

Hell's Gate

Season Two - Episode Thirteen

"Ghost of the Past"

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

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

We PAN AROUND the restaurant, at all the happy patrons.

JACK (O.S.)
We're not on a date?

MIKE (O.S.)
We're on a not-date.

Finally we land on MIKE and JACK, sitting together at a small corner table.

JACK
See, what you said had all the same words as what I said, but--

MIKE
Casual. Chill. Relaxed. You know.

JACK
Oh yeah. I know. You're ashamed of me.

MIKE
I'm not ashamed of you!

JACK
Sure you are. I'm some old professor and you're a hip young cat.

MIKE
Okay, dude, no one actually says "cat," and they never did. Sitcoms made it up in the nineties to make people feel stupider.

JACK
I was there, you weren't. That's all I'm saying.

Mike laughs and takes a sip from his champagne glass.

JACK (CONT'D)
This isn't really a casual place, either, is it? I have on too many clothes for a casual place.

MIKE
You always have on too many
clothes.

JACK
Ho ho ho!

MIKE
Did Christmas come super early this
year?

JACK
More than once, I hope.

Mike smiles.

ELDERLY MAN (O.S.)
Yes, just the small duck, please.
With a bit of the sauce...

Mike turns in his chair, looking at the ELDERLY MAN, who's reading off the menu, speaking to his WAITER. Mike stares hard at the man, ignoring Jack, who keeps on talking.

JACK
(slowly fading in)
...agreed.
(beat)
Mike? Mike?

Mike SNAPS OUT OF IT, turning back to Jack.

MIKE
I'm sorry, what?

JACK
Are you okay?

MIKE
Yeah, it's just-- that guy, his
order.

JACK
You're opposed to eating duck?

MIKE
No. That's what Lon always ordered
when we came here.

JACK
(cold)
Oh.

Mike furrows his brow.

MIKE
What?

JACK
Nothing.

There's a long beat, as Mike looks around uncomfortably and Jack stewes in his seat.

JACK (CONT'D)
You're not over him.

MIKE
What? Lon? What are you talking about?

JACK
Every time you remember him, you... slip away. Into some past life. And I'm left here alone.

MIKE
It's not like that.

JACK
Yes it is.

MIKE
I'm over him, Jack. I've dealt with it. I promise.

Jack nods, but it's clear he isn't convinced.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S DINER - NIGHT

RAIN pours down on the diner and LIGHTNING flashes outside the windows. The diner is empty, but the silence is quickly broken by shouting.

FRANK (O.S.)
Nope, no, no.

TYLER (O.S.)
You're being a baby.

FRANK and TYLER descend the stairs, in the midst of an argument. Frank retreats to his "Happy Place" behind the counter. He picks up a rag and starts wiping down its surface.

Tyler slides into a chair in front of him.

FRANK

Be that as it may, this is my diner, which is also my house. So, I double-win.

(beat)

A man's home is his castle, and I say that woman is not stepping foot inside my kingdom!

TYLER

Well, technically it's Vi's kingdom...

FRANK

Okay, and you two are gonna have to cut that Dinertopia crap, because it's about to drive me insane!

TYLER

Uncle Frank, you know I respect you and all, but we both know Grandma is way, way scarier than you. Besides, her phone call did not imply that she was asking if she could come so much as forewarning us of her arrival, much like the warnings in the Book of Revelation.

Frank wipes his forehead with the back of his hand.

FRANK

Dammit, son.

TYLER

I know.

FRANK

This is not ideal.

Tyler nods, licking his lips.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What is she coming here for?

TYLER

She told me she wanted to meet Callie.

Frank instantly spins around and grabs the first thing he can -- a SPATULA. He points it right at Tyler's throat.

FRANK

You!

TYLER

What?!

FRANK

You summoned her here with your damned engagement! What did I always say about marriage?

TYLER

Frank--

FRANK

What did I always say?!

TYLER

(sighs)

Marriage is of the Devil. It is a ceremony of Satan. It breaks men and rains Hell down upon them.

FRANK

And now Hell is raining down upon my diner.

Tyler rolls his eyes.

TYLER

She's your mother.

FRANK

She's Doris "Hope-Slayer".

TYLER

And you're Frank "No-Balls".

FRANK

If I let you believe that, will you tell her she can't come 'cause an asteroid struck my diner?

TYLER

You should probably clean up a bit before she gets here...

Frank groans. He scrubs harder at an invisible spot as we:

CUT TO:

EXT. HEAVEN'S GATE - CITY PARK - NIGHT

A CRACK OF LIGHTNING.

Two LOVERS run through the rain, heading for the shelter of a LARGE TREE.

THE GIRL

You're not supposed to hide under trees during a lightning storm!

THE GUY

Oh, come on. We'll be fine.

THE GIRL

Let's at least go over there.

She points across the park to a small gazebo. The guy nods and the couple run through the rain to the white structure.

Safe from the rain now, the guy pulls the girl close.

THE GUY

You're all wet.

THE GIRL

(seductively)

You bet I am, baby.

He smiles wide and pulls her in close for a kiss.

ANGLE ON: the large tree the couple were near seconds earlier. A BOLT OF LIGHTENING hits the tree, splitting it down the middle.

ANGLE ON: the gazebo. The couple begins to make out heavily as the rain continues to hammer down. We PAN AWAY slowly. Slowly enough to see a WHITE BLUR enter the frame.

As we leave the couple to focus on the park in the middle of the storm, a pair of SCREAMS pierce the night.

BLACKOUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. FRANK'S DINER - DAY

The next morning. Frank, Tyler, Mike, CALLIE and VI have all assembled, dressed in their finest clothing.

VI
I'm so excited!

FRANK
Good. You pretend to be me, I'll go watch football for three days.

VI
I think she'll recognize her own son.

