

NEPHALEUS

INT. LARA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A young college couple lie together on the couch watching TV. AUSTIN lies on top of LARA. Lara's stomach is grumbling.

LARA
Hey babe, can you get me some chips
please?

CARLOS
But I'm so comfortable.
(Burying his head into her
chest)
Five more minutes.

LARA
Okay... But no more head scratches.

Austin shoots up off her. She giggles at his quickness.

CARLOS
(Playfully whispering)
You are evil.

LARA
If you ever want them again, you'll
throw in a soda.

CARLOS
Coming up.

He kisses her forehead and stumbles to the kitchen. His phone rings, the caller ID is Lara. He pokes out the kitchen to see Lara isn't on her phone.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
Hello?

???
Hey babe, listen I can't make it
tonight. I'm out with Danny and
Ellie right now at the Brightline
Bar and I might be at his place.
Can you get me afterward?

Carlos' eyes widen. The voice on the phone was Lara's. Carlos keeps observing Lara while talking on the phone.

CARLOS
Who is this?

LARA
Very funny Carlos.

CARLOS
You're not Lara.

LARA
Yes I am, what- what's going on?

CARLOS
No, she's here- you're here-

LARA
Look I don't know what's going on
but we'll talk about this when I
get home. Bye.

The phone hangs up. Carlos takes a breath and walks into the living room.

CARLOS
Hey Lara, we need to-

Lara is gone. Carlos looks around living room cautiously.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
Lara, come on this isn't funny.
Lara? LARA!

A cloud of black fog rises from the ground, reaching 6 feet high. It reveals a CLOAKED FIGURE facing the wall.

CLOAKED FIGURE
Finally, now where are you?

CARLOS
Where's Lara?

CLOAKED FIGURE
(looking back at Carlos)
I don't know a Lara, but I know
you.

Carlos is paralyzed with fear as the figure approaches him. Carlos clenches his fist, trembling greatly.

CLOAKED FIGURE (CONT'D)
Let's talk.

The cloaked figure reaches out to Carlos, covering the screen.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. DEADLOCK REALM - CONTINUOUS

A dark, endless void filled with fog and gigantic chains that span for miles. They block out what little light the moon provides.

Carlos is restrained in a chair. His eyes dart around. Every exhale feels heavier and faster than last.

CLOAKED FIGURE (O.S.)
Calm down, you're not in danger.
Not yet anyway.

CARLOS
What the hell was that? Wh- where
am I? Where's Lara? Am I in hell?

CLOAKED FIGURE (O.S.)
This is your dream, and you're in
the abyss.

The dark cloaked figure, NEPHALEUS, emerges from the fog into the moonlight. He has no face and pitch black eye sockets that can move like eyes.

NEPHALEUS
The darkest abyss the mind can
conceptualize.

CARLOS
Please don't hurt me, is this for
something I did? I don't know what
I did!

NEPHALEUS
I just told you nothing's going to
happen, Carlos.

CARLOS
I never told you my name.

NEPHALEUS
No, you didn't. I think its only
courteous to start our rapport on a
first name basis.

CARLOS
What rapport? I don't even know who
you are! I don't know what's going
on!

NEPHALEUS
(Annoyed sigh)
My name is Nephaleus, Demon of
Guidance.

CARLOS
Demon? Oh God!

NEPHALEUS
God can't help you, but I can.

CARLOS
What can a demon do that God can't?
You expect me to take your word?

NEPHALEUS
No, believe what you want. We can
both wait for him together, or you
can help me help you, your choice.

CARLOS
Okay then, what's your deal with
me?

NEPHALEUS
That's what I came to find out.
See, my bosses have this annoyingly
accurate intuition you need help
with something before you... break.

CARLOS
Break?

NEPHALEUS
(Tapping his head)
Yeah. Up here.

CARLOS
I don't need some demon therapist
to try and... fucking-psychoanalyze
me like they know what's good for
me. I'm good.

NEPHALEUS
(Chuckles)
You know it's funny.

CARLOS
What is?

NEPHALEUS
You remind me of this big guy.
Matthew, school teacher I think.

NEPHALEUS (CONT'D)

Anyway, he always had this "macho man" attitude of toughing it out, same condition you're in now.

CARLOS

And what happened?

NEPHALEUS

I tried to help, but all that came out it is... his kids hating Father's Day.

CARLOS

I- I don't know what to tell you.

NEPHALEUS

Not convinced? How about this? I know before you went to sleep, you felt anger, and sadness. Not just for a little bit, but for hours, and it was strong too, especially the anxiousness.

CARLOS

That was- I never told anyone anything. How could you possibly know that?

NEPHALEUS

(pointing to his chest)

We've been connected here since yesterday.

(pointing to his head)

And I just got through here today.

Carlos is shocked, unable to respond despite opening his mouth several times.

NEPHALEUS (CONT'D)

I don't have much time in here, so I'll be brief: what's got you in this turmoil I feel?

CARLOS

I'm not telling you anything.

NEPHALEUS

Don't make this difficult.

CARLOS

No, if I don't want to tell you, that's that. End of story.

NEPHALEUS

Damn it you're really stubborn you know that?

CARLOS

I'm not stubborn, I just have a lot of pride.

NEPHALEUS

To hell with this, sorry kid.

CARLOS

What are you do-

Nephaleus opens his hand, reaching for Carlos. Carlos' eyes roll back and become bright white. Carlos begins choking.

Clouds form in his pupils, then disperse. A silhouette of a heart with a piece missing shows in both of his eyes.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

What... what are you... doing?

NEPHALEUS

Something I didn't want to.

CARLOS

Why... why me?

NEPHALEUS

To find a starting point.

Nephaleus puts his arm down, Carlos can breathe normally again. His eyes return to normal.

NEPHALEUS (CONT'D)

I saw a broken heart. Not much to go off of, but I'm only guessing it involves what's her name.

CARLOS

Go to hell.

NEPHALEUS

I'll make a note of that. For now, I'll be watching.

CARLOS

Me? What do you mean?

NEPHALEUS

(Walking into the void)
If you had a better attitude, I'd tell you.

CARLOS
I'm not done with you? Get the hell
back here and tell me! HEY!

INT. CARLOS' BEDROOM - DAY

Carlos wakes up in a cold sweat. He looks around and plops back on his bed, checking his phone for notifications before getting off.

He changes clothes and brushes his teeth before walking downstairs into the kitchen.

INT. CARLOS' KITCHEN - DAY

Carlos enters the kitchen checking his phone. A conversation can be seen with "Erica" as the contact. They converse about where Lara is.

Carlos' mom, MARITZA, walks in.

MARITZA
Hey hon, something on your mind?

CARLOS
Um. Yeah, I uh... Lara and I had a little fight yesterday, and I haven't heard from her since.

MARITZA
Oh no, want to talk about it?

CARLOS
No, I'm probably just thinking about it too much. Thanks.

MARITZA
Have you tried calling her?

CARLOS
I did, no answer. I asked her sister too, nothing.

MARITZA
Well, her mom and I see each other in church every Sunday. I don't think she'll mind if I shoot her a call.

CARLOS
No, it's fine mom. Really.

MARITZA
(checks her pockets)
I think I left my phone upstairs,
I'll be right back.

Maritza walks out the kitchen to her room.

NEPHALEUS (O.S.)
That explains the heart I saw.

