

Hell's Gate

Season One - Episode Eight

"The Atomic Weight of Iodine"

Written By
Tyler Moody

(Based on characters and situations created
by Joss Whedon and Mutant Enemy Productions)

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. COMMAND CENTRAL - NIGHT

The command center is quiet as LON types away on one of the computers, all alone. He suddenly SLAMS his fist on the terminal.

LON
Dammit...

He rubs his face with both hands as FRANK enters.

FRANK
What's going on?

LON
I've been trying to locate the source of the anomalous portal activity.

FRANK
From the data you got on the one James came through?

LON
Exactly.

FRANK
Any luck?

LON
Absolutely zero. It's frustrating, no matter what I try... it's like trying to catch a falling leaf. Even trying seems to make what you're after get further away.

Frank cocks an eyebrow.

FRANK
You're analogizing. It's time to take a break.

LON
I can't. If indeed some external force is causing these portals to open, portals that the sphere is powerless to control, need I remind you, we must find it. If we don't, we could have demons attacking us right inside this very building.

FRANK
God knows it would be the first
time for that.

LON
Ah, yes, sarcasm, always helpful.

Frank puts his hand on Lon's shoulder.

FRANK
Seriously. Come upstairs, have
something to eat, a drink or
something. Relax for a minute.
(beat)
Consider that an order.

Lon nods reluctantly. They walk together out of the room.

LON
Relax, relax, relax, that's all
anyone seems to do round here.

FRANK
It's just, you seem to like work so
much we'd feel bad if we took any
away from you.

Lon gives Frank a wry smile as we:

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Lon and Frank enter the empty diner via the kitchen. Lon sits
at the counter. Frank reaches under the counter and pulls out
a bottle of liquor and two glasses.

LON
You keep alcohol under the counter?

FRANK
(waving the bottle around)
Well, I didn't pull this out of my
ass.

LON
Do you even have a liquor license?

FRANK
Now, see, it's questions like that
which get us in trouble

LON
Trouble?

FRANK

Yeah. That's an area where we have to throw around words like "laws" and "criminals" and "the diner shutting down."

LON

So no, then.

FRANK

Tell the man what he's won.

Frank opens the bottle and pours a small amount into each glass. He pushes one over to Lon who looks at it apprehensively.

Frank nods insistently toward Lon's glass. Hesitantly, Lon picks it up. Frank picks his up and clinks it into Lon's. In unison, they down the glasses' contents.

A beat and then both men cough and sputter. While Frank appears to have enjoyed his beverage, Lon makes a disgusted face.

LON

(nodding toward the bottle)

Are you sure that didn't come from your ass?

Frank chuckles.

There's the sound of FEET ON STAIRS. MIKE enters from the upstairs apartments and sits down at the counter beside Lon.

FRANK

Hey, Mike.

MIKE

Hey.

Lon looks at his watch, then at Mike. He sighs loudly. Mike notices.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(to Lon)

Something wrong, princess?

LON

No, it's just... ten o'clock, is all.

MIKE
I'm sorry. Am I interrupting your
"special-time"?

LON
No, no.

They sit uncomfortably for a beat.

LON (CONT'D)
It's just you were complaining all
day how you have such a huge test
tomorrow and yet here you are, at
ten o'clock at night, not studying,
just sitting around.

Mike turns on his stool to face Lon. Frank backs away slowly.

MIKE
For your information, "Dear Abby,"
I'm taking a break, seeing as how
I've been at it since we got back
from excoriating that dragon-thing--

LON
That was a Pu-Nahb demon, and we
didn't excoriate it. Excoriation is
the act of tearing off a thing's
skin. We disemboweled it.

MIKE
Which took up valuable study time!

LON
Combating the forces of evil is
more important than your dream of
becoming a bloody artist!

Mike stands up quickly, knocking the stool across the room
and scuffing the diner floor. Frank winces.

MIKE
I happen to be a great artist,
buddy!

LON
Just because you're good at
something, doesn't mean it's
important. But you're too damn
immature to realize that you have a
greater purpose than drawing funny
talking cats for insurance
companies!

Mike's eyes narrow, clearly about to blow his stack.

MIKE

You think I'm just a freakin' child! "Oh, yeah, Mikey, you'll be a great artist one day, mmhmm." Patronizing little nancy.

Lon stands up and turns away. He pulls on his coat and heads for the door.

FRANK

Where are you going?

Lon pauses and turns back to face Frank.

LON

You're the one that said I should take a break. Suddenly, I feel in need of a long one.

With a final glare at Mike, Lon EXITS the diner through the front door. There's a beat as the bell over the door jingles and Mike sighs, loosing the tension in his muscles.

Mike and Frank stand in awkward silence for a beat. Frank looks around the diner at nothing in particular.

FRANK

Well, I'm going to bed.

He walks from behind the counter and goes upstairs. Mike sits down and SLAMS his hand down on the counter. Off his annoyed expression we:

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE DINER - NIGHT

Lon is walking across the street, huffing, his arms crossed. As he walks across our field of vision, the camera PANS AWAY to the OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET. A car is parked parallel to the sidewalk.

INT. CAR INTERIOR - CONTINUOUS

An OVER THE SHOULDER shot, of a FIGURE watching Lon. All that can be seen of the person is its right shoulder clad in a coat and its gloved hand on the steering wheel.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE DINER - CONTINUOUS

As Lon turns the corner, the vehicle pulls away from the curb and begins to follow him.

BLACKOUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. CHUCKY'S BAR - NIGHT

CU on the "Chucky's" marquee on the wall. Though not upscale by most people's definition, the bar is as close to "classy" that one can get in a small town.

The camera PANS right to Lon who is sitting at the bar, nursing a golden-brown drink in a glass. The BARTENDER steps up in front of Lon, wiping the bar down.

BARTENDER

You look like you've had a rough day, buddy.

LON

(looking up)
You could say that.

He downs his shot.

LON (CONT'D)

Another.

The barkeep pours the drink and looks Lon over. He's clearly seen this before.

BARTENDER

Let me guess. Big fight?

LON

Yeah.

