful birds. The feathery flock almost seem to sing with their harmonized chirping.

Dante is even more awestruck at the sight of Lina Belle.

Dr. Montgomery comes up the bridge behind Dante.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Ah, allow me to introduce you two.

Dr. Montgomery walks past Dante and toward Lina Belle. He turns back to Dante.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
(motioning with his hands
to Lina)
Dante Talbot, this is Lina Belle
Montgomery, my daughter.
(motioning with his hands
to Dante)
Lina Belle Montgomery, this is my
star pupil, Dante Talbot.

LINA BELLE
It's a pleasure to meet you.

Dante shies away for a moment.

DANTE
The pleasure is all mine, Miss
Montgomery.

LINA BELLE
(smirks)
You may call me, Lina, Mr. Talbot.

DANTE
Please, you may call me, Dante.

They lock eyes and exchange smiles. A few birds fly off Lina's shoulders and onto Dante's.

As Dante feeds the birds, Lina Belle and Dr. Montgomery gleefully watch.

DR. MONTGOMERY
(in Lina's ear)
I must feed Vincent. Keep Dante
company.

Lina Belle nods. Dr. Montgomery turns and walks down the bridge.

LINA BELLE
 (approaching Dante)
 Looks like they like you.

DANTE
 I hope so.

Dante continues feeding the birds as they pounce around his arms and shoulders.

LINA BELLE
 Hope? No need for that. It's plain
 as day.

Dante looks off into the distance and sees Dr. Montgomery approaching a locked off portion of the enclosure. He grabs a hanging wooden bucket outside a cage door.

INT. VULTURE CAGE - CONTINUOUS

With wooden bucket in hand, Dr. Montgomery enters.

DANTE (O.S.)
 Where's your father going?

An enormous vulture, Vincent, rests upon a branch.

LINA BELLE (O.S.)
 He's going to feed Vincent, our
 vulture.

Dr. Montgomery reaches into the bucket and tosses Vincent carrion. Vincent gobbles them down.

INT. AVIARY DOME - CONTINUOUS

Dante returns his focus to feeding the birds.

DANTE
 (smiling)
 Ah, other colleagues, I see.

LINA BELLE
 (chuckling)
 Would you like to see more of them?

In bewilderment, Dante looks at Lina.

DANTE
 More?

CUT TO:

INT. BEAR ENCLOSURE PIT - LATER

A bear stands and roars. A slab of salmon is lobbed at him. The bear catches it with his mouth.

DR. MONTGOMERY (O.S.)
Splendid! That's my Brutus!

Behind Brutus the bear, Herbert tends to the pit terrain.

INT. BEAR ENCLOSURE BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

As Brutus the bear eats below, Dr. Montgomery applauds him. Lina and Dante stand beside Dr. Montgomery upon the enclosure balcony.

DR. MONTGOMERY
From cub to bear. They grow up so fast.

Dr. Montgomery maneuvers around Lina and toward Dante.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
(pats Lina's shoulder)
They all grow up so fast.

Lina reluctantly chuckles at her father's tired proverb.

Dr. Montgomery moves past Dante and across the balcony. Dante and Lina follow him down the balcony arch.

Approaching up the opposite balcony arch, GARRETT, 30s, another burly house servant steers a wooden wheelbarrow. A large alligator rests within the wheelbarrow with her mouth roped shut.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Ah, Garrett! How's our sweet Alondra?

GARRETT
Doing well.

Lina and Dante look at Alondra. Dr. Montgomery pets and caresses Alondra.

LINA BELLE
Where is she going, father?

DR. MONTGOMERY
(to Lina)
Mating season is upon the alligators.

Dr. Montgomery's fingers stride across the branded Montgomery crest upon Alondra's hide.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
 Let's hope our beautiful Alondra
 will be pregnant upon her
 recapture.
 (nodding to Garrett)
 Proceed, Garrett.

Garrett trudges the wheelbarrow across the balcony. Lina and Dante look back as he strolls down the arch with Alondra.

Dante looks back to Dr. Montgomery.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
 How are you liking the Montgomery
 Menagerie, Mr. Talbot?

DANTE
 I have no words. It's simply
 remarkable. I adore it.

DR. MONTGOMERY
 I knew you would. It's plain as
 day.

Dante looks back at Lina. She smiles at Dante due to the repetition of Montgomery dialogue.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
 Which brings me to my proposition,
 Mr. Talbot.
 (pause)
 Graduation looms ever so near,
 would you like to work with us for
 your final quarter and
 accreditation?
 (pause)
 This may also lead to employment
 possibilities here as well.
 (pause)
 You must use the present to mold a
 future, that you won't regret in
 the past.

Lina rolls her eyes at her father's pretentious proverb. Dante smirks at Lina and shyly bows his head.

Dr. Montgomery continues toward...

INT. WOLF ENCLOSURE BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

The three stand upon the balcony. Dante slowly looks down at the wolf pit.

INT. WOLF ENCLOSURE - CONTINUOUS

A lone wolf steadily emerges from its den. It looks up at Dante.

INT. WOLF ENCLOSURE BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

The wolf gives Dante an icy stare. Dante and the wolf lock eyes. Dante's eyes glisten with buried emotion.

DR. MONTGOMERY (O.S.)
Mr. Talbot?

CUT TO:

EXT. MONTGOMERY MANOR - LATER

Dante's eyes continue to glisten as he breaks away from his suppressed reverie. He looks at Dr. Montgomery, standing across from him on the manor steps.

At the bottom of the steps, Lina combs her brown mustang's black mane.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Please, take the time to think over my proposal. Only fools rush in, remember that.

DANTE
Thank you, Dr. Montgomery. I will definitely put some thought into your lovely proposal. You need not worry about that.

Dante trots down the manor steps and toward Lina.

DANTE (CONT'D)
Does the horse have a name?

LINA BELLE
Her name is Dawn.

DANTE

Oh.

(to Dawn)

Well, warm salutations, Dawn.

Dante pets Dawn's head while Lina continues brushing Dawn's mane.

DR. MONTGOMERY

(to Dante)

I constantly advise her to replace her horse with a motor vehicle. Save the poor animal.

With slight disdain, Lina looks up at her father.

LINA BELLE

An iron horse cannot replace a living horse and convenience cannot replace a companion.

(pause)

Dawn is my friend.

Dante admires Lina's response. His hand slightly brushes upon Lina's hand as a stagecoach steadily arrives outside the manor.

DANTE

I agree with you, Lina.

LINA BELLE

You do?

Dante strolls toward the parked stagecoach. He looks back to Lina.

DANTE

Of course. It's plain as day.

Lina smirks. Dante looks up toward Dr. Montgomery.

DANTE (CONT'D)

(saluting)

Thank you so much, Dr. Montgomery!

DR. MONTGOMERY

The pleasure was mine, my dear boy!
Thank you for your presence!

Dante climbs upon the stagecoach steps and looks toward the STAGECOACH DRIVER #2, 40s.

DANTE
(to stagecoach driver)
Rose Bloom Village, please.

STAGECOACH DRIVER #2
Yes, sir.

Dante enters the stagecoach.

INT. STAGECOACH - CONTINUOUS

Lina locks eyes with Dante through the stagecoach window. Dante waves goodbye to Lina. She nods and returns the gesture.

The stagecoach rides off. Dante faces forward and has a moment of contemplation.

He closes his eyes, sees flashes of the lone wolf's eyes, and flares of Wolf's dying eyes. Dante opens his eyes in depression.

EXT. NEW YORK SLUMS - NIGHT

The stagecoach rumbles on and across the dingy, broken streets. Small pockets of people huddle together within their dirty and tattered garments. Poverty runs rampant across the slums and can be seen on the faces of these poor souls.

The stagecoach slows down its pace. Stagecoach driver #2 pulls the reins of his horses. The stagecoach stops.

STAGECOACH DRIVER #2
Rose Bloom Village!

Dante exits the stagecoach and looks at the driver.

DANTE
Thank you, sir.

The stagecoach driver tips his hat, whips his reins, and rides off.

Dante walks across the wet and cracked pavement. He maneuvers around impoverished pedestrians and toward a grimy tenement building. Wet clothing drips and dangles off clotheslines strung across the building exterior. Dante looks up at the building's smoke stained walls and rusty gutters.

CUT TO:

INT. TENEMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dante stands outside and knocks on tenement door seven. The door cracks open to reveal --

TASHA TALBOT, 41, stands at the door. Her harsh lifestyle is worn across her face in the form of baggy eyes, wrinkles, and blemishes. She has lived a tough forty-one years.

Mother and son lock eyes.

DANTE

Mom.

TASHA

Dante.

CUT TO:

INT. TASHA'S TENEMENT - NIGHT

Dante sits at the kitchen table, a drink rests before him. His coat is draped upon the backseat of his chair.

Seated across from Dante, Tasha pours herself a drink as her silver bracelets gleam.

TASHA

University life has you too busy to visit your mother dearest?

DANTE

I'm sorry, mom.

TASHA

It's fine, Dante. I understand.

(picks up drink)

Actually, I really don't. What is it you do at the university again?

Tasha takes a sip of her drink.

DANTE

You would understand but you refuse to move into the city with me. It's not safe around here.

TASHA

It's not safe anywhere, Dante. The city is no different.

DANTE
I haven't heard of people
disappearing in the city. I've only
heard that happening here, in the
slums. I've heard rumors that
they're abductions.

TASHA
(laughingly)
As if I'm worth abducting.

DANTE
Mom, please.

Tasha looks over at Dante with an annoyed look.

DANTE (CONT'D)
Never mind, I'll drop it.
(pause)
Answering your previous question, I
study animals at the university.

TASHA
(jokingly)
Still my Wolf-Boy, I see.

DANTE
Dr. Montgomery offered me final
accreditation for graduation and
possibly a job at his menagerie.

Tasha's face squirms as her grip tightens on her glass.

TASHA
What'd you tell him?

DANTE
Nothing yet. I'm still thinking
about it.

Tasha downs her drink and places her glass down. She scoffs
and rises from her chair. She turns away from Dante and paces
away.

DANTE (CONT'D)
It's a good opportunity.

Tasha irritably turns around to look at her son.

TASHA
Dante, do you forget what happened
to our people? OUR people.

Dante looks away in silent shame.

TASHA (CONT'D)

We were free. You could go and stay
where you pleased. Roamers,
wanderers, nomads! They called us
what they willed but we were free!

DANTE

(under his breath)
You were free.

Tasha caresses her silver bracelets with her fingers. She
then looks around at her surroundings in disdain.

TASHA

Doctors, entrepreneurs,
industrialists, bastards! Whatever
the hell you want to call them, ran
us and our business away! Now look
at us!

(motions to her
surroundings)

Look at where we are! The slums!

Tasha points at Dante.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Now you want to be one of them?!
(pause)
I've warned you about well-dressed
men with their silver tongues.
Their tongues --

DANTE

-- are forked.

TASHA (CONT'D)

-- are forked.

Dante fervidly finishes his mother's proverb.

DANTE

You can still go where you want.
You can come with me, mother. I can
take care of you.

TASHA

No, Dante. I can't. It was my
responsibility to care of you. I
failed, I admit.