FRANK
She hasn't seen me in ten years. Maybe I got a dye-job and a sex change and shackled up with a British lesbian.

TAMSIN
Not a lesbian.

VI
Just for that, I'm asking for photos.

Frank rolls his eyes.

CALLIE
Are there certain things I shouldn't say?

TYLER
Nothing about Nixon. She hates Nixon. And nothing about Carter. She hates Carter. Try not to mention any music that happened after you were born.

FRANK
Don't speak unless spoken to. Never promise anything three times. Don't look directly into her eyes, lest you be turned to stone.

Tamsin ruffles Frank's hair.

TAMSIN
She's not a troll.

FRANK
Of course not. Not green enough.

TAMSIN
Honestly! The two of you make her
out to be some sort of...

FRANK
She-devil?

TYLER
Succubus?

FRANK
Anti-christ?

Tamsin sighs and throws up her hands. Outside the diner, a taxi pulls up.

TYLER
Okay. This is it. Everybody, just,
pretend to be normal.

MIKE
You stole that from Little Miss
Sunshine.

TYLER
Can you think of a better movie to
steal from?

MIKE
(beat)
I can not.

TYLER
Then shut up.

After a great deal of fuss regarding luggage, DORIS MCGANN walks up to the diner. She's in her early 70's, but clearly was a looker in her day. Confident and smart at the same time, puffing on a cigarette, a badass grandma if ever one was.

Doris reaches the diner door. Tyler jumps up and rushes over, holding the door open for her as she and the CAB DRIVER enter. He puts her luggage down and holds his hand out for a tip, but a fierce glare from Doris sends him running back to his car.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Grandma!

DORIS
T-Bird!

She grabs him and hugs him.

TYLER
(less than thrilled)
You remembered my nickname...

MIKE
(thrilled)
You remembered his nickname!

Doris pulls away from Tyler and looks Mike up and down.

TYLER
Grandma, this is Mike, you remem--

DORIS
Of course I do!
(to Mike)
I thought you would've joined the
Navy by now, sailor.

MIKE
They asked, I told, you know how it
is.

She smiles and pats Mike on the shoulder. As she turns, surveying the room, she takes in Tamsin, Callie, and Vi.

DORIS
You surrounded yourself with sexy
ladies, T-Bird? Good boy.

TYLER
Yeah, no, Grandma, this is Vi, and
this is Tamsin. They're just
friends.

The girls wave at Doris as they're introduced. Tyler takes Doris by the shoulder and turns her towards Callie.

TYLER (CONT'D)
And this is, uh, Callie.

CALLIE
Hi, Mrs. McGann.

DORIS
Come here, honey!

She hugs Callie tight against her, patting her on the back.

DORIS (CONT'D)

And please, just call me Doris. I haven't been a miss since my husband passed years ago.

On Frank behind the counter as he reacts to this statement. Not happy. Guilty...?

CALLIE

Well, it's so good to meet you, Doris. Frank and Speedy have told me--

DORIS

(cocking her eyebrow)
Speedy?

CALLIE

It's a nick name.

DORIS

Tyler. Remember when I gave you "the talk"? I told you to think about baseball.

Tyler cringes and turns pale.

CALLIE

No. It's, uh, short for Speed Racer.

DORIS

Is that a nerd thing?

Callie nods.

DORIS (CONT'D)

(to Tyler)

Don't let this one go, T-Bird.

Mike chuckles. An awkward beat passes.

CALLIE

(embarrassed)

Anyway, I've heard a lot about you.

DORIS

All bad, I imagine.

CALLIE

No, there were... like... a couple... I think there was something sweet about a puppy?

FRANK

She made us give it away 'cause it looked at her funny.

DORIS

That emotion in its eyes was strange.

FRANK

That emotion in its eyes was love.

DORIS

Right. That one.

She grins and approaches the counter slowly. It's not unlike a jungle cat coming up on disabled prey.

DORIS (CONT'D)

Frank, Frank, Frank.

FRANK

Mom. Mother. Mommy.

DORIS

Don't be sarcastic.

FRANK

Sorry. Defense mechanism.

Doris leans over the counter and kisses Frank on the cheeks leaving copious amounts of her lipstick.

DORIS

How've you been, son?

FRANK

Pretty good. Kinda busy here with cleaning, though.

Doris takes the hint, her smile slipping a bit.

DORIS

That's fine. I'll find other ways to occupy myself while you work.

She turns to the girls.

DORIS (CONT'D)
Ladies! Come sit with me while I
ask you embarrassing questions
about my grandson.

VI
Ooh! I have stories about Tyler and
showers.

CALLIE
(suspicious)
Why do you have stories about Tyler
and showers?

Doris pulls a small photo album out of her purse.

DORIS
And I have baby pictures!

The four women sit at a corner booth.

TYLER
I better go over there and make
sure I still have a fiancée in half
an hour.

Mike grabs Tyler by the arm.

MIKE
Actually, dude, can I talk to you
for a minute?

Tyler reads the expression on Mike's face and nods.

TYLER
'Course.

Mike pulls Tyler to a table and they sit across from each
other.

TYLER (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

MIKE
Okay, so, last night I was out with
Jack, right?

TYLER
Yeah.

MIKE
And something happened, it wasn't a
big deal, it was nothing, but...

He trails off, looks out the window, finally comes back.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Do you think I'm over Lon?

TYLER
Whoa. Um, well. I don't know. He was the first guy you loved--

MIKE
I loved--

TYLER
I mean actually "loved", dude, not BS high school "I'll love you 'till homecoming" love. You loved him, and he died. That's terrible. That's the worst. I don't know if you ever get over losing someone you love.

Mike shakes his head slowly.

MIKE
No way, man. I'm totally over it. Have to be. I can't live my life crying over... whatever.