Carlos twists in shock and horror. Nephaleus stands in the middle of the kitchen.

CARLOS
What the hell are you doing here?

NEPHALEUS
I remember specifically telling you
I'd be watching. What wasn't clear
about that?

CARLOS
I thought you were just a bad
dream! Do I have no privacy now?

NEPHALEUS
In a way, yes. But that should be a
good thing because no one's telling
you your heart feels like a
jackhammer to your chest every
beat.

CARLOS
How did-

NEPHALEUS
Connected remember? Now breathe
damn it.

CARLOS
Right.

He does several reps of controlled breathing, calming him. He listens carefully at the TV in the living room.

NEWS ANCHOR
On this morning's bulletin, a
tragic revelation unfolds as the
body of 38 year old Matthew Rivera
was found in the waters underneath
a suspension bridge on the
outskirts of town. He was a middle
school teacher who loved his kids
and students alike.

The TV shows a big Latin man with a hefty beard in a school uniform labeled "Matthew Rivera". Carlos looks at Nephaleus in horror. Nephaleus crosses his arms.

CARLOS

That... no.

NEPHALEUS

Yeah... Same one.

CARLOS

Why are you here? With me? He needed-

NEPHALEUS

Help? Of course he did. Everyone does. My track record in this job of mine is decent, but it'll never be enough. Like you said, what can a demon do that God can't?

MARITZA

Everything good?

Maritza stands outside the kitchen, looking confused at Carlos.

CARLOS

I'm fine, why?

MARITZA

I just saw you standing here looking at the wall, I called your name twice.

Carlos glances at his mom, then at Nephaleus.

NEPHALEUS

You want to pull the pin on that grenade?

CARLOS

I'm... I mean, my heads in the clouds. I can't think straight.

MARITZA

Love is always a ride, you'll overcome this bump in the road. Which reminds me, I don't have her mom's number saved, do you have it?

CARLOS
(Leaving the house)
You know mom, it's fine. I'll just
head to her place.

MARITZA
Okay sweetie, let me know how it
goes.

INT. CARLOS' CAR - DAY

Carlos hops in his car and leaves the driveway in haste. He
sees Nepheleus in the passenger seat.

CARLOS
I don't think I'll get used to you.

NEPHELEUS
You might not get a chance to.

CARLOS
Well, let's play 20 questions.

NEPHELEUS
How about no?

CARLOS
Okay, tell me this: Why did my mom
think I was standing there doing
nothing? We're having a full-blown
conversation.

NEPHELEUS
I make you dissociate every time we
talk.

CARLOS
Why?

NEPHELEUS
I've accidentally sent several
people to a psych ward for "talking
to demons." My bosses were not
happy at all.

CARLOS
Who? Oh don't tell me? God? Or
Satan? No wait... Lucifer. Yeah,
God or Lucifer?

NEPHELEUS
Both.

Carlos' eyes widen and he turns his head to Nephaleus.

CARLOS

No way.

NEPHALEUS

Keep your eyes on the road.

Carlos faces the road and slams his breaks, barely missing the car.

CARLOS

Not saying I don't believe you, but
I am saying I think you're fucking
with me.

NEPHALEUS

Which part?

CARLOS

I don't know. It's just too much
for me to process all at once.

NEPHALEUS

Then focus on one thing at a time.
Lauren-

CARLOS

Lara.

NEPHALEUS

Lara should be your top priority.

CARLOS

Right, okay.

The car passes into a gated community.

NEPHALEUS

Are we almost there? I can feel
your heart spike.

The car stops at a house. In the driveway sits 2 cars and a police cruiser.

CARLOS

What the hell is going on?

Carlos picks up his phone and makes a call. It rings, but ends quickly. Carlos unbuckles his seat belt and marches to the door.

EXT. LARA'S HOUSE - DAY

Carlos makes his way to the door. He knocks with urgency, a police officer opens the door.

OFFICER
Are you a resident in this house?

CARLOS
No, my girlfriend lives here, is she in?

??? (O.S.)
Who is it?

CARLOS
It's Carlos.

OFFICER
Espansa?

CARLOS
Yes.

OFFICER
Come in. You're going to want to sit down for this.

INT. LARA'S HOUSE - DAY

Carlos enters the living room, where a family sits distressed. A young woman, ERICA, picks her head up from her hands while crying.

Erica and Carlos look at each other intensely. Carlos shakes his head side to side. Erica nods her head. Both have tears rolling down their cheeks.

INT. LARA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Two officers stand while Lara's parents, RICHARD and Pamela, sit on the couch and Carlos on a sofa chair.

OFFICER 1
As I explained to the Levy household, this morning at 8:03 AM, we got a call about a flipped van on the side of the road. Our officers went to take a look and, unfortunately, we saw Lara and 2 others in the vehicle. By the time we got them out, it was too late.

OFFICER 2

We've alerted the other families.
We wanted to give you updates and
our sincerest condolences.

PAMELA

How, just how? She's a bright girl,
a good girl, a smart girl.

OFFICER 2

We found spilled tequila bottles
along with a liter of coke. The
driver must have been inebriated.

PAMELA

She wouldn't get with someone like
that.

OFFICER 1

It's suspected the drinking started
after she got in.

PAMELA

OH GOD!

OFFICER 1

We're still trying to piece
together what led up to the
accident. If you guys have anything
that can help, it would be very
much appreciated.

RICHARD

Yesterday, she told me she was
going out to visit some friends.
Erica told me she and Carlos
couldn't reach her. I thought that
was her being a young woman but...
but... I'm sorry I need a moment.

OFFICER 1

Please, take all you need.

Richard walks out the room covering his face. Pamela follows.

OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)

Is this true?

ERICA

Yes.

OFFICER 1

What about you, Carlos?

Carlos looks down. Erica tries to call him to no avail.

ERICA

I'm going to check on my parents.

OFFICER 2

That's fine. You alright, Carlos?

CARLOS

I need a minute.

OFFICER 2

Let's take a few, my partner and I
will step out.

Everyone leaves the living room except Carlos.

NEPHALEUS

Look at me Carlos. Look at me.

Carlos slowly tilts his head up at Nephaleus, who towers over him.

NEPHALEUS (CONT'D)

What are you not telling him?

CARLOS

It's none of your business.

NEPHALEUS

(pointing at the parents)
You're right, it isn't. But it's
theirs. Like it or not, they
deserve to know.

CARLOS

It's not that simple.

NEPHALEUS

Nothing is, but the moment you let
that girl in your life, critical
business like this is not yours
alone, it's EVERYONE's.

CARLOS

I... I can't.

NEPHALEUS

Did you drive the car?

CARLOS

No.

NEPHALEUS
Did you give her alcohol?

CARLOS
God no.

NEPHALEUS
Then what the hell are we doing here? There's this overwhelming tension in your chest I'm feeling, and it's going to explode. Tell me what it is.

CARLOS
Fuck off!

NEPHALEUS
Can't do that, but I can do this.

CARLOS
No, wait!

Nephaleus reaches out to Carlos once again, paralyzing him.

FADE TO:

INT. CARLOS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nephaleus enters Carlos' memory from the day before. He sees him in his bedroom screaming over the phone.

CARLOS
You go with him and I swear to fucking God I'm not picking you up... What sense does that make?... He doesn't care about you... I'm controlling?!... You know what Fine, do what you want, I don't care.