DANTE

Your pride is worth that much?

TASHA

It's all I have left. It's worth
more to me than those New York City
streets you call home now.

DANTE

And I suppose sweeping the slums
for pennies is worth it to you?

Tasha looks away in contemplation as tears fill her eyes.

TASHA

Yes.

Dante negatively shakes his head and rises from his seat.

DANTE

Things are different now.

TASHA

How?

DANTE

Men with vision can change the
world now. I want that.

Mother and son fiercely lock eyes.

TASHA

You're speaking like one of them.

DANTE

I don't care about them! I'm doing
this for the animals!

Dante presses his hand upon his necklace.

DANTE (CONT'D)

Their habitats need to be
conserved! They need to be saved
from us! Back to nature! Back to
where it began!

TASHA

That's what you want? The path to
hell is paved with good intentions,
Dante Talbot.

(pause)

Who will save you? I can't. I never
could.

Dante's shoulders slump.

DANTE

Don't worry about that. It's not
like you ever tried.

Dante grabs his coat, stomps toward the door, and latches
onto its knob.

TASHA

Dante!

Dante looks back at his mother.

TASHA (CONT'D)

The choice is yours to do what you want but what do you need?

(pause)

Truly need. Don't try to be something you're not.

DANTE

I need to be me for once. That's how I'll be free.

TASHA

Be careful who you become.

(pause)

I'm sorry, Dante.

Dante grimaces and exits.

CUT TO:

INT. STAGECOACH - LATER

As the stagecoach rumbles along, Dante contemplates, and fights back tears.

INT. DANTE'S LOFT - NIGHT

Dante sits upon his bed.

Sebastian purrs as he sleeps upon Dante's lap. The mice eat wafers outside of their hole. The crow sits perched outside of Dante's window.

Dante looks around at his makeshift animal family. He twirls the red rock upon his necklace. Tears stream out of Dante's eyes. He looks up with determination.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

In the university auditorium pit, Dante extends his hand toward Dr. Montgomery.

DANTE

Deal, Dr. Montgomery.

Dr. Montgomery shakes Dante's hand.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Deal, Mr. Talbot.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. MONTGOMERY'S STUDY - DAY

An enormous portrait of the Montgomery family hangs above Dr. Montgomery's desk.

With bifocals, Dr. Montgomery works on the schematics of a glass domed machine.

Framed photos of Charlotte Montgomery litter his desk along with compasses, rulers, inkwells and inkwell pens.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Enter.

Lina cracks open the door and pokes her head in.

LINA BELLE
You wanted to see me, father?

Dr. Montgomery looks over the rims of his bifocals at Lina.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Ah, my little girl. Yes, you are correct. Please come in.

Lina enters her father's study, shuts the door behind her, and approaches Dr. Montgomery.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
The young boy, Dante Talbot, will be assisting us for his final university credit. Please take him under your wing.

LINA BELLE
I shall.

Lina nods and turn for the exit.

DR. MONTGOMERY
He's my best student. He's got a brilliant mind. Maybe some of that will inspire you.

Mildly agitated, Lina turns back toward her father.

LINA BELLE
Inspire me for what?

DR. MONTGOMERY
For our mission of animal
conservation, of course.

LINA BELLE
Apologies in advance for this
father but I don't need to absorb
anyone else's mission. I'm here to
support my family not fulfill their
destinies.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Oh, then what are you here for?

LINA BELLE
To save the animals. That's it.
It's for them not myself, you, or
even mother.

Dr. Montgomery gives Lina a stern look over his bifocals.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
I'm still a Montgomery but you have
to accept that I'm Lina Belle first
and foremost.
(pause)
We've had this discussion before.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Yes, I've grown tiresome of it.

Lina looks intently at her father.

LINA BELLE
I still miss mother. I always will.
I'll see her again once I take my
last breath. Until then, I can't
let her ghost dictate my life.
(pause)
I want something more in life. I
don't know what it is yet but I'm
searching for it.

Dr. Montgomery's face grimaces.

DR. MONTGOMERY
It's a cruel world with cruel
people in it. Cruel people that
took your mother from you and I.

LINA BELLE
I know. I was there.
(pause)
But now I'm here.

An uncomfortable pause lingers between father and daughter.

Dr. Montgomery returns to looking at his schematics.

DR. MONTGOMERY
You are dismissed, Miss Montgomery.

Lina negatively shakes her head and exits her father's study.

Dr. Montgomery breaks his attention away from his schematics. He looks over to the framed photo of his late wife, CHARLOTTE MONTGOMERY.

His hands caress and grab his wife's framed photo. Dr. Montgomery rises from his seat with framed photo in hand. He walks over to a wooden cabinet and stares at it.

Dr. Montgomery unlatches the cabinet and opens it to reveal small brass urns with engraved names upon them. He stares at the urns in depression.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
I'm getting closer.

He looks at his wife's framed photo resting in his hand.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Soon. Soon, I'll make this all
right, my love.

Dr. Montgomery looks back at the urns within the cabinet.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
I'll bring you all justice.

Dr. Montgomery closes the cabinet.

INT. WOLF ENCLOSURE - DAY

Dante and Dr. Montgomery walk upon a stone path toward the wolf enclosure's center.

DR. MONTGOMERY
From your previous assignments,
I've seen your interest in the
Canis Lupus species.

Lina stands atop a small mountainous formation amongst the lush shrubbery. Water streaks down the textured rocks into a small watering hole. She looks toward a cavern.

The lone wolf emerges from the shadowy cavern and approaches Lina.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
I figured your initial endeavor
would be to tend to the wolf
enclosure.

Dante looks up at Lina as she kneels and pets the lone wolf.

DANTE
(smiling)
Thank you, Dr. Montgomery.

CUT TO:

INT. WOLF ENCLOSURE - LATER

Dante approaches Lina and the lone wolf.

DANTE
Greetings and salutations, Lina
Belle.

Knelt, Lina pets the lone wolf as she looks to Dante.

LINA BELLE
(smiling)
Hi, Dante.

DANTE
Where'd you find him?

LINA BELLE
I found him as a cub at the edge of
the forest near Rose Bloom Village.
It seemed he'd wandered away from
his pack.

DANTE
Rose Bloom Village. That's where
the slums are.

LINA BELLE
Mhm. I managed to save him from
being run over.

Those words reverberate within Dante. He stands before Lina and the lone wolf.

DANTE

And what's this gorgeous wolf's name?

LINA BELLE

He doesn't have a name. I never decided on one. He's our lone wolf at the moment.

DANTE

Not entirely bad. Why taint a beautiful animal with a human christening? Better to remain nameless as nature intended.

Lina scoffs with a smirk.

DANTE (CONT'D)

It's their nature and instinct to survive. Ours is much more selfish. We're more savage than animals.

LINA BELLE

It's no wonder my father likes you. You sound just like him.

Lina gives Dante a condescending look.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)

My father has mentioned you a lot in the past.

(sarcastically)

It's been my pleasure to meet the legend known as Dante Talbot.

(pause)

From what he's told me, I admire your love for animals but your faith in people is something to be desired.

DANTE

Oh, there's no love loss between myself and humanity. These poor creatures must be saved from us.

Lina rises to her feet.

LINA BELLE

Are you that misanthropic?

DANTE

To some extent, yes. That's possibly the main attribute I admire about animals, they're honest.

LINA BELLE

Their honesty?

DANTE

Yes, their honesty. I've never had a wolf steal my money and help me look for it. People do that.

Lina raises her eyebrows with a sense of understanding.

DANTE (CONT'D)

Animals don't lie. People do that. Animals don't deceive. People do that.

Lina forces a smile.

LINA BELLE

Well, people do many things, sometimes even good things.

(pause)

I'm sure that surprises you.

Disdain grows on Dante's face.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Dante, but you can't hold all of humanity responsible for the selfish acts of a few people. That's not logical.

DANTE

I can and I do. People are barbaric and cruel. Aforementioned, animals are honest.

(attempts to pet the wolf)

They either like you or they don't.

The lone wolf snarls, rises, and pushes Dante to the ground with its paws. Lina jerks the lone wolf back by the hair on his neck.

LINA BELLE

(to the lone wolf)

Hey!

The lone wolf eases down and loyally sits beside Lina.

Lina turns her attention from the wolf to Dante.
Embarrassment is written all over his face.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
I don't think he likes you.

Dante looks up at Lina, makes eye contact for a split second,
and looks back at the lone wolf. Its icy glare burns through
Dante as they lock eyes.

INT. RATTLESNAKE ENCLOSURE - DAY

A dead rat rests upon a dry, sand terrain. A rattlesnake
slithers and emerges above the deceased rat. It unhinges its
jaw to begin its feast.

A forked wooden stick suddenly jets atop the base of its
neck, trapping it.

Dr. Montgomery latches onto the base of the rattlesnake's
neck. He raises and takes him over to a steel bucket. He
presses upon its head, baring its fangs.

Dr. Montgomery places the rattlesnake's head upon the lip of
the bucket. Venom droplets spill out from the rattlesnake's
fangs.

DR. MONTGOMERY
(to the rattlesnake)
You're precious, Rupert.

The venom continues to drain into the steel bucket. Dr.
Montgomery takes the rattlesnake away. He pets the
rattlesnake's head as it's tightly restrained. Dr. Montgomery
turns around and hands the rattlesnake to Herbert.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Thank you, Herbert.

Herbert returns the rattlesnake beneath the rocks within the
enclosure.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Any update on the specimen?

Herbert looks up at Dr. Montgomery with a defeated look. He
negatively shakes his head.

A frigid look dawns upon Dr. Montgomery's face. He turns and
marches toward the enclosure exit. Herbert follows.

Dr. Montgomery pushes the enclosure doors open and exits.

INT. MONTGOMERY MANOR - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Montgomery approaches a black velvet curtain. He pulls the curtain back to reveal a massive hammered brass door behind it. An iron lock hangs upon the door. A thick, oak jamb rests across the door.

Dr. Montgomery retrieves a key from his pocket and unlocks the brass door's lock. He steps aside. Herbert arrives and lifts the heavy oak jamb off the door. Dr. Montgomery looks on with determination.

CUT TO:

INT. LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

The brass door opens, Dr. Montgomery enters with Herbert behind him. Herbert locks and barricades the door behind them as Dr. Montgomery marches forward.

An enormous, scorched, metallic machine rests at the center of the laboratory. Conduits run from the machine and into two cast-iron tables before it. The two scorched tables rest side by side, covered by a blood-stained white sheet. A human-sized lump is sprawled beneath the sheet. Life-sustaining tubes and wires trail out from beneath the sheet.

An enormous white sheet covers an immense contraption upon a platform in laboratory.

Bloodied, crude medical tools dangle off hooks upon the walls. Chemical vials and scientific instruments litter sturdy oak tables around the laboratory.

Dr. Montgomery walks past the machine to his workstation. He retrieves a pair of gloves, and puts them on. He walks over to the tables and lifts the sheet slightly.

A dead humanoid alligator lies upon the connected tables. With its mouth agape, its body is scorched, tattered, and bloodied. He rests the sheet over the corpse's breasts. Dr. Montgomery bows his head in defeat.

