

CONSTANTINE SPEC

"The House of Rakshasa"

Written by

Devin Skrade

Devin Skrade  
dskrade@gmail.com  
408.420.8320

Teaser

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

An INDIAN FAMILY is gathered together, praying in a room illuminated only by CANDLELIGHT. PICTURE FRAMES are turned to face the wall, and a freestanding mirror has a cloth draped over it.

In the center of the room, a BODY on a cot is covered by an ORNATE RED SHEET. A candle burns above the head of their fallen family member. A HINDU PRIEST, eyes closed, guides them through the ritual prayers that will ease him on to the next world.

The body TWITCHES. A BOY, 8, notices and tugs at his FATHER'S sleeve.

BOY  
(whispering)  
Appa. Appa.

FATHER  
(sharp whisper)  
Ashwin. Silence.

The Priest's chant intensifies. More movement can be seen under the sheet. Some of the others in the room begin to take notice. Ashwin cowers behind his father in fear. The chant speeds, reaching a crescendo, then abruptly STOPS. The priest opens his eyes, terror washes over his face.

GASPS of fear and awe. The BODY rises to its feet and the red sheet slides to the ground, revealing its face to the stunned assembly. Over its shoulder, the priest's face is frozen in horror. This is not the face they laid to rest.

PRIEST  
(terrified)  
*Rakshasa.*

The BODY races at an inhuman speed toward the priest, plunging its teeth into his neck with a horrible fervor. The violence of the attack jostles the cloth off the freestanding mirror. The head of the assailant turns slowly to look into the mirror. Its head cocks sideways, quizzically - no self reflection. The mirror reveals only the terrified faces of the family helplessly watching.

The body speeds toward its next victim.

UNDER THE TABLE

Ashwin hides behind the veil of the tablecloth, quivering in fear. He hears the sound of the people he loves most in the world being savagely ripped apart amidst SNARLS and BLOOD CURDLING SCREAMS.

The room falls silent after one final THUD of a victim falling to the floor. Ashwin stares at the backside of the bloodstained tablecloth, praying his silence will be enough to save him.

The tablecloth LIFTS, revealing the face of the attacker for the first time. An INDIAN MAN, 30s, pale-faced with BLOODSHOT EYES stares back at Ashwin, studying him, expressionless.

The Indian Man BARES FANGS.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. PUB - DAY

JOHN and ZED sit at a bar watching an English Premier League match on the OVERHEAD TELEVISION. A disinterested bartender busies himself at the far end of the bar. Only a handful of patrons dot the establishment at this early an hour.

John takes a sip of his whiskey. The rest of the bottle sits beside the glass, an unseemly amount already dispensed with. Zed concentrates hard on the game before her. She is either a die hard fan or hellbent on becoming one.

CONSTANTINE

Concentrate on the sound. Let that be your pathway in. Try to feel the ebb and flow of the movement on the pitch. You can't imagine the energy that fifty thousand fans can put out in unison when a goal is scored.

ZED

I don't understand how anyone can feel that through a television.

CONSTANTINE

It's possible. Believe me. That's where we need to get you.

ZED

To prepare for the "rising darkness"?

CONSTANTINE

No, love. To pay back some of my old gambling debts.

She turns and looks sharply at him. He flashes a smile and a tip of the drink and returns to watching the match.

CHAZ barrels into the bar, out of breath. He looks unusually worried.

CHAZ

(to Constantine)

I've been looking all over for you.

Chaz grabs the remote off the bar and switches to a NEWS CHANNEL FEED. BLOODY FOOTAGE of the CRIME SCENE from the Hindu burial ceremony.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)

(on television)

--bloody massacre took place in Milwaukee last night during what appears to be a fairly commonplace burial ritual in the Hindu community. Some are calling this a potential hate crime scenario, but no official statement has been made. Authorities are asking anyone with knowledge to come for--

John takes the remote and turns the television back to the match. His face betrays some level of concern. He takes a sip of his drink.

CONSTANTINE

She's fine, Chaz. If anyone can handle themselves in a religious turf war, it's Marj.

ZED

Who?

CONSTANTINE

An old friend. Now, back to the exercise.

Chaz pulls out the BLOOD MAP and unfolds it on the bar in front of John. He points directly to a BLOOD SPOT covering Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

CHAZ

So what you're telling me is that you never noticed this particular spot. Just never saw it.

CONSTANTINE

Leave it out, Chaz.

CHAZ

Okay. Maybe we go grab that sword. You know, the...Goodnight...Sword...thing.

Eyes on the television, John WINCES at a conceded goal.

CONSTANTINE

It's a tall order, but you might actually be more confused than the lads out there in red.

ZED

Are you guys going to tell me what's going on? What's a Goodnight Sword?

CHAZ

It's a big fancy sword that makes you say a bunch of stuff that you really didn't want people to know.

ZED

By putting you to sleep?

CONSTANTINE

Oh, for fu--It's called the *Sword of the Night*.

(turns to Zed)

You should give it a try, love? I'm dying to know what's bubblin' up in that pretty little head of yours.

Confused, she looks to Chaz. Chaz shakes his head behind John's back as if to say "Don't do it."

ZED

(to Constantine)

Who's Marj?

CONSTANTINE

Just another person that needs to stay as far away from me as possible. Same thing I keep telling you, only she's smart enough to do it.

CHAZ

And what about Mercury? I guess she can take care of herself, too?

CONSTANTINE

She'll fare better than either of you, that's for sure.

John refills his glass. These are not subjects he wants to discuss.

John's PHONE BEEPS with a text message. He checks it.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN

From: Marj

Message: Don't suppose you have any spare stakes I could borrow...