BARTENDER

Tough break. Wife? Girlfriend?

LON

(looking up; sputtering)
What? No! Why would you... why would you think that?

BARTENDER

(shrugs)
I seen that look on men's faces before. Usually a dame is involved.

Lon has finished this shot and taps his glass. The bartender again fills the shot glass.

LON

Well, no. It wasn't a "dame". Just
a... a co-worker.

He takes another shot. He's in a hurry not to be sober
anymore. The bartender gives Lon a knowing smirk.

BARTENDER

You and this "co-worker" close?

LON

No. We don't-- never really...
talk, he and I. For some reason
he's just so... frustrating.

BARTENDER

Yep. Been there, my friend.

The bartender takes the bottle of drink and sets it down on
the bar.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Hey, I've had a I gotta go wipe off
tables, but if you want some more,
help yourself.

LON

I thought you were supposed to--
(Lon hiccups)
--cut me off eventually.

The bartender gives a lopsided grin and shrugs.

BARTENDER

That sort of thing is bad for
business.

He walks away, leaving Lon to drink, which he does. After a
moment, a BRUNETTE comes over to Lon. Her shapely body is
encased in a sexy black dress. Short brown hair frames her
face which, along with a pair of large glasses, partly
obscures her striking features. She sits down on the stool
next to him, a glass in her hand.

BRUNETTE

Hi.

LON

Hello.

BRUNETTE

I heard you talking.

LON
(looks to where she had
been sitting)
From all the way over there?

She gives a flirty shrug.

BRUNETTE
I've got good hearing. You noticed
where I was sitting?

LON
In my line of work you... notice
things.

BRUNETTE
(smiling, shifting her
shoulders)
I'm sure you do.

She settles in closer to him. A gold locket dangles
seductively between her ample cleavage which is on full
display.

BRUNETTE (CONT'D)
Where does a big... strong... man
like you hang his whiskey-soaked
hat?

LON
Oh, God. I don't even want to
contemplate going home right now.

BRUNETTE
(smiling wider)
Mmmmm. That's good to hear.

LON
Why's that?

BRUNETTE
I was hoping maybe you and I could
hang out a little more. Maybe back
at my place?

The mysterious woman's finger traces down her chest. Lon's
eyes follow it down to her cleavage. He quickly realizes
where his gaze lies and averts his eyes. He looks off to the
side and cocks a flustered half-smile.

LON
Sure. Yeah. I mean, yes. I would
like that.

The Brunette grins.

BRUNETTE
One more drink for the road?

LON
Sure.

The Brunette grabs the bottle off the counter. Lon glances away for a beat, looking nervous and excited, as his new acquaintance refreshes their drinks. She then picks up both glasses and hands Lon one. They touch their glasses together in a silent toast to fornication and drain the shots.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHUCKY'S BAR - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Brunette is supporting Lon on her shoulder, showing surprising strength. Lon's slumped, sort of out of it, and acting loopy.

LON (CONT'D)
Do... do I still have a left side?

BRUNETTE
Yes, sweetie.

LON
It's only, I can't feel it.

BRUNETTE
It's there.

LON
You sure?

BRUNETTE
It's dragging along behind us pretty nicely now.

LON
I feel odd.

BRUNETTE
You're pretty drunk.

LON
No, no. I don't get drunk.

He stops moving.

LON (CONT'D)

I-- is everything always this swimmy?

The Brunette takes his hand and pulls him a little further. They've finally reached the Brunette's car, and she unlocks the doors. She puts Lon in the back seat, laid down.

BRUNETTE

It's nothing personal, it's just that I don't want you throwing up in my car.

She closes the door and leans up against the side of her car. Instantly her demeanor changes. Her stance becomes that of a predator with prey in its sights.

In one graceful motion she reaches up and pulls off her brown wig, revealing her true dark blonde hair underneath. She tosses her glasses on the ground and turns so that her face is in the light of a street lamp. It's a familiar face: HESTER the vampire, last seen after the dusting of her vampire lover. She smiles, licks her canine teeth, and gets into the driver's seat of the car.

FADE TO:

EXT. FRANK'S DINER - MORNING

Establishing shot of the diner.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S DINER - CONTINUOUS

Mike sits at the bar, drinking a cup of coffee. VI sits next to him, TAMSIN at a table a little further away.

MIKE

...and that should pretty much fill up my day. What are you gonna do after classes?

VI

Oh, you know. I was just gonna go out... shopping.

MIKE

Well, have fun-- wait.

Mike squints his eyes suspiciously at Vi.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 There's nowhere to shop in this town.

Vi averts her eyes from Mike's gaze, trying to appear casual.

VI
 Is too. Secret places. They don't like your kind.

Mike raises one eyebrow, now positive he's on to something.

MIKE
 They don't like out-of-towners?

VI
 (nervous)
 N-no. They're ho-homophobic.

Vi cringes. The jig is definitely up.

MIKE
 (slams his hand on the table)
 You're going to the Roundhouse to flirt with Rick!

VI
 Am not!

MIKE
 Are too!

VI
 How'd you know?

MIKE
 You women all speak in code. "Going shopping" means you're hunting for men, "Secret place" means it's a guy I like too, "homophobic" means "keep your gay, gay man-hands off my slice of Boston Cream Pie!"

VI
 Well, yes. But now that you've cracked our carefully crafted female language, I'm going to have to kill you.

MIKE
 Bring it.

VI

What? You think you can take me?

MIKE

You weigh like thirty pounds!

VI

But I'm superstrong and much faster than you. Slayer. Remember?

Mike spreads his fingers apart, and thin lines of blue lightning spread between them.

MIKE

(playful)

Bring it, bitch.

FRANK (O.S)

Ah, the joyful lilting of little children.

Frank descends the stairs, stretching his arms over his head. He looks over at Tamsin, who's staring at the table, disinterested. He sits at the booth she's occupying, across from her, and puts his hand on the table.

FRANK (CONT'D)

How you doing?

TAMSIN

(blah)

Fine.

Frank frowns.

FRANK

You know you can't lie to me, Tamsin.

TAMSIN

(finally looking up)

He was here, Frank. He was right here, I held him!