He gets up and heads for his room. Tyler slumps back, sighs. The loud sound of LAUGHTER coming from the ladies' table brings Tyler back to reality. He leaps up and races to see what's going on as we:

FADE TO:

INT. FRANK'S DINER - LATER

Vi stands in the corner, on her cell phone. As we fade in, she SNAPS it closed, frustrated.

Tamsin looks up from the table she's sitting at.

TAMSIN
What's wrong?

VI
Sarah still won't answer her phone. I keep calling, but...

TAMSIN
She's probably busy. Maybe her battery died.

VI
(unconvinced)
Yeah. Probably.

Before they can talk any more, FLETCHER enters the diner.

FLETCHER
Hey guys. Ready to work?

He leans down and gives Tamsin a kiss on the cheek and then joins Mike and Frank at the counter.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
Where's the infamous Doris I've heard so much about?

FRANK
Tyler took her out to see the sights so we could get some work done.

FLETCHER
Sights? There are sights? Been here nine months and no one told me there were sights.

MIKE
There's that place where they started to paint a mural, but then stopped. I guess he could show her that streak of yellow paint.

Frank tosses a file to Fletcher.

FRANK
I honestly don't care where they went. I've got two dead bodies in the middle of the park needs taking care of.

Tamsin and Vi join the boys at the counter. Vi looks down at the photos.

VI
Oh, eww.

FLETCHER
Looks like they were skinned and gutted.

TAMSIN
What by?

Fletcher shrugs.

FLETCHER

Could be a lot of things. Won't know till I go check out the scene.

Frank looks up.

FRANK

What are we waiting for?

CUT TO:

EXT. HEAVEN'S GATE - CITY PARK - DAY

The team spreads out over the park, concentrating on the gazebo. The bodies are gone, but Frank still pokes around for traces.

FRANK

There's nothing here. The cops cleaned it up too well.

Fletcher squats on the ground, looking for tracks or footprints.

FLETCHER

Ground's clean, as well.

Mike stumbles around, feeling out for some intangible thing.

TAMSIN

Is there anything here? Was there a point to this little escapade?

FRANK

I dunno. Vi, take photos of everything, maybe we'll spot something later --

MIKE

Whoa. Guys.

He's dizzy, arms out for balance.

FRANK

What's wrong?

MIKE

I feel something. Buried. Like, hidden.

They gather around him.

VI

What is it?

MIKE

Something... angry. A spirit. A
really pissed-off spirit.

He points down at the ground where he's standing. Vi points
the camera, takes a picture.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEAVEN'S GATE - DAY

Tyler and Doris walk side-by-side across the sidewalk.

DORIS

I can't wait for dinner tonight.

TYLER

I think Callie's looking forward to
it, too. Mostly because you'll tell
her new ways to make fun of me.

DORIS

That's a grandmother's job, honey.
To make everyone else's lives
miserable.

Tyler smiles.

TYLER

Sure you don't mind walking? We
could find a bench or something--

DORIS

I'm old. I'm not feeble. Walking is
good for me.

The sidewalk rounds a corner, but unfortunately the change in
angle gives Doris a clear view of the city park.

DORIS (CONT'D)

What are they doing?

TYLER

Huh?

She points. Tyler looks, and spots Frank and his team in the
park, poking around the gazebo.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Oh! Uh, well, I dunno, it--

DORIS

Let's go say "hi".

She starts walking. Tyler scrambles to catch up with her.

TYLER
I really don't think that's a great
idea...

CUT TO:

INT. HEAVEN'S GATE - CITY PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Doris approaches Frank, Tyler right behind her. Doris reaches Frank and flicks her cigarette onto the grass. Tyler makes a face, picks it up. But then he just holds it, unsure what to do with it. Finally, he pinches it out and puts it in his pocket.

DORIS
What's going on?

Frank turns around.

FRANK
What the hell are you doing here?!

DORIS
I saw you from across the street. I
thought I'd come say "hi". What the
hell are you doing here?

FRANK
Working.

Doris looks around.

DORIS
Exactly what part of the diner
business involves scowling around
the park with your friends?

FRANK
I-- we're not-- I'm not working on
my job. No, no. Uh...

Tamsin sees Frank floundering.

TAMSIN
We're helping Vi out.

Vi wanders over with the camera around her neck.

VI
Hmm? What now?

Fletcher steps up.

FLETCHER

Yeah. She has a class project.
Photography. And, you know, we were
helping her take... pretty
pictures.

(beat)

Of leaves.

VI

I... I sure do like leaves.

DORIS

Right.

FRANK

But I think we're done now.

VI

Oh yeah.

FRANK

So, let's go back.

Smiling to herself, Doris follows the flustered Frank and the rest of the team out of the park.

DORIS

What's wrong with the sailor?

She nods towards Mike, who's still a bit woozy.

TYLER

He's not good in the heat.

Doris laughs as we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Fletcher and Tamsin sit in the command center, Tamsin at a computer terminal, Fletcher beside her looking at his small laptop.

FLETCHER

Anything?

TAMSIN

Absolutely not.

FLETCHER

I'm not shocked.

TAMSIN

I dunno if I'm offended or
apathetic.

(beat)

Question asked, question answered,
I suppose.

Fletcher taps buttons on his machine, not really paying it much attention.

FLETCHER

Only so many things can create
spirits. It's human in origin.
Souls and whatnot. So, we'll look
at violent deaths in the park.
Suicides. Anything like that.

TAMSIN

Light reading, then?

Fletcher LAUGHS.

FLETCHER

The life we've chosen for
ourselves...

Tamsin shrugs.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Still. It's not such a bad life, is
it? I mean, there are worse things
you could be doing with your time.

Tamsin nods.

TAMSIN

I guess so.

Fletcher smiles warmly at her. He slides his arm affectionately around her and gives her a loving kiss. They silently stare at each other for a few beats. Finally Fletcher shakes his head.

FLETCHER

Except when we have to stay up all night hunting ghosts instead of doing what we'd rather be doing.