END INSERT

John closes the message and puts his phone back in his pocket. After a moment, he knocks back his drink in one gulp, grabs the bottle and heads for the exit.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)  
Chaz, be a good lad and pay the man.

CHAZ  
Where are you going?

CONSTANTINE  
Someplace where I can drink and lose  
money with a little more dignity.

ZED  
(to Chaz)  
Home?

CHAZ  
(shakes his head)  
He's going to a strip club.

John steps out the door to

EXT. BAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

John is temporarily blinded by the transition from dark bar to daytime sunshine. He shades his eyes with the bottle of whiskey. When he regains his sight, Manny is standing before him, wings outspread, majestic as ever.

MANNY  
A little early for the hard stuff,  
don't you think?

CONSTANTINE  
Easy for you to say. You're not a  
Liverpool fan.

MANNY  
You're drunk.

CONSTANTINE  
And you're...just in time. Zed doesn't  
quite have "the sight" yet. What say  
you be a good little guardian angel  
and give us the derby score?

MANNY  
John.

CONSTANTINE  
Oh, right. Sorry. Guide us to the  
derby score.

MANNY  
This isn't a joke.

CONSTANTINE

Who's joking, mate?

MANNY

Did it ever occur to you that you might be someone else's guardian angel?

CONSTANTINE

A terrifying thought.

Manny looks at him long and hard.

MANNY

Truly. Sober up. There's a little girl out there that needs you at your best.

TIME RESUMES and Zed and Chaz exit the bar behind John. John looks at the bottle of whiskey, scowls at it like it offended him, and tosses it in a garbage bin outside the bar.

CONSTANTINE

On second thought, maybe I'll pay them a visit. You know, for old time's sake.

EXT. BODEGA - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

MARJ, late 30s, Indian, strikingly beautiful, closes her phone. She carries with her a GROCERY BAG full of PLUNGERS, their WOODEN HANDLES protruding from the top. She puts her phone back in her pocket and tightens the scarf around her neck. She reaches for the hand of her daughter, MERCURY, 8, cute, alert, with stunning green eyes suggesting something different, special about her.

They hustle away from the Bodega toward the

EXT. STREET - SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Marj, head down against a biting wind, is about to step off the curb when--

MERCURY

Amma!

A BUS zooms past with a LOUD HONK, inches from Marj's face. She would have stepped directly in front of it if not for Mercury pulling her back.

MARJ

What would I do without my little guardian angel?

Marj reaches into the grocery bag and pulls out a lollipop. Mercury looks at it, not nearly as thrilled as Marj expected, and looks back at her mother very seriously.

MERCURY

What will I do with out you, Amma?

A disconcerting response. She bends down so they are eye to eye.

MARJ

Let's play true or false. I will always be around to protect you, Mercury.

Mercury looks into her mother's eyes. Her green irises SHIFT COLOR to PURPLE then return to green. Mercury's face lights up.

MERCURY

True!

Marj smiles and gives Mercury a big hug. She stands, reaches into her grocery bag, and removes a small BLUE LILY. She hands it to Mercury. Marj then looks around them with renewed worry.

MARJ

Come on. Let's get you home.

They continue down the street. Another bus zooms by behind them. After it has passed, appearing in the place where Marj and Mercury had just been standing, is the haunting figure of a small boy - Ashwin - watching them as they walk away.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. RENTAL CAR LOT - DAY

The TRUNK of a rental car pops open and John throws a DUFFEL BAG in. The bag CLANKS when it lands. John UNZIPS the bag to inspect the items, revealing the bag is full of METAL STAKES with SYMBOLS engraved on them and small MALLET - the kind of things you might expect from someone hunting a vampire. John removes one and tucks it inside his trench coat.

Chaz tosses his bag in, then Zed does the same. She leans in to see the contents of John's bag. She looks at him, stunned.

ZED

Wait, they took my lotion but somehow missed that the guy in the creepy trench coat had a dozen steel rods in his suspicious-looking carry on?!

CHAZ

To be fair, they did take his lighter.

CONSTANTINE

Bloody *Puritans*. And that's not just any old duffel. Jasper needed a way to get everything back to the house, so he made a special tote. I could walk a fallen angel right back through the gates of Heaven in that thing and Saint Peter would be none the wiser.

ZED

(smirking)

You're like Mary Poppins.

CONSTANTINE

Believe me, love, no one wants a spoonful of anything in that bag.

INT. CAR - DAY

Chaz drives while John looks out the passenger side window, concerned. Zed is in the back seat, still grappling with the possible existence of vampires.

ZED

So what makes you think a vampire killed all those people?

CONSTANTINE

No such thing as vampires. Well, not since I killed the last one.

Another story for another day, but John makes no attempt to disguise his pride over this fact.

ZED

But stakes are for killing vampires. I mean, that's the legend, right?

CONSTANTINE

Exactly, legend. Stakes don't work on vampires. They are, however, quite useful when you're fighting a rakshasa demon.

ZED

Rakshasa demon?

CONSTANTINE

A vicious blood-sucker that preys on the living and lives in the dead.

HAZ

Sounds an awful lot like a vampire.

CONSTANTINE

Rakshasa were born on the ancient battlefields of India. Hundreds of thousands of tortured dead souls unwilling to cross over to the other side. The angriest and most resolute among them found their way back into a body.

ZED

Reanimation.

CONSTANTINE

Precisely. And they came back with a vengeance. Rakshasa tear through living flesh out of rage and necessity. Corpses rot quickly. They have an insatiable need for new host bodies.

HAZ

How can you be sure it's a rak...asasha...demon?

CONSTANTINE

Because if it's not, I'm just a weirdo with metal stakes.

The mood lightens, if only for a moment.