Carlos ends the call and tosses the phone on his bed, pulling his hair and screaming.

FADE TO:

INT. LARA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nephaleus rests his arm. Carlos begins sobbing.

NEPHALEUS

I'm sorry, I didn't want to do that, but we can't leave them hanging out to dry.

CARLOS

(Wiping tears)

I... I don't want them to hate me.

NEPHALEUS

For what?

CARLOS

You saw, I drove her to get in the car. I... I...

Nephaleus sighs as he kneels down to look up at Carlos.

NEPHALEUS

No one here did anything wrong. It was a freak accident out of your control. No one could've seen this coming.

CARLOS

But-

NEPHALEUS

No more of that, alright? For fuck's sake, a couple lost their daughter and a girl lost her sister. You're not the only one hurting, you're lucky to be one of the first to know. Now stop being selfish and talk to the cop.

CARLOS

(clears his throat)

Sorry.

NEPHALEUS

Don't be sorry to me, be sorry to them.

Erica returns with her parents and signals the officers to come back in the room. Carlos looks back at her family. He turns to Nephaleus, he's gone.

OFFICER 1

Are you good?

CARLOS

No, but I don't think I can keep it together for much longer.

RICHARD
None of us can, son.

OFFICER 1
Okay, well Carlos, do you know
anything that could possibly help?

CARLOS
Yeah... I know why she was in the
car.

Everyone looks at Carlos. The room is free of sniffing and
crying.

OFFICER 1
Okay, start from the beginning.

CARLOS
Last night, we got into a big
fight. She said she was going out
with some friends and was angry
with me.

PAMELA
Why?

CARLOS
Because... she thinks I'm
controlling and I think her work
friends are bad influences.

OFFICER 1
Who are these friends?

CARLOS
A couple coworkers of hers, Danny
and Ellie.

OFFICER 2
Those were the other passengers.

OFFICER 1
Alright, so you got in a fight,
some words were exchanged and then?

CARLOS
(sighs deeply)
I said some things I shouldn't
have. I told her if she went with
them to find a ride home and that-
that-

OFFICER 1
Breathe.

CARLOS
That I didn't care.

PAMELA
What?!

CARLOS
I was just mad and angry. I was
worried something was going to
happen.

PAMELA
And something did!

OFFICER 2
Ma'am, calm down.

PAMELA
I can't! My baby girl is gone!
Gone! The last thing she heard from
us is I don't care? NO! That is not
right!

CARLOS
I didn't mean-

PAMELA
Let me tell you something!

Pamela stomps to Carlos, but Officer 1 stands between them
while Richard holds her back.

RICHARD
Pam, don't!

PAMELA
It's not right!

OFFICER 1
Ma'am, I need you to calm down.

PAMELA
It's not right!

ERICA
Mom!

PAMELA
No, damn it! I can't! I can't. Not
today, please God, not my baby!

Pamela falls to her knees, Richard hugs her tight. Officer 2
tries to console Carlos, but he marches out with tears.

EXT. LARA'S HOUSE - DAY

Carlos collapses trying to breathe.

NEPHALEUS

Hey hey hey, just focus on your
breathing.

Erica comes out with Officer 2. They both huddle around Carlos. Officer 2 holds him up while Erica takes hold of his hands.

CARLOS

I'm sorry!

ERICA

It's okay!

CARLOS

No, no it's not! I was mean and
she's gone and your mom hates me! I
don't want you to hate me too,
please!

ERICA

I don't!

CARLOS

Take me to my car please, I'm so
tired.

Officer 2 and Erica help Carlos to his car. He sits on the passenger seat gasping for air.

ERICA

I don't hate you, but what you said
to my sister hurts, she didn't
deserve that.

CARLOS

(lowers his head)
I know.

ERICA

But, as much as I want to scream at
you, I can't.

CARLOS

Why?

ERICA

It's stupid because... heh, it's because she wouldn't shut up about you. She would slam her phone in my face for every message you sent.

CARLOS

Heh heh, yeah that sounds like her.

ERICA

I had to shout at her a few times to shut up, haha.

CARLOS

(wiping his face)

Ha, it is pretty funny.

ERICA

Hmm. I need to go inside, I need water.

(To the officer)

Can we continue this inside?

OFFICER 2

Yeah, let's regroup with your parents. Are you good to go, Carlos?

CARLOS

I think so, I mean I'm not GOOD, but I'll manage.

Carlos gets in the driver seat as Officer 2 and Erica approach the house. Before Carlos leaves, he and Erica exchange half smiles before the door closes.

He lies back in his seat with his eyes closes, slowly exhaling.

INT. CARLOS' CAR - NIGHT

Carlos wakes up in the same position in a parking lot. He checks his phone to many notifications.

NEPHALEUS

You should head home.

CARLOS

I don't want to head back.

NEPHALEUS

Why here?

CARLOS
I'm feeling nostalgic.

NEPHALEUS
You're more calm than usual.

CARLOS
I've accepted what I need to do
next. I just need some air, okay?

NEPHALEUS
Just air, nothing else.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Carlos observes the city as he walks along the edge for
several minutes. He looks at a nearby air conditioning unit.

CARLOS
If you can hear me, I need some
time to myself, okay?

Carlos waits a few seconds and hears nothing. He lets out a
big sigh as he sits down and slumps against it.

PAN TO THE ROOFTOP DOOR.

FADE TO:

THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF A FLASHBACK.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Lara bursts through the door giggling while dragging Carlos.
She slows down to enjoy the view while Carlos carries two
backpacks.

LARA
Here it is, what do you think?

CARLOS
I think sunscreen and ice cream
would've been great up here.

LARA
I know that, but what about the
city?

CARLOS
(Pointing at the city
streets)

CARLOS (CONT'D)
I mean you got a Honda here, Ford
there, oh a semi truck-

LARA
(Lightly slaps his
shoulder)
You know what I mean.

CARLOS
Ha ha, yeah I do. It's a great view
and the sun is nice, but I've
always been more of a night person.

LARA
Well it's only 3 in the afternoon.
The day is still young. We can
catch up on a class assignment or
maybe clear our watch list.

CARLOS
It's too bright to see anything on
my phone. Books it is.

LARA
If we get done early, would you
wanna watch something?

CARLOS
Yeah, we can finally start watching
Star Wars.

LARA
What?

CARLOS
Yeah, you haven't seen it and...
something wrong?

LARA
I was kind of hoping to show you
Harry Potter.

CARLOS
And I'll see it, I just wanted to
show you some space wizards.

LARA
I prefer real wizards.

CARLOS
Oh is that right?

LARA
Yeah, how about a coin toss?

CARLOS
Go on.

LARA
Heads, my wizards. Tails, your
wizards.

CARLOS
Hmm I'm not sure.

LARA
Oh is that a forfeit I sense? Guess
you have no faith in your space
wizards, what a shame.

CARLOS
What- I do. I just- I need a second
to get ready. The force is with me,
always. Go ahead.

Lara flips the coin and it lands on heads.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
Damn.

Lara does a celebratory shimmy. Carlos is disappointed, but
smiles at her dance. She hugs him.

LARA
After the movies, we can move to
your wizards.

CARLOS
Yeah, I'd like that.

He plants a kiss on her forehead.

