

KRACKAJACK

Episode 1

"Pilot"

by

T. C. H. Collins

Based on characters from the novel

Arcana

by

T. C. H. Collins.

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tchcollins@gmail.com

www.tchcollins.com

ACT 1

EXT. WELSH COUNTRYSIDE - AFTERNOON/CONTINUOUS (1999)

FADE IN:

SUPERIMPOSE: SOMEWHERE IN SOUTH WALES, 1999

The idyllic Welsh countryside. Lush, green rolling hills, dotted with sheep and cows. A FARMER herds his flock with his trusty sheep dog, who obeys every WHISTLE and command his master calls out.

JACK (V.O.)

What makes a person good? What makes a person evil? Is it simply shades of grey? Is inaction itself as evil as the heinous act that's being witnessed?

CUT TO:

EXT. WELSH COUNTRYSIDE ROAD - AFTERNOON/CONTINUOUS (1999)

A tractor TRUNDLES along a stretch of road. Three cars follow, waiting for an opportunity to overtake.

JACK (V.O.)

Is it something biological? Or psychological?

CUT TO:

INT. VICAR'S CAR - AFTERNOON/CONTINUOUS (1999)

An anxious VICAR in the car directly behind the tractor listens to CLASSICAL MUSIC, while MUTTERING calming words to himself.

VICAR

You're not that late anyway, they'll understand... They'll understand...

Horns TOOT from behind.

VICAR (CONT'D)

Why are you beeping at me for?

TOOT-TOOT!

VICAR (CONT'D)
I wish I could go faster, believe
you me!

TOOT-TOOT!

VICAR (CONT'D)
OH FOR CHRIST-

He holds his tongue and LETS OUT A DEEP BREATH.

VICAR (CONT'D)
No. They're just impatient. And
nothing makes you more impatient
than wanting to be somewhere a
little quicker than you're going.

TOOT-TOOT!

He glances in the rear view mirror, and his mouth tightens.
They're getting to him.

TOOT-TOOT!

His jaw clenches.

TOOOOOOT-TOOOOOOT-TOOOOOOOT!

The vicar wrinkles his nose up in anger and LIGHTLY TAPS his
own HORN:

PEEP!

He's immediately embarrassed about giving into temptation.

JACK (V.O.)
Could it be something spiritual?

CUT TO:

EXT. WELSH COUNTRYSIDE ROAD - AFTERNOON/CONTINUOUS (1999)

The camera PANS from the vicar's car to the car behind it.

INT. COUPLE'S CAR - AFTERNOON/CONTINUOUS (1999)

A YOUNG, WELSH COUPLE in their 20s, thick accents, are
dressed like they are going to a friend's wedding. They
BICKER...

MAN

Oh come on, your mother's 'ardly a paragon of truth!

WOMAN

Well at least my mam can trust that I won't rob 'er!

MAN

I've never stolen a thing from my mam! Where the fuck you hear that?

WOMAN

(pause)

Rhian.

MAN

My ex, Rhian? Why talk to 'er for?

WOMAN

I didn't. Mam did.

MAN

Oh my God. Just stop! Can't you see what your mother's doing? She's trying to break us up!

WOMAN

Don't be so fucking ridiculous. Why? Why would she even do that?

The Man stays silent.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

See? You can't even answer because it's all bullshit! You're just jealous we're closer than you and your mam.

MAN

Oh really?

WOMAN

Yeah.

MAN

...Your mother doesn't care about you—

WOMAN

—Oh, fuck off!—

MAN

—'Cos if she did, she wouldn't have sucked my cock, would she?

WOMAN

You're fucking sick in the 'ead, mun!

MAN

Look. When you went to Cardiff to that concert last month, she used the spare key and snuck in when I was sleeping. Well, I woke, and—and she was blowing me, And I thought it was you, and you'd come home early. So after I cummed, I lifted the duvet to be nice and give you some air, and it wasn't even you, it was her. Your fucking mother.

WOMAN

You're lying.

MAN

I wish I fucking was!

WOMAN

(shakes head)

Don't believe you.

MAN

It's the truth. Remember when she tried flirting with me? We laughed about it!

(beat)

WOMAN

(throwing slaps and punches)

You fucking bastard! BASTARD!
BASTARD! BASTARD!

MAN

Oi—what you doing, mun?—I'm driving, you crazy bitch!

JACK (V.O.)

Can evil be cured?

CUT TO:

EXT. WELSH COUNTRYSIDE ROAD - AFTERNOON/CONTINUOUS (1999)

We PAN to the car behind, carrying four YOUNG GUYS,
DANGEROUSLY trying to OVERTAKE everyone.

JACK (V.O.)
If there was a vaccine that could
stop you committing an evil act,
would you take the shot?

The road straightens, but there's a BLIND BEND at the end.

The car at the back GOES FOR IT, passing the two cars in
front.

One of the GUYS in the back seat UNWINDS the window to make
RUDE GESTURES at the vicar, who shakes his head in
disappointment.

While passing the tractor itself, the same GUY IN THE CAR
then HURLS AN OPEN CAN OF COKE at the tractor.

GUY IN THE CAR
(yells)
PULL OVER AN' LERRUS PASS, YOU
FUCKIN' WANKER!

The TRACTOR DRIVER flips the birdie, and mouths "TWAT".

HORNS BLARE.

There's an ONCOMING CAR! The tractor's brakes SQUEAL.

The car overtaking is forced to suddenly SWERVE, and CRASHES
into the grassy verge, while the oncoming car SWERVES, SKIDS,
and PLOUGHS into the tractor, and so do the cars behind.

The guy who threw the can looks out of the back of the
crashed vehicle, unharmed, staring at the pile up he just
caused. EMOTIONLESS. His fellow companions aren't as lucky.

JACK (V.O.)
Or can just one act imprint evil
itself indelibly onto your mind and
soul?

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. WELSH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY (1999)

JACK LINCOLN, early 30s. A tall, slim American in a long
black trenchcoat, jeans, and white trainers. His hair is
shoulder-length and overgrown.

HE RUNS FOR HIS LIFE over the green pastures! His feet HIT THE GROUND HARD, neither the grass nor his trainers giving any cushioning.

A dozen or so other folk are running too, spread apart about five metres or so behind Jack. PLUMES OF BLACK SMOKE RISE in the background.

JACK

(breathless/to camera)

My first mistake was taking on an apprentice in the first place. My second was choosing a goddamned thirteen-year-old. My third? Leaving him unsupervised.

Jack stops to catch his breath, bent over slightly, his hands resting on his legs as he takes DEEP HEAVING GULPS of air. He looks up at the camera.

JACK (CONT'D)

Yes. I'm a total. Fucking. Moron.

(pauses for breath)

Fuck!

And he's off!

He hurdles a gate and runs over the remaining bit of grass as he heads towards the MAIN ROAD.

While Jack approaches an embankment, SCREAMS are heard off-camera.

He turns to look back, but TRIPS AND TUMBLES down a short hill.

Shit!

He STRIKES his head on a rock and blacks out.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING (1980)

SUPERIMPOSE: CHICAGO, 1980

A scrawny YOUNG JACK—about 13 years old—approaches the high school with foolish optimism.

He recognises a friend from his last school, BILLY, also 13, who is loitering near the main entrance with three MEAN-LOOKING boys.

Young Jack waves.

Billy doesn't respond and looks away. But his three companions notice.

BOY #1
(to Billy)
Who's the dweeb?

BILLY
Just some kid I went to middle school with.

BOY #2
You're friends with a dweeb?

BILLY
Wha-no, he was just in my class, that's all.

BOY #1
Well, you're with us now.

BOY #2
Yeah, and-
(pokes Billy hard in the chest with every word)
-No. Dweebs. Allowed. Got it?

BILLY
(rubbing sore spot)
Got it.

Boy #3's expression tells us he'll test Billy later.

They watch the disappointed-looking Young Jack make his way inside.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - OUTDOOR EATING AREA - LUNCHTIME (1980)

A nice day for eating al fresco. STUDENTS sit on the walls, the grass, and the tables. Two TEACHERS are on duty in the background of the shot, doing the lunchtime rounds.

Young Jack sits down with his lunch and is about to eat, when the boys from earlier that day approach him.

BOY #2
Hey look-it's the dweeb!

BOY #1
(to Young Jack)
Aww! Did Mommy make your lunch for
you?

He snatches Young Jack's lunch bag.

BOY #1 (CONT'D)
Let's see what ya got then...

YOUNG JACK
Hey, that's mine!

Boy #1 RUSTLES through the bag and pulls out A SAD, FLOPPY-
LOOKING HAM SANDWICH. He drops it to the floor.

He pulls out a BAG OF CHEETOS, opening them and POURING them
onto the ground, too.

Billy looks on sheepishly, wanting to intervene but also not
wanting to lose his new gang.

Boy #1 GRINDS the orange snacks into the ground with a shoe.

BOY #1
The cheese really does go *crunch!*

Boy #2 LAUGHS, while Boy #3 watches his posse tormenting this
new student as if they'd be graded on their bullying.

A DELICIOUS-LOOKING SHINY RED APPLE gets tossed to Boy #3,
who takes A HUGE JUICY BITE from it.

YOUNG JACK
(stands up)
You guys are assholes!

Boy #3, mouth full of apple, scowls and GRABS Young Jack by
the collar.

BOY #3
(spitting apple chunks)
The fuck you say, punk?

Young Jack stays silent and brushes a morsel of apple from
his face.

Boy #1 hears RATTLING inside the nearly empty lunch bag and
looks inside.

BOY #1
Aww... Are you on a diet? Won't
your mommy give you a whole bag of
M&Ms like a normal person?

Boy #1 reaches inside and EATS a few of the loose M&Ms.

YOUNG JACK
 Sure, but I wanted to see if they'd
actually melt in my hands if I put
 them inside my foreskin first...

Young Jack IMMEDIATELY regrets replying.

BOY #2
 (screws up face)
 Eww, nasty!

Boy #1 stops chewing, eyes wide. He SPITS OUT the partially
 chewed M&Ms just in case.

BOY #3
 Hey, dork! That smart mouth of
 yours is gonna get you a beating!

Boy #3 gestures for Billy to approach.

BOY #3 (CONT'D)
 Hey Billy...

Billy steps forward.

BOY #3 (CONT'D)
 Time for your initiation... Hit
 him.

BILLY
 What, here?

BOY #3
 Do it.

Billy hesitates.

BOY #3 (CONT'D)
 Hit him, or get hit. Your choice.

The other bullies CHEER him on.

Bil-ly! Bil-ly! Bil-ly!

This CHANTING alerts one of the teachers in the background,
 and she JOGS towards them awkwardly in her HEELS.

Young Jack curls up his FIST. It gently GLOWS PURPLE,
 swirling with a dark, SHADOW-LIKE MIST, but on hearing the
 teacher RUNNING OVER, he resists the urge to use his magic;
 the glow dims and his hand relaxes.

Young Jack closes his eyes and braces himself.

BOY #3 (CONT'D)

DO IT!

Billy takes a deep breath and CLENCHES his fist.

THWUMP!

Young Jack FALLS to his knees, holding his gut, winded.

The TEACHER finally arrives and pulls the bullies away from Young Jack.

TEACHER

Hey—What's going on here?

BOY #1

(stifling a giggle)

I think his lunch was... Kinda bad.

BOY #2

Yeah, he got injyjestion.

Young Jack COUGHS as the teacher helps him up.

BOY #3

(cringes at BOY #2)

That's in-*di*-gestion, dumbass!

TEACHER

(to Boy #3)

Watch your mouth!

(to Young Jack)

You okay, Honey?

Young Jack nods, clearly not "okay" and tries to regain his composure.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

(to the bullies)

Now get outta here before I put you all in detention. For a week!

The bullies walk away, SNIGGERING.

BOY #1

(to Boy #3)

Your mom's such a killjoy.

Billy tries to mouth a way-too-late SORRY at Young Jack, but was met with a MIDDLE FINGER.

JACK (V.O.)
 And that was only my second day of
 high school.

INT/EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY (1980)

A SERIES OF SHOTS where Young Jack is running from his tormentors, on different days:

-Passed the LIBRARY.

-Passed some LOCKERS.

-Through the CANTEEN. Cornered, so he RUNS ACROSS A TABLE. And other kids' food.

-THROUGH the library this time, where he stops to return a BOOK. The bullies don't follow him in, but keep watch for him through the door glass. They don't realise he's already left using a different door until he runs behind them.

-Passed a group of SURPRISED SENIORS, sat on the grass.

-Ploughing through the CHEERLEADERS.

-Through the lunchtime practice of SEVERAL DIFFERENT SPORTS teams: American football, soccer, baseball, track and field.

The bullies STOP SHORT of the football field. Too many BIGGER, OLDER BOYS. Their kryptonite.

The coaches and kids present seem used to this NEARLY DAILY OCCURRENCE.

A few kids even casually SAY "HI" to Young Jack as he passes by.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY (1980)

One of the AMERICAN FOOTBALL COACHES spot Young Jack approaching.

COACH #1
 (nudging Coach #2)
 Hey, here he comes.

Coach #2 quickly resets his stopwatch and they both watch Young Jack for several seconds as he crosses the field.

COACH #2
 (impressed)
 Point three faster this whole week.

WE DON'T SEE THE TIME on the STOPWATCH, but we DO see some "not bad" faces and impressed NODS.

Young Jack spots a heavily shaded area and runs to it.

There, he TRANSFORMS into a DARK, WISPY MIST, "becoming" the shadows. He waits for the bullies to pass, and escapes in the opposite direction.

JACK (V.O.)
I managed to avoid them most days,
but I still got a beating when I
couldn't outrun them.

INT/EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY (1980)

A SERIES OF SHOTS where Young Jack can't evade the bullies and gets beat up:

-PUNCH to the gut.

-PUNCH to the kidney.

-PUNCH to the face.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASEBALL FIELD - DAY (1980)

Young Jack is preparing to HIT the BASEBALL. He STEPS UP to the plate and holds the bat behind his head.

JACK (V.O.)
Pops suggested I take up sports to
toughen up and make me a man. Being
a Cubs fan, he suggested baseball.
Because of course he would.

A PITCHER HURLS the ball.

Young Jack SWINGS and MISSES.

JACK (V.O.)
But I couldn't hit a fastball...

The pitcher THROWS ANOTHER.

Young Jack MISSES AGAIN.

JACK (V.O.)
Or a curve ball...

SEVERAL SHOTS in quick succession of every failed SWING.

Young Jack NICKS the last ball, which ROLLS but a few feet away.

JACK (V.O.)
Or any pitch with more than a small clip.

Surprised that he made ACTUAL CONTACT with the ball, Young Jack FORGETS to RUN.

He then becomes ENRAGED at being STRUCK OUT yet again.

YOUNG JACK
What? Man... This is BULLSHIT!

Angry, he tosses the bat over his shoulder with reckless abandon and STORMS OFF.

It hits a TEAM MATE off-screen.

TEAM MATE (O.S.)
Oww! ASSHOLE!

INT. LINCOLN HOUSE - DINING TABLE - EVENING (1980)

Young Jack sits at the dining table.

CLIFF LINCOLN AKA POPS, a ROTUND FELLOW in his mid 50s, sits at the head of the table.

Opposite Young Jack sits CIARA [Kira] LINCOLN, nee BYRNE, AKA MA, A PRETTY WAIF of a woman in her early 40s, half her husband's size.

CIARA
(to Young Jack)
So, the school called... Said there was an incident. Ya wanna talk about it?

Young Jack stays silent, over-mashing his potatoes with his fork.

Meanwhile, Cliff is WOLFING DOWN his home-cooked meal. IN GOES an enormous forkful of mash mixed with soggy but tasty veg and thick, meaty gravy. MMM!

Next, Cliff picks up a JUICY CHICKEN LEG from the plate with his fingers.

CIARA (CONT'D)
Jacky?

Young Jack looks up at his mother.

YOUNG JACK
(shaking his head)
Nuh-uh.

Ciara SIGHS and looks over at Cliff, who is REALLY ENJOYING HIS FOOD.

She KICKS him under the table.

CLIFF
Ow! What?

Ciara makes a silent wide-eyed plea at Cliff URGING him to provide some support in the conversation.

YOUNG JACK'S POV: Cliff LEANS IN a little, not quite making eye contact but speaking in SHORT NASAL BURSTS between each GREASY mouthful.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
You should try football...
(pauses to relish)
Put some meat on your bones.

Young Jack looks grossed out by Cliff's eating: He SMACKS his lips while GREASY DRIBBLES escape his mouth.

JACK (V.O.)
So, I did.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY (1980)

CLOSE UP of Young Jack's eyes narrow behind the grill of an oversized football helmet.

WE DOLLY BACK and see he's on an American football field, clutching an OBLONG BALL, about to make a PASS at his team mate.

He THROWS... And the BALL lands short, BOUNCING on the ground.

The team mate opens his arms wide as if to say "what the fuck was that?"

JACK (V.O.)
But... I sucked at it.

ANON BOY (O.S.)
You SUCK, Lincoln!

YOUNG JACK
BITE ME!

Young Jack gives up and takes off his helmet.

He approaches the two coaches, but before he could quit,
Coach #1 SPEAKS.

COACH #1
Have you tried... Track?

Coach #2—seeing he's about to lose one of the faster kids on
the team—SIGHS HEAVILY and DISCARDS the doughnut he was
halfway through eating OVER HIS SHOULDER in defeat and walks
off-screen.

His dream is over.

JACK (V.O.)
So, I tried track too...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - ATHLETICS TRACK - DAY (1980)

Young Jack JOGS half-heartedly around the athletics track.

He looks MISERABLE.

JACK (V.O.)
And it was... Well. Boring.

Young Jack WALKS to the finish line. Last.

He DRAMATICALLY HURLS himself onto the grass and JUST LAYS
THERE, staring up at the sky.

YOUNG JACK'S POV: Little fluffy clouds pass through the azure
sky. It's calm. Serene.

The view is OBSCURED by the TRACK COACH's partially
silhouetted head, who's CHEWING HEAVILY on gum.

He quickly eyeballs Young Jack for actual SIGNS OF INJURY.

He finds none.

TRACK COACH
(leaning in/chewing)
Ya dead?

YOUNG JACK
(unenthused)
Probably.

TRACK COACH
So, um, you want a coffee or
something, yeah?

Young Jack looks confused.

TRACK COACH (CONT'D)
A doughnut?

Young Jack sits up.

YOUNG JACK
We got doughnuts?

TRACK COACH
Seriously? No! We don't got
doughnuts—

YOUNG JACK
(quietly)
—Well that sucks.

Young Jack groans and lays back down on the grass.

TRACK COACH
Are you for real?

Young Jack ignores the coach and goes back to cloud-gazing.

TRACK COACH (CONT'D)
Jack. Jack! Hey!

The coach taps the bottom of Young Jack's shoe with his foot.

Young Jack makes eye contact.

TRACK COACH (CONT'D)
You want a detention with that
doughnut, huh?

YOUNG JACK
But you said there weren't any—

TRACK COACH
(rolls eyes and snaps)
—Get up, Lincoln!

YOUNG JACK
I'm fine here, thanks Coach.

TRACK COACH
(under his breath)
This kid's something else, man...

The Track Coach walks off MUTTERING and SHAKING HIS HEAD.

Young Jack scoffs, and conjures The Perfect Doughnut.

Pink glaze, sprinkles, and so very fresh. He takes a big bite, and his eyes roll with delight.

JACK (V.O.)

I guess the thrill I got from
running from a potential assault
just wasn't there, like I had no
motivation to run any more.

EXT. LINCOLN HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON (1980)

Young Jack sits on the ground at the side of his house,
repeatedly BOUNCING a BASEBALL off its wall.

BUH-BOP... BUH-BOP... BUH-BOP...

Cliff appears, and although he struggles a little with his
large frame, he manages to TAKE A SEAT next to the boy on the
ground.

They sit in silence for a moment or two.

CLIFF

It's not easy, huh?

Young Jack doesn't respond.

BUH-BOP... BUH-BOP... BUH-BOP...

CLIFF (CONT'D)

People can be mean, horrible
bastards at times. And kids? Well,
kids are even worse. I got flushed
at least six times during my first
semester. Got my nose broke too.
Twice. Man, (chuckles) I *hated* high
school. But I kept at it. Not
'cause I wanted to, but my pop
promised me a car at the end of
it...

Young Jack continues to BOUNCE the BALL off the wall in
silence.

BUH-BOP... BUH-BOP... BUH-BOP...

CLIFF (CONT'D)

And I know I haven't been around much lately, pulling all these double shifts, but you were having a bad time, and I wanted to help. Get money for extra coaching, or something, I dunno. That's a thing dads do, right?

Young Jack side-eyes Cliff a little, guessing one of the coaches or teachers must have made a PHONE CALL home.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

So, whatever you need, kid. You choose.

Young Jack pauses his game and looks thoughtful.

JACK (V.O.)

I never knew my real dad, but Pops had been there since I was old enough to appreciate the entertainment value of hiding a Lego brick in the vicinity of a grown man with bare feet.

INT. LINCOLN HOUSE - CLIFF AND CIARA'S ROOM - MORNING (1973)

The silhouette of a WEE SIX-YEAR-OLD JACK hides under his parents bed, waiting for them to wake up.

WEE JACK'S POV: The bed squeaks and two feet drop from above onto the hand-placed Lego brick prepared a few moments earlier.

Cliff CRIES OUT IN PAIN and lifts his feet back up.

Wee Jack stifles a giggle, but Cliff knows he's under there.

The boy is swiftly dragged backwards from under the bed by an ankle.

CLIFF

You're in trouble now, Boy!

Wee Jack is thrown onto the bed and attacked by The Tickle Monster!

JACK (V.O.)

He always did right by me, even if I was a bit of a dick, never scolded me even when I thought I deserved it. He was good people.

A BRIEF FLASH FORWARD: Cliff is DRAGGED into SHADOWS. The shadow RETREATS and Cliff lays DEAD on a wooden floor.

JACK (V.O.)
He didn't deserve to die like that.
No-one does.

FLASH FORWARD ENDS:

EXT. LINCOLN HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON (1980)

Young Jack looks up at Cliff with BIG, PUPPY-DOG EYES and offers up the BALL.

CLIFF
(takes the ball)
You... You wanna give baseball
another shot?

Young Jack NODS, but doesn't think he deserves it.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
And... You're wanting extra
coaching for it?

YOUNG JACK
(meekly)
Sure.

CLIFF
That's great!

Cliff THROWS his arms up in the air, triumphant.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
Yeah! Go Cubs!

Cliff looks down at Young Jack, seeing SO MUCH POTENTIAL.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
Come 'ere, Squirt...

Young Jack half smiles as Cliff gives him a reassuring hug.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
(grunts with effort)
Now... I gotta try... and... get up
from here...

Cliff ATTEMPTS TO STAND, EXAGGERATING his exertion.

Young Jack ROLLS HIS EYES and takes both his hands.

YOUNG JACK
Come on, old man, after three...
One, two, THREE!

CLIFF
(scoffs)
Wait—Old? Pffft!

Cliff reaches a squatting position, his face turns red.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
(strains)
Oh no, now you've seen my pooping
face!

YOUNG JACK
(also strains)
Well, here's mine!

A WIDE SHOT: We hear a DISTANT FART.

Surprised, Cliff LETS GO, putting them both off balance.

They fall over, GIGGLING.

JACK (V.O.)
Well, I guess it's montage o'clock!

EXT. LOCAL BALLPARK - AFTERNOON (1980)

We see a SHORT MONTAGE of Young Jack becoming a better batter with guidance from a semi-pro coach.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASEBALL FIELD - DAY (1980)

The day is blessed with sunshine.

The baseball coach, O'BRADY, a short, stout Irish guy, wears a look that says "not this shit again" and awaits THE COMING STORM: Young Jack's SECOND attempt at baseball.

Young Jack STEPS UP to the plate, OOZING with confidence.

JACK (V.O.)
I mean sure, I could have used
arcana to hit the ball in the first
place and avoid the whole
developing mettle through sheer
hard work and determination
narrative, but cheating with magic
would make for a poor story,
wouldn't it?

GIGGLES and WHISPERS surf the small crowd who are also expecting another tantrum from Young Jack.

JACK (V.O.)
And besides, searching for that missing spark was one of my better life choices.

The PITCH...

And to everyone's amazement, Young Jack HITS the BALL!

EVERY. TIME.

JACK (V.O.)
Then there was that time I actually hit a home run...

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASEBALL FIELD - DAY (1980)

A SLOW MOTION SHOT of Young Jack SLAMMING the ball square on. Perfect. Up and over.

Uniformed necks CRANE UP, following the BALL into the sky.

Young Jack RUNS from base to base, making it home to a CELEBRATORY APPLAUSE from his team mates.

COACH O'BRADY
Wow... That was a cracker, Jack!
(to himself)
Full of surprises, that boy.

JACK (V.O.)
The crazy bastard wouldn't stop calling me Krackajack after that. Well, until he died... Still, the nickname stuck with me like sweaty, plump thighs on a fake leather couch in the middle of a summer heatwave.
(pause)
Or Florida.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

EXT. JACK'S SHOP - MORNING (1997)

SUPERIMPOSE: CHICAGO, 1997

Jack's BASEMENT SHOP, located around the Wicker Park/
Bucktown area. The sign above the doorway reads:

JACK-IN-A-BOX

Beneath it in a smaller, whimsical typeface:

Gifts & Curiosities

Jack SAUNTERS into frame and ISN'T SURPRISED to see us.

JACK

(to camera)

Ha, bet you thought it was gonna
say Krackajack, didn't ya? PSYCH!

We watch Jack DISAPPEAR down the steps to OPEN the shop.

(beat)

His head POPS UP again, just above street level.

JACK (CONT'D)

(calls out to camera)

Are you waiting for an invite to be
mailed to you? Get the hell over
here!

The camera PANS left, then right, then back at Jack who looks
bewildered.

JACK (CONT'D)

Yes, You! Come on, I don't bite.

He descends again.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S SHOP - SHOP FLOOR - MORNING (1997)

Jack's shop is a gloomy, incense-scented haven for hippies
and neo-pagans to buy generic new age trinkets, jam-packed
with books, crystals, candles, etc. There is barely any free
space for any shelf to collect dust.

Jack SLAMS the front door a bit too hard, the WIND CHIMES above the door CLASH instead of tinkle.

JACK
 (startled/to camera)
 Ah, there you are. Well, this is my store.

JACK'S POV: PANNING LEFT TO RIGHT. The room is LONG and NARROW, with just enough space for a central aisle. Not wheelchair friendly in the slightest, and at the BACK of the room stands the CASH REGISTER on the SALES DESK, in front of a BEADED CURTAIN.

We FOLLOW Jack as he WALKS in further.

JACK (CONT'D)
 I know, I know I sold out on the whole magic shop thing, but the store's just a front for the Vulgars—you know, the regular people, the ones who always ask if I have—

Jack LEANS IN CLOSE to the camera to whisper.

JACK (CONT'D)
 —Real spells.
 (scoffs)
 Like I'd sell a real one to a Vulgar on purpose! Sorry guys, I only sell the good stuff to Cenicans [kennick-uns].

He MOTIONS for the camera to continue to FOLLOW as he walks over to where the cash register sits.

Distracted by the shiny lens on the camera, probably, Jack SMASHES his hip on the corner of the SALES DESK. It renders him speechless for a moment.

He CLENCHES his teeth, THUMPING the desk, waiting for the pain to subside.

Then, he SQUATS behind the desk briefly, resurfacing with several spell kits and novelty magical paraphernalia, branded with "KRACKAJACK" in a janky, whimsical typeface.

There were:

—A few small packets, the type you hang up on display hooks/pegs.

-A couple of boxed items a bit bigger than a pack of playing cards.

-A small jar, with smaller objects inside.

JACK (CONT'D)
 (feigns shock)
 Oh, look, real spells! These ones
 are harmless, so the N-triple-A
 allows me to sell them as long as
 they're not on display to Vulgars.

Jack looks left and right, then leans in close.

JACK (CONT'D)
 (quietly)
 Most people don't even know magic
 exists!

He holds a finger up to his lips. *Shh!*

He opens a drawer, and with one SWIPE of his arm he CLEARS the table of the items he'd placed on the desk only moments before.

The drawer SLAMS SHUT and Jack SUSPICIOUSLY EYES the room for eavesdroppers, even though there are none.

JACK'S POV: The shop is so empty you can expect TUMBLEWEED to ROLL ON BY. We can HEAR CRICKETS.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Anyway...

Jack turns to PART the beaded curtain.

JACK (CONT'D)
 The good stuff's back here.

He walks on through, rubbing his sore hip.

INT. JACK'S SHOP - BACK HALLWAY - MORNING (1997)

JACK'S POV: A long, narrow, WINDOWLESS HALLWAY, bar the TINY WINDOW above the back door at the other end, DIMLY LIT by a BARE BULB; the DARK WALLS absorb most of the light.

There are TWO DOORS ON THE LEFT, and ONE ON THE RIGHT.

JACK
 Here's where the real magic's at...

Jack opens the FIRST DOOR to his left. The light had been left on. The SIGN on it is barely legible:

SHIT HAPPENS

JACK (CONT'D)
Bathroom. Obviously.

The light CLICKS OFF and the door closes.

Jack opens the SECOND DOOR on the left:

JACK (CONT'D)
My place...

INT. JACK'S STUDIO APT. - MORNING (1997)

We PAN FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The room is a studio apartment. A kitchenette, a couple of tatty couches cupping a small coffee table, and just visible behind an old privacy screen is an unmade bed beneath a small basement window.

JACK
Also doubles as the staff room.

The camera lingers on a bed at the far end of the long room.

JACK (CONT'D)
Not the bedroom side though.
Obviously.
(shakes head)
Why are you making this weird?

Jack RETREATS and closes the door.

INT. JACK'S SHOP - BACK HALLWAY - MORNING (1997)

Jack STANDS READY at the last door—the ONLY one on the right—and produces his KEYS.

JACK
The good stuff's in here. No,
really this time.

The lock CLICKS and the door SWINGS open.

INT. JACK'S SHOP - STORE ROOM/ARMOURY - MORNING (1997)

JACK'S POV: A NARROW L-shaped storeroom, lit better than the hallway, and lined with CURIOSITY-FILLED SHELVES, turning to the left at the far end.

Following it, we find ourselves in an armoury-cum-workshop.

Like a museum, there are many locked glass cases, displaying intricate DAGGERS and ornate JEWELLERY.

A selection of SHIELDS, AXES, SWORDS AND MACES are MOUNTED on the wall. There are a few HELMETS too.

At the CENTRE of the room is a large chunky workshop bench: A CRAFTING TABLE.

JACK

(proudly)

Think of me as the Indiana Jones of arcane paraphernalia, but with less whips and better cologne—'cause *eau de chameau* is so not my thing.

We take a closer look at the weapons. Many of them scintillate or shimmer with a magical energy.

There are a dozen or so different swords ranging from pretty, dainty things, to huge, glorified girders.

Some fancy elaborate daggers. A set of throwing daggers. A cursed gun.

A pair of large dual-bladed GLAIVES, not unlike what you'd find in a video game, are MOUNTED in between two identical pairs of smaller glaives.

JACK (CONT'D)

Some of these were payment for services rendered. The others? I... err, acquired, one way or another.

(pause)

So I like shiny, pointy, stabby things... Might be a penis thing, it might be a magpie thing.

(shrugs)

Who knows?!

Jack leads us to an exquisite, five-foot long, double-headed BATTLE-AXE that is the centerpiece of his mounted collection. The axe blades have a purple flame-like aura that laps like many short tongues.

JACK (CONT'D)

This one I'm keeping safe for a friend.

Jack UNMOUNTS the BATTLE-AXE to admire it.

JACK (CONT'D)

The Fireblood Battle-Axe of Amo-Ethel. You see, it's both enchanted and cursed. No-one of this little planet—which we the Cenican call Bo, and the Vulgar call Earth—can wield it.

Jack rolls the handle in his hands, ROTATING the axe slowly.

JACK (CONT'D)

Well, unless they possess the blood of the dragon in their veins. Or the blood of the phoenix.

He pauses briefly, ENTRANCED by the axe.

JACK (CONT'D)

Only the Forvha possess the blood of the phoenix, which means that apart from Dragonkin, only Azara and those of her blood can use it in battle.

Jack SHAKES himself from the mesmerisation.

JACK (CONT'D)

Being fireproof probably comes into play here, and the Moga have the same trait... The blades are made from a metal not found in our realm. The Moga call it fireblood.

INSERT: A battle-axe being forged and worked. It's dipped into scintillating Moga blood instead of water. Steam rises.

JACK (CONT'D)

This axe knows when it's being wielded as a weapon, hence why I can hold it. Fantastic enchantment, but when it's held—and swung—with intent, the entire thing gets all fiery, handle and all. These small flames on the blades here are just the pilot light. They're not even hot just now.

Jack playfully passes his fingers through the small flames.

JACK (CONT'D)

If they were, the whole block would've caught fire by now.

(to battle-axe)

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
 One day, you beautiful thing, I
 will learn all your secrets...

He remounts the heavy weapon.

JACK (CONT'D)
 ...But that day is not today!
 (to camera)
 'Za thought someone might use it to
 kill her, or one of her children. I
 told her she's paranoid-

INSERT: Jack telling Azara "You're paranoid" and Azara
 rolling her eyes.

DISTANT, INAUDIBLE WHISPERS.

We slowly ZOOM IN over Jack's shoulder to the CREEPY,
 WHISPERING DOOR at the other end of the room.

JACK (CONT'D)
 You're probably wondering what's
 behind there, huh?

The camera shakes from side to side, as to say "No way in
 hell, dude."

Jack LEADS US anyway to the creepy, foreboding door.

And UNLOCKS it...

INT. THE HUB - PROBABLY STILL MORNING (1997)

The light comes on with a PLINK! But the dark walls absorb
 most of the light, so the room seems dimmer.

JACK'S POV: The windowless room is a void, except for eleven
 doors that line the walls: Three on the left wall, three on
 the right wall, and five on the far wall. It's a creepy-ass
 room.

JACK
 (to camera)
 My hub. All my portals lead here.
 Being able to visit one of my
 other stores instantly is the
 ultimate way to travel, I'm telling
 ya. No delays, no queues... No
 money? No problem! But I try to
 spend as little time as I can in
 here these days.

Jack glances at the central door on the back wall and SHIVERS a little.

JACK (CONT'D)

Still creeps me the fuck out.
Purgatory. Worst. Adventure. Ever.

(pause)

You see, necromancy is dangerous.
Almost as dangerous as releasing
all this exposition like this, with
me, talking to you...

Jack WINKS and a twinkle SHINES from his cheesy grin.

JACK (CONT'D)

The place a necro's power comes
from is dark, and powerful. A place
that only accepts payment of the
worst type of currency, and no, I
don't mean a credit card that has a
damning 29.9% APR on all purchases
and fuck all air miles. I mean with
parts of your soul, man...

CUT TO:

INT. THE HUB (1994)

SUPERIMPOSE: 1994

The hub has a large, CIRCULAR TABLE standing in the centre of the room. It's dark, but there's LIGHT coming from the table, although the source is unseen.

There is a seance in progress, and Jack is unwittingly entertaining infamous NECROMANCERS known as THE DARK FIVE.

Jack is CHANNELLING, speaking in tongues. Everything is going as it should. Suddenly, he becomes PARALYSED. Frozen.

One of the necromancers WALKS to the middle door on the hub's back wall—unallocated up until then—and SMEARS a scintillating SLIME on it, which is absorbed by the wood. A breathless spell is CHANTED, and Jack's arcana—his magical power—is SYPHONED off into the door.

A FLASH.

The portal is ready. Jack, still in a trance, is THROWN through this portal, into another realm...

EXT. ANNWN - PERPETUAL TWILIGHT (1994)

ANNWN [ah-NOON]. Purgatory. The Underworld. A forest. A dirt path stretches far into the dark woodland. Light barely makes it through the canopy. It seems ancient in the twilight, probably because it is.

Shadows in the peripheral DART ABOUT, suggesting to stay on the path that the undergrowth encroaches menacingly.

Jack, eyes completely white and still in a trance, is VULNERABLE.

He STANDS to walk, as if being GUIDED by something...

JACK (V.O.)

Annwn [ah-NOON] isn't one of those lovely places you'd go for a picnic. It felt like I'd wandered for days. And being a flesh and blood entity in purgatory is like smothering your naked self with honey, alerting all the bees, wasps, and bears to your presence, except in Annwn, there are no living animals or insects, just dead... things.

WHISPERS. They are louder here.

This STIRS Jack from his trance.

He knows where he is. And SHAKES his head in disbelief.

The SHADOWS begin to FRENZY, as if they can SMELL Jack's adrenaline as it FLOODS his body.

He COVERS his ears as the CREEPY WHISPERS become TOO LOUD, SHAKING him to his core. PAIN. He DROPS to one knee as a shadowy being approaches.

ARAWN [pronounced like "around" minus the D]. King of Annwn. The Underworld. Purgatory. An ancient Celtic [Welsh] deity.

In shadow form, he is ethereal and shrouded with shadow until he lowers his hood, then the shadowy mist blows away to reveal a solid, tall, pale, elf-like man with silvery white hair and silvery white tattoos—or maybe even scars.

The appearance of Arawn QUELLS the voices.

Jack OPENS his eyes in surprise, and on seeing Arawn in his shadow form, he's TERRIFIED.

But NOTHING happens.

Jack STANDS UP cautiously. He shouldn't have.

He is then ATTACKED by Arawn's HELLHOUNDS, the CŴN ANNWN [pronounced "COON ah-NOON"].

They TEAR his clothing from his body until he stands butt-naked in front of an ethereal deity who invokes PURE FEAR from the very depths of your soul.

Jack's BREATHING FAST now. He wants to RUN, but can't.

Arawn raises his hand and POINTS his fingers towards Jack.

Jack's skin begins to SEAR as white-hot glyphs BURN themselves into his naked flesh.

The sigils darken as they cool, looking more like tattoos, yet they are CARVED into him, not only his skin, but beneath his skin, beneath flesh. Onto his bones.

And when Jack's SCREAMS finally STOP, Arawn lowers his hand, and his smoky hood; his shadow-self BLOWING away like mist as he becomes SOLID.

Arawn's skin is now translucent and PALE, as are his hair and skin. Pigmentless, apart from his eyes.

Arawn LIFTS UP the sleeve of his robe, his arm wearing THE SAME MARKS that Jack now bares.

He HOLDS Jack's gaze HOSTAGE for longer than is comfortable until Jack finds his voice again, although in this realm it's DISTORTED: It ECHOES, but it's also MUFFLED.

JACK
(shivers)
So, what now?

Arawn doesn't respond, only continues to STARE.

JACK (CONT'D)
What? Am I supposed to know what these mean? I can't fucking read it. I don't even recognise the language!

Jack attempts to decipher the marks on his arm.

Squiggle, squiggle, penis-thing, line, squiggle... What the fuck is *that* supposed to be?

His confusion turns to ANGER and begins to bubble to the surface.

JACK (CONT'D)
This one's just a scribble, man,
c'mon... What the fuck?!

Arawn STARES for a moment or two, then he RAISES his hood, becoming SHADOW once more, and GLIDES away from Jack, backwards.

JACK (CONT'D)
(rages)
Oh! So you're gonna leave me find
my own way out, huh? I must have
missed the fucking billboard with
the visitors map on my way in here!

Arawn STOPS in his tracks.

Oh shit...

JACK'S POV: Arawn RUSHES Jack, STOPPING only inches from Jack's face.

JACK (CONT'D)
I-I-I-sorry, um, Sir-Your
Majesty... Lord. It's, you know,
habit... Back up there.

It's awkward. For the both of them.

Arawn glides back a little with a raised eyebrow.

Apart from a glint of amusement in Arawn's eyes, he stays SILENT.

JACK (V.O.)
I've always wondered if Annwn is an
alternate dimension occupying the
same pocket of space as our realm.
Maybe it's somewhere far away. Is
Earth above or below? I didn't know
then, and I still fucking don't!

While Jack ponders on the actual physical position of purgatory in the cosmos, Arawn WITHDRAWS and DISAPPEARS into the darkness, leaving Jack to fend for himself.

Again.

JACK
(pissed off)
Great. That's just fucking great.
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
Oh, thank you King of the
Underworld! Master of the Dead! How
the fuck do I find my way out
now...?

We ZOOM OUT, UP into the CANOPY, looking down.

Jack feels small. And alone. Yet the shadows DO NOT ATTACK him like they had done before. And the whispers aren't as loud, either.

The time? Who knows! His wrist is BARE, and his watch? GONE. And he's STILL NAKED.

He looks over at the pile of his clothes. In bits.

A few cautious steps.

The shadows themselves RECOIL and RETREAT as if THEY are afraid of HIM.

He DIGS through the tatters for his watch, wallet and keys, before walking back along the path the way he came. At least, he thinks it's the right way.

Hours pass, maybe. Time is fucked here.

His WALK becomes a JOG.

Then a RUN.

Then, Jack throws a WOBBLY.

JACK (CONT'D)
HOW THE FUCK DO I GET BACK HOME?

A portal effortlessly appears about ten feet in front of him.

JACK (CONT'D)
(sarcastic)
Oh. Well, obviously!

It's the same one he was pushed through.

Bastard necros...

JACK (CONT'D)
Those fuckers...
(pause)
My stuff!

Jack STORMS towards the portal like a man on a mission.

INT. THE HUB - DAY (1994)

The necros are still in the hub; only moments have actually passed. They're about to leave when Jack BURSTS through the portal, FLINGING open the door, standing boldly in front of it, bollock naked, much to the their surprise.

The necros make for the exit. Jack holds his hand up and makes a fist, which causes the door back to the armoury to SLAM closed, and not let them pass.

They are trapped, and Jack knows EXACTLY what to do with them. Jack STEPS ASIDE, and smoky hand-like tendrils come forth from the open portal, SNAKING into the room, taking hold of each SCREAMING necromancer to DRAG them back to Annwn.

Jack closes the door with a satisfying CLICK, and turns towards the séance table, The chairs that had been encircling it are now overturned.

JACK
(exhausted)
No more fucking séances!

Jack leaves the room.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

FADE IN:

INT. JACK'S SHOP - SHOP FLOOR - AFTERNOON (1997)

SUPERIMPOSE: 1997

The shop is quiet. Jack's behind his counter, filling in a crossword. Ambient, NEW AGE MUSIC plays on the shop's speakers, contrasting with Jack's overgrown hair, and his "The Clash" T shirt.

He occasionally looks up to check on things.

Enter SEAN JAMES, a goth-looking 13 year old, short for his age, and a little on the scrawny side. He has the type of thick, dark eyelashes women would kill for, or at least pay a pretty penny to get glued onto their face professionally.

He browses the books intended for the general public.

It's not his first time in the shop and he knows his way around.

JACK

Hey kid, you gonna buy anything today, or are you still *just looking?*

Sean is a little STARTLED.

SEAN

(quietly)
Dunno...

Sean works his way around the shop to Jack's counter.

Sean looks at Jack a little longer than necessary, as if he wants to ask something.

Awkward.

SEAN (CONT'D)

How come you don't have anything *real* here?

Jack MASSAGES the back of his neck, while regretting a decision not to buy a new chair.

JACK
Real? What do you mean, *real*? Of course this stuff is real!

SEAN
Yeah, but they're not *real* real.

Sean checks that there no other customers there.

SEAN (CONT'D)
(whispering)
They're not *Cenican* [kennick-un] real.

Ah. He's after the good stuff.

Jack SLURPS at his coffee. GULP.

JACK
Well, whatcha after, kid?

SEAN
Ugh, I probably can't afford it anyway...

JACK
Afford what, exactly?

SEAN
(whispering)
You know those cool spells you sell?

Jack wanted to say no, but bit his tongue on feeling the sarcasm wanting to slip out.

JACK
Shir-thanol [sheer-thanol]?

SEAN
Yeah, them—I, er, I wanna make a book out of the paper.

JACK
You wanna make a grimoire?

SEAN
Is that what they're called?

JACK
Sometimes, most of us just call them journals.

Sean SMILES POLITELY, like a happy sponge, ready to absorb all and any drops of information.

JACK (CONT'D)

Thing is, that paper has risks, my dude. Imagine sticking a firework on a birthday cake. Overkill, right?

Sean NODS.

JACK (CONT'D)

You make a mistake when writing something on it, you could implode your bedroom, or tear the fabric of reality. People normally just use regular paper, or even that fancy-schmancy recycled stuff with dried flowers 'n' shit pressed into the pages. I got some of that over there. Besides. The arcane paper ain't cheap, kid.

Sean looks disappointed.

JACK (V.O.)

His face fell like my grammy's boobs might have done after being released from their torturous boob-prison at the end of a long day, and that made me feel bad. The kid being disappointed, I mean, not Grammy's breasts; but they ain't the happy fun-bags they used to be any more either, especially since she's dead.

(Pause)

If I'm honest, Sean reminded me a little of myself when I was young, except I was a little more confident, and by that, I mean mouthy. And that's when the wave of pity hit me.

For fuck's sake.

Jack sighs.

JACK

I'll tell you what. I could give you *some* for your book, just enough to make, I don't know, emergency tear-off spell strips or something, in exchange for something that I need.

SEAN

(grimacing)

I ain't sucking no-one's dick for a book, man!

Jack CHUCKLED until he saw the panic on Sean's face as he slowly backs away.

JACK

Whoa, kid, chill out, I meant come work for me here.

(taps on the counter)

You work it off, and after it's paid off, I might keep you on permanently.

Sean STOPS backing away, and his face lights up a little, almost as if he hears a KER-CHING go off in his teenaged brain.

SEAN

Like... like a job?

JACK

Yeah, why not?

SEAN

Okay... yeah. I'll work it off. But no molesting me.

JACK

(laughing)

Kid, trust me, I'm the farthest thing you can get from a Catholic priest.

INT. JACK'S SHOP - VARIOUS ROOMS - AFTERNOON (1997)

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

-Sean being shown how the till works.

JACK (V.O.)

Sean worked damned hard to learn the ropes.

-Sean making disastrous coffees.

SO MUCH MESS!

-Sean and Jack checking contents of boxes delivered.

JACK (V.O.)
He was like a little psychic goth
sponge.

-Sean learning how inventory works.

JACK (V.O.)
Nothing powerful, but he'd know if
the phone was about to ring, or
when a customer was about to enter.

-Sean answering the phone with a "Hello" that morphed into a
"S'up" and then a "Yo" as his comfort level increased.

JACK (V.O.)
But it wasn't all fun and games.

-Sean learning to clean glass to avoid smears.

JACK (V.O.)
We had quiet days, and I had rules.

-Sean cleaning the toilet.

-A LOW-ANGLED SHOT of Sean watching Jack enchanting items.
Glowing lights are lighting up their faces and are reflected
in Sean's eyes.

JACK (V.O.)
He wasn't allowed in certain rooms
out the back on his own, especially
the hub.

-Sean stacking shelves, but hearing spooky, DISTANT WHISPERS.

JACK (V.O.)
For his own protection.

EXT. SCHOOL NEAR JACK'S SHOP - AFTERNOON (1997)

The street is quiet for a Friday afternoon, that is until the
local high school opens their floodgates, releasing its
hormonal horde, who emerge from the school like a swarm of
wasps.

INT. JACK'S SHOP - SHOP FLOOR - AFTERNOON (1997)

A GANG of four hooded kids enter the shop. They WHISPER with each other, GIGGLING and SNIGGERING.

Jack is writing in some notebooks and ledgers on the counter, Sean, not long having left school himself, is already restocking candles nearby.

Worried, Sean glances over at Jack.

Jack, having already clocked the GANG, mouths "watch them" at Sean.

Sean NODS and takes up a better spying post, rearranging a display. He watches them WHISPER among themselves, pointing at some things in locked glass cases.

Sean gives his head a small shake as a strange feeling comes over him.

He hurries over to Jack who is balls deep in inventory books.

Sean leans in to Jack.

SEAN

I got a bad feeling-

One of the GANG clears a shelf near the bookcase with one swift swipe of their arm. Breakables SHATTER and CLATTER to the floor. A distraction attempt.

Meanwhile, a smaller, shiftier-looking hooded kid SMASHES the locked glass display case containing expensive pagan ceremonial blades with a rock they'd smuggled in.

He immediately flees the store with a shiny stabby-stab.

The others follow, bolting out of the door, up the steps, and then they scatter.

JACK

Oh, you little bastards, GET BACK
HERE!

Jack LEAPS INTO ACTION, HURDLING the box Sean had been restocking candles from.

EXT. JACK'S SHOP - AFTERNOON (1997)

Jack bounds up the steps and chases the little shit down the street for about twenty seconds.

JACK
You better get back here or-

Jack raises his hand. He wants to break that stupid NAAA rule about using magic in public, and snatch the knife back from the thief's hand.

But, a feeling of dread comes over him.

INT. JACK'S SHOP. SHOP FLOOR - AFTERNOON (1997)

Sean stands by the counter, unsure what to do.

WHISPERS. LOUD WHISPERS.

Coming from the STORE ROOM.

Sean looks down on the counter and sees Jack's KEYS.

EXT. THE STREET - AFTERNOON (1997)

Jack FREEZES.

He realises the danger he's put Sean in.

JACK (V.O.)
The boy. I'd left the boy alone in
the store.

He quickly pats himself down, checking for his KEYS.

Nope. They're still on the counter.

JACK
Fuck!

Jack watches as the dagger-thief disappears around the corner.

JACK (CONT'D)
Damnit!

Jack WHIMPERS after his stolen shiny, yet turns on his heels and races back.

INT. JACK'S SHOP - SHOP FLOOR - AFTERNOON (1997)

Jack BURSTS through the front door, but Sean is already gone.

The beaded wooden curtain that leads into the back hallway is swinging slightly.

Jack RUNS around the counter, grazing his hip off the corner.

JACK
(wincing)
Motherfucker!

Jack limps through the beaded curtain, getting a little tangled, and heads through the OPEN store room door.

INT. ARMOURY - AFTERNOON (1997)

Jack emerges from behind the storage shelves and SPRINT-LIMPS through the armoury.

No time to admire his shiny collection right now.

JACK
(frantic)
Sean?

Jack's KEYS are swinging from the lock of the OPEN hub door.

We can almost hear Jack's heart skip a beat when he sees them, nearly tripping up on his own feet.

INT. THE HUB - AFTERNOON (1997)

The atmosphere in the room is thick, one where instinct tells you not to make any sudden moves.

Sean is standing in front of the open door to Annwn/Purgatory, mesmerised.

JACK
(snaps)
SEAN!

Sean JUMPS with fright.

SEAN
Jack—I couldn't help it—I'm sorry!

Jack motions Sean towards him.

JACK
(interjects)
—Sean, step away from the portal.

Sean isn't listening. His nerves have taken over and he continues to apologise over Jack's pleas.

It's as if the heavy atmosphere is muffling Sean's words.

SEAN

-They wouldn't stop. I hear them
all the time! Whispering to me that
they're alone, and afraid.

Jack slowly and cautiously approaches him.

SEAN (CONT'D)

They told me to come to them. To
free them. And I-I-I couldn't stop
myself.

Jack swallows hard; the door had been open for far too
long...

JACK

(implores)

Sean, please, get away from there!

Jack is only a few steps away from being able to push the
door closed, but it's too late.

SEVERAL LONG BLACK ARMS snake in from the portal, the smoky
tendrils engulfing the boy.

Sean's eyes widen in horror as his feet are lifted clear off
the ground.

SEAN

(arm reaching out)

JACK!

Jack grabs on to Sean's small, outstretched hand as tight as
he could as the shadows try to pull Sean into their world.

SEAN (CONT'D)

PLEASE DON'T LET GO!

Jack reaches even higher up Sean's arm with the other hand,
terrified of dislocating his shoulder. But at least he would
be safe.

JACK

Hold on!

Sean's hand starts to SLIP from Jack's. He tries to reach
Jack with his other hand, but it's being restrained by the
shadows.

Jack places a foot on the door frame for leverage.

As Sean's tears begin to flow down his cheeks, a dark and
shadowy ENTITY grasps the boy's head to lap at them, tasting
them, disappearing back into the shadows.

Each time Jack pulls Sean closer, it's countered.

Sean slips further into the event horizon.

Jack calls out to Sean to encourage him to hold on.

Sean calls out to Jack, begging him not to let go.

This MORBID GAME of tug-of-war is like a countdown: The TICKING of the clock replaced by the sound of stitching seams being TORN slowly...

SEAN
 (whimpers quietly)
 Jack, don't let them take me!
 Please!

The final threads give out and Sean's whole sleeve TEARS OFF in Jack's hands.

JACK!
 SEAN (CONT'D)

Off balance, Jack FALLS BACKWARDS, landing with a BUMP on the hard floor.

The door SLAMS shut.

JACK
 No no no no! SEAN!

Sean's CRIES and SCREAMS muffle and fade into nothing.

JACK (CONT'D)
 SEAN!

Jack tries to open the damned door, but something is holding the door shut.

The doorknob ices up, becoming so cold that it burns Jack's hand. He CRIES OUT and lets go.

Jack winces and inspects his injured palm. It looks bad, but a WHITE LIGHT starts EMANATING from it, HEALING it.

JACK (CONT'D)
 What the hell... Ow!

All of Jack's wards start to burn and glow white, searing with as much intensity as they had when Arawn had first scored them into his flesh.

JACK (V.O.)
 Was it a coincidence Arawn warded
 me, or did he know I'd be needing
 protection again? It didn't matter
 though, I wasn't scared anymore.

Jack, almost growling through clenched teeth, uses his pain to push on.

He tries the door again and this time is met with no resistance.

EXT. ANNWN - PERPETUAL TWILIGHT (1997)

Jack RUNS along the eerily familiar path which cuts through the dimly lit forest.

JACK
 (voice distorts, like
 reverse echoes)
 Sean?

SCUFFLING in the undergrowth.

Dark shapes DART ABOUT in the distance.

Are those EYES watching from the shadows? Lots of eyes...

A louder SCUFFLE just to Jack's right, off the path, into the dark wood. He turns his head sharply.

JACK'S POV: A couple of FIGURES are only just visible in the dim light.

As Jack approaches, the shadows retreat, revealing Sean in the grasps of a SHADE; a dark entity. It isn't fully solid, yet appears corporeal, like someone wearing a black unitard that fully covers their head, except for eyeholes, which glowe.

The Entity is clearly FEMALE.

THE SHADE
 (hisses)
 He's mine now, Jack.

At first, Jack shudders at the thought of this shade knowing his name.

And then? Anger.

JACK
 Not on my watch, bitch!

Jack CHARGES at The Shade like a juggernaut.

There's a BRIGHT FLASH as Jack THUMPS his palm into the entity's face; the flash sending the surrounding shadows even deeper into the forest.

The Shade SCREAMS in pain, holding its face in its hands, while Sean is thrown a few feet away.

Jack pulls Sean to his feet.

Sean's face crumples and he hugs Jack tightly around the waist.

SEAN
I knew you'd save me!

JACK
Always, but we gotta go. Now.

Jack grabs Sean by the hand and leads him back to the path.

SEAN
Now which way?

JACK
Any! This way!

THEY RUN.

Sean lets go of Jack so he could TURN TO LOOK BEHIND them and sees The Shade in PURSUIT.

JACK
Don't look, keep running!

But Sean TRIPS.

Jack SKIDS to a halt and goes back to help Sean up.

The Shade is close!

SEAN
I'm sorry!

JACK
Keep running!

Jack looks up and knows The Shade is closing in on them too fast. Jack's attempt to put some distance between them and their pursuer fails, so he summons the portal to the hub.

A portal appears in front of them, and they run through.

INT. THE HUB - AFTERNOON (1997)

Jack and Sean EXIT the portal, Jack dragging Sean behind him.

Jack SLAMS the door shut.

OUT OF BREATH, he leans on it and SLIDES to the floor.

He closes his eyes in relief for a few seconds.

JACK
I'm getting too old for this shit.

Sean doesn't move an inch, He just stands there, back towards Jack, motionless. Not even out of breath.

JACK (CONT'D)
Kid, you okay?

Sean doesn't answer.

JACK (CONT'D)
(gets up)
Hey, Sean?

Jack places a hand on the boy's shoulder and spins Sean around.

JACK (CONT'D)
Sean?

Sean's eyes are closed.

Jack panics a little and gives Sean a small shake.

JACK (CONT'D)
Sean!

Sean's eyelids fly open.

JACK (CONT'D)
Dude! You okay?

Sean's lip quivers, about to cry.

JACK (CONT'D)
It's okay, you're safe now. You're-

A menacing smile CREEPS onto Sean's face, and Sean isn't the one doing the smiling.

JACK (CONT'D)
(incredulous)

NO!

Jack pushes the possessed kid away from himself in horror.

Sean's eyes grow WIDE with glee.

SEAN
(hissing)

YES!

Sean's meatsuit moves incredibly fast and exits via a different portal.

Jack stares at another door that's been shut in his face.

No, not again, please not again!

His eyes flick to look at the doors on his left and then his right.

Then it hits him.

JACK
Oh no... Mom!

Jack pinches the bridge of his nose to force himself to focus.

He BOLTS out of the hub.

INT. ARMOURY - AFTERNOON (1997)

Jack RACES to the front of the store, yanking the KEYS from the hub door as he leaves.

INT. JACK'S SHOP - SHOP FLOOR - AFTERNOON (1997)

Jack scans the shop to check that no customers had wandered in, but none had.

He HURLS his KEYS at the front door. They find the lock themselves.

CLICK.

The store then SHUTS SHOP ON ITS OWN. Blinds draw themselves, lights switch themselves off.

The open/closed sign flips over and a secondary sign magically drops below it:

CLOSED—UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

The KEYS fly back to Jack's open hand.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HUB - AFTERNOON (1997)

Jack stands before the door that The Shade/Sean had escaped through.

He reaches for the doorknob.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT 3