CHAZ

You think it has anything to do with Mercury?

CONSTANTINE

I don't know, mate.

Zed studies John. She knows he is never keen to share, but she asks anyway.

ZED

Who's Mercury?

CONSTANTINE

A little girl I think you'll get along with quite well.

He looks out the window. This someone very dear to his heart.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

John, Chaz, and Zed get out of the car and head toward the house. YELLOW CAUTION TAPE blocks off the yard. A lone OFFICER stands at the entrance to the house. John flashes his MAGIC CARD, now displaying credentials. The officer waves John through, allowing Zed and Chaz to follow behind. John steps first into the

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

John enters what is now a well lit crime scene and surveys the damage. BRIGHT WORK LIGHTS illuminate the BLOODY WALLS AND FLOORS. The room is untouched, save for the removal of the bodies.

CONSTANTINE

Bloody hell.

MANNY (O.C.)

Exactly.

John instantly recognizes the voice. He shakes his head and turns to see MANNY in the middle of the room.

CONSTANTINE

Same flight, mate? You must've been in first class.

MANNY

You should not have brought them, John. You're putting them in serious danger.

CONSTANTINE  
What else is new?

MANNY  
This is.

CONSTANTINE  
A new demon? Bit of an oxymoron, no?

MANNY  
Not the fallen one. The object of her affection.

CONSTANTINE  
Here we go again.  
(pontificating)  
Riddle me this, Manny. A guy walks into a bloodbath, and the angel says--

ZED (O.C.)  
Oh my God.

John turns to see Zed and Chaz where Manny once stood.

CONSTANTINE  
(enraged)  
AGGHHHH!!

Chaz and Zed look at each other, startled by John's outburst.

CHAZ  
(to Zed)  
It's part of his process.

Zed nods. They tiptoe around an exasperated John to look at the scene.

ZED  
What happened here?

Chaz notices a CANDLE at the head of the cot BURNED DOWN. He looks at the walls and notices the PICTURE FRAMES FACE THE WALL.

CHAZ  
Hindu burial ritual.

John looks at the mirror, checks the reverse side.

CONSTANTINE

Hindus believe that if the body doesn't receive proper burial rites, it remains an open vessel for malevolent spirits still inhabiting this plane.

ZED

So they didn't finish the ritual?

CONSTANTINE

Hard to say. In the final moment before the soul moves on, the barrier between this side and the other is... vulnerable. A powerful enough spirit with enough will and determination might be able to crossover.

ZED

You mean a rakshasa demon.

CONSTANTINE

(not convinced)

Maybe.

John turns one of the photos around. It is a FAMILY PORTRAIT. He studies the faces in the photo for a second, then SMASHES the glass on the corner of a table.

Zed and Chaz startle at the sound. John REMOVES the photo from the frame and hands it to Chaz.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

Chaz, do us a favor and head on down to the morgue. Zed and I are going to try to catch up with our old friends.

CHAZ

You want me to I.D. the bodies?

CONSTANTINE

No, mate. I want you to tell me who's missing.

All three EXIT the front door. Beside the front door, a LONE PICTURE FRAME faces out. A picture of TWO YOUNG CHILDREN side by side smiling.

INSERT: PHOTO OF ASHWIN AND MERCURY

INT. MARJ'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

PLUNGER HEADS on the floor, disconnected from their wooden shafts. Marj sits at the dining table of a modest apartment.

She WHITTLES away at one of the plunger handles, using a large KITCHEN KNIFE to SHARPEN the end into a deadly point. A PILE of freshly-carved STAKES on the table beside her.

Mercury sits on the floor at a low coffee table DRAWING. The artistry is crude, that of an eight year old, but it appears to be a MAN IN A BROWN TRENCH COAT with a PURPLE AURA.

THREE DULL KNOCKS

Marj bolts to attention.

MARJ

Who's at the door, Mercury?

Mercury doesn't look up from the drawing. She seems completely unaware of the sound.

MERCURY

Nobody, amma.

Marj puts down the knife, clutching the newly finished stake. She approaches the door carefully. As she nears, COMPLEX ENGRAVINGS can be seen LINING the WOODEN DOOR FRAME.

She holds out her hand and closes her eyes. Her LIPS MOVE, attempting to remember movements that form a spell learned long ago.

MARJ

(stumbling)

Non erit trans... iens...

Incorrect. She is shaking. She takes a deep breath, steadies herself, and tries again.

MARJ (CONT'D)

(slow, deliberate)

Non erit transiens per eam portam  
malum.

She opens her eyes. The ENGRAVINGS momentarily GLOW GREEN.

Satisfied, she cautiously opens the door, gripping the stake ever so tight. Standing there, flesh GREY and ROTTING, is the little boy, ASHWIN, with UNBLINKING BLOODSHOT EYES.

The image takes Marj's breath away.

ASHWIN

Can I come in and play?

His bloodthirsty eyes lock on Marj. She is speechless.

MERCURY (O.C.)  
You look like Ashwin.

Ashwin's head turns sharply in Mercury's direction. He BARES FANGS and SNARLS, making a hasty move toward Mercury. An UNSEEN FORCE BLOCKS his entry.

Ashwin looks around the door frame. The demon understands the forces at play and HISSES.

Marj SLAMS the door shut, throwing her body weight against it. Ashwin's snarls on the other side of the door die down.

MERCURY (CONT'D)  
What's wrong with Ashwin? What happened to his colors?

MARJ  
(catching breath)  
That's not Ashwin, baby.

Mercury returns to her drawing. Marj looks at her little girl with worry.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ashwin stands MOTIONLESS, his face only an INCH from the door that just slammed in his face. In contrast to his violent outburst moments ago, his stillness is unnerving.