At the bar, Mike looks down and Vi bites her bottom lip.

TAMSIN (CONT'D)

For two days he was...

FRANK

It wasn't him.

TAMSIN

(seriously)

He was close enough.

(beat)

My face is probably all red... I'm going to go to the loo and freshen up.

She gets up, wiping away the tears which threaten to spill out, walks to the ladies room door, and enters inside. Frank gets up from the booth and moves around behind the counter to his usual spot.

FRANK

So, uh, guys... where's Tyler?

VI

Went to work.

MIKE

He's a responsible adult with an actual job. He had to leave early.

FRANK

(smugly)

Responsible adult. Wonder what that's like?

(just realizing)

And speaking of responsible, where's Lon?

MIKE

(rolling his eyes)

Probably still out moping because the kids at school were mean to him.

VI

What?

MIKE

We had a fight and Lady Di ran off to regain her composure.

Frank looks at his watch and frowns lightly.

FRANK

He should have been back by now, though. He usually likes to get an early start at being pompous.

MIKE

Whatever, dude. I'm sure he's fine.
Just too stubborn to share a room
with me.

Frank nods and begins cleaning the counter with a rag.

CUT TO:

INT. HESTER'S BEDROOM - DAY

We are CU on Lon's face-- he takes up our entire view. Lon appears to be sleeping peacefully, and as the scene opens he JERKS AWAKE.

LON

(mumbled; from a dream)
No. Father! I don't want any bloody
cheese...

He blinks a few times to clear his eyes.

LON (CONT'D)

Where the hell-- oh, yes. The bar.
The woman.
(beat)
A woman!

He smiles a cocky smile. Then he turns his head to the side.

ANGLE ON: A pair of high high-heeled shoes on the floor. PAN ACROSS the floor over a black dress, a black lace bra and matching set of panties, and finally a pair of stockings. The camera continues UP THE BEDSIDE TABLE, and Lon finally sees the black wig lying next to a bedside lamp. His smile fades.

LON (CONT'D)

What...?

We finally PULL BACK off the bed to reveal all of Lon-- he's still fully dressed and is handcuffed to the bedposts. Suddenly Lon begins JERKING his arms about, trying to free himself.

LON (CONT'D)

Oh, God! Oh, God!

He strains with his upper body to lift himself up, but can't. His kick wildly, but it does little good. Then the DOOR TO THE ROOM OPENS. Lon turns to face his captor. Hester steps through the doorway. Lon GASPS.

LON (CONT'D)

No...

Hester JUMPS across the room in one leap and lands on the bed. She moves to straddle Lon, and grabs his face with one hand. She leans down close to his face.

HESTER

Was it good for you too?

She smiles wickedly and runs her tongue across her lips as Lon turns his face from hers.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. HESTER'S BASEMENT

Lon has been tied to a wooden chair, hands behind his back, feet bound to the chair legs. There's a chalk circle on the pavement floor in front of him, and around the circle are bowls of various herbs, roots, hair, and a bowl with a few drops of blood in it. At the end of the circle furthest from Lon is a dead lamb. Hester stands across the basement from Lon, staring at him.

LON
(nodding towards the
circle)
What is all this?

HESTER
You can't figure it out?

LON
(studying the circle)
You've got... netherroot. A rare
form of Father Dominic's Cord. If
I'm not mistaken that's the last
surge of blood from a dying heart.
And a freshly-slaughtered lamb, I
assume as a symbol for a vessel to
be filled--
(his eyes widen)
A bodiless resurrection?

HESTER
(smiling)
Exactly.

LON
You're trying to bring back your
mate!

HESTER
And let me tell you, it'd have been
a hell of a lot easier if you and
your commandos hadn't set that
house on fire scattering his ashes
to the winds!

Lon squints his eyes, thinking for a moment.

LON
 You don't need a human sacrifice
 for this sort of thing, just some
 part of the body being restored.
 Why am I here?

Hester moves closer to Lon, pulling a rolled-up scroll from her pocket and unfurls it under Lon's nose.

HESTER
 Because I can't read the damn
 incantation!

Lon looks from the paper up to Hester- Once, then twice. A smile cracks his lips and he BURSTS INTO LAUGHTER. Hester looks on, uncomprehending.

HESTER (CONT'D)
 What? What's so funny?

LON
 (gasping for breath)
 You think-- ahaha-- that I'm going
 to help you? Heh heh.

HESTER
 I'm still lost.

LON
 What would possibly possess me to
 assist you in bringing back from
 Hell a conscience-less murderer?

HESTER
 (glaring)
 You'd best do as I say, Brit.

LON
 Never going to happen.

Now it's Hester who grins. She straightens up.

HESTER
 And here I was praying you'd say
 that.

She walks off, leaving Lon, no longer laughing. He looks scared at her last comment.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND CENTRAL - DAY

Frank is standing in front of a computer bank, typing, looking up occasionally to check a spreadsheet taped beside the monitor. He stops typing and rubs his eyes. He checks his watch.

FRANK

Okay...

Frank huffs and heads up the stairs into the diner.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S DINER - CONTINUOUS

Frank walks to the stairs that lead to the upper apartments.

FRANK (CONT'D (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Mike! Vi!

There's a beat and then the sound of FOOTSTEPS coming down the stairs. Mike enter first, dripping wet and wearing a very short pink robe with "Vi" embroidered on the right lapel. Vi follows, dressed in a long bathrobe, with a green mask of face cream covering her visage.

MIKE

What's going on?

Frank can't respond, he's merely staring at the two and their ramshackle appearance.

VI

(beat; waves hand in
Frank's face)

Uh? Frank?

FRANK

What the hell goes on in this
house!?

MIKE

No classes this afternoon. Some
kind of teacher seminar.

VI

So I decided to take a spa day.

FRANK

Okay.

(to Mike)

What's with...

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)
 (motioning to Mike's
 attire)
 ...this?

MIKE
 I was in the shower! I couldn't
 find a towel.

Vi takes a nice long look at Mike's naked legs and grins.

FRANK
 I just want to know, is this going
 to become a habit?