LARA
I know magic isn't really your
stuff, but nothing wrong with a
little leap of faith.

CARLOS
I know, but I had a vision on how
we can clear our watch list and
spend the afternoon and graduate
and all that.

LARA

You can't control all that at once,
it's too much. Nothing wrong with
letting go and going with the flow.

CARLOS

Sounds like something Kenobi would
say.

LARA

Is that a bad thing?

CARLOS

No, not at all.

LARA

Then you know I'm right.

Carlos hugs her tight.

CARLOS

I know. I'll work on it.

LARA

Thank you.

CARLOS

Can we try rolling for snacks at
least?

LARA

I'm glad you asked.

CARLOS

Okay I'm in the mood for pizza,
you?

LARA

Cheese steak sandwiches. I'm tails,
you're heads.

CARLOS

Flip it.

Lara flips the coin and it lands on tails.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

You're cheating, no way!

LARA

I swear I'm not!

CARLOS

Let me see the coin!

Lara laughs as she runs to keep her coin from Carlos. He keeps chasing her laughing, but can't catch her.

FADE TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Carlos and Lara lay against an air conditioning unit. Lara lays her head on Carlos' shoulder as she crumbles her sandwich wrapper.

CARLOS

Okay you were right, those hit the spot.

LARA

Right? Beef and bread is undefeated.

CARLOS

Yeah. You know, I kind of see it now?

LARA

What?

CARLOS

Your vision of the city. It really is beautiful.

LARA

I knew you'd like it. This view is like a canvas that's constantly being painted.

CARLOS

A work of art?

LARA

Took the words right out of my mouth.

CARLOS

I was skeptical at first, but I was dead wrong.

LARA

See what happens when you open your mind a little bit?

CARLOS

I think I forgot what that was like. I'm glad you dragged me here.

LARA

I'm glad. Now then, you ready
for...

(Covering her nose)

The boy who lived?

CARLOS

Haha yeah. I have no idea what that
means.

LARA

You will. Oh, before that, let's
get a picture.

CARLOS

Okay.

Carlos tries to hide his smile. Lara gets her phone and uses
the rearview camera. He kisses her on the cheek and she
smiles. A bright light flashes, covering the screen.

THIS ENDS THE FLASHBACK.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Carlos looks at the photo, sliding through more pictures of
her and Lara in a photo album titled "STOOPIDZ". He closes
his phone and stands up.

He glances over the city and taking a big whiff of the air.
His heartbeat can be heard getting progressively louder and
faster as he approaches the edge. He pauses briefly before
putting a foot over the edge.

He's pushed back into the AC unit hard enough to dent it.

NEPHALEUS

Of all the stupid asinine bullshit
you could've done, this is high up
there!

CARLOS

What do you know?

Carlos tries to get up but Nephaleus pushes Carlos back with
force. He pins Carlos down.

NEPHALEUS

You forget I'm a demon, boy. I can
possess you just enough.

CARLOS

Please stop! Help!

NEPHALEUS

No one can hear you. If even you weren't dissociating, it's too loud down there.

CARLOS

Why are you being so mean? Just let me do this, please!

NEPHALEUS

(Approaching Carlos)

Last man I coddled ended up in the pearly gates. At least he had a decent life to live, you know nothing.

CARLOS

Yeah I d-

NEPHALEUS

No you don't, don't give me that bullshit!

CARLOS

So tell me, what's life?

NEPHALEUS

Hell if I know. I just know what it isn't. This isn't that.

CARLOS

That wasn't helpful at all.

NEPHALEUS

What I do know is that there are two types of people when they're at the edge. Those who need coddling and those who need an ass whooping. I tried the former with you, but maybe the ladder should've been the first choice.

CARLOS

How has that worked out for you?

EXT. DEADLOCK REALM - CONTINUOUS

Nephaleus is surrounded by dozens of adults and children.

NEPHALEUS (V.O.)

It's worked out both ways. I've had my victories, but...

(MORE)

NEPHALEUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
the ones I remembered most are the
ones I'm not allowed to forget.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

CARLOS
Why?

Carlos' phone rings. Nephaleus squats down.

NEPHALEUS
Think very carefully about your
next move.

Carlos clenches his fist while answering the phone. He and
Nephaleus share a hostile gaze.

CARLOS
Hello?

MARITZA (V.O.)
Carlos, where the hell are you?

CARLOS
(Sitting upright)
I'm fine, mom, just getting fresh
air.

MARITZA (V.O.)
You had me worried sick! I tried
calling several times and thought
something happened to you!

CARLOS
I'm okay mom, just... processing
things.

MARITZA (V.O.)
Well, Richard called and told me
what happened. I'm sorry honey, but
don't do this again.

CARLOS
Sorry, mom.

MARITZA
It's okay. But if something like
this happens again, you come to me.
I'm not your friend, I'm your mom
and I need to know where you are,
especially for something like this.
I love you, so much. Okay?

CARLOS
I love you too, mom. I'll head out
in a few minutes.

MARITZA
Okay. Drive safe.

CARLOS
I will.

Carlos ends the call and stands up.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
Thanks.

NEPHALEUS
For what?

CARLOS
For stopping me.

NEPHALEUS
Hmph.

CARLOS
Hmm.

NEPHALEUS
What are you smiling about?

CARLOS
I was thinking- are you like my
guardian angel- demon I mean?

NEPHALEUS
That's one way to put it. I've also
been nicknamed the sinner's
consultant, you can guess which
name is more accurate.

CARLOS
You don't look like a consultant.

NEPHALEUS
I just solve problems and move on.

CARLOS
Well, time to head home.

NEPHALEUS
Get a snack before you head home.

CARLOS
I'm good.

NEPHALEUS
You can't dry fast forever.

CARLOS
Ugh, fine.

CUT TO:

INT. CARLOS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Carlos opens the front door and walks into the kitchen.

MARITZA
Carlos?

CARLOS
It's me mom.

She gives him a big hug.

MARITZA
I'm glad you're okay... I know it's not easy, but I promise you it will get better.

CARLOS
What makes you say that?

MARITZA
Life. It always has its ups and downs, and right now, it's only going up from here.

CARLOS
I guess.

MARITZA
It's hard to see it now, but sooner or later, that little voice in your head will put you on a path that leads to loving life more. You know what I mean?

CARLOS
In a way, yeah.

MARITZA
I'm always here if you need me, you know that right?

CARLOS
I do, thanks mom.

MARITZA

Good.

She kisses him on the cheek and gives him one more hug. She let's go after a few seconds.

CARLOS

I'm going to head upstairs and sleep it off?

MARITZA

You don't want stew? You have to eat.

CARLOS

Maybe later mom, thanks.

He slumps upstairs to his room. She looks at him with a helpless expression.

EXT. DEADLOCK REALM - CONTINUOUS

Nephaleus stands with his arms crossed frustrated. A bold but calm voice echoes across the realm.

??? (V.O.)

I sense frustration.

NEPHALEUS

Had a close call with the kid. Almost threw himself off a building.

??? (V.O.)

Yet he lives. Why the concealed anger?

NEPHALEUS

Because I thought I solved the problem, but no. He's more unstable now and out of control.

??? (V.O.)

The fate of his mental collapse has not yet been mitigated, but it has been postponed.

NEPHALEUS

I hate waiting.

??? (V.O.)