THE DING OF AN ELEVATOR

Ashwin's head whips in the direction of the sound. BARES FANGS.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

John drives while Zed sits in the passenger seat processing.

ZED

So Mercury is like me then.

CONSTANTINE

Not quite. Your psychic abilities have gone untrained your whole life. You see certain things, but you can't understand them fully.

ZED

(defensive)

But this little girl can?

CONSTANTINE

Easy, love. She's powerful, but more importantly, she's a child. Her imagination runs free in ways we as adults can't possibly understand. Her consciousness exists in multiple dimensions. Time and energy are fluid concepts for her.

She takes a moment to digest that.

ZED

Is Mercury your... I mean, did you and Marj...

CONSTANTINE

Did we...?

ZED

Do... it?

CONSTANTINE

What?! No! That's my best mate's family.

ZED

Of course not. Sorry.

They ride in silence.

CONSTANTINE

What did you mean by "of course not"?

ZED  
No, it's just, you never--

CONSTANTINE  
Never what?

ZED  
No, no! Just, you know--

CONSTANTINE  
Just what?!

ZED  
Well, you're gay.

Not what he was expecting her to say.

CONSTANTINE  
Like I said, untrained psychic  
abilities.

ZED  
Maybe it's the coat.

She's messing with him.

CONSTANTINE  
Oh no! Don't you go bringing me coat  
into this. This is great coat.

ZED  
John.

CONSTANTINE  
This coat causes universal swooning.

ZED  
John.

CONSTANTINE  
Men and women alike have--

ZED  
John.

He stops talking and sees for the first time what she is pointing at. They pull up to Marj's apartment building and see the GLASS FRONT DOOR to the building is SHATTERED.

John's mood changes abruptly. He drives slowly past and parks the car. Zed starts to get out of the car. John is looking in the rearview mirror.

ZED (CONT'D)

Well, come on.

John is looking at MANNY, who is now sitting in the back seat. Manny returns John's gaze and simply shakes his head to say "no".

CONSTANTINE

You stay in the car on this one, love.

ZED

Come on! Just give me a stake and let's get in there. They could be in trouble!

CONSTANTINE

Let me poke my head in first. If I'm not back in five--

ZED

(disappointed)  
Yeah, yeah. Call Chaz.

CONSTANTINE

No! If I'm not back in five, come in and save me from a bloody demon!

John gets out of the car and slams the door. He removes a stake from his coat. The mallet hangs from his belt.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

(stomping away)  
Bloody hell! Good thing we got that sorted!

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

John steps into the lobby through the broken glass door. OVERHEAD LIGHTING FLICKERS. At times the lobby is nearly PITCH BLACK. It looks as if a tornado has just blown through. An EXPOSED WIRE hangs from the ceiling SPARKING near a guard desk along the side wall.

John moves cautiously. He grips the stake tightly, ready to strike.

LIGHTS FLICKER OFF.

LIGHTS UP. ASHWIN stands before him.

Ashwin lunges at John, knocking him to the ground and sending the stake bouncing away. John throws the boy off and rolls in the opposite direction.

They SQUARE OFF. Ashwin bares his fangs, ready to attack again. John looks around, surveys the wreckage.

CONSTANTINE

Just us then, ay?

John removes a SMALL VIAL from his coat. He holds it in his hand and stands upright, ARMS OUTSTRETCHED, a position of surrender.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

Let's dance, you and I.

Ashwin breaks toward John at an inhuman speed. John closes his eyes.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

Dhan'ya samudra para davata.

The VIAL GLOWS. John smashes the vial on his chest, the contents SPLASHING over him.

Ashwin leaps into the air, LATCHING onto John's TORSO, and attempts to PLUNGE HIS TEETH into John's NECK.

SIZZLE OF BURNING FLESH.

Ashwin recoils and rolls away from John. The SKIN AROUND HIS MOUTH is melting away. SCREAMS of AGONY.

John looks to where his stake had fallen.

The STAKE is GONE.

ZED (O.C.)

John!

ZED holds up the STAKE. She THROWS it to him.

John catches the stake and walks to where Ashwin writhes in agony on the ground. Using his foot, he turns the boy on his back. He looks into the boy's eyes, seeing the demon within.

JOHN

Sorry, boy.

Ashwin SNARLS one last time. John holds the stake over his chest and drives it through the body into the FLOOR underneath him using the mallet. The SOUND of the stake penetrating the marble floor is heard.

The body goes limp.

CONSTANTINE  
Pissy little bastard.

ZED  
(stunned)  
What did you break on your chest?

CONSTANTINE  
Holy water from the Ganges. Strange  
thing to carry around unless you have  
a rakshasa demon on your neck.

CLAP. CLAP. CLAP.

John and Zed slowly turn around. A SECURITY GUARD, mid-40s, stands behind the guard desk, CLAPPING at John and Zed's display. His NECK has been TORN OPEN. It was the wound that ended the man's human life.

SECURITY GUARD  
(in John's voice)  
"Just us then, ay?"  
(demonic voice)  
Only one thing is certain, in this  
life and the next: There's never a  
shortage of dead bodies around John  
Constantine.

NOTE: Security Guard speaks in a demonic voice for the remainder of the scene.

John is troubled by the familiarity--and the message. He steps in front of Zed, ushering her behind him.

CONSTANTINE  
And what foul creature do I have the  
pleasure of speaking with?

SECURITY GUARD  
(melodramatic)  
I'm hurt, John. After everything we've  
been through together. The laughter,  
the tears. We shed blood on the same  
ground!

CONSTANTINE  
Could you be more specific, mate? I've  
shed so much demon blood in my time.