Fletcher gives Tamsin a quick kiss on the nose. They both turn back to their work as we:

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mike sits at the window, looking to the moon, talking on the phone.

MIKE

Oh, come on.

(beat)

You can't be mad at me forever, Jack. Please?

(beat; smiles)

Good! Tomorrow?

(beat)

See you, too. Bye.

Mike hangs up, smiling to himself.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Oh, yeah. You got the magic, baby.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S DINER - NIGHT - LATER

Doris, Tyler, and Callie enter, returning from dinner out.

DORIS

My, my, that was fun. It's been a while since I've had to keep up with two people so young.

CALLIE

What? Are you kidding? You wore me out! I hope I have that much energy when I'm your age.

DORIS
Don't flatter me, dear, you already
made a good impression.

Frank bursts out of the back of the diner. It's possible he's
been drinking.

FRANK
Oh. Hi, guys.

DORIS
Frank. You look like hell.

FRANK
Then you should feel right at home.

DORIS
I raise 'em witty, ladies and
gentlemen.

Tyler drags Callie aside.

TYLER
(quietly)
This could get ugly quick. We
should take an escape pod.

FRANK
(to Doris)
You barely raise 'em at all, if I
remember right.

DORIS
Oh, don't start with me, Frank, I'm
not in the--

FRANK
Mood? Well, you never are. It's a
pretty convenient set-up, I think.
You just get to avoid any problems
that might come up because you're
not in the mood.

DORIS
I don't avoid problems, Frank,
don't pretend like I--

Frank fishes around under the counter for his secret stash of
booze as he interrupts:

FRANK
I don't have to pretend anything at
all!

Doris rolls her eyes. Callie and Tyler try to sneak out of the room, desperation in their eyes.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Anything that might shatter your perfect little world just passes right through your head, and that's the God's honest.

DORIS

I don't know what you're talking about!

She turns to leave.

FRANK

Yeah, you just walk on upstairs. Ignore me again, just like when I was a kid. Worked out so damn well the last time!

Doris whirls back around to glare at Frank.

DORIS

"Last time?" Are you gonna hang all your troubles on me again?

FRANK

The ones you deserve, yeah. Bet your ass.

Doris steps closer, grinning angrily.

DORIS

Oh, do please, Frank, tell me what I deserve. Tell me what I ever did to deserve all the things you wish would happen to me.

FRANK

(snaps)

Nothing, ma! You never did a thing! Not a single thing, when your son came to you with a broken nose or a black eye. Just turn back to your damn TV had another drink.

Tyler looks from Frank to Doris, confused.

DORIS

That was decades ago. I can't believe you're still hung up on--

FRANK

Just dismiss me, mother, go right ahead. Ignore anything negative you ever heard about your deadbeat alkie husband and how he beat the living crap out of his kids. Pop the earplugs, sauce it up and tune out--

Doris steps forward again, grabbing the bottle away from Frank

DORIS

You're one to talk about drinking, aren't you? Rubber legs at eight o'clock!

(beat)

Fine. Nathan hit you. Is that what you wanted to hear? Daddy slapped little Frankie around. Well, boo hoo. We all have our problems, Frank. Deal with them.

Frank SNATCHES the bottle right out of Doris's hand, for a second it looks like he's going to hit her. But he doesn't. He SLAMS it down on the table and grabs a bar stool, HURLING IT THROUGH THE WINDOW.

Callie PULLS a stunned Tyler away from the flying glass shards.

Without saying a word, without looking around, almost automatically, Frank stalks out of the diner, SLAMMING the door behind him.

Doris turns to Tyler and Callie, who're staring at her in complete disbelief.

DORIS (CONT'D)

Tyler...

And Tyler grabs Callie's hand, dragging her upstairs. Doris watches them leave, tears forming in her eyes. She picks up Frank's bottle off the counter and takes several large gulps.

She sets the bottle down and stares off in the direction Frank left as we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Frank, knocking on door # 303. It opens.

BILLIE sticks her head out. She looks very tired.

BILLIE
What-- Frank? Hey.

FRANK
Hey, Bill. Can I come in?

BILLIE
Jeez, Frank, you look awful.

FRANK
The carpet matches the drapes
(beat)
Non-sexually.
(beat)
I'm pretty drunk.

BILLIE
Yeeh. I can tell.

FRANK
So. Can I come in?

Billie bites her bottom lip, clearly conflicted.

BILLIE
I... Frank. Now's not a good time.

Frank frowns.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
It's just... I've got a bad
headache and--

Frank immediately turns around and storms off.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
Frank! Frank!

But Frank ignores her cries. Billie watches him go, wincing, regretful as we:

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

Frank, on the front porch. KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. No answer. He hesitates, considers-- KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

CORRINE opens the door.

CORRINE

Frank. This is like a pleasant surprise, but not a surprise because you always show up looking horrible needing my help, and not pleasant because "House" is on.

FRANK

Can I come in?

Corrine pushes the door open.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRINE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Frank and Corrine sit on the couch. There's a bottle of hard liquor on the table in front of them with a half-full glass beside it.

Laying on the table next to them is an old, faded, childhood picture of Corrine and her sister. Frank picks it up and glances at it.

FRANK

Thought you were watching "House"?

Corrine shrugs as Frank sets the picture back down.

CORRINE

I'd offer you a drink, but you seem pretty far ahead of me all ready.

FRANK

You go get another glass, little lady, and I'll teach you just how much a full-grown, non-Tyler man can hold.

FADE TO:

INT. CORRINE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Frank and Corrine, sprawled on the couch. The bottle is three-quarters empty.

FRANK
She's a bitch, is who she is.

CORRINE
Who?

FRANK
Doris. Doris McGann.

CORRINE
Your mom?

FRANK
This is the bitch.

CORRINE
She just watched?

Frank shakes his head, drinking the last from his glass.