Mike seems to contemplate this for a beat.

MIKE
 You know, it's growing on me.

He examines his legs.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Plus the breeze is just... well,
 gosh, it's just swell.

Frank nods.

FRANK
 Perfect.

The DOOR to the diner OPENS and Tamsin walks in.

TAMSIN
 Hey, guys, what's-- oh, and look,
 no pants.

MIKE
 I'm trying out a new thing.

FRANK
 No, no, no. You are not trying out
 a new thing. No new things. This no-
 pants... "event" is going to be
 isolated.

MIKE
 Hard-ass.

Tamsin looks at Vi.

TAMSIN
 (excited)
 Oh! Spa day?

VI

Yes.

TAMSIN

Done the feet yet?

VI

I was just getting to them, do you
wanna come up and help?

TAMSIN

(as the girls move to the
stairs)

Sure! You know, I read this
magazine the other day, and it said
if you put--

FRANK

(shouting)

Hey!

Tamsin and Vi turn to look at Frank. Mike stops looking at
his legs and focuses.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Lon's been gone since last night.
We need to go find him. So you--
(to Mike)
--go put on some damn clothes. And
you--
(to Vi)
--stop playing Elphaba and get in
your ass-kicking gear.

Mike and Vi hurry up the stairs, seeing that Frank's slipped
into commando-mode. Once they're gone, Tamsin gives Frank a
smirk.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What?

TAMSIN

Elphaba? I never fancied you as a
"Wicked" fan.

Frank crosses his arms defensively.

FRANK

A guy can't have some culture?

Tamsin cocks her eyebrow as we:

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S SUV - DAY

Frank and Tamsin sit in the front, the now-groomed-and-dressed Vi and Mike in the back.

MIKE

What's the plan? Are we just going to drive around this half-horse town and pray real hard that we find a soggy, hung-over Brit lying on the ground?

FRANK

No. I've got a thing here--
(thumps the dashboard)
--that will lead me right to him.

MIKE

How?

FRANK

There's a tracking device in his car.

MIKE

(bewildered)
I'm sorry?

Vi and Tamsin don't look shocked.

FRANK

Yeah. Standard, for an operation like this.

MIKE

It's standard to spy on your friends and LoJack their cars?

FRANK

Look, kid, don't go all PATRIOT Act on me. I didn't plant a bug on his dashboard and I don't have cameras in his bedroom.

TAMSIN

(under her breath)
Not that there'd be anything to see.

FRANK

I just thought knowing where his car was might be useful one day.
(mock surprise)
And what do you know!
(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Lon's lost and this little blinking
 light is leading us right to him!

Mike leans back in the car, clearly unsatisfied. Frank drives on.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHUCKY'S BAR - PARKING LOT - DAY

Frank's SUV pulls up beside Lon's car in the parking lot. Frank parks the car and the team exits the vehicle. Vi peers into the window of the car.

VI
 Well, he didn't set up camp.

TAMSIN
 Perhaps the bartender wouldn't let
 him drive home. Let's go check
 inside.

The gang crosses the parking lot and heads into the bar.

CUT TO:

INT. CHUCKY'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

At this time of day, the bar's fairly empty. Just one MAN, sitting in the corner, and the Bartender, cleaning a glass. Frank sits down on a stool across from the Bartender, and the rest stand around him.

BARTENDER
 (re: Vi)
 She twenty-one?

FRANK
 Yeah.

BARTENDER
 It's just, I'll get in trouble if
 she's not twenty-one and someone
 finds out.

VI
 (to Mike)
 Why is it always me? Why not you?

MIKE
 People are floored by my maturity.
 They see you, they think, "Eh, pep
 squad."

VI

Don't make me slap you.

MIKE

You could, but legally it's a hate crime.

Frank hasn't even turned to look at this exchange.

FRANK

Yeah, look. Did a squirrely, depressed British guy come in here last night?

BARTENDER

I see a lot of people, I don't--

TAMSIN

He's also kind of pretentious, uses lots of big words.

BARTENDER

(snaps fingers)

Oh, yeah. That guy. Came in here whining about how his girlfriend or something was mean to him.

MIKE

Whoa, buddy! Not his girlfriend.

The bartender shrugs; what does he care?

FRANK

Do you know where he went when he left here?

BARTENDER

(thinks)

Uh, yeah. He got picked up by some hot brunette chick.

The gang turns to look at each other, exchanging confused looks. Tamsin steps forward, nudging Frank aside.

TAMSIN

Maybe we described him wrong. Kind of lean, whimpy, has an annoying voice? Doesn't shut up?

BARTENDER

That's him. This chick was way out of his league.

The gang still look unconvinced, but Frank continues.

FRANK

This woman... you know her?

BARTENDER

(shaking his head)
Never seen her before.

TAMSIN

Are you certain?

BARTENDER

You kidding me, doll? A broad that
smokin', I'd remember. Those legs!
That rack! Whoo!
(beat)
Sorry ma'am.

Tamsin nods. The bartender leans in to Mike.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

(quietly; with a sly grin)
Her caboose was pretty sweet too.

MIKE

Ah, yeah. Thanks.

BARTENDER

Good luck finding your friend. I
gotta get back to work.

The bartender gives the group a wink and walks off. The gang
circle up.

TAMSIN

So Lon got lucky.

MIKE

With a hot brunette with a nice
rack and sweet caboose.

There's a beat. No-one can quite believe it.

VI

Fifty bucks says he's dead already.

From their concerned looks, we:

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. HESTER'S BASEMENT - DAY

ANGLE ON: The basement floor. We PAN ALONG the clean concrete floor, finally reaching a trail of RED BLOOD. There's the sound of a KNIFE going back in its LEATHER SHEATH. We follow the blood trail across the floor, UP A LEG, to a MAN'S NAKED CHEST, which is absolutely covered in blood.

Further up we go, and the man is revealed as Lon. He's got a massive cut across his left eye. His shirt is ripped to shreds, and a tic-tac-toe board of cuts is etched into his chest. Other, less-gushy scratches exist all over Lon's face and arms.