SECURITY GUARD  
(suddenly angry)  
Not in Varanasi!

The change in tone startles John and Zed. John realizes what they are up against.

CONSTANTINE

*Kali.*

SECURITY GUARD

(to Zed)

From one woman to another: Stay away from this one, dear. He's only going to bring you down.

CONSTANTINE

Said the demon goddess inhabiting the corpse of a man she just murdered.

SECURITY GUARD

Goddess! My, John, you certainly have a gift for flattery. Look at me, I'm blushing!

The Security Guard fans his pale, blood-drained face.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Well, I would be, if...you know.

John starts to move sideways across the lobby, keeping Zed behind him. He surveys the wreckage.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

(looking at self)

Ugh! What a hideous vessel.

CONSTANTINE

Speaking of, by my count you are out of vessels.

SECURITY GUARD

And you pointy metal sticks.

CONSTANTINE

First world problems. What can you do?

The Security Guard bares his fangs and races toward Zed. John grabs a PIECE OF WOOD from BROKEN FURNITURE and thrusts it out. The Security Guard's speed and direction force the wood straight through his stomach.

He looks down at the wound then SNARLS in John's face. The Guard stumbles back, looks around the lobby frantically, then speeds toward a floor to ceiling WINDOW, CRASHING THROUGH.

John and Zed watch as the demon races off into the night.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

John and Zed approach the door to Marj's apartment. John raises his fist to knock but stops.

CONSTANTINE

You may want to step aside. If I know Marj, she's on the other side of this door with a stake in one hand and--

The DOOR OPENS and Mercury wraps her arms around John's waist.

MERCURY

Uncle John!

Zed watches adoringly how this girl clings to John.

CONSTANTINE

(surprised)

Oh! The most beautiful Indian Princess in all the land!

John hugs her in return, then looks up to see Marj slowly lowering a WOODEN STAKE and a SHOTGUN. Her face shows a mixture of relief and irritation at the mere sight of John.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

(to Marj)

We were just in the neighborhood, thought we might stop by for a cuppa.

INT. MARJ'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

John sits at the dining table with Marj. He studies her handiwork, turning a wooden stake over in his hands.

CONSTANTINE

Not bad. Try that one.

He hands her one of his metal stakes. She feels the weight of it. Her fingers trace the engraving.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

It's part of an ancient protection spell like the one I put on your door--

MARJ

Before you left us.

John pauses, decides to ignore the jab.

CONSTANTINE

It prevents malignant spirits from crossing certain thresholds.

MARJ

Yes, well, thank you for that. I'm going to lose my security deposit because of you.

COFFEE TABLE

Mercury and Zed sit at the coffee table nearby. Mercury shows Zed her drawings. Some are familiar scenes.

MERCURY

This one is Uncle Chaz at the morgue. And this is Uncle John with his angel friend on the roof.

ZED

These are so good, Mercury.

Mercury turns to a drawing of Chaz, Mercury, and Zed. They seem to be standing in a cemetery.

ZED (CONT'D)

Wait, is that me?

Mercury nods.

ZED (CONT'D)

But we haven't met before.

Mercury looks over toward her mother with worry.

MERCURY

You won't remember that one yet.

DINING TABLE

MARJ

(re: wooden stakes)

So why not just carve these ones?

CONSTANTINE

The demon can inhabit any available corpse within 50 meters or so. She's powerful enough to get inside the body even with the spell, so you have to tether the body to the earth by driving the stake through the floor.

MARJ

*She?*

John grimaces. He did not intend to let that information slip.

ZED (O.C.)  
 (chiming in)  
 He called her Kali before.

CONSTANTINE  
 (winces, to Zed)  
 More show, less tell on that side of  
 the room.

MARJ  
 (to John)  
 When were you going to tell me?

ZED  
 Who's Kali? Is she a rakshasa, too?

MARJ  
 She is the rakshasa, Queen of the  
 Fallen. Kali is the most powerful  
 demoness in the history of my people--

CONSTANTINE  
 (to himself)  
 Not *just* your people...

MARJ  
 --with a violent thirst for human  
 blood--

CONSTANTINE  
 (to himself)  
 She doesn't really *drink* the blood...

MARJ  
 (to John)  
 Who murdered my husband because of  
you. And seeks vengeance against us  
 all for trapping her in Hell. Because  
 of you.

John is silent, looking back at Marj. They wait for his next  
 clever quip.

ZED  
 John?

CONSTANTINE  
 (conceding)  
 That part is true.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

John spills out of the roof exit door, angry and pacing. He YELLS toward the sky.

CONSTANTINE

How convenient! I have everything under control, you show up and bugger things up with your grave warnings. But when I need some real, actual, divine intervention, you're curiously absent!

MANNY (O.C.)

Yelling at the heavens? Bit cliché, even for you.

Manny is perched on the ledge of the roof behind John.

CONSTANTINE

I need to know what's going on here. I sent Kali to Hell in Varanasi. How did she escape?

MANNY

That's what you are supposed to be finding out for me, John.

CONSTANTINE

Well, I could use some bloody help here! I'm not the omniscient one!

MANNY

(considers, then)

They've figured out you are the lone soldier on this plane.

CONSTANTINE

You're the soldier! Mindlessly obeying orders from your general up there.

MANNY

Look at you. Frothing at the mouth with impotent rage. Your weakness will be your undoing.

CONSTANTINE

Weakness?! Right, mate. Thanks for the help.

John turns for the roof exit.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)  
 (over his shoulder)  
 I was powerful enough to stop her last  
 time. I will send Kali straight back  
 to Hell.

MANNY  
 (yells)  
 At what cost?! You dive headfirst into  
 danger because your soul is already  
 lost. Stop dragging people down with  
 you!