DR. MONTGOMERY

(to the corpse)

Forgive me, Alondra.

(looking up)

I'll get this right soon. I'm close. So very close to saving this world.

HERBERT

Should Garrett and I search the
slums for another test subject?

DR. MONTGOMERY

Please.

Dr. Montgomery's eyes well up with tears. He caresses the
corpse's face. His fingers stroll across the branded
Montgomery crest upon the alligator hide.

HERBERT

I'll start the cremator and ready
an urn.

Tears stream down Dr. Montgomery's cheeks.

DR. MONTGOMERY

Thank you, Herbert.

(pause)

Place Alondra's remains with the
others. None of my animals will be
forgotten. Never.

With a heavy heart, Dr. Montgomery places the sheet back upon
the failed fused specimen.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. MONTGOMERY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pale moonlight gleams through enormous windows connected to
Dr. Montgomery's second floor terrace.

The moonlight spills upon Dr. Montgomery sitting upon his
king-sized bed. His back is pressed against its lavish wooden
headboard.

Defeated and frustrated Dr. Montgomery pinches the bridge of
his nose. His free hand clasps onto a wine glass. He takes a
gulp and looks at the vacant space by his side.

Dr. Montgomery downs the rest of his wine, reaches to his
nightstand and puts down his glass.

BEGIN NIGHTMARE:

He sits back in bed to discover:

CHARLOTTE MONTGOMERY, 40s, his deceased wife now lying in bed
with him.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Charlotte.

Dr. Montgomery's eyes seem to twinkle as they well.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
I've missed you so.

Dr. Montgomery desperately embraces and kisses his wife.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
I love you.

Dr. Montgomery catches sight of a shadowy figure outside of his window.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
No.

The shadowy figure stands stock still and stares through the window.

Dr. Montgomery's grip tightens on his wife.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
No! Stay away from her!

Charlotte looks toward the shadowy figure as it draws closer to the window. Tears stream out of her eyes.

BOOMING SLAMS

The Montgomerys look toward the bedroom door.

The bedroom door begins to quake. Knife blades puncture through the bedroom door and stab at the thick wood.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Stay away!

The Montgomerys look toward the bedroom window.

Moonlight cascades upon the shadowy figure to reveal it to be The Grim Reaper. Pale, angelic wings sprout from The Grim Reaper's back as he holds his scythe.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Leave us be!

Wielding knives, corpse-like poachers break through the bedroom door. The Grim Reaper shatters through the bedroom window.

In desperation and fright, the couple tightly hold onto each other as supernatural forces approach them from both sides.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)

I love her!

GUN COCKING SOUND

Dr. Montgomery looks up to the ceiling. Through a broken hole in the ceiling, he catches sight of another corpse-like poacher.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)

No!

The corpse-like poacher stands above The Montgomerys and aims his revolver at them.

Dr. Montgomery shields Charlotte with his body.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)

No!

The corpse-like poacher unleashes a deafening shriek.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK

GUNSHOT

DR. MONTGOMERY (V.O.)

(crying)

No!

DR. MONTGOMERY CRIES

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Dr. Montgomery weeps as he holds onto Charlotte's cadaver. The woodland creatures hear his cries and approach the mourning widower. They seem to mourn along with him. Dr. Montgomery looks at the animals as a smile dawns upon his tear soaked face.

Dr. Montgomery looks across the forest. His eyes fall upon Dante Talbot and his daughter, Lina Belle Montgomery, petting a lone wolf. A spark glimmers in Dr. Montgomery's eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. WOLF ENCLOSURE BALCONY - DAY

Dr. Montgomery looks down at the wolf enclosure. With a bead sweated brow and bloodshot eyes, Dr. Montgomery focuses upon Dante and Lina Belle tending to the lone wolf below.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Dante and the lone wolf are tied to the altar. Dr. Montgomery stitches Dante and the lone wolf's body parts together. He then crucifies Dante's hybrid body and stakes it before the altar.

Dante screams and squirms in agony. Dr. Montgomery is covered in blood as he stands before the altar. He raises his arms in victorious grace.

END NIGHTMARE.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. MONTGOMERY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dr. Montgomery awakens from his lucid dream. He rises from his bed and approaches his bedroom window. He looks out his bedroom window and catches sight of the half moon burning in the night sky. He stares frigidly as the sanity seems to drain from his eyes.

EXT. MONTGOMERY MANOR - NIGHT

The half moon looms over the Montgomery Manor grounds across the night sky.

FADE IN:

EXT. MONTGOMERY MANOR - DAY

As time passes, the tangerine sun replaces the half moon across the azure morning sky.

At the bottom of the manor steps, Lina stands beside her horse, Dawn, and feeds her sugar cubes.

A stagecoach approaches and parks. Dante descends from the stagecoach and approaches Lina.

They exchange smiles. Lina pets Dawn.

DANTE
Good morning, Lina Belle.

LINA BELLE
Good morning, Dante.

DANTE
I'm ready for whatever you desire
from me today.

Lina nods, ceases from petting Dawn, and contemplates.

LINA BELLE
Ah, yes! Follow me.

Lina walks up the manor steps. Dante follows.

CUT TO:

INT. MONTGOMERY MANOR - HALLWAY - DAY

Lina and Dante walk down the hallway.

DANTE
Maybe your lone wolf will warm up
to me one day.

LINA BELLE
It all depends on him.

DANTE
And me. Trust is earned with the
right amount of effort.

LINA BELLE
True. Very true in more ways than
one.

They arrive at Lina's bedroom door.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
I apologize for this surprise,
Dante. We just need to quickly run
to the market for supplies. I hope
this isn't a burden?

DANTE
Not at all. I understand.

Lina opens the door.

INT. LINA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lina enters her bedroom. Dante stands within the doorway. She looks back at Dante.

LINA BELLE
Need not fear, Dante. It's never
trespassing, if you're welcome.

Dante crosses the doorway and enters Lina's bedroom. He looks around at her large, lavish quarters. Framed paintings of beautiful birds are hung upon the walls. A grand piano rests at the center of her room. A layer of dust cakes it.

Lina approaches her vanity table set and stool. She opens and rummages through her drawer.

Dante approaches a nearby desk. An inkwell and quill rest near handwritten musical sheets upon her desk. A dusty metronome stands beside it all.

DANTE
I take it you adore music.

Lina extracts dollar notes from her drawer.

LINA BELLE
(counting the bills)
You could say that.
(jokingly)
I mean music does soothe the savage
beast.

Dante spots a music box seated upon Lina's desk. His sight focuses upon it.

Lina places her currency within her purse and walks toward Dante.

DANTE
Your music box is...cute.

LINA BELLE
(hanging the purse upon
her shoulder)
I wish the story attached to it
was.

With a sorrowful look, Dante locks eyes with Lina.

DANTE
I'm sorry.

LINA BELLE

It's okay. It's in the past now.
There's always new memories to
make.

DANTE

Does it work?

Lina chuckles.

LINA BELLE

(smiling)

Of course. I'm making new memories
everyday. You should try it
sometime.

Dante smirks.

DANTE

I meant the music box.

Lina laughs.

LINA BELLE

Oh, that. Not anymore. It was
broken during a fall. I just
haven't had the heart to get rid of
it.

(pause)

It was given to me by my mother.

DANTE

Sentimental value.

LINA BELLE

Oh, yes. Sometimes it's worth more
than gold and can cost you as much
personally.

Dante looks over at the musical sheets.

DANTE

You write your own music?

LINA BELLE

Yes, in my spare time. I haven't
really had that in a while.

(pause)

Ready for the market?

DANTE

You might be onto something there,
Lina Belle.

(MORE)

DANTE (CONT'D)

That could be something that makes
you even more special than what you
already are.

Lina blushes with a smile as Dante locks eyes with her.

LINA BELLE

(shrugging)

It's possible. Anything really is
but right now we're onto the
market, Prince Charming.

Lina walks past Dante and exits. Dante follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - DAY

Dante and Lina walk amongst the pedestrians, customers, and
street vendors. Chattering conversations bellow to and fro
across the market square.

Lina approaches a poultry merchant, VANESSA EVANS, 50s, and
her booth. Dante follows.

VANESSA

Lina Belle, my dear!

LINA BELLE

(beaming a smile)

Mrs. Evans!

Dante stands beside Lina while Vanessa gleefully greets her.

VANESSA

How are you? How's the good doctor?

Dante looks across the street and notices a musical store,
HART OF MUSIC. A piano rests behind the display window.
Dante's eyes peer and focus to a revolving rack of music
boxes upon the piano's lid.

LINA BELLE

My father and I are doing well.
Buried in work as usual.

Vanessa looks over at Dante.

VANESSA

Who's your handsome gentleman here?

LINA BELLE

This is Dante.

Lina turns to Dante, who is still fixated upon the musical display window. She tugs at Dante's arm.

Dante's focus is broken as he looks back at Lina.

DANTE

Oh, my apologies. I am Dante
Talbot, Madam Evans.

Vanessa presents her hand to Dante. He takes Vanessa's hand and kisses it. Lina smiles.

LINA BELLE

Dante's one of my father's
students. Dare I say, his best
student.

Dante shies away.

DANTE

Oh, Lina, please.

LINA BELLE

(smiling)
What, Dante? It's no exaggeration.
(to Vanessa)
Dante is also lending a helping
hand at the manor.

Dante slowly glances back at Hart of Music's display window and focuses on the revolving music box rack.

VANESSA

Learning a lot, my dearest Dante?

Dante looks back at Vanessa.

DANTE

(smiling)
You could say that. Definitely.

Dante looks back at Lina.

EXT. MONTGOMERY MANOR - LATER

With supplies in hand, Lina and Dante approach the manor steps.

LINA BELLE

Thank you for accompanying me to
the market today, Dante. I
appreciate it.

They begin their ascent up the manor steps.

DANTE
You're very much welcome, Lina
Belle. I enjoyed myself.

Lina stops in her tracks and turns to look at Dante with her mouth agape.

LINA BELLE
(sarcastically)
I'm shocked.

Dante shakes his head with a smirk. Lina returns to walking up the steps.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
I had no idea it was possible for
you to have fun around people --

Lina slips on one of the steps, drops her supplies, and begins to collapse.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
Ah!

In a rush, Dante drops his supplies and catches Lina in his arms.

Dante and Lina hold onto each other tightly and are face to face. They share a moment and look into each other's brown eyes that resemble pools of honey.

Dante lifts and straightens Lina onto her feet. They adjust their garments. Lina clears her throat as Dante shyly bows and lifts his head.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
Thank you.

DANTE
Aforementioned, you're very much
welcome.

INT. WOLF ENCLOSURE - LATER

Dante and Lina watch the lone wolf eating meat from his steel bowl. A wooden bucket hangs off of Lina's fingers.

DANTE
Is there anything special to his
diet?

LINA BELLE
Beef, sometimes chicken or even
fish.

DANTE
Isn't it ironic or sad, that we're
feeding animals to other animals in
the name of conservation?

The lone wolf continues to eat.

LINA BELLE
It can be.
(pause)
I think of it this way. It's the
wheel of existence. We need to help
keep it turning. Nothing more,
nothing less.