Patience is a vir-

NEPHALEUS

Virtue I get it, I get it. But his emotions are all over the place, it's getting harder to anticipate what he does next.

??? (V.O.)

You've always had a keen eye, and I trust you'll never waver your gaze easily.

NEPHALEUS

Not anytime soon. I'll keep you updated.

??? (V.O.)

Understood.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. CARLOS' BEDROOM - DAY

His alarm clock shows 7AM as the current time.

Carlos lays in bed crying. He holds back tears glancing at his photo gallery. Carlos grips his blanket hard and brings it to his chest.

The alarm clock shows 10AM as the current time.

Carlos sits at his desk looking at his phone once again. Tears roll down his face, but he stopped crying.

NEPHALEUS

Pretty early for a drink. Wouldn't you say?

CARLOS

One never hurt anyone. It makes me feel a bit lighter.

NEPHALEUS

Don't overdo it.

CARLOS

I won't.

Carlos' phone rings several times, it's from Erica. He ignores the calls and continues watching.

The alarm clock shows 2PM as the current time.

He drunkenly harmonizes to music. He grabs a bottle and sings into it. His phone vibrates. It's riddled with messages from his mom.

CUT TO a CLOSE UP SHOT of his phone with messages from his mom. They notify him about breakfast and chores.

Footsteps can be heard outside his room marching to his bedroom. Maritza opens the door.

MARITZA

Hey did you get my messages?

CARLOS

(Checking his phone)

Let me see, uh... oh the garbage.
Yeah I'll get it in a minute.

MARITZA

Clean up the bottles, they're going to fall off your desk.

CARLOS

Mhm, I will, I will, I just- I just need a minute.

MARITZA

Okay, I'll be back later.

Maritza leaves. Carlos raises the volume of his music and continues to sing.

The alarm clock shows 7PM as the current time.

Carlos slams face first on the ground. He hits his desk as he falls, causing the bottles to fall on top of him. He groans in pain.

The alarm clock shows 10PM as the current time.

Carlos is snoring while drooling. Erica calls his phone, it goes to voicemail.

EXT. DEADLOCK REALM - CONTINUOUS

Carlos wakes up in the realm restrained.

CARLOS

You need something?

NEPHALEUS

What do you feel right now?

CARLOS
If you're talking about... I'm a lot
better than I thought.

NEPHALEUS
Oh really? Tell me.

CARLOS
Had a cry, a really good cry, for
hours.

NEPHALEUS
Uh huh.

CARLOS
Oh I get it. You're talking about
the pregame?

NEPHALEUS
Have fun how you want, it's the why
I don't understand.

CARLOS
To...

NEPHALEUS
I just find it interesting how
yesterday you were fighting so hard
to fall off a building, and today
now you're... oddly over it.

CARLOS
The drinks help.

NEPHALEUS
Think about why they help.

Nephaleus disappears. Carlos ponders for a moment before
closing his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. CARLOS' ROOM - DAY

Carlos wakes up groggy and irritated. He smacks his lips and
flips his blanket to see urine stains on his mattress and
pants. He slams his head into his pillow and groans.

INT. CARLOS' LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

Carlos stumbles into the laundry room with a laundry basket. His mom comes behind him as he struggles to keep his eyes open.

MARITZA

I heard you hit some high notes last night.

CARLOS

Oh that. I got a little carried away.

MARITZA

Washing your sheets?

CARLOS

Yeah, I uh, had a spill.

MARITZA

Well, how are you feeling?

CARLOS

I'm... getting through it in my own way.

MARITZA

Well, I think you could do some good going out.

CARLOS

I'm really not-

MARITZA

I'm not asking you to go out and party. Just get some sun, vitamin D wouldn't hurt.

CARLOS

Okay, I'll give it some thought.

She nods and walks away. Carlos finishes loading his laundry and checks his phone. He hesitates to respond to Erica's messages, closing his phone.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Carlos sits looking through the "STOOPIDZ" photo gallery. A tear rolls down his face, he wipes it away and takes a sip of beer.

Carlos walks towards the edge and looks over the city.

NEPHALEUS (V.O.)
Don't even think about it.

He looks down and notices a bar next to a sandwich shop.

INT. BAR IN THE WALL - NIGHT

Carlos walks into a small bar called Bar In The Wall. He walks past several tables to sit at a stool looking down. A female bartender notices and tends to him.

BARTENDER
Hi there, how are you doing?

CARLOS
I'm good thanks. I think I'll start off with a shot. Vodka.

BARTENDER
Starting off strong. Want a chaser?

CARLOS
No thanks. It's a special occasion.

BARTENDER
Coming up.

Carlos puts in headphones and listens to music. His body becomes fidgety. He hears voices of past conversations replaying in his head.

He raises the volume of his headphones and hums the melody. The bartender comes by.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Here you are.

CARLOS
(Taking off his
headphones)
Appreciate it.

BARTENDER
What are we celebrating today if you don't mind asking?

CARLOS
It's... the life of someone close to me. They passed recently.

BARTENDER
Oh my god I'm sorry to hear that. Who was it?

CARLOS

It's... It... Can I get two more shots and a coke? Just the can.

BARTENDER

Ye-yeah. Okay, want to open a tab?

CARLOS

Please.

She walks away. Carlos drinks the shot and shakes his body while pounding his chest. He exhales and relaxes his shoulders.

NEPHALEUS

Celebrating huh? Could've fooled me.

Nephaleus sits in a chair to his left.

CARLOS

What? It's next to a sandwich shop we went to a while back. I just wanted to hop in and see what's so special.

NEPHALEUS

Right.

CARLOS

Got something you want to tell me?

NEPHALEUS

I just think you're not processing Lara's death-

CARLOS

Don't say her name.

NEPHALEUS

Oh ho! Look at the balls on you, so you do care.

CARLOS

I always cared.

NEPHALEUS

Not enough to accept it.

CARLOS

What was that?

NEPHALEUS

You think she'd want you to be in here? Downing shots like you got 3 livers?

CARLOS

Hey fuck you.

NEPHALEUS

Tell me I'm wrong.

CARLOS

You're wrong.

NEPHALEUS

Look me in the face and tell me you believe that. Full chest and all.

His face twitches. Echoes of a woman can be heard calling to him, but he doesn't answer.

BARTENDER

(Waving her hand)

Hey, hey sir! Sir!

CARLOS

(Snapping his head to her)

Hmm?

BARTENDER

(Delivering the drinks)

Are you waiting for someone? You've been looking at the entrance for a while now.

CARLOS

(Forcing a smile)

My girlfriend. She's the one who passed.

BARTENDER

I'm sorry, honey. Don't you think you should be home with family?

CARLOS

What? Nah, she believed in taking a leap of faith and trying new things. I wanted to come in on a whim and explore new horizons.

(Raising Shot glass)

To her.

BARTENDER
 (Raising Check booklet)
 To her.

CARLOS
 Salud!

He drinks the shot and takes a big gulp of his Coke. He physically shakes his body and blows air. Carlos growls with excitement.

NEPHALEUS
 You need to go home.

CARLOS
 (Slurring words)
 What? Go home? HA! Why? I'm just chilling with you. You my boy.

NEPHALEUS
 No I'm not.

CARLOS
 You my fucking boy bro!

NEPHALEUS
 Oh God, you're a lightweight.