FRANK
(shaking his head)
Nope. She never watched. She'd go
in the other room. I'm sure she
could hear it, but... never did
anything.

Corrine puts her hand on Frank's chest.

CORRINE
I'm sorry.

He shakes his head, drops his empty glass on the carpet
thoughtlessly.

FRANK
Doesn't matter.

CORRINE
Why? Why not?

FRANK
I got the bastard. In the end, you
know.

Corrine sits up a little.

CORRINE
You did what?

Frank smiles grimly at Corrine as we...

FADE TO:

INT. GARAGE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Through the filtered, sepia-toned lens of nostalgia, we find ourselves in the McGann garage.

TITLE OVER: "1976"

A muscular, balding man, works on a cheap car. From his strong resemblance to Frank, it's obvious that this is NATHAN MCGANN, Frank's father. Several EMPTY BEER CANS litter the garage floor.

There's a radio on a workbench to the side, and "**Carry On Wayward Son**" by Kansas, released just that year, plays high.

A teenaged boy, YOUNG FRANK (17), enters the garage from the driveway, trying to move quietly. But he accidentally KICKS a piece of metal, causing a loud CLANGING sound. He cringes.

Nathan looks up. Frank freezes.

NATHAN

Where you been, boy?

YOUNG FRANK

Just out with, you know, Ted and the guys.

NATHAN

Ted and the guys.

YOUNG FRANK

Y-yeah.

Nathan looks sternly at Frank.

YOUNG FRANK (CONT'D)

(nervously)

I mean, yes sir.

Nathan nods.

NATHAN

I told you I was going to need your help with the car today.

YOUNG FRANK

You said to be home at five, it's not even--

NATHAN

Did I ask you to talk back?!

He SLAPS Frank with the back of his hand. A small bit of blood appears at the corner of Frank's mouth as he stumbles backwards, hitting the wall. Nathan pursues him. The young man's eyes go wide.

YOUNG FRANK

Dad--

Another SLAP. Nathan grabs Frank's collar and SLAMS him into the wall.

YOUNG FRANK (CONT'D)

Dad!

NATHAN

Think you can just open your damn mouth any time you damn want?

Nathan PUNCHES Frank, Frank starts sliding down the wall as Nathan PUNCHES over and over. Frank's nose breaks with a CRACK. Blood pours down onto the young man's white t-shirt.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

This is my God damn house! You'll do what I tell you to, boy!

On the floor now, Frank struggles to get away from his father's non-stop rain of blows. He scrambles around, feeling on the floor for something to pull himself away with.

His hand lands on a long, bent piece of metal, a tire iron. Instinctively he SWINGS IT UP, blocking Nathan's next punch.

Nathan shouts in pain as his fist connects metal. He staggers back. Rage fills Nathan's face.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

You little bastard! I'll kill you for that!

He drunkenly moves toward Frank.

Frank's eyes narrow, his jaws sets. An expression we know all too well. He SWINGS the tire iron again, SMACKING Nathan in the head. Nathan falls to the ground. His head hits the garage's cement floor. Hard. He lays there motionless. His eyes fixed and staring up at his son.

Stunned and shaking, Frank looks down at his father. An amazed smile flickers across his face. A smile which quickly fades as he notices the pool of blood spreading out from this father's head.

He looks at the end of the weapon he is holding. It's covered in blood which is now dripping down onto his hand. He looks down at his dad-- he's not getting up. His face goes white as reality sets in.

YOUNG FRANK

Oh my God...

He drops the tire iron. It hits the floor with a loud CLANG. Frank RUNS OUT OF THE GARAGE without looking back.

FADE TO:

INT. CORRINE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Corrine leans up on the couch, eyes wide open as Frank finishes his story.

CORRINE

You killed your father?

Frank simply nods.

CORRINE (CONT'D)

Frank, you were young, you can't--

FRANK

Don't start trying to absolve me. I don't regret it. Bastard got what he had comin' to him and there hasn't been a second of my life where I wish I'd done something different.

Corrine nods. Completely understands.

CORRINE

So what happened?

FRANK

Ran away. Lived on the streets for four months. Police picked me up for panhandling.

Corrine places a comforting hand on Frank's shoulder.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Since it was self-defense, they weren't gonna toss me in jail. But since I ran, the judge thought I needed "discipline." Ordered me to sign up with Uncle Sam.

(scoff)

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)
Like lack of discipline was ever my
problem.

CORRINE
I can't believe they punished you,
after how he beat you.

FRANK
But back then a few smacks was just
good parenting, and I couldn't
prove it wasn't just a one-time
thing.

CORRINE
Your mother--

FRANK
Any time you think of a sentence
accusing my mother of doing
something noble... just rethink it.

Corrine reads Frank's face carefully.

FRANK (CONT'D)
And don't say you're sorry.

Corrine looks away, not sure what to say. After a beat, she reaches down and retrieves Frank's glass from the floor. She pours him another drink and slides it across the table so that it is in front of him.

For moment, nothing. Then, Frank smiles.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Now you're speaking my language,
sister.

He raises the glass up waiting for her to do the same. She does and they clink glasses. They both down the contents as we:

FADE TO:

INT. COMMAND CENTER - MID-MORNING

Tamsin and Fletcher are back to work this morning. Though they are in fresh clothes, their haggard expressions make it clear that they didn't sleep.

FLETCHER
Maybe there is no spirit. Maybe
Mike was wrong, and those kids just
exploded.

TAMSIN

Yes. That's a strong possibility. I hear spontaneous human combustion is quite common this time of year.

Fletcher gives an unamused smirk.

FLETCHER

We've been looking for, what, twenty straight hours now. If anything had ever happened in that park to give rise to a ghost, we would have found it by now.

TAMSIN

Well, we can't just... give up...

She's looking down at the newspaper on her terminal.

FLETCHER

What is it?