The lone wolf finishes eating and approaches Lina. He nuzzles into Lina's hand with his nose. Lina kindly pets and caresses him. The lone wolf glares at Dante for a moment.

DANTE
Nothing more, nothing less.

Dug into the boulder of the enclosure, the lone wolf turns away and walks toward his den.

LINA BELLE
Let's go.

Lina follows the lone wolf.

DANTE
Where?

Lina grabs Dante's hand and leads him toward the wolf's den. Lina crouches and enters the wolf's den. Dante stands at the den entrance.

DANTE (CONT'D)
Won't the wolf take this as
trespassing?

Dante crouches and looks into the dark gaping void of the wolf den.

INT. WOLF DEN - CONTINUOUS

Dante enters.

DANTE

Lina?

His eyes discover Lina sitting with the wolf across her lap.

LINA BELLE

(petting the wolf)

It's never trespassing, if you're welcome.

Dante sits down across Lina and the wolf.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)

I built this den for him. He actually helped a bit.

DANTE

He must consider you family now.

The lone wolf's eyes slowly blink as Lina continues petting him.

DANTE (CONT'D)

Wolves inhabit dens for safety and familiarity.

LINA BELLE

(chuckles)

You don't always have to speak like some sage or a university textbook, Dante. You're just with me.

Lina looks down at the resting wolf in her lap.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)

I've raised this boy since he was a pup. I consider him family. He probably considers me the same.

DANTE

Possibly the best family anyone could ask for. Better than the best.

Lina looks up to Dante with a stern look.

LINA BELLE

Something buried deep makes you say things like that. I'd like to know what it is.

DANTE

I doubt that.

LINA BELLE

Try me.

Dante and Lina lock eyes for a moment.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)

Well, if you're too shy, I'll go first.

CUT TO:

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. AFRICAN SAVANNA - DAY

Enormous elephants graze across the lush savanna. CREIGHTON MONTGOMERY, 40s, along with his wife, CHARLOTTE MONTGOMERY, 40s, tend to the elephants.

LINA BELLE (V.O.)

The Montgomery name has been synonymous with animal conservation. At that time, I just knew it was my last name.

LINA BELLE MONTGOMERY, 7, stands between her parents, holding their hands. Elephants roam across the savanna freely.

LINA BELLE (V.O.)

The ivory trade made the African elephant a prime target for poaching.

A small hut stands sturdy upon the savanna and near the Montgomery family.

GUNSHOT

CUT TO:

EXT. AFRICAN SAVANNA - DAY

A bullet shreds into the bark of a tree. Charlotte helps Lina aim a small pistol. Lina squeezes the trigger.

GUNSHOT

Another bullet sheers into the bark of the tree. Creighton looks over his wife and daughter.

MUSIC UP: HUSH LITTLE BABY MUSIC BOX

INT. HUT - NIGHT

Creighton and Charlotte lie in bed together.

Lina lies in her own bed across from her parents. Beside Lina's bed, a pocket-sized music box slowly spins. The melody to 'Hush Little Baby' escapes from its case.

GUNSHOTS

ELEPHANT CRIES

The vicious noises awaken Creighton and Charlotte.

Creighton quickly rises, runs to his gun cabinet, and unlocks it. Charlotte stands up from bed as Creighton grabs a pair of rifles. He hands one over to Charlotte. They lock and load their rifles.

LINA BELLE (V.O.)
The Montgomerys would protect
animals to the death.

Lina slowly awakens from her slumber. Her father rushes past her and toward the hut door.

Charlotte follows suit until she locks eyes with Lina. She stops in her tracks and kneels before her daughter. They embrace. Charlotte kisses her daughter's forehead.

GUNSHOTS

Charlotte rises to her feet and rushes out the hut door.

Lina stands atop her bed and looks out the hut window.

Her motions quake the music box. It falls upon the ground and breaks.

END MUSIC

Lina's eyes fall upon a scene of violence.

EXT. AFRICAN SAVANNA - CONTINUOUS

An elephant lies upon the grass, bleeding. A POACHER, 30s, saws the elephant's tusks with a blade. A bullet rips through the poacher's head. He collapses to the ground as Charlotte shoots him again for good measure.

With machete in hand, POACHER #2, 30s, lunges upon Charlotte and drags her to the ground. He mounts her until a bullet rips through his chest.

Creighton aims his rifle at the final pair of POACHERS, 30s, attacking another elephant. His bullets pierce Poacher #3 but miss Poacher #4.

The remaining poacher aims his revolver at Creighton. He fires. A bullet shreds into Creighton's shoulder.

Creighton falls as the final poacher rushes over. He struggles to lift his rifle. The poacher kicks away Creighton's rifle and aims his revolver at Creighton's head.

A bullet grazes the poacher's ear. As his ear streams blood, he turns around. He spots Charlotte aiming her rifle at him from beneath the corpse.

The final poacher points his revolver at Charlotte and fires.

INT. HUT - CONTINUOUS

Lina's eyes widen as she witnesses her mother being shot.

LINA BELLE (V.O.)
My mother, Charlotte, did just
that.

EXT. AFRICAN SAVANNA - CONTINUOUS

The poacher returns his aim at Creighton.

GUNSHOT

The poacher looks up to discover Lina at the doorway of the hut with pistol in hand. He aims his revolver at little Lina.

Suddenly, a charging elephant rams into the poacher. The poacher's revolver flies into the grass. The rampaging elephant tramples the poacher with its heavy feet.

With a broken body, the poacher looks up before the elephant stomps upon his head with its massive foot.

Creighton rises and runs over to Charlotte. He cradles her warm, dead body. He weeps.

CREIGHTON'S AGONIZING CRIES

The elephant stomps across the terrain and stands beside the Montgomerys.

From across the savanna, elephants walk toward the crying Creighton. They all stand beside the Montgomerys with saddened demeanors.

Tears stream out of Lina's eyes as she looks at the morbid scene beyond the doorway.

LINA BELLE (V.O.)
The animals seemed to mourn my mother. My father took that to heart.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. WOLF DEN - DAY

Lina pets the wolf in her lap and looks back to Dante.

LINA BELLE
So did I.

A combination of sadness and anger battle upon Dante's face.

DANTE
I'm so sorry about your mother. She's a hero. That should've never happened to your family.
(pause)
I can't stand people that hunt animals. If I had to choose, I'd rather hunt people.

LINA BELLE
(taken back)
Dante.

DANTE
It's true. At least people know what's coming. The poor, innocent animals don't.

Lina negatively shakes her head.

DANTE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry Lina but how can you have faith in humanity after witnessing that?

LINA BELLE
If I don't let my mother rest in peace, I'll never find mine.

DANTE
I don't get it.

LINA BELLE

If I dine on pure misery, I'll
never have my fill of happiness.

(pause)

It's much easier said than done, I
understand, Dante.

Dante and Lina lock eyes as silence hovers between them for a moment.

DANTE

(breaking the silence)

Now look who sounds like a
university textbook.

Lina chuckles.

LINA BELLE

Still too shy to share anything?

Dante looks around in uncertainty. He looks at Lina and remains silent.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)

(smiling)

This is going to be a long quarter.

DOOR SLAMS

CUT TO:

INT. DANTE'S LOFT - NIGHT

With a heavy mind, Dante locks his loft door behind him. He stands and shuts his eyes for a moment. Lina's words seem to hover within his mind.

CUT TO:

INT. DANTE'S LOFT - LATER

Dante opens his loft window as the crow stands upon the window sill. Sebastian sleeps at the foot of Dante's bed. The crow glides onto Dante's bed, awakening Sebastian. The lazy cat looks at the crow for a moment and returns to his slumber.

The mice feast on wafers upon Dante's desk. Dante grabs a mouse, sits atop his bed, and pets it.

Dante looks around at his animal friends.

DANTE

If I dine on pure misery, I'll
never have my fill of happiness.
(to the animals)
Is it true? Is she right?

Dante stares at the keyhole of his doorknob. Light slowly seeps through the keyhole.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - DAY

Dante stands before the store display window of Hart of Music. His eyes focus on the revolving rack of music boxes.

He looks back across the street and notices Vanessa behind her vendor's booth. Vanessa grins and nods at Dante.

Dante smirks and waves at Vanessa. He approaches the entrance of Hart of Music and opens the door.

ENTRY DOORBELL RINGS

Dante enters the musical shop.

CUT TO:

INT. FOX ENCLOSURE - DAY

Lina and Dante tend to the fox enclosure. A silence seems to loom between them. Dante shovels shrubbery aside. Foxes excitedly trot around him. He smiles at them. Lina places a bowl of food in the vacant space made by Dante.

Dante stakes his shovel into the ground.

DANTE

I grew up in a roaming carnival.

Dante breaks the silence with his statement. Lina looks up at Dante, astonished.

LINA BELLE

(smiling)
Only took you three weeks to break
your vow of shyness. I'm impressed.

Dante shies away with a smirk.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)

What was the carnival like?

DANTE

Different. Abnormal, looking back at it.

LINA BELLE

What makes you say that?

DANTE

The carnival freaks were my only family. My mother was a belly dancer, my aunt was The Bearded Woman, and I was the Wolf-Boy. We followed wherever the money was around the state.

LINA BELLE

And your father?

DANTE

What father.

A pregnant pause looms between them.

DANTE (CONT'D)

I saw people laugh at my aunt. I saw drunkards abuse my mother relentlessly.

Dante's eyes well up as he zones into a depressive trance.

DANTE (CONT'D)

I had to fight off grown men in defense of her when I was a child. I remember tasting my own blood and nursing my own wounds. The only person by my side was my Wolf.

(pause)

The sad fact is all that became normalcy for me.

LINA BELLE

Of course it did because when you're a child you don't know any better. You were just a baby.

Dante wipes away tears. Lina approaches Dante.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)

Dante, you should be proud of how far you've come.

Dante negatively shakes his head.

DANTE
I want to go further.

LINA BELLE
You shall. It's plain as day.

Dante looks into Lina's eyes.

DANTE
A child shouldn't have been exposed
to that degree of abuse and
exploitation.
(pause)
I think that's why I retreated from
people.

LINA BELLE
Sounds like you found safety in
loneliness.

DANTE
Yeah.

LINA BELLE
I'm sorry, Dante.

DANTE
I'm not always alone. I have
friends.

LINA BELLE
Am I one of them?

Dante takes a moment and shrugs.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
Who are your friends?

A small smile dawns upon Dante's face as he looks at Lina.

CUT TO:

INT. DANTE'S LOFT - DAY

Sebastian loudly purrs as Lina's hands glide across his velvety fur. Lina sits atop Dante's bed with Sebastian upon her lap.

Dante sits at his desk with his mice atop it. The crow, perched upon the iron bed railing, looks at Lina with a sense of mystery.

Lina looks at Dante as she continues petting Sebastian.

LINA BELLE

(joyously)

You have your own menagerie here. I love it!

DANTE

They're more than a menagerie. Aforementioned, they're my friends.

LINA BELLE

(with a smirk)

Ha, aforementioned. There it is again. I love your university textbook vocabulary, Dante.

(laughingly)

It's grown on me.

Lina scratches Sebastian's chin. The pitch black cat enjoys it. Lina looks at the mice upon Dante's desk.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)

Has he ever attacked them?

(looking to the crow)

Or him?

Dante turns toward Lina.

DANTE

Sebastian, never. I guess he knows better.

LINA BELLE

(to Dante)

Because of you.

DANTE

I doubt that.

Dante rises from his seat and heads toward his loft window. The crow tightropes across the bed rail, trailing Dante. Lina's eyes follow Dante.

LINA BELLE

You really should give yourself more credit.

Dante stares out his loft window.

DANTE

Please, Lina Belle. I'm not you.

LINA BELLE

What do you mean?

DANTE

(turning around)

You're remarkable. You've been through hell and came out the flames...an optimist. I don't know how you can find any positivity from the life you've lived.

A determined look dawns upon Lina's face. She picks up and gently places Sebastian on the bed. Lina slides off the bed and onto her feet. She approaches Dante.

LINA BELLE

There's much more to life than what you see. You really need to learn that.

Lina draws closer to Dante.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)

If you dwell on the past in hopes for the future, you'll never appreciate anything in the present. You have to fight to be happy in the moment.

DANTE

I've been surrounded by so much misery and death that happiness is uncomfortable.

LINA BELLE

Death is inevitable. We value life because it ends.

(pause)

That's what makes us human. I believe that all life should be valued. If we don't, we truly become inhuman.

(pause)

Aforementioned, there's much more to life than what you see.

They stand across from each other and lock eyes for a moment.

DANTE

I want to show you something.

Dante turns around and opens his loft window.

LINA BELLE

What?

Dante edges his way through his loft window and onto the fire escape. His hand reaches through the window and toward Lina.

Lina takes a moment before she takes Dante's hand.

Dante guides Lina through the window and onto...

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

Hand in hand, Dante escorts Lina up the fire escape and onto...

EXT. APARTMENT ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

The sun slowly sets as Dante ushers Lina across the rooftop. Dante stops in his tracks and grabs a burlap bag beneath a wooden crate. Dante extracts birdseed peanut mix from the bag.

DANTE

Here.

Lina cups her hands as Dante pours birdseed and peanuts into Lina's hands. Lina smiles as she tosses the birdseed peanut mix across the rooftop.

As Lina feeds the birds, Dante looks over at the edge of the brick rooftop. A music box, an inkwell, quill and a wicker basket of music sheets rest upon the lip of the brick rooftop railing. Dante grabs the music box and winds it up.

MUSIC UP: HUSH LITTLE BABY MUSIC BOX

A loft of pigeons litter the rooftop. Joyously, Lina continues spreading the birdseed peanut mix across the rooftop. Dante beams a smile at her.

While the pigeons feast, Lina stops in her tracks as she hears the music box. Dante approaches her. Lina turns around to face him.

DANTE (CONT'D)

I need to let myself be happy.

Dante removes his red rock necklace and clips it around Lina's neck.

DANTE (CONT'D)

I need to make new memories now.

They stand inches from each other and affectionately lock eyes. As the setting sun creates a tangerine halo across the sky, Dante and Lina kiss.

END MUSIC

EXT. NEW YORK SLUMS - NIGHT

Fog eerily lingers across the slums like dense specters. Dimly candlelit street lamps illuminate pockets of the sooty streets in the dark early morning hours. The candlelight shimmers off a pair of silver bracelets.

Tasha sweeps a grimy, littered, and wet street with a push-broom. She pushes the moist debris, dirt, and water toward an alley gutter.

She straightens her back and looks toward the alley.

Down the alley, Herbert stands stock still with his eyes fixated on Tasha.

Herbert's glare startles Tasha.

TASHA

Hello?!

Herbert has no response and continues staring at Tasha.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(under her breath)

Oh no.

Garrett rushes behind Tasha and viciously seizes her.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Help! Someone! No! No! Help!

Herbert joins Garrett in apprehending Tasha.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Get off me! Help! No! No!

Garrett covers her mouth with a rag, muffling her cries. He ties the rag taut. Tasha looks up at the men. Herbert covers her head with a burlap sack, blinding her.

CUT TO:

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Tasha awakens gagged and strapped to an iron table with only a white sheet covering her naked body. Her eyes dart around the laboratory fearfully. She spots the intimidating medical instruments, vials, and chemicals.

With Tasha's bracelets upon his wrists, Herbert removes the sheet from the bulky contraption revealing an enormous glass dome outlined in iron rods.

Tears of fright stream out of Tasha's eyes. She squirms as muffled cries exit her gagged mouth.

CUT TO:

INT. WOLF ENCLOSURE - NIGHT

Dante and Lina walk around in search of the lone wolf. Lina carries a bucket of beef in her hand.

LINA BELLE
Here, boy. Where are you?

DANTE
I wonder where he is.

Lina and Dante peer into the wolf den entrance. Lina clicks her tongue and whistles.

LINA BELLE
Come here, boy.

Dante and Lina look around the enclosure.

DANTE
Strange. Very strange.

Lina catches sight of Herbert upon the enclosure balcony above.

LINA BELLE
Herbert!

Herbert looks down at the enclosure.

HERBERT
Yes, Miss Montgomery?

LINA BELLE
Do you know anything about our wolf missing?

Dante takes a few steps forward and focuses on Herbert.

HERBERT

I believe Garrett took him in for
medical tests. He was not well.

Shock quietly surges through Dante when he recognizes his
mother's bracelets on Herbert's wrists.

LINA BELLE

I didn't see anything wrong with
him.

(to Dante)

Did you, Dante?

Dante breaks away from his focus.

DANTE

No.

HERBERT

I'm sorry, Miss Montgomery. That's
all I know.

Herbert walks away. Dante approaches Lina.

DANTE

We have to find, Garrett.
Something's wrong.

LINA BELLE

Yeah, very wrong.

CUT TO:

INT. MONTGOMERY MANOR - HALLWAY

Subdued, muzzled, and bound, the lone wolf lies within a
moving wheelbarrow.

His eyes peer up to see Garrett pushing the wheelbarrow.

As Garrett strolls down the hallway, Lina and Dante
cautiously pursue him from a distance.

Garrett parks the wheelbarrow before the black curtain. He
peels the curtain away to reveal the massive hammered brass
door. He lifts the oak jamb and unlocks the iron lock.

Dante wants to rush toward Garrett. Lina holds Dante back.

Garrett picks up the lone wolf out from the wheelbarrow and
carries it in his arms.

LINA BELLE

(quietly)

Dante, we can't just rush in like lunatics.

DANTE

I think my mother's in danger, Lina Belle.

LINA BELLE

Your mother? What? How?

Dante moves Lina aside and darts down the hallway. He tackles Garrett from behind. They along with the wolf tumble into...

INT. LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

The subdued, muzzled, and bound wolf slams onto the ground. Dante and Garrett collapse onto the ground.

The sudden commotion catches Dr. Montgomery's attention from his podium near the glass dome.

Herbert pauses from unlatching Tasha from the iron table.

Dante latches onto him and buries his fist into Garrett's face.

DR. MONTGOMERY

Get him out of here!

Lina enters the laboratory.

LINA BELLE

Father!?

Dr. Montgomery fervidly looks at his daughter.

Dante continues to pummel Garrett. Herbert hooks Dante's arms from behind. Garrett rises and backhands Dante.

DR. MONTGOMERY

Get them out of here, damn it!
Herbert! Garrett!

Dante kicks Garrett in the groin. Garrett falls to his knees. Dante bashes Herbert's nose with the back of his head.

In retaliation, Herbert throws Dante into the iron table beside his mother. Dante rises from the ground and holds onto his mother.

DANTE

Mom!

Gagged and restrained, Tasha cries and squirms.

DANTE (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, mom!

Dante quickly unlatches his mother from the iron table. In a weakened state, Tasha crumples to the ground. Dante kneels to console his mother.

Herbert emerges from behind Dante and bashes the back of Dante's head. He latches onto Dante's shirt and drags him toward Dr. Montgomery.

LINA BELLE

Father, what the hell is this?!

Garrett swarms and restrains Lina.

DR. MONTGOMERY

This is my duty, little girl! These animals were here before us. I need to make sure they're here with us and after us!

LINA BELLE

Father, you're not God!

Dr. Montgomery stomps away from his podium.

DR. MONTGOMERY

No! I don't want to be God! I want to defeat God!

Lina's eyes bulge in shock.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)

Lay waste to his fault! Eradicate the mistake he made in creating us! Who took the life of your mother, my beloved?!

Lina wrestles in Garrett's clutches.

LINA BELLE

You're mutilating nature! Something you swore to protect! You're perverting it, father!

Blood seeps out of Dante's temple, mouth, and nose as he looks up at Dr. Montgomery.

DR. MONTGOMERY
 Humanity and nature must be one!
 Only then can there be serenity in
 coexistence! I'm saving us all.

Dante spits blood at Dr. Montgomery.

DANTE
 My condolences to your wife but
 you're not saving anything.

Dante looks over to Lina.

DANTE (CONT'D)
 There are good people in this
 world.

Lina's eyes well up. Dante looks back to Dr. Montgomery.

DANTE (CONT'D)
 You're dining on misery. Your sense
 of justice is twisted, Creighton.
 You've truly gone mad.

Dr. Montgomery walks over to Dante, grasps his hair, and
 pulls his head up. They violently lock eyes.

DR. MONTGOMERY
 I prefer to be addressed as Dr.
 Montgomery.
 (pause)
 I'm disappointed in you, my star
 pupil. You of all people should
 understand my dream.
 (pause)
 Empathy has tamed you.

Dr. Montgomery angrily releases his grip on Dante's hair.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
 You were nearly a mirror image of
 me, my boy.

Dr. Montgomery looks at Herbert and nods. Herbert viciously
 lifts up Dante from the ground.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
 And you of all people will
 understand your sacrifice!

Herbert punches Dante in the stomach and pushes him into the
 glass dome. Dante falls to the ground.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Remember this!

Dr. Montgomery approaches and stands behind his control podium.

LINA BELLE
Father! No!

Garrett covers Lina's mouth with his hand.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Nature is one with us! We are one
with nature!

Herbert approaches the subdued, muzzled, and bound wolf on the ground. In a last defensive effort, Tasha lunges at Herbert and claws at his eyes.

Herbert backhands Tasha to the ground and continues toward the lone wolf.

Dr. Montgomery pulls levers from behind his podium. Herbert lifts and carries the wolf toward the glass dome.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
How natural is humanity?! How
humane is nature?!

INT. GLASS DOME - CONTINUOUS

Dante rises to his knees. The wolf collapses into his arms.

Herbert shuts the glass dome door shut.

Dr. Montgomery pulls the final lever from behind his podium.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Answer me!

Dante looks around as the iron bars conduct electricity and turn white hot. The glass panels illuminate into white.

Dante looks through the glass panel and locks eyes with Lina.

Dante holds the wolf in his arms. They seem to drift into a white void.

INT. LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

A look of triumph dawns upon Dr. Montgomery's face as the glass dome's illumination intensifies.

Lina's lip quivers in fear. Tasha lies on the ground, weeping. Herbert backs away from the dome in fear. Garrett squints and covers his eyes from the dome's bright illumination.

INT. GLASS DOME - CONTINUOUS

Within the white void, Dante and the wolf's bodies begin to meld together. The wolf's paw melts with and into Dante's hand. Their shoulders follow. The hair on the wolf's legs pierce into flesh of Dante's legs. Their bodies contort and twist into one.

Dante screams. The wolf howls. No sound exits their mouths. Their heads begin to weld together as a wolf snout protrudes from their merging. Their eyes meld into a single pair and the pupils turn bleach white.

INT. LABORATORY

Everyone's eyes are plastered upon the glass dome.

THE WEREWOLF erupts from the glass dome door, shattering it.

Glass flies across the air as steam seeps and fogs the laboratory.

The Werewolf stands eight feet tall on two legs. Dante's shredded clothes dangle off its enormous frame. Visually the Werewolf is a cross between Joe Dante's 'The Howling' and Sam Keith art.

The Werewolf howls, quickly climbs atop the glass dome, leaps, and crashes through the barred laboratory window.

Lina desperately back-fists Garrett in the groin. Garrett releases his grip on her.

Lina removes her coat as she rushes to Tasha. Lina wraps her coat around Tasha. Both escape the laboratory hand in hand.

Garrett rises and attempts to pursue them.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Never mind them!

Garrett and Herbert look at Dr. Montgomery.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Go after him!

Dr. Montgomery points to the broken window. Garrett and Herbert rush out the laboratory exit.

Dr. Montgomery stands in solitude for a moment.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
I've done it.

THUNDER BOOMS

EXT. MONTGOMERY MANOR - NIGHT

Rain drizzles from above as lightning streaks across the black blanketed sky.

THUNDER BOOMS

Lina and Tasha run toward Lina's horse, Dawn.

LINA BELLE
Get on my horse, Ms. Talbot! Now!

Tasha mounts Dawn as Lina checks the rifle within the scabbard hanging off of Dawn's blanket. Lina removes a small leather pouch from the scabbard and hastily ties it around her waist.

Lina quickly unties and mounts Dawn.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
(to Tasha)
Hold onto me!
(to Dawn)
Let's go, Dawn!

Lina whips Dawn's reins and they speed off toward the city.

Two automobile headlights circle from behind the manor.

INT. AUTOMOBILE - CONTINUOUS

Herbert drives as Garrett loads his revolver and readies his net.

EXT. MONTGOMERY MANOR - CONTINUOUS

The automobile makes its way to the city.

THUNDER BOOMS

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - NIGHT

Pedestrians converse and interact with one another around the streets.

As rain drizzles, a WOMAN, 20s, quickly walks down the dampened streets. She rips through the dense fog as she grips onto her purse.

She maneuvers around pair of drunken men, 30s, standing outside of a tavern. Drunk Man #1 gestures to the woman with his eyes.

DRUNK MAN #1

Hey, doll! Looks like you'd enjoy a bash with me and my friend here.

Drunk Man #2 winks and whistles at her. The woman fearfully looks back as she crosses an alleyway entrance.

The trio of pickpockets emerge from the alley, grasp onto the woman, and pull her into...

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Pickpocket #1 latches onto and pulls the woman's purse away.

WOMAN

Stop! Help! Stop it! Let go of me!

Pickpocket #2 backhands the woman. Pickpocket #3 angrily grabs and yanks her dress. The woman collapses to the alley ground.

THUNDER BOOMS

The pair of drunken men enter the alley.

DRUNK MAN #2

Hell of a bash, huh?!

With fright in her eyes, the woman looks up at the men.

WOMAN

Oh, God. No.

The drunken men seize the woman, pull her off the ground, and menace her.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Let me go!

Drunk Man #2 covers the woman's mouth with his hand and locks her arms behind her back.

THIEF #1
(opening the purse)
You know it, boys. It's been a
pleasure working with you both.

Thief #1 pulls money out from the purse. His fellow pickpockets approach him. Thief #1 gives them portions of the money.

THIEF #1 (CONT'D)
Here's your cut, boys.

DRUNK MAN #1
Oh, we got our cut.

DRUNK MAN #2
Yeah, right here.

Drunk Man #2 kisses the woman's cheek as Drunk Man #1 tears at the woman's skirt.

HARROWING HOWL

In shock, the five assailants look around the dark alley in bewilderment.

THIEF #2
What the hell was that?

All the assailants looks down the alley and stare into a dark abyss.

Lightning strikes and outlines The Werewolf.

THUNDER BOOMS

THIEF #3
Oh, God. It's a beast!

As Thief #3 turns around and attempts to run. The Werewolf draws near and latches onto Thief #3's shoulders. The Werewolf's claws dig into his shoulders and drags him to the ground.

THIEF #3 (CONT'D)
Ah! Ah! Ah!

The Werewolf viciously rips Thief #3's body apart.

THIEF #3 (CONT'D)
Oh, God! Help! Help!

The Werewolf chomps down on Thief #3's head with his powerfully massive jaws.

THUNDER BOOMS

The pair of drunkards and Thief #2 watch in shock.

The Werewolf lunges at Thief #2, rips out his throat, and dismembers him violently with his claws.

DRUNK MAN #2
To hell with this whore!

The drunkards toss the woman into a pile of trash.

DRUNK MAN #1
Let's get out of here!

Thief #1 darts out of the alley as the Werewolf rips apart his partner.

The drunkards attempt to run out of the alley. The woman trips Drunk Man #1 with her legs.

THUNDER BOOMS

Drunk Man #1 stumbles into Drunk Man #2. They collapse out of the alley and into...

DRUNK MAN #2
Son of a bitch!

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - CONTINUOUS

Thief #1 looks back at the fallen drunkards.

Startled, pedestrians gather toward the alley in curiosity.

DRUNK MAN #1
Oh, God! No! No!

In a broken heap, the drunkards look back. The Werewolf suddenly looms over and viciously pummels them with his claws. With a violent swipe, he decapitates Drunk Man #2. The decapitated head rolls across the street, leaving behind a bloody and pulpy streak.

In sheer panic, the pedestrians fearfully scatter across the streets. Some scream, others cry as they flee. Others take refuge within the nearby establishments.

With no remorse, the Werewolf bites down on Drunk Man #1's face and crushes his skull with his jaws.

Bone, blood, and sinew stream out of the drunkard's body and into the street gutters.

The Werewolf quickly darts his head toward and focuses his attention on Thief #1 standing in the middle of the street.

Thief #1 cautiously tosses the stolen purse onto the damp street.

THIEF #1
I'm sorry! Take it back! I'm sorry!
God! I'm sorry!

Thief #1 turns around to run. The Werewolf lunges toward him and pierces through Thief #1's back with his claws.

Blood spurts from the exit wound and out of Thief #1's mouth. The Werewolf bites down on Thief #1's neck and dismembers him.

THUNDER BOOMS

A pair of armed POLICE OFFICERS, 40s, turn the corner as pedestrians continue to flee.

POLICE OFFICER #1
What in heaven's name is going on
here?!

Police Officer #1's grip tightens on his billy club. They stop in their tracks as they catch sight of the Werewolf before them.

POLICE OFFICER #2
My God, it's a wild animal!

POLICE OFFICER #1
Shoot it!

Police Officer #2 draws his pistol. He cocks it. The Werewolf's ears alarm it from the nearby danger.

The Werewolf lunges at the police officers. His claws swipe at Police Officer #1's throat, ripping it open. His throat gushes out blood as he collapses.

The Werewolf swipes at Police Officer #2's arm, severing it. He punches the officer across the face, sending him to the ground. The Werewolf pummels and mutilates the fallen officer into a dead heap.

THUNDER BOOMS

On horseback, Lina and Tasha arrive at the bloodbath of a scene. Pedestrians continue to flee in fear as Lina maneuvers Dawn around the crowd. Lina's hands pull on Dawn's reins.

TASHA

Good Lord.

Lina dismounts Dawn and cautiously approaches the Werewolf.

LINA BELLE

Dante!

The Werewolf raises his head from his victim. He slowly turns toward Lina. Lightning strikes, illuminating the Werewolf's face.

THUNDER BOOMS

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)

Oh, God.

The Werewolf lunges and pounces upon Lina. She falls to the ground as the Werewolf looms over her.

Dawn fearfully neighs as Tasha covers her face in fright.

The Werewolf and Lina lock eyes for a moment. The Werewolf seems to recognize Lina and her brown eyes that resemble pools of honey. The Werewolf ceases his attack.

THUNDER BOOMS

Two automobile headlights circle from around the street corner and come to a sudden stop. With revolver in hand, Garrett emerges from the automobile and takes aim at the Werewolf.

The Werewolf releases Lina from beneath him. She runs toward Dawn, her horse.

Garrett fires at the Werewolf, missing him. The Werewolf fervidly growls.

Herbert exits the automobile with net in hand and rushes toward the Werewolf.

The Werewolf lunges, pounces upon Herbert, and begins ripping him to pieces. Herbert unleashes bloodcurdling screams.

HERBERT

(painfully)

Ah! Ah! Garrett! Shoot it!

Garrett takes aim at the Werewolf's head as Herbert continues to be dismembered.

Dawn neighs and Tasha turns away while closing her eyes.

GUNSHOT

Blood leaks out of Garrett's temple and nose. He collapses to the ground, dead.

Lina breathes heavily as smoke seeps out from the rifle in her hands. Lightning strikes.

THUNDER BOOMS

The Werewolf howls. He grapples, hoists, and launches Herbert's corpse into the automobile. He rushes toward the automobile and smashes it up.

Lina puts down her rifle and slowly approaches the raging Werewolf. He continues destroying the automobile as Lina cautiously reaches toward him with her hand.

Her fingertips barely graze the Werewolf's fur. Breathing heavily, the Werewolf quickly turns around to face her. They lock eyes. Lina reaches and holds onto the Werewolf's face.

SLOSHING FOOTSTEPS

The Werewolf looks away to discover Tasha ripping her silver bracelets off of Herbert's corpse. She catches sight of the Werewolf and quickly runs away in fear.

The Werewolf bows his head in shame.

With reassurance, Lina holds onto and lifts the Werewolf's face. She looks into his eyes.

LINA BELLE

I'm here.

The Werewolf slowly morphs back into Dante. After his metamorphosis, Lina is now holding onto Dante's face.

DANTE

Lina, help me.

Lina kisses and embraces Dante. Lightning strikes.

THUNDER BOOMS

CUT TO:

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Dr. Montgomery finishes installing a new door upon the glass dome. He opens it and enters.

INT. GLASS DOME - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Montgomery stands before the subdued trio of animals: Brutus the bear, Vincent the vulture, and Rupert the rattlesnake.

INT. LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Montgomery shuts the door behind him.

DOOR SLAM

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Tasha's tattered garments lie on the ground. An enormous bear claw lifts them off the ground.

A bear snout sniffs at the scent of its newfound prey. A massive forked tongue slips through the bear snout and licks Tasha's garb.

RATTLESNAKE'S TAIL RATTLES

SOUNDS OF VULTURE WINGS FLAPPING

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Dawn stands tied to a wooden parking post.

INT. DANTE'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Dante lies upon his bed in a deep sleep. In a corner of the room, an exhausted Lina sits in a chair with Sebastian in her lap.

Lina extracts ammunition cartridges from her small leather pouch. She reloads her rifle and watches over Dante.

Dante slumbers.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

BABY CRIES

A mother wolf licks at her cubs. She rolls onto her side to provide nourishment for her young. Amongst the wolf cubs is a six-month old human baby, Dante.

Baby Dante nestles his nose into the mother wolf's belly in search of a nipple.

INT. WAGON - DAY

Tasha, 17, scoops infant food from a wooden bowl with a wooden spoon. She glides the spoon toward the snout of a wolf cub. Seated in a high chair, the human clothed wolf cub licks the spoon and feasts on the baby food.

TASHA

Good, baby. Good. Now say, "Ma-Ma".

The wolf cub tilts his head in confusion.

TASHA (CONT'D)

"Ma-Ma".

The wolf cub slowly opens its mouth.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Dante, 7, runs with a wolf pack across the forest terrain.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The wolf cub, 4, roams across the forest terrain with a bow in paw and quiver of arrows hanging off its back.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Dante, 7, sits atop a fallen tree. The wolf cub, 4, appears at the other end of the forest.

Dante growls. The wolf cub's grip tightens on his bow as he extracts an arrow from his quiver.

The wolf cub readies his bow and arrow. Dante charges and leaps at the wolf cub. They collide.

CUT TO:

INT. DANTE'S LOFT - DAY

Dante, 25, awakens in bed. Lina lies next to him. His hands caress her, she awakens.

LINA BELLE
Dante, my beloved.

Lina caresses Dante's face. They rise to their knees upon Dante's bed. He leans in to kiss her until...

His mouth morphs into a wolf snout. Lina's face is buried into his tongue.

Dante winces and cries in pain.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Dante tackles and slams the wolf onto the ground. He rips apart the lone wolf limb by bloody limb. He drapes the wolf's fur over his body and wears the wolf's head like a headdress. Its eyes are bleach white.

Dante breathes heavily in triumph. He howls.

The pupils upon the wolf headdress dawn and its brow fiercely furrows. The teeth of the wolf headdress fervidly dig into and savagely bite down on Dante's head.

Dante latches onto the headdress as blood pours down his face. He desperately attempts to remove it to no avail. Dante collapses to the ground.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

INT. DANTE'S LOFT - DAY

The music box rests in the palm of Lina's hand. Lina's fingers stroll across it until --

Dante agonizingly squirms in his sleep. Dante's body contorts between his human and werewolf state.

Lina quickly pockets her music box within her leather pouch.

In fear, Sebastian jumps off Lina's lap and runs out of the room.

Lina rises from her seat and approaches Dante.

LINA BELLE
(tearfully)
Oh, God. Dante.

Dante's eyes peel open. He slowly rises from bed. Lina stares at him in shock. Dante is caught between his human and werewolf state.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
Dante.

Dante growls. He looks at Lina.

DANTE
Yesterday seems as though it never existed. I was me but now he's gone.
(pause)
Where do I take this pain of mine?
Who is this man? I run but he stays right by my side. What have we become?

LINA BELLE
You're Dante Talbot, my beloved.
You are Dante Talbot!

DANTE
(confused)
Dante Talbot?

Dante slowly and negatively shakes his head at Lina.

Lina's eyes widen and well up in realization that she may be conversing with the wolf.

LINA BELLE
Good Lord...

Dante morphs into The Werewolf, rushes toward, and leaps out the loft window.

Lina rushes to the window. The sun rises on the horizon, the tangerine sun-rays fall upon Lina as she looks out the window. Lina bursts into tears.

INT. TASHA'S TENEMENT - DAY

Wooden boards are nailed across the tenement window. Furniture is barricaded at the front door. Small streaks of sunlight seep through the spaces between the wooden boards.

In near catatonia and wrapped in blankets, Tasha sits at the center of her bed.

CREAKING NOISES

Tasha's eyes dart around the room fearfully. She breathes heavily.

CREAKING NOISES

Tasha looks toward her boarded window. Something seems to block the sunlight cascading upon her.

CREAKING NOISES

An enormous body lurks outside the window and blocks the seeping sunlight cascading upon Tasha.

Tasha whimpers as tears stream out of her eyes.

GROWLS

The Werewolf shatters through the boarded window.

Splinters and glass rain upon Tasha. She leaps off her bed, runs to the door, and desperately tosses her furniture aside.

TASHA

Oh, please, no! God, no! Please!

The Werewolf grabs Tasha, spins her around, and holds her with his sharp claws.

Tasha looks into the bleach white eyes of the Werewolf.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Leave me be!

The Werewolf intensely growls at his mother.

TASHA (CONT'D)

You're not my son! Bastard! You're a beast! A murderous beast!

The Werewolf lifts Tasha in the air, bares his fangs, and opens his mouth.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Dante!

The Werewolf stops his attack and slowly lowers Tasha to the ground. He tosses her onto her bed. Tasha catches her breath.

TASHA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Dante. For everything.
But I warned you! Look what they've
done to you!

(pause)

You're too much of an animal to be
amongst humans...and you're too
much of a human to be amongst
animals. I warned you.

The Werewolf growls at his mother.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Beasts deserve painful solitude. Go
away and find peace.

(pause)

Or make your mother your next
victim. Do what you will, demon.

The Werewolf grimaces, walks to, and exits through the broken window.

Tasha cries.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A crisp cool wind gusts across an enormous wolf den. The wind filters into a gaping blackhole that is the den's entrance. The sun sets.

INT. WOLF DEN - DAY

Within the inkwell of darkness, the Werewolf rests.

EXT. NEW YORK SLUMS - NIGHT

With bottle in hand, Tasha stumbles around the streets amongst the pedestrians. She rants and raves to anyone within earshot.

TASHA

Someone help! My son, my son, he's
a monster!

Tasha bumps into a pedestrian, who pushes her aside.

TASHA (CONT'D)
Believe me, please! Please!

She latches onto a PEDESTRIAN, 30s.

TASHA (CONT'D)
My son's a monster! He's a
murdering beast!

PEDESTRIAN #1
Let go of me, you lunatic!

The Pedestrian shoves her aside. Tasha storms toward
PEDESTRIAN #2, 40s.

TASHA
The beast is my son! He's roaming
the streets! He has to be killed!

Pedestrian #2 slaps Tasha away. She tumbles to the ground.

PEDESTRIAN #2
That's the bottle talking, you
drunken wench!

Tasha lies on the dirty street for a moment. She looks at her
bottle of alcohol and shamefully bows her head.

Pedestrians walk by and across Tasha like she doesn't exist.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK SLUMS - LATER

With tear moisture dried upon her cheeks, Tasha sits on a
street corner beneath the illumination of street lamps. Her
hand grips onto a bottle of alcohol.

Slum pedestrians continue walking before and around her.
Nothing breaks Tasha's depressive contemplation until...

A pair of horse legs stamp before Tasha. She looks up to
discover Lina upon her horse, Dawn. The women lock eyes.

INT. TASHA'S TENEMENT - LATER

With bottle in hand, Tasha sits at her kitchen table. Lina
stands before her.

LINA BELLE
Where did he go?

TASHA

I don't know.

Tasha takes a slug of her drink.

LINA BELLE

You saw him last! You must know!

TASHA

I know nothing! Shouldn't you know everything?! You rich university people are the ones with all the answers. You should know everything about that beast. You all made him.

LINA BELLE

He's no beast. That's your son.

TASHA

Not anymore. He's a beast and all beasts go where they belong. Back to nature. Back to where it began.

LINA BELLE

(quietly)

Where it began.

Lina drifts into a moment of contemplation. Tasha takes another slug of alcohol.

TASHA

Isn't that, how do you say, poetic? That's what you rich university folk are known for. Poetics and lies. Such beautiful deceit. Sons of bitches.

Lina scoffs at Tasha.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Scoff all you want, Madam Montgomery. My son is gone!
(pause)
I couldn't save him. I never could.

LINA BELLE

Seems to me you never tried, Madam Talbot.

Lina storms out of Tasha's tenement.

Tasha stares at her bottle for a moment. She angrily tosses it across the room. The bottle shatters and the alcohol drenches the wall.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK SLUMS - CONTINUOUS

Lina exits the tenement building and storms toward Dawn, tied to a parking post. She begins to untie her.

LINA BELLE
(to herself)
Where it began.

INT. TASHA'S TENEMENT - CONTINUOUS

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Tasha turns her head toward her tenement door. She slams her hands upon the kitchen table and rises to her feet in agitation. She stomps toward the door.

TASHA
(turning the door knob)
I've told you all I know, Miss
Montgomery. Now leave me be.

Tasha opens the door.

Dr. Montgomery stands stern in the doorway. His bleach white eyes fixate upon Tasha. He smiles.

DR. MONTGOMERY
Good evening, Ms. Talbot.

EXT. NEW YORK SLUMS - CONTINUOUS

Lina mounts Dawn.

CRASH

Debris rains upon Lina, Dawn, and the slums below. Pedestrians scatter in a screaming frenzy as they look up to the sky.

TASHA
Help! Someone! God, help! Help me!

Lina looks up to see a black-winged creature flying across the night-sky with Tasha in its clutches.

LINA BELLE

Oh my God.

Lina pulls on Dawn's reins. Dawn neighs and they ride off.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Fog sheers across sharp tree branches stretching down the wilderness. A full moon blares against a pitch black blanketed sky.

On horseback, Lina strays across the forest with diligent eyes. Dawn stops in her tracks as Lina spots the enormous wolf den.

Lina dismounts Dawn and approaches the den. She cautiously looks into the den's dark gaping hole.

LINA BELLE

This is where it began. The outskirts of Rose Bloom Village, where I found the wolf cub. I raised you like one of my own, little one. This is where it began.

Lina looks closer into the den's dark gaping hole.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)

This is also where Dante's family ended.

(pause)

But it hasn't ended for you, Dante. You're no beast. I promise you that.

(pause)

I know you're in there. Buried, deep beneath the pain.

(pause)

Dante Talbot still exists. He always will because I love --

The Werewolf viciously emerges from the den, breaking Lina's warm verbal confession. He growls and lunges at Lina.

Startled Lina falls to the ground. A fiery spark dawns upon Lina's face as she grimaces. Lina rises to her feet. She screams at the Werewolf.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)

Then stay here, my love of misery!
I've had enough!

(MORE)

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
I still have my humanity and I know
what must be done! Seal your own
coffin while I seal my father's!

Lina rips off the red rock necklace from around her neck. She fervidly throws it at the Werewolf, hitting him in the face.

Lina storms off. She mounts Dawn, whips her reins, and hastily rides off.

The Werewolf's bleach white eyes focus on the red rock necklace upon the ground. A memory is triggered within the Werewolf's subconscious.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. WOODS NEARBY - NIGHT

Memory of 1889, Dante Talbot, 10, kneels beside Wolf, who lies in a pool of his own blood. He pets his fallen friend.

The Werewolf watches from down the dirt path as Dante's memory unravels.

As Wolf breathes his final breath, Dante continues petting him. Dante closes Wolf's eyes. His dainty fingers caress the red rock tied around Wolf's necklace collar. Dante weeps.