CARLOS
 (Drinks the last shot)
 Hey, hey listen... you- you... MVP. GOAT. Like... my girl fucking died man. She died. And you... you saved me from jumping- like Superman!

Carlos put his arm around Nephaleus, but falls to the ground. A nearby patron helps him off the ground.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
 (To patron)
 Thanks man, you a G!
 (To Nephaleus)
 Why aren't you vibing man?

NEPHALEUS
 Because you're just trying to stop thinking about Lara.

CARLOS
 And I feel great! I'm happy, and these shots...
 (whispers in his face)
 Taste amazing!

NEPHALEUS

Hmph.

CARLOS

Look, I don't want to be sad, but
papa ain't raised a bitch! So you
can either get lit with me and have
a good time or you can go fuck
yourself!

Nephaleus crosses his arms before disappearing.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Another shot please!

EXT. DEADLOCK REALM - CONTINUOUS

Nephaleus spawns in and starts pacing around.

??? (V.O.)

This is troubling.

NEPHALEUS

Don't remind me. Kid is either
gonna give himself alcohol
poisoning or need a 12-step
program.

??? (V.O.)

What are your solutions so far?

NEPHALEUS

I can only do so much to him with
possession. Maybe if you loosen the
limit on my powers-

??? (V.O.)

Out of the question.

NEPHALEUS

Ugh, I had to try.

??? (V.O.)

You're aware how dangerous a demon
is with full access to their powers
in the human realm.

NEPHALEUS

And bloodthirsty, I'm aware. But
how else can I get him out without
risking him, say, getting hit by a
car?

??? (V.O.)
You words got through to him
before, you were doing fine until
now.

NEPHALEUS
That's when he had all his senses
intact. But... I have an idea.

??? (V.O.)
Do you now?

NEPHALEUS
Let me preface this by saying it's
really risky and a dangerous plan,
but it might be enough to kick the
habit before it starts.

??? (V.O.)
Let me hear it.

INT. BAR IN THE WALL - NIGHT

20 minutes pass and Carlos is humming to the bar music.
Nephaleus appears next to Carlos.

BEGIN MONTAGE

Carlos orders shots.

Glasses and soda cans are slammed on the counter.

Carlos downs shots.

Carlos screams with vigor and excitement.

NEPHALEUS
Having fun?

CARLOS
Where were you? I missed you buddy.
I missed my homie...

NEPHALEUS
I had to talk to someone. You know,
maybe we can celebrate, have some
fun.

CARLOS
Really?

NEPHALEUS
Yeah. But, I can't drink.

CARLOS

Bro... that sucks. We need to get you something. Something like uh-uh a demon beer.

NEPHALEUS

Not unless we're French. But, if you drink for me, it's like you're drinking FOR me.

CARLOS

What?

NEPHALEUS

If you drink a shot, I can feel the alcohol, but you have to drink a lot. Like a lot.

CARLOS

I don't know.

NEPHALEUS

I thought you were my bro.

CARLOS

But I am! I'm your bro! I'm your man, I'm your buddy, you understand?

NEPHALEUS

Yes.

CARLOS

Let's go!

END MONTAGE

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Ugh. Oh, oh god. Hwack.

NEPHALEUS

Feeling sick?

CARLOS

Yeah, I think I'm done. I want to go.

NEPHALEUS

We're not done yet. You still have 3 shots left.

CARLOS

Yeah, but... but no. I want my soda and I want my bed.

Carlos tries to get up but Nephaleus possess him.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
I want to go home now.

NEPHALEUS
You don't get to go home yet,
you're finishing those shots.

Nephaleus moves Carlos' hand to grab a shot glass.

CARLOS
No please!

NEPHALEUS
I thought you were my bro.

CARLOS
You're hurting me! You're hurting
me!

NEPHALEUS
(Whispering)
Shh, just let it happen.

Carlos' head cocks back and the drink is poured in his mouth. Nephaleus sends a powerful shock to his stomach, causing Carlos to cough and swallow the shot.

CARLOS
(Starts crying)
That was mean.

NEPHALEUS
2 more shots to go.

CARLOS
I don't wanna, I don't wanna!

NEPHALEUS
We're celebrating for Lara
remember? Don't you love her?

CARLOS
Lara? Where is she? Is she here?

NEPHALEUS
No buddy, she's gone. And we're
drinking to celebrate.

CARLOS
But... she hates when I drink. If I
drink, I'll get in trouble.

NEPHALEUS

You're already in trouble, Carlos.
Let's have some fun.

Nephaleus forces Carlos once more to grab his drink, pour it in his mouth and make him cough to swallow. Carlos let's go of the glass and slams his head on the counter.

NEPHALEUS (CONT'D)

It's funny, every time you people
get drunk, it makes my job 10 times
harder. But...

Nephaleus forces Carlos to grab the third shot.

NEPHALEUS (CONT'D)

It also reminds me why I don't have
a halo.

CARLOS

No no no no no!

NEPHALEUS

No what?

CARLOS

No more drink, no more drink!

NEPHALEUS

You want to stop?

CARLOS

Yeah!

NEPHALEUS

Call your mom to get you or we get
5 more shots.

Carlos pulls out his phone and bursts into tears. He calls Maritza.

MARITZA (V.O.)

Hello?

NEPHALEUS

Repeat after me: mom can you pick
me up?

CARLOS

Mom can you- can you get me?

MARITZA (V.O.)

Where are you?

NEPHALEUS
I'm at Bar In The Wall.

CARLOS
I'm at B-Bar In The W-W-Wall!

MARITZA
Oh God. Alright, just stay there,
I'm on my way.

NEPHALEUS
Thank you mom.

CARLOS
Okay mom, I love you!

MARITZA
Love you too.

Carlos ends the call and falls off the stool. He leans against the counter and starts to fade in and out of consciousness.

NEPHALEUS
I'm gonna make sure you don't go
anywhere, so get comfy.

BEGIN MONTAGE

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF CARLOS. EVERY TRANSITION BETWEEN CLIPS WILL BE AN EYE CLOSING AND OPENING.

THE VIDEO WILL BE SLIGHTLY WARPED AND THE AUDIO WILL BE MUFFLED AND ECHO. A HIGH PITCHED RINGING NOISE WILL BE CONSTANT THROUGHOUT.

Clip 1: The bartender shakes him, asking him if he's okay. She signals another coworker to help.

Clip 2: Carlos is given a cup of water by the bartender.

Clip 3: His mother is talking to the bartender and other workers asking how he got like this and what led to it.

Clip 4: He's looking at the street lights passing through a window in his mom's car.

Clip 5: He's stumbling on the sidewalk into the house while his mom supports him.

END MONTAGE WITH ONE FINAL EYE CLOSING TRANSITION, LEAVING THE SCREEN BLACK.

INT. CARLOS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

POINT OF VIEW EYE OPEN TRANSITION of Carlos looking at the ceiling of his living room.

He looks around to find he's on the couch with a thin blanket. He notices his shirt and a cup of water on the floor. Nephaleus looks down at him.

NEPHALEUS

You were a piece of work last night
you know that?

CARLOS

How bad was it?

NEPHALEUS

You had a complete meltdown,
begging for mommy to come get your
pathetic little ass out the bar. By
the way, you left you car in the
parking lot, so you'll have to get
a ride over there.