John is stunned by Manny's directness.

MANNY (CONT'D)  
 Once is a fluke. Twice may even be a  
 coincidence--

CONSTANTINE  
 Don't.

MANNY  
 At a certain point, the collateral is  
 on you, John.

Manny disappears, leaving John fuming. John's PHONE RINGS. He  
 answers.

CONSTANTINE  
 (into phone)  
 Could really use some good news, Chaz.  
 What'd you find at the morgue?

CHAZ (O.S.)  
 (over phone)  
 There's nothing here.

CONSTANTINE  
 (into phone)  
 That's alright, mate. Pretty certain I  
 already met the missing victim.

INT. MORGUE - CONTINUOUS

Chaz stands in the middle of a sterile room talking on his  
 phone.

CHAZ  
 (into phone)  
 No, John. I mean there's nothing here.

A wider view of the room reveals BARE METAL GURNEYS and EMPTY  
 MORGUE DRAWERS.

CHAZ (CONT'D)

(into phone)

The bodies never made it to the morgue.

INT. MARJ'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Marj and Zed sit at the dining table sipping tea while Mercury draws at the coffee table. They are both watching her draw.

ZED

Does she remember her father?

MARJ

Vividly. She remembers everything, past and future. Her teachers are starting to ask questions.

ZED

People don't usually take "powerful psychic" as an explanation.

(beat)

So John and her father were close?

MARJ

Anand. Arnie. He was one of John's best friends. He adored John. Would do anything for him.

ZED

What happened to him?

MARJ

They trapped Kali in a temple in Varanasi, but they didn't know what they were up against. She was going to use Arnie against John. So Arnie...

ZED

Sacrificed himself.

Marj's silence is confirmation enough.

MARJ

After he died, John promised to look out for us. But to John that meant keeping us as far from him as possible.

ZED

That seems to be how he deals with the people he loves.

MARJ

That. Or he yells at them.

John ENTERS purposefully unfolding a MAP of the city. He puts it on the table between Marj and Zed.

CONSTANTINE

(Yelling)

Hey! Let's play a game. Find a demon goddess and her stockpile of vessels in the haystack.

(to Zed)

And... go.

Zed looks back at John. He looks a little crazier than usual.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

Concentrate. Don't make me ask the eight-year-old.

ZED

John, I just see stuff. I don't even know what it means usually. I can't track people, or demons or whatever.

John takes a deep breath. He calms down a bit. He squats beside her chair and tries to connect with her.

CONSTANTINE

Remember in the pub, watching the game.

ZED

Yeah. I couldn't predict the score. I'm sorry.

CONSTANTINE

Never mind that. Remember what the energy felt like. All those people in the stadium. All the love and hate, the passion, so much *life* pulsing at a focused point in time and space.

Zed closes her eyes and breathes, going back to that moment.

ZED

It was exhilarating.

CONSTANTINE

Good. Now I need you to find the opposite. Feel this city, all the life coursing through it.

(MORE)

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

Somewhere in all of that is death and nothingness and despair, a concentrated well of emptiness in the middle of all that energy.

Zed tries. She squeezes her eyelids tight.

ZED

I... I can't. I don't know how. It's too much.

Mercury walks over. She climbs up on a chair beside Zed.

MERCURY

Let's look at this drawing together.

John looks at Marj. She reluctantly nods her approval.

Mercury puts her hands on top of Zed's on the map, palms down. The moment their skin makes contact, the two of them are whisked into

ANOTHER PLANE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Whipping through the city. Bodies and souls and colors in motion. Spirits roaming the streets.

They cover vast sections of the city in seconds. A SKYSCRAPER pulses with colors. A STADIUM erupts with energy like bright fireworks. Freeways filled with cars moving at the SPEED OF LIGHT.

Then, a gaping BLACK HOLE in all of the vibrant atmosphere. They crash and plunge into a well of darkness.

RETURN TO LIVING ROOM

Zed GASPS back to this plane of consciousness. She breathes heavily trying to recover from the trip. She looks around wildly at everyone trying to regain awareness.

Mercury turns and hugs her mother, burying her face in her mother's body.

MERCURY (CONT'D)

Don't go, amma.

MARJ

Go where, baby?

Everyone looks to Zed for the answer to that question. Zed looks down and sees only one of her fingers remains on the map. All the eyes in the room follow hers. She lifts up her finger.

CONSTANTINE

The Hindu temple. Perfect. Never had  
any problems at one of those before.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK

John exits the building on his phone.

JOHN  
(into phone)  
I'll meet you at the temple. And Chaz,  
bring more stakes.

John hangs up the phone as he approaches his car and pops the trunk. Marj comes up behind him.

MARJ  
I'm coming with.

CONSTANTINE  
No, you're not.

MARJ  
That *thing* came after my daughter,  
John, and it's going to come after me.

CONSTANTINE  
That's exactly why you have to stay  
here.

MARJ  
I can look out for myself. Been doing  
just fine without your help. But you  
wouldn't know that since you stay on  
the other side of the country.

John SLAMS the trunk closed.

CONSTANTINE  
You think I like it this way? You  
think I like waking up everyday and  
wondering if you and Mercury are  
alright?!

MARJ  
I think you want to be the hero in the  
story and you don't care what that  
means for everyone else.

CONSTANTINE  
I didn't ask for Arnie's help! I never  
wanted him to come along!

He moves to get into the car.

MARJ

But you didn't tell him no! And it  
cost us everything.

(beat)

For what it's worth, you've never been  
the hero in my story, John.

John closes the car door. Marj watches the car drive away.

EXT. HINDU TEMPLE - NIGHT

John's car pulls up in front of the temple.