The Werewolf tilts his head as he witnesses Dante mourning Wolf's death. A sense of empathy washes over the Werewolf.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

With determination in her eyes, Lina rides Dawn across and against the cold, harsh wind.

THUNDER BOOMS

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Smoke lingers over Tasha's face. The sounds of crackling fire waken her. Her eyes flutter open to see Dr. Montgomery burning his blueprints and schematics in a nearby sink.

Tasha is strapped and gagged to an iron table. She weeps which catches Dr. Montgomery's attention.

DR. MONTGOMERY
My dearest apologies for awakening
your slumber Ms. Talbot.

Dr. Montgomery approaches Tasha.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
I was tending to some personal
affairs. I mustn't allow anyone to
plagiarize or pervert my work.
(pause)
That anyone includes my daughter,
your son, or the rest of the world
for that matter.
(pause)
It's a shame when the world calls
their own salvation a madman.

Dr. Montgomery stands over Tasha.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
The secrets behind my machine are
now locked --
(points to his head)
-- in here.

Dr. Montgomery's bloody and skin cracked hands latch onto
Tasha's face.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Your loose tongue is detrimental to
me. Not that anyone would believe a
person of your low moral standards
or class.
(pause)
You'd make a much better specimen
or even better bait for Dante.
(pause)
Now, we'll see if he cares or if
he's truly become more wolf than
man.

Scorching tears stream out of Tasha's eyes. Dr. Montgomery
wipes away her tears. His bleach white eyes, lock onto
Tasha's.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
No need for tears. You should be
proud of your son, Ms. Talbot. He's
the first of his kind.

Dr. Montgomery's forked tongue slides out his mouth and licks
Tasha's face. It recedes into his mouth.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
If his dream is the same as mine,
then he must be content with what
he's become. Back to nature as one.
(pause)
Not as God intended but as I
intend.

Dr. Montgomery runs his finger tips across Tasha's body.
Slowly his fingernails begin to blacken and sharpen.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
And you are next.

Dr. Montgomery turns to his instrument table. Tasha looks
toward the glass dome. Her eyes widen as she discovers a
subdued fox within it. Tears stream down her face.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Need not worry.

Dr. Montgomery extracts a syringe from his instrument table.
Subduing liquid jets out of it with a firm press from Dr.
Montgomery's finger.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
You'll awaken to a better life and
everything before will have been
nothing but a nightmare.

GUNSHOT

A bullet rips into Dr. Montgomery's shoulder.

DR. MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Ah!

Dr. Montgomery collapses to the ground.

Lina stands at the laboratory entrance with smoking rifle in
hand.

Dr. Montgomery's body begins to transform. Lina cocks her
rifle.

Vulture wings sprout from Dr. Montgomery's back. Lina fires a
bullet into her father's black wings. She cocks her rifle
once again.

As Dr. Montgomery rises from the ground, his head begins to
morph into a bear's and a large rattlesnake tail pulsates as
it proliferates from his tailbone.

Another bullet darts out of Lina's rifle and embeds into her father's other wing.

Lina cocks her rifle and takes aim for the glass dome's control podium.

RATTLESNAKE RATTLING SOUNDS

He slams his massive bear claw under the iron table, sending it turning to the ground with Tasha upon it.

LINA BELLE
Ms. Talbot!

Dr. Montgomery leaps toward his daughter.

Massive bear claws powerfully grasp onto Lina's shoulders and pin her to the wall. Lina looks up to see:

MONSTROUS MONTGOMERY, Dr. Montgomery's mutated form of a bear's body, vulture's wings, and a thickened rattlesnake's tail.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
Ah! Father! No!

His grotesque snout opens massively wide to reveal his thick snake fangs and forked tongue.

BEAR ROAR

Venom drips down Monstrous Montgomery's fangs while his mouth draws closer to Lina's head.

CRASH

The Werewolf bursts through the laboratory window and lands in the middle of the room. He rises to his feet. The red rock necklace dangles upon his neck.

Monstrous Montgomery tosses Lina to the ground and turns his attention to the Werewolf.

THUNDER BOOMS

They lock eyes and charge at each other. They clash.

The Werewolf pummels the Monstrous Montgomery in the face. He pushes the beast into the glass dome, cracking it.

Monstrous Montgomery retaliates with a stab to the Werewolf's chest with its bear claws.

Lina races over to Tasha upon the ground as the fight rages on between the Werewolf and Monstrous Montgomery.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
Come Ms. Talbot!

Lina unstraps Tasha, grabs her hand, and leads her toward the laboratory entrance.

THUNDER BOOMS

TASHA
But Dante!

LINA BELLE
No time! Just go!

Lina pushes Tasha toward the entrance. Tasha runs out.

The Werewolf swipes its claws across Monstrous Montgomery's face. Pulpy blood launches from its wounds.

Lina rushes over to the glass dome's control podium. She rips at the conduits and wires. The flesh on her hands burn and singe.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
Ah!

Monstrous Montgomery slashes at the Werewolf's chest. It then tail-whips the Werewolf, sending him into the wall of medical instruments. It pounces upon the Werewolf and bites down on his neck with its rattlesnake fangs.

THUNDER BOOMS

Lina runs to a safe distance. She cocks her rifle, aims at the control podium, and fires.

Sparks fly as the control podium erupts in fire.

Monstrous Montgomery catches sight of his contraption set ablaze.

BEAR ROAR

Monstrous Montgomery flaps his vulture wings and goes airborne.

As the fire rages on, Lina aims her rifle at what was once her father.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
(tearfully)
I'm sorry, mother.

RIFLE CLICK

Lina's eyes widen in fear as she realizes she has no more ammunition. Quickly, Lina reaches into her leather pouch, digs, and clasps onto something. She pulls out the only thing left in her leather pouch, her music box. Her lip quivers as she realizes she has no more ammunition.

LINA BELLE (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Oh, God.

Lina looks up toward her father, flapping his wings. Her grip tightens upon her music box.

Monstrous Montgomery takes his aim at his daughter as he prepares to dive at her.

The Werewolf leaps onto Monstrous Montgomery, bites down upon his neck, and rips apart his wings.

Both creatures collapse and crash into...

INT. GLASS DOME - CONTINUOUS

The Werewolf and Monstrous Montgomery shatter through the glass dome roof. Now awake, the fox rushes out of the glass dome to safety.

The Werewolf pounces upon Monstrous Montgomery and viciously pummels him with his claws. Blood and tissue splatters upon the glass panels of the dome.

The Werewolf latches onto Monstrous Montgomery's neck. Its head is battered to a bloody pulp. It slips into unconsciousness, transitioning to.

CUT TO:

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Dr. Montgomery stands in a forest. He looks around. His eyes fall upon a battle ensuing between Brutus the bear, Rupert the rattlesnake, and Vincent the vulture.

His eyes well up as he witnesses the violent struggle. Suddenly, the animals stop fighting. Slowly they turn their attention toward Dr. Montgomery. Their eyes lock onto him for an uncomfortable moment.

Dr. Montgomery stands with tears in his eyes. All three animals swarm and attack Dr. Montgomery.

Vincent flies toward and pecks at Dr. Montgomery's eyes. Brutus claws Dr. Montgomery's sternum. Rupert slips up Dr. Montgomery's body and bites into his neck.

END DREAM SEQUENCE:

CUT TO:

INT. GLASS DOME - CONTINUOUS

The Werewolf is now holding Dr. Montgomery's neck. Dr. Montgomery has reverted back to his human form.

The Werewolf releases Dr. Montgomery and howls.

THUNDER BOOMS

The Werewolf looks back to discover Lina at the laboratory entrance.

Through the glass dome, Lina locks eyes with the Werewolf's bleach white eyes.

Flames engulf the remainder of the laboratory.

EXPLOSION

Lina covers her face from the gust of wind and debris. She looks back to see the laboratory set ablaze and nothing more.

THUNDER BOOMS

Rain showers through the shattered window and broken roof of the laboratory. The fire begins to be extinguished.

Lina bows her head in defeat.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONTGOMERY MANOR - LATER

Lina and Tasha sit outside upon the manor steps. Grey smoke bellows out of laboratory portion of the manor.

Tasha walks down the steps and stands before the manor. Lina follows her.

LINA BELLE
 (somberly)
 I'm sorry, Ms. Talbot. I couldn't
 save Dante or my father.

Tasha holds onto Lina's shoulders.

TASHA
 You saved me. Most of all, you
 saved yourself, Lina Belle.

Tasha releases Lina's shoulders. Lina bows her head to hide her tears. She notices her hand is still fearfully balled into a fist. Lina opens her fist. The music box plays in the palm of her hand.

MUSIC UP: HUSH LITTLE BABY MUSIC BOX

Lina wipes away her tears and places the music box back into her leather pouch. Its song, subdued.

A silhouette slowly surfaces from the manor entrance.

Tasha and Lina look up as the figure emerges from the shadows.

The Werewolf carries a battered Dr. Montgomery and lays him before the Montgomery manor.

Lina rushes over to her father and kneels beside him. Dr. Montgomery breathes heavily.

LINA BELLE
 Father.

The Werewolf looms over the Montgomerys. Tasha approaches the scene.

DR. MONTGOMERY
 I love you, Lina Belle.
 (breathing heavily)
 Just as much as I love your mother.
 (pause)
 I can only hope she forgives me.
 (to the Werewolf)
 I'm sorry.

The Werewolf reaches toward and pets Dr. Montgomery as he breathes his final breath.

Dr. Montgomery dies.

The Werewolf closes Dr. Montgomery's eyes and stands up straight.

Tasha looks up at her son. The Werewolf looks at his mother. They lock eyes. Teary eyed, Tasha rushes over and embraces her son. The Werewolf slowly wraps his arm around his mother.

Lina approaches the Werewolf and puts her hand on his shoulder.

The Werewolf slowly turns around and stands before Lina. They lock eyes. He grabs, holds, and closes Lina's hands with his claws. The Werewolf releases her hands and walks away toward the nearby forest. Lina looks down at her clenched fists.

Lina opens her hands:

The red rock necklace lies in the palms of her hands.

Lina looks up. The Werewolf is gone. Lina weeps.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. LINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The music box sits atop the grand piano's music desk.

Lina's fingers press the keys upon her grand piano. She carries the 'Hush Little Baby' tune over from the music box.

The tune then morphs into an original piece as Lina continues playing the grand piano. Freshly written musical pages rest upon the piano's music desk. Tears streak out of Lina's eyes as her song concludes.

MUSIC END

Lina sits in silence. She places her hand over her chest. Her fingers twirl the red rock upon her necklace. Lina looks out her bedroom window and sees the full moon.

EXT. THE MONTGOMERY MENAGERIE - NIGHT

The full moon shines bright over the lush, contained wilderness inhabited by the menagerie of animals. They scurry about freely within their respective encampments. Some look up at the moon.

INT. WOLF ENCLOSURE - NIGHT

Tasha cradles a sleeping and bandaged wolf cub within her arms.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The full moon burns in the black night sky.

The Werewolf's profile is silhouetted by the pale moon. His snout opens and unleashes...

A MOURNFUL HOWL

FADE TO BLACK.