CARLOS

Damn it.

NEPHALEUS

But, how are you feeling?

CARLOS

Like shit.

NEPHALEUS

Good. You should.

Nephaleus pushes Carlos firmly on the couch and possess him, pinning him down.

NEPHALEUS (CONT'D)

I'm going to make sure your mom has
a proper chance to chew you out.
She should be out the bathroom in a
minute.

CARLOS

Come on, I'm not in the mood for-

NEPHALEUS

Shut up! You don't get to be in any mood, not after last night!

Nephaleus strengthens his force, causing Carlos minor pain.

NEPHALEUS (CONT'D)

Let me make one thing clear, if I have to deal with this again because you're too much of a bitch to deal with your problems, I'll really lose it.

Nephaleus tightens the force around his throat, causing Carlos to choke.

NEPHALEUS (CONT'D)

You'll find out why I'm called the DEMON of Guidance.

Nephaleus lets go. Carlos coughs excessively, grabbing his throat. His mom comes out the bathroom and walks in.

MARITZA

You're finally awake.

CARLOS

Woke up just now, I need some water.

Carlos gulps down his cup of water. His mom sits on a chair across the room.

MARITZA

We need to talk about last night.

CARLOS

(Sits up)
Okay.

MARITZA

You remembered what happened? Humor me for a second.

CARLOS

Uh, well I remembered you talked with the bartender, took me home, and we struggled to get inside.

MARITZA

I struggled to get YOU inside.

CARLOS

R-Right...

MARITZA

Look at me Carlos, look at me.

Carlos looks up to meet his mother's gaze.

MARITZA (CONT'D)

You were a mess yesterday, big time. Thank god the bartender made sure you were okay, otherwise I don't know what would've happened.

CARLOS

I'm sorry mom-

MARITZA

You should be! For Christ's sake, last time I visited Pamela, she could barely stand she was crying so much. Then you do this and a million things were rushing in my head, but I thank God you're alive. Do you understand?

CARLOS

Yes.

MARITZA

If you drink, you stay inside. If you need something, come to me. But you WILL NOT do this again. Are we clear?

CARLOS

Okay, I promise.

MARITZA

(Crosses her arms)

Why? Why do this? Is it because of Lara?

CARLOS

I... I mean... yes.

(Tearing up)

I miss her, a lot. I tried taking a leap of faith, she was always talking about that. "Go with the flow" was something we talked about. That happiness... I felt with her... isn't there, not anymore and I haven't felt it since. And... I don't know, maybe the feeling I was chasing was too good to let pass. I couldn't let that go, not yet. Not for a while.

(MORE)

CARLOS (CONT'D)
(Looking at the ground)
She set a bar that's too high to
reach, and... I think alcohol
helped me feel light enough that...

CARLOS (CONT'D)
I could jump and reach it again.
But, here we are.

Maritza scoffs, uncrossing her arms. She gestures Carlos to
stand up, he does so and is given a big hug from his mother.

MARITZA
(Whispers to him)
It's hard baby, I know it is. But I
know you're better than this, and
she did too. Okay?

CARLOS
Okay.

She lets go.

MARITZA
You want to go upstairs and rest?

CARLOS
I think I'll stay down here for a
while and go on a walk.

MARITZA
Good idea. I'll be out to run some
errands. You'll be okay?

CARLOS
I think I will.

She exits the house. Carlos slams on the couch and groans.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Carlos strolls with a water bottle in hand. He comes across a
bench to sit at while relaxing his shoulders. He scrolls
through his "STOOPIDZ" photo gallery, shedding tears.

He smiles and chuckles at one video where Carlos is chasing
Lara with a spoon of spaghetti sauce and Lara pleading to get
away.

He wipes his tears and takes a sip of water. He gets up and
walks for an hour more before coming home at 7:30 PM.

INT. CARLOS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Carlos walks in on his mom making dinner.

MARITZA

Hey sweetie, how was the walk?

CARLOS

I feel hot and sweaty, but in a good way. I don't know how to put it.

MARITZA

That's how it is, it's a good burn. Feeling better?

CARLOS

(Filling cup with water)

No. This is probably the worst I felt since the news. It's not all bad, I just forgot how happy she made me and remembered what it felt like.

MARITZA

That is such a good way to look at it. And hey, before you know it, the pain and the memories you feel will make you a stronger person. It starts with baby steps.

CARLOS

Baby steps, got it.

MARITZA

Going to shower now?

CARLOS

Yeah, and I'm going to watch a movie afterwards.

MARITZA

Ooh, new or old?

CARLOS

Old, The Chamber of Secrets.

MARITZA

Huh, I thought you weren't into wizards and magic.

CARLOS

I'm not but... why not right?

Carlos walks upstairs. Maritza stirs stew in a pot.

INT. CARLOS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Carlos lays in bed watching Harry Potter on his TV. He drinks his water before checking his message. He sighs and pauses the movie to call Erica.

ERICA (V.O.)

Hello?

CARLOS

Hey.

ERICA (V.O.)

Hey.

CARLOS

So, I need to apologize to you...
for going AWOL.

ERICA (V.O.)

Yeah, you kind of left me in the
dark. It's quiet here without Lara.

CARLOS

I know. I've been grieving... more
like spiraling. I spiraled and I
don't know what to do. I'm calling
because maybe I wanted to hear a
familiar voice and check in.

ERICA (V.O.)

That's kind of you. I wish you
answered my texts.

CARLOS

Same, but I wasn't in a good head
space. How have you been holding
up?

ERICA (V.O.)

Bad. Really bad. I feel this
constant pain in my chest that I
can't fix. She was my best friend
and now... and...

CARLOS

I get it. It's hard to finish those
sentences right?

ERICA (V.O.)

So hard. It hurts... it's hard to get by, I feel sick about it. I don't know what to do.

CARLOS

Me too. You know I went on a walk today. You remembered the time we tried cooking pasta?

ERICA (V.O.)

Mhm.

CARLOS

I forgot how she made me feel until I saw a video from that day on my phone. She was yelling "put down the spoon, I have an interview tomorrow" haha. I feel so happy every time I watch it.

ERICA

Can you send it?

CARLOS

Yeah, of course.

ERICA

What're you doing to get by?

CARLOS

I almost became an alcoholic.

ERICA

Oh my god.

CARLOS

Almost, but my mom and someone else helped. So now, I'm watching The Chamber of Secrets.

ERICA

Well... that's good. I think you'll like it. She loved the last 2 movies the most.

CARLOS

I think so too.

ERICA

Well, thank you for calling Carlos. I needed this, I really did.

CARLOS
You're welcome. I'm sorry for not
answering sooner.

ERICA
If you want to make it up to me,
we're having her funeral next week.
Show up and wear something nice.

CARLOS
I will. Take care okay? I'll answer
my phone this time.

ERICA
I will. Talk to you later.

CARLOS
Bye.

The call ends. Carlos exhales and falls back in bed. He rubs
his face before playing the movie.

FADE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Giant text reads "ONE WEEK LATER" layered on a wide shot of a
cemetery.

Several dozen people gather around a burial site in black
dresses and suits. Carlos arrives with his mom. He approaches
the Levy family slowly.

CARLOS
Hi, Mrs. Levy.

PAMELA
No need for formalities Carlos,
Pamela is fine.

CARLOS
Okay, Pamela.