TAMSIN

A tree near the murder scene got struck by lightning in the storm the other night.

FLETCHER

So?

TAMSIN

Well, Park Services was cleaning it up and they... found a body underneath it.

Fletcher crosses the room to Tamsin and leans in over her shoulder.

FLETCHER

Do they know who it was?

TAMSIN

Elizabeth Gertsman, it says. She'd been missing since 1995.

(beat)

That's the same year they planted the tree in the park, actually.

FLETCHER

She was buried under the tree?

TAMSIN

And not in coffin, apparently.

They share a significant look.

FLETCHER

We need to find out everything we can about this woman. I'll call Frank. Extra pair of eyes.

Tamsin's already started typing, and she nods at Fletcher as he takes out his cell phone.

CUT TO:

INT. A ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON a cell phone. It's VIBRATING.

Pull back to reveal we're in CORRINE'S BEDROOM. Frank lays in the bed, completely naked, the Strategically Placed Brand Sheets doing their job covering his delicates. He raises up, groggy, grabs his phone from the bedside table.

FRANK

Damn Fletcher...

From over his shoulder, can see an equally naked Corrine, the smooth curve of her back disappearing under the sheets. Frank turns to her. A perfect expression of "Oh, crap" crosses his face. Slowly, carefully, he slides out of bed, fumbling on the floor for his clothes.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Fletcher snaps his phone shut.

FLETCHER

He's not answering.

TAMSIN

We don't need him. I've got a hit on the old newspaper archives.

FLETCHER

Oh?

TAMSIN

"Elizabeth Gerstmann Still Missing." Says here the prime suspect was her husband, Paul.

FLETCHER
 (leaning over her)
 "Believed to be having an
 affair..." Are they allowed to
 print that in newspapers?

TAMSIN
 It was a different time. A better
 time. A more... libellous time.

Fletcher smiles.

FLETCHER
 So, the husband and his girlfriend
 knock off the wife and bury her
 under the tree.

TAMSIN
 I mean, if you wanna make an evil
 spirit... I can't think of a better
 way.

FLETCHER
 Yeah, me either.

TAMSIN
 We need to tell everyone. Get them
 in here.

Fletcher nods and takes his phone out again.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEAVEN'S GATE - CONTINUOUS

Mike and Jack walk together through the city.

MIKE
 I'm glad you decided to come out.

He makes a face as he considers his words but shrugs it off.

JACK
 You're cute when you beg, and
 that's all I'm saying about it.

Mike smiles.

MIKE
 So cute you'll forgive me for the
 other night?

JACK

I don't know, Mike. This past guy
still--

MIKE

I know you're concerned about me
not being over him, but I am, man.
I promise.

Jack doesn't say anything. Mike sighs.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What will it take to convince you?

JACK

I don't know. Time?

MIKE

I can't control time.
(to himself)
Intentionally.

The pair continue walking, not really paying attention to
where they're going.

JACK

It's not something you can control.
It'll happen naturally.

MIKE

Yeah, but -- hold on a sec...

He's interrupted by his vibrating cell phone.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(answering phone)
Hi there.

He and Jack keep walking as Mike talks.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Yeah, Fletch, me and Jack are out
for a walk, so I don't think I'll
be able to get back right away.

FLETCHER (O.S.)

(over phone)
Okay, well, if you find yourself
passing by the park, try to keep
clear of it. The ghost we're
looking for is probably attracted
to couples. Some revenge thing.

MIKE
Yeah, I'll keep that in mind.

Mike hangs up and now notices where they are. He frowns.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Perfect.

He and Jack have wandered into the heart of the PARK.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. HEAVEN'S GATE - CITY PARK - MID-MORNING

As before, Mike looking around, dismayed. Jack watches him, confused.

JACK
Something wrong?

MIKE
No. No, not at all.
(beat)
Nope.

JACK
Good. Because we need to talk about this Lon guy. Not around him, about him.

MIKE
Jack... I can't. Fletcher called me, I have to go back to the diner.

He looks around, nervous.

MIKE (CONT'D)
It's probably pretty important.

Jack ponders this for a beat.

JACK
You know what, Mike, don't worry about it. I'll go.

MIKE
Jack--

JACK
You're obviously not ready for another relationship.

MIKE
I am re--

JACK
It's probably better if we don't see each other outside of class any more. At least, not till you can handle a being with another guy.

He turns and walks away. Mike opens his mouth to say something, but can't think of any words. So he just watches as Jack heads out of the park.

MIKE

(beat)

Perfect.

He runs his hands through his hair. Then, out of nowhere, he SHIVERS. Realizes.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Yeah, this is gonna be the part where the ghost attacks me.

He turns-- and the SPIRIT of Elizabeth Gerstmann, bedraggled and wiry, floats just behind Mike.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Well, hello there.

The ghost SCREECHES, whacking Mike with her spectral hand. He FLIES BACK, landing on his back in the grass.

From the ground, Mike launches a LIGHTNING BOLT at the spirit. It forces her back, but doesn't do any real damage. Mike pulls himself up, still firing away with the lightning bolts. They're just as effective as always, which is to say, not.

With a howl, the ghost PUSHES him forward via an invisible force. Mike slides along the ground, digging his feet into the turf. But the ghost is powerful, tapping into some hidden energy source and blowing Mike away.

Mike falls flat on his stomach, groaning.

MIKE (CONT'D)

This isn't really a solo instance.

And right on cue, a HAND enters frame, pulling Mike up.

Fletcher, Tamsin, and Vi stand in the park, just a few yards from the advancing, but now confused, ghost.

FLETCHER

This is the part in your American films where the trumpets would blow and the Mounted Division would charge over the hill to kill the native savages.

MIKE

We don't actually call them Mounted Division, but thanks.

TAMSIN

(re: the ghost)

She doesn't move very fast, does she?