It's obvious from the gallon or so of blood covering the left side of Lon's head that he's been partially scalped.

Hester steps around Lon, squatting in front of his WHEEZING, PANTING form.

HESTER

It's not that hard, Lonnie. Just read the pretty words on the old, old paper and everything will be over.

LON

(taking deep, pained
breaths)
You're not going to let me go.

HESTER

(matter-of-fact)
Well, no. But I promise you, from the bottom of my admittedly evil heart, I'll make your death painless.
(holding out the scroll)
Now what does the incantation say?

LON

(reading the scroll)
The atomic weight of Iodine is
126.90.

Hester sighs, rolls up the scroll, and SLAPS Lon. Her long fingernails cut through the flesh of Lon's nose.

HESTER

This is your area, boy! I've been studying you. You know this mystical stuff!
(MORE)

HESTER (CONT'D)
You're not a soldier, you're not
trained to resist torture.

LON
Yeah.

HESTER
So why are you?

LON
Honestly? It tickles me.

Hester's neutral expression immediately darkens, and she punches Lon with a closed fist. There's a CRACK, and Lon makes a pitiful CRYING sound for a moment, before regaining his composure.

LON (CONT'D)
(between gasps)
I never... really liked that
bone... anyway.

When Lon turns back to us, the area around the wound has already begun to purple. Hester grabs Lon by the hair and forces him to look at the scroll again.

HESTER
Read this thing to me, or I'll tear
your nose off.

LON
I guess I'll just have to find
something else to look down on
people from.

Hester does not appreciate self-deprecation. She grabs Lon's nose in her hand and WRENCHES it until it POPS. She lets go, and Lon's nose is clearly broken. Blood pours from him, and he SPITS some of the surge out of his mouth. Hester forces the incantation back in his face.

LON (CONT'D)
(in extreme pain; hard to
understand)
Okay. Okay. I'll reab your bloovy
spell.

HESTER
(pleased)
Finally.

LON
There once was a mab from Namtuckeh-

-

Another SLAP for Lon.

HESTER
 (coolly)
 Okay, you limey little prig, if I
 can't make you talk, I'll find
 someone who can.

Hester delivers a SPINNING KICK to Lon's chest, sending the chair he's tied to backwards onto the hard concrete. Lon hits his head with a THUD as Hester walks out of the basement. We linger on him just long enough to see his eyes lose focus and close as he passes out.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Frank, Mike, Vi, and Tamsin stand outside the hotel, frustrated. TOMMY, the young runaway, is standing with them talking to Frank.

TOMMY
 (shaking his head)
 I haven't seen him since lunch
 yesterday at the diner.

Frank nods.

FRANK
 Well, keep an eye out. It's not
 like him to disappear like this.

TOMMY
 You got it, Frank.

Frank smiles warmly at the boy and gives him a friendly punch in the arm. The team turns to leave.

FRANK
 See you later, kid.
 (beat)
 Oh! Don't forget! Tonight! Steaks!

Tommy smiles broadly and nods.

Frank turns and joins the gang as they walk away. Tommy enters the hotel.

TAMSIN
 (to Frank)
 You're quite fond of the lad.

Frank nods.

FRANK

He's a good kid. Just needs some guidance.

(beat)

Reminds me a lot of me at that age.

TAMSIN

(intrigued)

Sounds like there's a story there.

FRANK

(looking off)

Yep. But not one you're likely to hear soon.

Tamsin frowns and the gang walk a few more feet in silence.

VI

So. We've searched every hotel in the city.

MIKE

Which, incidentally, means we've searched three hotels.

FRANK

What kind of woman is it that picks up a man in a bar and doesn't take him to a hotel?

VI

A lady?

FRANK

I think it'd be weird. Waking up in a woman's house? What if she wanted to make you breakfast? You'd have to stick around, make small talk.

(shudders)

Eww.

Vi, Tamsin, and Mike give Frank a "You pig" look.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What?

As the three of them walk away, leaving Frank standing alone, he rolls his eyes.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I wish Tyler was here.

CUT TO:

INT. MACROWARE LOBBY - DAY

CU on the elevator doors. We hear a DING as the doors open. TYLER steps off the elevator and turns over his shoulder.

In the elevator stand CHAD and MITCH.

TYLER

Yeah. Lunch tomorrow, Chad, you're buying.

MITCH

Good luck with that.

CHAD

Hey!

The elevator doors close. Tyler chuckles lightly and then continues through the lobby, waving at the secretary. When he reaches the door, the DOORMAN pulls it open and smiles at him. Tyler gives an exaggerated nod.

TYLER

(bad British accent)

Why thank you, Patterson.

DOORMAN

(good-humoured)

My name is still Ronald, Mr. McGann.

CUT TO:

EXT. MACROWARE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Tyler steps through the door and walks through the parking lot. "The Imperial March" starts to play, sounding very polyphonic. It's a CELL PHONE RINGTONE. Tyler digs in his pocket to get his phone, and as he does a car pulls up behind him.

TYLER

Hey?

(beat)

What?

(beat)

No, I'm a--

(beat)

I appreciate that, but I'm--

(beat)

I am quite happy with the size of my penis, thank you!

He slams the phone shut.

TYLER (CONT'D)
 Dammit, Mike! Stop putting my phone
 number on the Internet.

Tyler starts to put the phone in his pocket, but he drops it on the ground. He sighs and kneels down to pick it up, and there's a THWACK!

Tyler slumps forward and falls on the ground, revealing a pair of legs, draped in a thick blanket, standing behind him. The owner of the legs drops a baseball bat on the ground, and drags Tyler back towards the car behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S SUV - DAY

The same configuration as before, but now everyone looks more tired.

FRANK
 Does anyone have any ideas?

Everyone takes a minute to think.

VI
 Well, let's break it down. I'm a
 hot woman, and I'm picking Lon up.

TAMSIN
 I'm definitely not a woman.

This garners a weird look from Frank and Vi, and a smug grin from Mike.

TAMSIN (CONT'D)
 (off their reaction)
 I'm inserting myself into the
 scenario!

FRANK
 Of course.

VI
 Yeah.