PAMELA
I wanted to apologize for how I
reacted when we first got the news.

CARLOS
It's fine.

PAMELA
I was so sad, shocked, angry. I
just...

(MORE)

PAMELA (CONT'D)

I wanted to hold her in my arms one last time. And I'm sad that we couldn't get together as a family. Erica told me you were the first to contact us about her.

CARLOS

I-

PAMELA

I still don't take kindly to what you said to her before she...

CARLOS

Yeah.

PAMELA

But it gave me closure. It really takes a man to share something no one wants to hear, my husband does all the time.

CARLOS

Oh yea?

PAMELA

He was screaming in hysterics not to tear you apart and all that jazz, haha. I hated him at that moment, but he's right. He's my rock.

RICHARD

Anything for you.

(To Carlos)

You doing better?

CARLOS

A little, Mr. Levy. You?

RICHARD

Richard, and yes, thank you.

PAMELA

Well, we should be getting ready. We have- um, to- lower her in.

CARLOS

Need any help?

PAMELA

Please.

Carlos' face as he holds the casket with several others. Carlos looks inside the grave as he shovels in dirt. He keeps shoveling dirt in until the whole is filled.

Sometime after the funeral ends, the Levy family and Carlos shaking hands with other people. They give their condolences before leaving the cemetery.

The Levy family and Carlos looking at the burial site littered with memorabilia for Lara.

RICHARD

We're going back to our house to celebrate her. Would you like to join us?

CARLOS

Yeah, I think I'll stay a little longer if that's okay.

RICHARD

Of course. We'll see you later than.

The Levy family go to their car and drive off. Carlos waves goodbye, they return wave.

NEPHALEUS

What was she like?

Carlos looks to his left. Nephaleus stands with his arms behind his back.

CARLOS

She was someone I felt vulnerable with. She solved my problems with softness, she taught me how to let loose, and even cuddling with her made everything quiet. Like I felt true peace.

NEPHALEUS

She sounds like a cure for catharsis.

CARLOS

She was. I have to find that for myself but... it's hard, really hard.

NEPHALEUS

You'll get there one day. You're extremely stubborn and naive, but you got a good heart.

CARLOS
You think so?

NEPHALEUS
I know so. I've dealt with
psychopaths, narcissists and
degenerates. You're none of the
above.

CARLOS
Thanks.

NEPHALEUS
Mind if I see what she's like?

CARLOS
What?

NEPHALEUS
I'd like to see what she was like.
I only caught glimpses of her in
your phone, but I want to know how
you see her.

CARLOS
I'm not doing this memory invasion
thing with you again.

NEPHALEUS
That's why I'm asking now. The
other times I was trying to do my
job, but this voluntary. If you say
no, I'll leave it alone and never
ask.

CARLOS
You swear?

NEPHALEUS
Yes.

CARLOS
(Scratching his head)
Okay, I'll let you see.

NEPHALEUS
You sure?

CARLOS
I'll change my mind.

NEPHALEUS
I'll take it. Just think about her
and I can tap in.

CARLOS
Okay, I can do that.

Nephaleus reaches out to Carlos. He connects and enters his memories.

BEGIN MONTAGE.

THE FOLLOWING MONTAGE WILL HAVE A FADED WHITE FILTER WITH
SOMBER PIANO MUSIC AS THE ONLY AUDIO.

1st Clip: Carlos is talking passionately and riling himself up. Lara puts a hand on his leg and hands him a glass of water. He drinks it and calms down.

2nd Clip: Carlos hugs Lara as they sit beside Erica laying in a hospital bed. Lara is in tears while Carlos hugs her and pats her head while talking to her.

3rd Clip: Lara tries getting Carlos to dance in her bedroom, but he refuses. She grabs his hands to get him to copy her steps with little success. He slowly begins dancing clumsily. Lara is smiling, which causes Carlos to laugh.

4th Clip: Carlos chases after Lara with a can of whipped cream. He sprays some on her nose. She tries to yank the can out his hand.

5th Clip: Carlos sleeps on Lara. She plays with his hair and pets his head.

MONTAGE ENDS.

Nephaleus puts his arm down and Carlos has tears pouring down his face.

NEPHALEUS
I think I get it now, she was a
beautiful soul.

CARLOS
(Wiping his tears)
Thank you. She was my rock.

NEPHALEUS
I think my job is done. You're
still around, so that's another
mark up for my record.

CARLOS
One question if I don't see you
again: why do you do this?

NEPHALEUS

It's a lot.

CARLOS

Please. You stopped me from jumping off a building. No one does that just because unless they're family, but we're not that. You're a spiritual guardian.

NEPHALEUS

I don't-

CARLOS

Please?

NEPHALEUS

Look, I'm a demon for a reason. I was lucky to even get council to do this. If not for that, I'd probably be possessing kids and getting exorcised.

CARLOS

Seriously?

NEPHALEUS

Yes.

CARLOS

I mean, you don't seem that bad.

NEPHALEUS

A few decades of this work does wonders. But I was molded to be this after I died, not before.

CARLOS

Oh, I see.

NEPHALEUS

So do me a favor and never do anything stupid or crazy like that again, we clear on that?

CARLOS

Crystal.

NEPHALEUS

Good. Take care.

CARLOS

You too.

NEPHALEUS

I won't.

Nephaleus disappears and Carlos walks away.

EXT. DEADLOCK REALM - CONTINUOUS

NEPHALEUS

You wanted to talk?

??? (V.O.)

What you did was reckless and could have costed him his future.

NEPHALEUS

I didn't see you coming up with anything else.

??? (V.O.)

But I can't deny Carlos is alive because of your efforts.

NEPHALEUS

That kid was a stubborn little bastard. Good kid, but so full of himself sometimes.

??? (V.O.)

Don't get cocky, you still have many a victim who have fallen or perished from their mental collapses.

NEPHALEUS

You know what? You're right, lets get ACTUAL angels to help and possess people. Oh wait, that's right, you can't!

A bright light flashes in the middle of the realm behind Nephaleus. GOD, A man in white robes, walks to him.

NEPHALEUS (CONT'D)

Struck a nerve didn't I, God?

GOD

You know angels are always protecting people.

NEPHALEUS

And where's Lucy? He's too busy also?

GOD
Keeping hell in check.

NEPHALEUS
Of course. You know, I just find it funny how there's demon sightings and possessions everywhere, but nothing about angels doing the sort. Just a touch on the shoulder here and a whisper there.

GOD
They don't overstep their boundaries. Your kind does.

NEPHALEUS
That's kind of why I'm here right? Tell me something, if you sent an angel to do my job, would Carlos still be alive?

God contemplates an answer, but crosses his arms defensively.

NEPHALEUS (CONT'D)
Until that can happen, I guess I'm in the clear. On another note, who's the next guy?

GOD
Your next person of interest is Monica Rodrigo. Her estimated mental collapse will be 2 days from now. How fast can you communicate with her?

A replica of Monica is conjured in front of Nephaleus. He observes her with an attentive glance.

NEPHALEUS
The quickest way is still through dreams, unless you know another way.

GOD
Make haste. I will transport you to her soul and connect you two as one.

NEPHALEUS
Let's do it.

A dark cloud rises from the ground to form around Nephaleus. After engulfing him completely, it dissipates and he is gone.

THE END