MIKE

Trust me. She doesn't need to.

Fletcher regards Tamsin and Vi.

FLETCHER

Well.

VI

Well what?

FLETCHER

You're the ones who kill things. I just name them.

VI

It's a ghost! What do you want me to do? Punch her?

Fletcher shrugs. Vi rolls her eyes and charges the ghost. She LAUNCHES herself into the air, swinging down in a kick -- which completely passes through the ghost. Vi crashes into the ground and the ghost ignores her, continuing on to the other three.

VI (CONT'D)

You have to imagine my complete and total surprise.

FLETCHER

Mike, you wanna fry that thing?

MIKE

Tried that a couple times. It holds her off, but past that, nothing.

TAMSIN

Any bright ideas from your part, Captain Kangaroo?

FLETCHER

I could...

He draws out of his pocket a tiny bottle, much like the one Frank used to store Praxx in from a previous episode.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
It's a prototype of a more advanced
fairy bottle.

MIKE
What do you need?

FLETCHER
It'll take me a moment to get it
ready. Hold it still.

Mike nods, spreading his hands.

MIKE
Incarchium.

Green light spreads between his fingers and Mike THRUSTS his hands forward, the light SHOTS FORWARD, creating rings of energy around the ghost. All seems good for a beat then the ghost passes right through the rings.

Mike groans as the spirit advances.

TAMSIN
Oi! Elizabeth.

Hearing her name, the ghost pauses.

TAMSIN (CONT'D)
(soothingly)
I know you're upset, and rightly
so. You had a great injustice done
to you.

Fletcher fumbles with a small bottle. The ghost again begins to advance.

TAMSIN (CONT'D)
But hurting others won't make it
better. Besides, your husband and
his little trollop got what was
coming to them.

The ghost again pauses. Fletcher continues to fiddle with the bottle.

TAMSIN (CONT'D)
Even without a body, there was
enough evidence to put them away
for a very long time. I imagine
Paul is having a lovely time with
his cell-mate, Big Bubba.

The ghost ponders this for a beat and then begins to LAUGH. Her laughter builds until she is almost doubled over, if a ghost can be doubled over.

Meanwhile, Fletcher has opened the bottle. He passes his hands around it in the mystical way. The top of the bottle glows bright, slowly expanding as the light gets closer to the ghost. Slowly, Elizabeth Gerstmann is sucked into the bottle. She disappears in a fit of laughter. Fletcher corks the end of the bottle.

Tamsin helps Vi up as Fletcher pockets the bottle.

TAMSIN (CONT'D)

Poor thing. I can't help but feel
sorry for her.

Vi brushes herself off.

VI

Yeah, well you're not the one
picking shrubbery out of your hair.

FLETCHER

(to Mike)

Didn't I tell you to stay out of
the park?

MIKE

Well, by then it was a too-little
too-late type thing.

VI

I'd like to make a note of this so
in the future when someone tells me
to punch a ghost, we can skip the
part where I crash into the ground
and get stains on my pretty
clothes.

MIKE

So where's Frank?

FLETCHER

I don't know. We called him in,
but...

(sighs)

No answer.

TAMSIN

I hope he's okay.

MIKE

He's Frank. He's always okay. What could possibly hurt him?

VI

One time I saw him step on a tack.
(beat)
He cried.

Mike laughs as the four start to walk away.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S DINER - MID-AFTERNOON

Tyler sits at the diner counter, eating a snack. Frank enters, rubbing the side of his head.

TYLER

Frank! Where've you been?

FRANK

Just out. Is everybody okay?

TYLER

Well, Mike and the rest went out to hunt a ghost--
(off Frank's reaction)
But they're fine. They called in and said they were stopping for a snack, so I figure everything went okay and Vi forgot to eat breakfast this morning.

FRANK

Oh. Good.

TYLER

So... do you wanna get more specific on where you went last night?

Frank sits down next to Tyler but doesn't say anything.

TYLER (CONT'D)

No. Okay. So. Wanna talk about what happened before you left? With the shouting and the screaming and the making Callie reconsider marrying me?

Frank GRUNTS. Other than this, nothing.

TYLER (CONT'D)

No. Okay. So. Wanna talk about what happens to your junk after you have too much sex to celebrate your engagement, because I--

FRANK

No! Fine! I went drinking. And I stayed drinking. And then I think I fell asleep on the floor, but I can't remember, because it's all a blur, because of the drinking.

TYLER

So... basically you slept in a bar all night.

Frank nods.

TYLER (CONT'D)

This does not alleviate my concerns.

Frank smiles at his nephew's worry. Tyler looks away.

TYLER (CONT'D)

(tentatively)

So... is all that stuff you guys yelled about last night true? Grandpa was a--

FRANK

Child-beating son of a bitch. Yup.

Frank puts his hand on Tyler's shoulder.

TYLER

Why-come other people get grandmas who knit and grandpas who fought in World War 2 and whittle?

FRANK

We're just lucky, I guess.

Tyler again turns to face Frank.

TYLER

You really slept at a bar?

FRANK

(uncomfortable)

Yeah.

Tyler nods, finishing his snack.

As he's finishing, Doris enters from upstairs.

DORIS
Good morn-- Frank.

Frank looks up at his mother but doesn't say anything.

DORIS (CONT'D)
I'm glad you're back.

Frank nods.

DORIS (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

Frank nods again.

DORIS (CONT'D)
You gonna say anything to your
mother?

Frank stares at her, silent. Tyler gets up, taking his plate and cup with him.

TYLER
I'm just gonna leave you two
alone...

He heads back to the kitchen. Frank and Doris continue their staredown, neither wanting to be the first to budge. Finally Doris sits down next to Frank at the counter.

DORIS
I worried about you.

FRANK
I'm sure.