INT. HINDU TEMPLE - MOMENTS LATER

John cautiously ENTERS the temple, a long empty chamber lined on both sides with ornate columns and lit by HUNDREDS OF CANDLES. COLORFUL STATUES and PAINTINGS depict Hindu gods and worshippers.

On the FLOOR, the BODIES of the Indian family from the burial ritual are LINED UP NEATLY in the center of the chamber.

Surveying the scene, John STUMBLES over something. He looks down and sees CHAZ with a fresh NECK WOUND, clutching his CELL PHONE in one hand and a bag of STAKES in the other.

John removes his trench coat to reveal he is strapped with metal stakes around his torso and the mallet hangs from his belt. He rolls up his sleeves and turns to face the door. He holds up his hands and recites the same spell used by Marj earlier to seal the chamber.

CONSTANTINE

Non erit transiens per eam portam  
malum.

He looks down at Chaz. Removing a stake from his torso, John bends down and holds it over Chaz's body.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

Sorry about this, mate. See you  
soon... I hope.

He hammers the stake through Chaz and into the floor beneath him.

DEMONIC VOICE (O.C.)

Still willing to sacrifice loved ones,  
I see.

John spins to see an INDIAN WOMAN, 50s, with a MORTAL NECK WOUND, standing at the front of the chamber on the ALTAR admiring a PAINTING.

INSERT: Painting of a GODDESS with BLUE SKIN and SIX ARMS standing on HUMAN CORPSE.

CONSTANTINE  
Anything for you, Kali.

John slowly approaches the next corpse lining the middle of the chamber, keeping his eyes on Kali.

NOTE: Possessed corpses speak in a demonic voice unless otherwise specified.

INDIAN WOMAN  
Why blue skin? I never understood that.

John hammers a stake through the corpse.

INDIAN WOMAN (CONT'D)  
At least they got the arms right.

John moves to the next corpse. He hears a THUD. John looks up to see the Indian Woman on the ground. Now an INDIAN TEENAGER, 18, is standing at the end of the line of bodies.

John stakes another body. He is working his way closer to where Kali possesses the Indian Teenager.

CONSTANTINE  
They forgot the unbearable stench of death that follows you around. But I suppose that's a tough thing to draw.

INDIAN TEENAGER  
Follows me around?

THUD. The body of the Indian Teenager drops to the ground. The next corpse rises, an INDIAN MAN, 50s, bolts upright. John stakes one more. John and the Indian Man are now only a few feet from each other.

The Indian Man looks back at the Indian Teenager's body.

INDIAN MAN  
(re: Teen's body)  
The irony was too much for him to bear.

He looks back at John and BARES FANGS. He lunges at John. John defensively stakes him. The body goes LIMP and falls to the floor. John stakes the body into the ground.

He senses something BEHIND him.

DEMONIC VOICE (O.C.)  
 (whispering)  
 You'll never find them all.

Startled, John turns and swings wildly at thin air with a stake. Someone scampers off into a dark corner of the temple.

John quickly stakes the remaining visible bodies in the center of the chamber. He hears the same voice that was behind him echoing through the chamber, the location unidentifiable.

DEMONIC VOICE (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
 We could have avoided all of this. But  
 you couldn't leave well enough alone.

John stands in the middle of the chamber, trying to track the voice.

CONSTANTINE  
 You murdered my best friend!

DEMONIC VOICE (O.C.)  
 And you banished me to Hell!

John spins to the sound of SCAMPERING behind him. He sees only shadows.

DEMONIC VOICE (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
 With every second passing like  
 eternity in Hell, I planned how to  
 bring the great John Constantine to  
 his knees.

John surveys the chamber. In the dim light he sees LIMBS of BODIES behind a few pillars. He REACHES INTO HIS POCKET.

CONSTANTINE  
 (skeptically)  
 And this is what you came up with?

SCAMPERING. John pulls an AMULET from his pocket. He holds it in his hands and mouths a spell silently.

DEMONIC VOICE (O.C.)  
 The problem is that you have a death  
 wish. Quite honestly, it takes the fun  
 out of the whole thing.

John completes the spell and looks at the LIMBS. They are TWITCHING. He repeats the spell.

DEMONIC VOICE (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
 Then I thought, what does John  
 Constantine fear most in this world?

The LIMBS from the shadows grow full of life. The BODIES they were attached to walk slowly like zombies toward the amulet in John's hand.

CONSTANTINE

Not spiders I hope. I hate spiders.

John looks around and sees FIVE BODIES.

DEMONIC VOICE (O.S.)

Always jokes.

When the BODIES are within a few feet, John SMASHES the amulet on the ground. The bodies instantly COLLAPSE.

DEMONIC VOICE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

No, John. Not spiders.

John stakes the remaining bodies. He hears the voice now directly behind him.

DEMONIC VOICE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

I will bring the death of everyone you love.

He turns to see the body that goes with the voice, a YOUNG INDIAN WOMAN, 20s, beautiful, wearing a BLUE SARI. She has a MORTAL NECK WOUND like the others.

YOUNG INDIAN WOMAN

Neat trick, magician.

CONSTANTINE

No more tricks, Kali. Just you and me. This ends now. I'm going to send you back to Hell once and for all.

Out of stakes, John goes to the BAG OF STAKES beside Chaz's body and retrieves one.

YOUNG INDIAN WOMAN

You're so disappointing, John. After all this, you are nothing but a typical human being.

John moves back in her direction.

YOUNG INDIAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

You haven't heard a word I've said. Only one thing is certain, in this life and the next: There's never a shortage of dead bodies around John Constantine.

He pauses, considers. Kali has said this to him before.

MARJ (O.C.)

John?