Mike opens his mouth to say something, and just LAUGHS instead.

TAMSIN
 (carrying on)
 Anyway! I'm not a woman, what am I?

VI
Demon, obviously.

All nod.

FRANK
Aren't many demons that can appear
as a hot brunette.

MIKE
Vampires.

Everyone else look as if they've been hit in the face with
the Obvious Stick.

TAMSIN
Of course.
(beat)
Why are vampires always hot?

MIKE
I think it might be a Dracula
thing. One of their superpowers.

VI
Nah. I mean, yeah, Dracula's hot,
but he didn't pass it on.

MIKE
(beat)
There's a Dracula?

VI
Yeah, but he-- you know what, I'll
explain it later.

Frank has been thinking through this whole thing, and he only
now voices his thoughts.

FRANK
There was no blood in any of the
alleys near the bar.

MIKE
So?

FRANK
Vampires don't like to wait around.
They see someone in a bar, they'll
take them outside, eat them right
there, and throw their empties on
the ground.

MIKE

The vampire would have drank all the blood, though, right?

FRANK

For all we joke about Lon, he knows how to handle himself. He would have put up a fight.

TAMSIN

So the vampire dragged him off somewhere.

FRANK

Which is weird.

VI

Which means they want something.

The team considers what this could possibly mean.

CUT TO:

INT. HESTER'S BASEMENT - DAY

Lon is still lying on the floor. The blood on his body is drying, caking his flesh. The door to the basement opens. Hester stands in the doorway.

HESTER

Since you obviously have no regard for your own life and I can't force you to do what I want, maybe I can convince you.

She reaches off-camera, grabs something, and throws it into the basement. It's Tyler, handcuffed, but not beaten. He stumbles across the floor, hitting the far wall, but not falling down.

Hester enters the basement behind him. She grabs Tyler's handcuffs, unlocks one of the cuffs, and lifts him up. She handcuffs him again, this time so that the chain between the cuffs is around a pipe crossing the basement ceiling.

Tyler's arms are forced above his head, and his feet barely touch the ground. Then Hester picks up Lon and points his chair toward Tyler.

HESTER (CONT'D)

You've got an hour. If you haven't agreed to read me my scroll by then, I'm going to kill this little bastard.

(MORE)

HESTER (CONT'D)

(beat)

Enjoy your visit.

She exits the basement and SLAMS the door behind her. Tyler and Lon look at each other. Tyler grimaces at Lon's appearance.

TYLER

Hey.

LON

Hello.

TYLER

How are you doing?

LON

Been better. How about you? Rough day at the office?

TYLER

Yeah. The copy machine broke, Corrine was PMSing or something, Chad ate my lunch, and then I got hit in the head with a baseball bat, thrown into a car that makes the Pope-Mobile look like KITT, and ended up handcuffed to a pipe in a basement.

(beat)

Even on salary, it just doesn't seem worth it.

Despite the grimness of the situation, Lon LAUGHS weakly.

TYLER (CONT'D)

(nodding toward the door)

Hester?

LON

(surprised)

Yes. How did--

TYLER

Have you met Mike? Gay guy, talks your ear off. Told me all about her and her boyfriend.

Lon strains and gives another light chuckle.

LON

(beat)

She wants to resurrect Silas.

TYLER

She mentioned that. That doesn't seem good to me.

LON

No. I imagine they'll kill us both and then lay this town to waste.

TYLER

Don't forget the loads and loads of demon-sex they'll have in between.

LON

(disgusted)

I certainly can't now.

TYLER

She needs you to read the spell?

LON

Yes.

TYLER

You can't do it.

A look of pain crosses Lon's face.

LON

She'll kill you.

TYLER

Either way, man.

LON

(looking down)

If I don't read it, I know what'll happen. If I do read it... we can only speculate. And it might buy us some time.

Tyler shrugs as best he can.

TYLER

So?

LON

(looks up again, tears in his eyes)

If I refuse to help her, I'm killing you.

Off his pained face we:

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND CENTRAL - DAY

Frank and Tamsin are working on separate computer terminals. Mike paces back and forth in the background, and Vi leans against a wall, worried.

VI

(to Mike)

Can't you jump into the magic 8
ball and get Kat and The Powers
That Be to tell us where Lon is?

MIKE

They really don't like me to ask
questions. Mostly they ask
questions which are supposed to
lead me to a conclusion but really
just give me a headache.

(beat)

Damn spirits.

Mike approaches the computer panels and stands between Frank and Tamsin.

MIKE (CONT'D)

How's it going?

FRANK

I really don't know what we're
doing.

TAMSIN

Yeah, I mean, we've got loads of
vampire nest data, locations all
over the city, but with no motive,
any of them could have grabbed him.

FRANK

We're pretty blind here.

Mike begins pacing again. Suddenly he stops.

MIKE

I know what we can do.

Everyone turns to look at him.

TAMSIN

What?

MIKE

I can do a locator spell. If we get, like, one of Lon's hairs or something, I can use magic to track him down.

FRANK

You can do that?

MIKE

(annoyed)

I just did one a few days ago to find that... ah... chalky demon!

FRANK

Chokva. And I know. I just didn't realize it worked on regular humans.

MIKE

Yeah. You guys don't really have a clue about this mystic stuff, do you?

Vi, Frank and Tamsin share a sad look.

VI

No. Lon does.

After a sombering moment, the team snaps into action.

TAMSIN

So what do you need?

MIKE

Well, like I said, a hair. Or a fingernail clipping. Some part of him.

FRANK

Whelp, I think Tamsin can handle that.

VI

Yeah.

TAMSIN

(peevied)

Fine! I'll just go collect brother-bits then, shall I?

MIKE
Okay, Frank, Vi, you guys are in
charge of rounding up mystic herbs
and spices.

The gang bustles into action.

CUT TO:

INT. HESTER'S BASEMENT - DAY

As before.

TYLER
You can't do it.

LON
I'm not going to murder you.

TYLER
(desperate)
The needs of the many outweigh the
needs of the few. Or the one.

LON
(surprised)
That's wise. Which philosopher is
that?

TYLER
(reluctant)
Spock... Mr. Spock. Star Trek Two.

Lon can't help but crack a little smile.

LON
(lightly)
Nerd.

In the middle of this nice moment, the door opens and Hester
steps in.

HESTER
Made up your mind yet? I'm getting
hungry.

Lon looks from the circle on the floor, to Hester, to Tyler.

LON
(slowly)
I...

HESTER
I guess you need more motivation.

Hester VAMPS OUT and stands behind Tyler. With a flirty wink at Lon, she BITES Tyler's neck. He SCREAMS. Blood pours down his shoulder and shirt. But he catches Lon's eye and spreads his left hand into the Vulcan salute. Lon still can't help but shout out.

LON
Okay! Okay! I'll read it! Just let
him go...

Hester sighs, disengages from Tyler, and RETRACTS her fangs. She crosses the basement to Lon and holds out the scroll. She wipes blood from her mouth with her sleeve.

HESTER
Hop to it, then.

Lon squints at the old paper and begins to read.

LON
Vi di dab--

Hester cuts him off.

HESTER
Oh! I almost forgot!

Hester runs over to the circle. She reaches for her locket. CU on the locket as she opens it. Inside is an ancient picture of Silas and a lock of hair. Hester takes the lock and drops it into the circle. She moves back over to Lon.

HESTER (CONT'D)
Continue.

She holds the parchment back out for him to read. Lon continues.

LON
Vi di dabios. Inferinatum.

In the circle, a cloud of dark energy forms. It's faint, but thickening.

LON (CONT'D)
Nos via invesauria!

The energy cloud expands and begins to take shape.

LON (CONT'D)
Va su! Va su! Va su!

The cloud CRACKLES and takes on human form. With one more thunderous BOOM, the cloud disappears and standing in its place is SILAS, fully corporeal. He raises his arms over his head, stretching, and POPS his shoulders.

SILAS

Good evening, everybody!

He opens his mouth and licks his teeth.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. HESTER'S BASEMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

As before. Hester tosses the spell aside. She and Silas run to each other and embrace. They kiss, long and hard. The two love-locked vampires twirl into the basement wall, and Silas slides his hands under Hester's shirt. Her hands go into his pants pockets. Silas breaks their kiss and rests his head against Hester's.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Did you miss me?

HESTER

Every day. You?

SILAS

Babe, I never stopped thinking about you. Never.

Hester jumps up and wraps her legs around Silas's waist. He begins to lift her shirt over her head.

TYLER

I can see this whole thing is about to get real "fleshy", so me and my British amigo will be on our way just as soon as someone sees to the "We're tied up" issue.

LON

Yes, quite.

The vampire couple turn to their captives.

SILAS

You brought me a snack? How sweet!

HESTER

Seems to have worked out that way.

SILAS

We should probably eat before we play.

HESTER

(pouts)

They'll still be here later!

SILAS

Yeah, but it's best to play it safe.

(MORE)

SILAS (CONT'D)
 Besides, being in a non-corporeal
 limbo really builds one's appetite.

Hester relents, and the vampires turn to their captives;
 Hester goes back to Tyler, presumably to finish what she
 started, and Silas comes up behind Lon, so he and his lover
 can watch each other while they eat.

TYLER
 Told you she'd kill me either way.

LON
 (annoyed)
 You're just like Mike, always
 anxious to get the last word in.

TYLER
 Well, since these are going to be
 my last words, yeah, I'm a little
 anxious!

Hester rolls her eyes.

HESTER
 (annoyed)
 Usually our food doesn't talk this
 much.

SILAS
 Don't worry about it, baby. All the
 talking will make their blood
 warmer.

LON
 Now look what you've done.

TYLER
 Yeah, yeah, blame it on Tyler. He
 doesn't have superpowers, he can't
 do anything about it.

Hester WHACKS Tyler in the back of the head.

HESTER
 You will shut up while we eat! It's
 very distracting!

TYLER
 Well, I'm sorry!

Suddenly the door to the basement EXPLODES open. Frank,
 Tamsin, Vi, and Mike rush in to the basement, ready for
 battle.

TAMSIN

(to Frank)

Why can't you ever just open a door? Do you always have to kick it in?

FRANK

It looks cool! Plus, it catches the bad guys off guard.

VI

I'm sure this little dialogue hasn't given them enough time to recover or anything.

The team re-focuses.

FRANK

Okay, vamps, let Lon go--
(realizes who is in the room)
Tyler? What are you doing here? Are you okay?

TYLER

I'm fine, Frank. Except for the whole hanging from a pipe being fed on by a vampire thing.

MIKE

(re: Silas)

What the hell?! Didn't we kill this one already?

FRANK

That's not fair! The good guys never get to come back from the dead.

VI

That's not true. I happen to know a Slayer--

Silas and Hester have released Lon and Tyler and adopted fighting position.

SILAS

Come on, guys. You're interrupting my "Welcome back to life" party!

HESTER

And I worked so hard to set it up.

LON

She certainly did. Look at these decorations.

Lon nods his head to indicate the summoning circle, where we see the lamb's body is no longer there, presumably consumed in the ritual.

FRANK

Let our friends go.

SILAS

And what? You're gonna let us leave?

FRANK

Well, no. We're gonna kill you either way.

TYLER

There's been a lot of that going around today.

Tired of negotiations and chit-chat, Hester VAMPS OUT again and dives at Vi. The young Slayer catches most of the weight of the attacking vamp, but they fall in a tangled heap to the ground.

Meanwhile, Silas rushes forward, grabs Mike by his arm and tosses him across the basement. Mike SHOUTS in surprise and rolls across the concrete floor, landing near Tyler.

TYLER (CONT'D)

(looking down)

See if you can get these handcuffs off me.

MIKE

(in pain; annoyed)

Yeah, I'm fine, thanks for asking.

TYLER

Great! Now about these cuffs.

Across the basement, Silas has engaged Tamsin and Frank and is fighting ably. He counters a punch from Tamsin and uses the momentum to kick Frank in the stomach, staggering him back a step. This allows Silas to direct all his attention on Tamsin. She has drawn a stake from her belt and stabs at him, but with a KICK, he sends the weapon scattering from her hand.

SILAS

Oh, no. Not getting caught with
that one again.

He grabs Tamsin's arm, and in a flash, has it bent behind her own back, holding her in front of him like a shield.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Hester, baby!

Hester is holding Vi on the ground and has her face pressed against the Slayer's neck. As she prepares to bite, Vi KICKS her in the stomach. Hester is thrown off the ground, regaining her footing. Vi jumps at her again, and they grapple until Vi gains the upper hand. She pins Hester to the ground and draws out a stake.

VI

You'd better stay down.

She raises the stake, and prepares to drop it, but:

SILAS

Don't you dare, red.

Vi turns. Silas has VAMPED OUT and is holding Tamsin's head to the side, exposing her neck.

SILAS (CONT'D)

You stab her, and your pretty
friend's gonna take her place.

LON

(nervous)

Tamsin...

Vi, frustrated, hurls the stake across the room. She gets off Hester, who quickly runs to Silas's side.

SILAS

There wouldn't happen to be a
secret escape route out of this
place, would there, darling?

HESTER

As a matter of fact...

She leads Silas-- still holding Tamsin-- into the corner of the basement. She pulls aside a TARP, revealing a hidden TRAPDOOR.

SILAS

(smiling at Hester)

You think of everything!

Hester opens the door and she and Silas descend. As Silas disappears into, presumably, the sewers, he throws Tamsin back up to the others. They escape, the trapdoor SLAMMING closed behind them. As soon as it does, Vi rushes over to Tamsin.

VI

Are you okay?

She helps Tamsin off the ground.

TAMSIN

Yeah. Yeah, I'm fine. Just a bit of damage to my ego.

Mike, meanwhile, is working on Tyler's handcuffs, thin lines of red energy slicing through the chains.

TYLER

You know, there was a guy at my tenth birthday party who put his handcuffed hands under a cloth, and in ten seconds he'd broken free and cuffed Jessica Randolph.

MIKE

Get me a cloth and a scholarship to Magic Camp.

TYLER

(matter-of-fact)

They don't teach the handcuff trick at magic camp. They only go up to making every card in the deck the same.

Mike grins at Tyler.

MIKE

You're a huge loser.

TYLER

Then why am I getting so much more laid than you are?

Mike GRUNTS in acknowledgement. Finally he's CUT THROUGH Tyler's handcuffs, and they fall to the floor. Tyler rubs his wrists, which are raw and cut.

TYLER (CONT'D)

(sincere)

Thanks.

MIKE

Yeah.

Meanwhile, Frank has crouched down behind Lon. He takes a knife from its place on his belt and cuts through Lon's restraints. Lon tries to stand, but has lost a lot of blood, and can't quite make it on his own. Frank steadies him.

FRANK

What the hell happened to you?

LON

She thought I should resurrect her psychotic boyfriend, I disagreed.

Everyone joins Frank and Lon at the center of the basement to hear the story.

TAMSIN

Lon, are you okay?

She reaches out to touch Lon's cheek, and he winces and flinches away.

LON

Yeah, she just hit me a little. I'm sure it looks worse than it is.

TYLER

Like hell! You should have seen him! I mean, I only got a little glimpse, but from what I saw, Hester put Lon through the ringer. He's even got burn marks on him!

Everyone takes stock of Lon's injuries, and there is indeed a large burn stripe across Lon's neck.

TAMSIN

Oh, god, your nose!

LON

It's nothing.

TAMSIN

Perhaps, if your name's Owen Wilson!

An awkward moment passes. No-one knows what to say. How do you comfort someone who's gone through what Lon has?

FRANK

We should, uh, we should get you to the hospital.

LON
Yeah. Wait! The resurrection spell.

Lon weakly points to the floor where the spell parchment lays. Frank crosses over and picks it up.

FRANK
Good thinking. We'll put this in the vault.

He motions to put it in his pocket.

LON
No.

Frank pauses.

LON (CONT'D)
It's too dangerous.

FRANK
But it may be of some use--

LON
(firmly)
No.

Seeing Lon's convention, Frank nods. He pulls out a lighter, clicks it, and touches the flame to the corner of the paper. The brittle, ancient paper instantly burst into flames. Frank drops it. It is totally incinerated before it even hits the ground. Lon sighs.

The team heads to the doorway, but Lon stumbles and almost falls. Mike catches him.

MIKE
I got him. You guys pull the car up.

The rest of the team go on. Mike and Lon slowly make their way to the door.

MIKE (CONT'D)
You withstood all that torture?

LON
Indeed.

MIKE
What finally made you crack?

LON
She said she'd kill Tyler if I
didn't do what she wanted. I
couldn't let myself be responsible
for that.

Mike looks shocked.

MIKE
(emotional)
I'm really sorry.

LON
For what?

MIKE
This whole thing was my fault.

LON
I don't see how that's--

MIKE
If I hadn't picked that fight with
you last night, you wouldn't have
stormed out and you wouldn't have
gotten kidnapped.

LON
It it's not your fault Hester's
insane. You're not responsible.

MIKE
Yeah, I am.

They carry on their slow trek in silence.

LON
So how did you find us?

MIKE
Oh, you know. A little detective
work, a little interrogation...
(quietly)
A little tracking spell...

LON
(surprised)
Oh.

MIKE
Yeah. It took a little effort, and
we had to pluck your hairbrush--
you know, you really need to clean
that out every now and then.

They've stopped walking now, and are standing in the middle of the basement.

LON
Thank you.

MIKE
You're welcome.

They regard each other for the moment, reflecting on the things each other has done this day. Lon extends his hand. Mike slowly takes it, and they shake.

LON
Truce?

MIKE
(smiling faintly)
Truce.

Shouldering Lon's weight again, Mike begins to lead the way out of the basement.

MIKE (CONT'D)
You know, truce or not, I'm probably still going to rag on you some. In case you hadn't noticed, I'm kind of a dick.

They exit.

LON (V.O.)
(with mock surprise)
You? No!

BLACKOUT.

END OF SHOW