DORIS
Why do you do that? Why, when I
come to offer genuine sentiment, do
you just assume--

FRANK
Because the idea of you giving a
crap about anything that happens to
me is one I'm just not familiar
with, ma.

Doris sighs.

DORIS
We haven't seen each other in a
decade, Frank.
(MORE)

DORIS (CONT'D)
And in that time, we've hardly spoken. I thought that you'd finally, finally have gotten over this.

FRANK
Seems like you thought wrong.

DORIS
Jason forgave me. If your brother got over it, why can't you?

Frank refuses to answer, stewing in his seat. Doris SLAMS her hand on the table.

DORIS (CONT'D)
Dammit, will you answer my question?

FRANK
Because you never left Jason to the police, mom! You never threw Jason to wolves, to do whatever they wanted, with no help from his mother!

DORIS
You were a grown man, Frank. I thought you could handle it.

FRANK
I was a boy! A boy who needed his mother.

DORIS
Frank. Look at me. You did what you did. What did you want me to do about it?

FRANK
What the hell is this, a Doctor Seuss book?
(cuts her off)
I wanted you to say something in my defense. To show up and say, you know, that I wasn't pulling this child abuse thing straight out my ass.

DORIS
I couldn't do that, Frank. I couldn't do that to him. For all his unbelievable faults, he was my husband.

FRANK

What about your kids? Didn't they matter?

DORIS

Of course they mattered, Frank! But I couldn't do that to him. Ruin his reputation like that--

FRANK

Don't you mean ruin your reputation like that?!

DORIS

(beat; quietly)
Yes.

Silence.

Then:

DORIS (CONT'D)

I couldn't let everyone know that I just... let that happen to my kids. That I was a terrible mother.

Frank doesn't jump in to contradict her. He's not reacting at all, completely stone-faced.

DORIS (CONT'D)

I was ashamed. I admit it. It's my fault it happened--

FRANK

No it's not.

He turns to her for the first time in the conversation.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You didn't make him do what he did. You didn't make him an asshole.

(beat)

You should have stepped in, but... it wasn't your fault.

He smiles at her. It's a false smile, but he's trying his best.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Never think that it was.

Doris manages to hold it together for a fraction of a second, but then she loses it completely, breaking down in a ball of tears and sobs.

DORIS

I didn't want anyone to know that
I...

FRANK

I know. It's okay.

He puts his hand on hers. Takes in her tear-streaked face. He's crying himself, but he's Frank. He's holding his stuff together.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Ma, there's something I should have--
- there's something we should have
said to each other a long time ago.

DORIS

Oh please God, son, don't start
getting emotional. I thought I
taught you better.

FRANK

Will you just shut up and let me
finish, you stubborn impossible
woman?

DORIS

Don't talk to me that way, I'm your
mother.

FRANK

You're not anybody's mother. You
found me in a corn field and
decided I'd be cheap slave labor.

DORIS

Someone told you? Damn. That was
going to be your birthday present.

They're smiling now-- this isn't their hateful teasing from before. It's something a lot more friendly.

DORIS (CONT'D)

Got any booze?

Frank smiles. He leans over the counter and pulls out a bottle of whisky. Another reach and he has two glasses.

He pours them each a glass.

FRANK

(as she throws hers back)
That stuff'll kill you.

DORIS
Like you care.

He LAUGHS, a real laugh. She takes out a cigarette and lights it.

FRANK
I don't like funerals and I'd probably have to show up.

Tyler pokes his head into the room.

TYLER
I heard laughing-- no one died, right?

FRANK
Not yet, but she's trying her best.

He points to Doris's cig.

TYLER
Grandma, didn't I tell you? Those things killed Kurt Vonnegut.

DORIS
They did not kill Kurt Vonnegut. The floor killed Kurt Vonnegut.

TYLER
Grandma! Don't be insensitive. He was a literary treasure.

DORIS
You drew your card and I trumped it.

FRANK
Bring me some pie from the back, kid.

Tyler smiles, heads back to the kitchen.

Frank and Doris share a smile.

DORIS
So does this mean you forgive me?

FRANK
(eyeing her)
We'll see about that.

He catches a glimpse of something moving over her shoulder:

FRANK (CONT'D)
Quick, ditch the talky. People
coming.

She winks at him as Mike, Vi, Tamsin and Fletcher enter the diner. Tyler re-emerges as well, holding a covered plate of cake. He nods at the others as he puts the cake on the table.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Take care of the thing?

VI
Sure did. Where were you?

FRANK
That, my dear, is a long story.

DORIS
He fell asleep in a bar. Literally
in the bar.

MIKE
Dude, that's kind of pathetic.

DORIS
I already told him that, Sailor.

TAMSIN
Why do you call him sailor?

Doris smiles at Mike. He winces and shakes his head "no."

DORIS
Well--

MIKE
I'll pay you a thousand dollars if
you don't tell them.

Doris turns to Tyler.

DORIS
He good for it?

Tyler shakes his head negative.

DORIS (CONT'D)
(to Mike)
Tough break.
(to Tamsin)
Well, once upon a time I was
babysitting these two rugrats. It
was bath time, and even then Mike
was a drama queen.

Laughter from everyone.

We PULL BACK slowly as Doris continues talking.

DORIS (CONT'D)
So, while Tyler's struggling to get
away from the water like a stray
cat...

Her voice fades out as we pull OUT OF THE WINDOW of the diner.

EXT. FRANK'S DINER - CONTINUOUS

It's daytime, but the low angle of the late-afternoon sun causes the buildings to cast quite a bit of shade on the street in front of the diner.

From under an exceptionally shady spot beneath an awning across the street, A FIGURE watches the diner intently. We CLOSE IN ON the figure. Male in shape, it's wearing a hooded sweat-shirt, all his skin covered making details hard to discern.

As we reach the mysterious form, he licks its teeth as he watches the diner's occupants. The figure turns his head and we recognize the face.

It's SILAS.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SHOW