CONSTANTINE  
(helpless disbelief)

No.

He turns to see Marj standing by the door of the chamber holding the METAL STAKE that he gave her at her apartment.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

Marj. Run.

He makes a move toward her but the demon is too fast. The Young Indian Woman races around the chamber and comes up behind Marj, grabbing her by the head and body, exposing her neck. She smiles at John.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)  
(pleading)

No.

The Young Indian Woman BARES FANGS and PLUNGES them into Marj's NECK.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)  
(screaming)

NO!!!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

FADE IN:

INT. HINDU TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS

CONSTANTINE

NO!!!

John watches as the Young Indian Woman possessed by Kali rips her fangs away from Marj's neck. Blood spills and Marj crumples to the ground.

John falls to knees, devastated.

The demon stands with Marj's blood around her mouth, triumphantly watching John's agony and helpless despair.

YOUNG INDIAN WOMAN

Looks like you missed one.

She laughs maniacally.

YOUNG INDIAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

(in Chaz's voice)

Marj, John needs you down here right away.

John picks his head up, realizing how Marj came to be at the Temple.

YOUNG INDIAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

See, John, I'm not here to kill you.  
I'm here to destroy you. For all time.  
To ensure that you are no good to anyone, dead or alive.

John listens. His spirit is broken.

YOUNG INDIAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

Only then will I end your mortal existence and relinquish your soul to the First of the Fallen.

John can only stare back at her, defeated.

YOUNG INDIAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

You know what I learned in Hell? I learned that John Constantine has a lot of enemies. Powerful ones, too. They were all too eager to help me cross back.

(MORE)

YOUNG INDIAN WOMAN (CONT'D)  
 You wouldn't believe the offers I got  
 when I promised to deliver your soul.  
 Naturally, I chose the First. He's  
 quite convincing.

Marj's LEG TWITCHES. John's eye's dart in her direction.

YOUNG INDIAN WOMAN (CONT'D)  
 (noticing)  
 Oh, that happens a lot. Don't get your  
 hopes up.  
 (thinking)  
 Where was I? Ah, yes. The First. He's  
 coming. And he knows you are the one  
 standing in his way.

MARJ (O.C.)  
 He's not the only one.

Marj GRABS the Young Indian Woman from behind, holding her  
 body close with one arm. With the other arm, she swings her  
 METAL STAKE and STABS it through the Woman's midsection,  
 piercing herself through in the process. The women both fall  
 backward to the ground.

Marj holds the stake with both hands, arms clenched tight  
 around the Woman, who violently writhes to get free.

YOUNG INDIAN WOMAN  
 NO!

MARJ  
 John! Finish it!

CONSTANTINE  
 Marj! No!

MARJ  
 Do it!

John approaches them, mallet in hand.

MARJ (CONT'D)  
 Hurry!

Marj looks up at him standing over them. Her eyes plead with  
 him to finish the job.

With tears in his eyes, John raises the mallet over his head  
 and screams as he drives it down into the stake, pushing the  
 stake through both of them into the ground.

Marj's body falls limp. The Young Indian Woman continues to  
 writhe.

## YOUNG INDIAN WOMAN

No! I can't go back!

The Woman's body goes LIMP. Bodies that have been staked nearby each JUMP to life one at a time as Kali tries to find a body not tethered to the ground.

John slumps over Marj and the Young Indian Woman, half protecting, half mourning.

P.O.V. KALI

Vacating the last potential vessel, Kali's spirit frantically races for the door. John's spell prevents her from exiting the chamber. Thwarted, she turns back to focus her anger on John, the last living soul in the room.

MANNY appears standing over the slumped John. He extends his massive wings and folds them over John, encasing him from harm.

Manny looks back at Kali and blows a gust of air through his lips. Kali's vision becomes engulfed in flames.

END P.O.V.

Manny stands over John. The chamber is still and silent except for John's gentle crying.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

Rows of tombstones as far as the eye can see. John stands at the edge of a FRESHLY COVERED BURIAL SITE. He looks wrecked. A group of friends, family and community members mourn while the burial service is performed.

Chaz holds Mercury's hand. It is the scene of Mercury's drawing from earlier. Tears fill Chaz's eyes. Zed strokes Mercury's hair.

Manny leans against a tree behind them, watching over John, as always. Beside him stands Marj, unscathed, how she was before the temple.

The service ends and people file away. Manny turns to Marj.

MANNY

Ready?

Marj nods.

Chaz picks up Mercury in his arms. She sees the tears in his eyes.

MERCURY

Don't be sad, Uncle Chaz.

This only makes Chaz more upset.

MERCURY (CONT'D)

Amma's okay. She's with Uncle John's angel friend.

Zed breaks down and hugs them both.

John sees Manny and walks toward him.

MANNY

John--

CONSTANTINE

No lectures. Please. Not now.

MANNY

Don't do that to yourself. You did everything you could. She doesn't blame you.

John looks up at him. It might actually be true.

MANNY (CONT'D)

She just asked for one thing.

EXT. CEMETARY - MOMENTS LATER

John approaches Chaz, Zed, and Mercury. He stoops down to Mercury so they are eye to eye.

CONSTANTINE

Love, you're gonna stay with your granny for bit, alright? It's not safe for you right now.

MERCURY

Because I'm too strong.

CONSTANTINE

Yeah. You're so strong. You should be looking after me maybe.

MERCURY

I am, Uncle John.

CONSTANTINE

I know you are, love.

John opens his coat and removes a BLUE LILY, like the one Marj gave to Mercury earlier.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

Someone asked me to give you something  
before I go.

Mercury's eye light up when she sees it. She throws her arms around John. He gives her a ferocious hug back.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE