

FADE IN:

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

A cramped hole cluttered with boxes and old furniture.

Needles of a TATTOO-GUN rake across flesh.

An unkempt Tattoo-Artist labors over a women's bare back.

The woman, straddling a chair, topless, is CHRISTINE: Black female, arms covered in tattoos, a foul-mouthed Goth loner.

The Artist wipes her down, shoves a mirror in her face.

She scowls at him, takes the mirror, and uses it to analyze her new BACK PIECE in the reflection of a standing mirror.

Sharp lines of ink etch a giant BLACK PHOENIX to her flesh.

With wings spread, it covers her ENTIRE BACK with a trail of fire and smoke swirling down her spine to her tail bone.

CHRISTINE (V.O.)

From the ashes...

INT. LEGACY (WOMEN'S RESTROOM STALL)

SHANNA: White female, a well-to-do family jewel, VOMITS her dinner and last couple drinks into a stained toilet.

SHANNA

Oh...God!

She staggers out to a sink, leans in squinting at her reflection in the mounted mirror, and notices a spatter of

VOMIT IN HER HAIR.

SHANNA (CONT'D)

Ewww! Shit!

She turns on the faucet, starts to wash it out.

The restroom door opens and her best-friend slithers in.

CANDICE: Latin female, a vivacious two-faced seductress.

She pauses at Shanna hunched over the sink.

CANDICE

You okay, sweetie?

SHANNA

Yeah...NO! I got vomit in my hair.

Candice busts out laughing.

CANDICE

No way!

SHANNA

It's not funny! Don't You have some breath spray or something?

CANDICE

I'm not laughing at you, sweetie.
I'm laughing at the situation.

She opens her little black handbag, spotting a small tube of BREATH SPRAY, then she closes the bag with a sharp smile.

CANDICE (CONT'D)

Looks like I forgot it. Sorry.

SHANNA

Shit. Great. Thanks, Dice.

CANDICE

Awww, no more kissy-kissy for you?

INT. LEGACY (V.I.P. SECTION)

Booming music, model-bred women drunk off top-shelf alcohol.

Two Black males occupy a table over-looking the club floor.

ROBERT: a born-again ghetto-escapee, nurses a drink.

The other, street-slick in a sharp suite, devours women with a hungry gaze as they saunter pass in scandalous wear.

STREET-SLICK

Yo, man, where those chicks go?

Robert eyes Street-Slick with simmering disdain.

ROBERT

Shanna's my girl, not a chick.

STREET-SLICK

My bad. No disrespect. So, what about Candice? She a gold-digger? A freak? What she about?

ROBERT
 She's here with you, right? What
 are you asking me for?

Street-Slick glares, nerve-struck.

STREET-SLICK
 What's with the attitude?

Robert measures him evenly.

ROBERT
 Attitude?

STREET-SLICK
 Yeah, like I'm annoying you.
 Remember, we in VIP because of me!

ROBERT
 Duly Noted.

He sips his drink, indifferently.

CANDICE (O.S.)
 Hey, fellas! Sorry we took so long.

Candice and Shanna slide into their seats.

CANDICE (CONT'D)
 Ya'll playing nice?

STREET-SLICK
 Nah, your boy here got problem.

Shanna searches Robert's face.

SHANNA
 What's wrong?

ROBERT
 Apparently, we're in VIP and I'm
 not kissing his ass. All these
 women, and he needs my attention?

Street-Slick jumps from his seat knocking over glasses.

STREET-SLICK
 Look, you and your chick can go!

Robert grins, downs his drink, turns to Shanna.

ROBERT
 Ready?

INT. DORMITORY (HALLWAY)

Christine reaches her room.

Slow Music plays through the door.

She tries the knob--LOCKED.

She searches her messenger bag, finds her key, and--

The door SWINGS open--

Christine's roommate rushes out, slamming the door behind her, with a breathless smile.

LIAN: Asian female, a behind the bleachers sneaky-freak.

LIAN
Hey, Christine! How are you?

Christine cock's a suspicious eyebrow.

LIAN (CONT'D)
I..I'm tutoring...

Christine's gaze falls upon Lian's unbuttoned blouse.

LIAN (CONT'D)
Don't you have to go to work?

CHRISTINE
Not 'til 10.

Lian takes Christine by the arm and leads her from the door.

LIAN
Can't you go in early?

CHRISTINE
Why would I do that?

LIAN
Please, do me this one favor!

Christine frowns.

LIAN (CONT'D)
Come on! I'm begging you!

CHRISTINE
Fucking humans! I swear!

She storms off down the hallway.

LIAN
Great! I owe you one!

CHRISTINE
Won't hold my breath.

LIAN
Cool, see you later. Thank you!

She rushes back into the room, slams the door.

CHRISTINE
Yeah, whatever. Fuck you!

INT. LEGACY (CLUB FLOOR)

CANDICE
Look, ya'll don't have to go.

Vexed disappointment wrinkles her brow.

SHANNA
It's all right. We had fun.

CANDICE
Yeah, right.

SHANNA
Besides, his mind's made up.

She eyes Robert patiently waiting a few steps away.

SHANNA (CONT'D)
I'm not feeling too well anyway.
Think I over did it a little.

CANDICE
Yeah? Vomit much?

Street-Slick approaches frustrated.

ANTHONY
Yo, Candice, come on!

Candice whips around sneering at him.

CANDICE
You just wait! Don't rush me!

Street-Slick backs off, flustered.

SHANNA
You going to be okay with him?

CANDICE

What? Please! What're you talking about? Hopefully, he can keep up!

SHANNA

Well, he seems like your type.

Candice cocks her head to the side, offended.

CANDICE

Really? How? In what way exactly?

SHANNA

Um, I mean...I was just saying...

While Shanna tries to apologize, Candice stares at Robert.

CANDICE

Look, just forget about it.

Robert glances at Shanna--Candice WINKS at him.

CANDICE (CONT'D)

I might let him get a taste anyway.

SHANNA

You're serious?

Shanna covers a laugh.

CANDICE

I gotta get something out of this.

SHANNA

You're so bad.

Candice licks her lips at Robert.

CANDICE

No, I'm not.

EXT. DOWNTOWN

Robert and Shanna walk the busy streets holding hands.

SHANNA

I found another school today. One of the best in the country.

ROBERT

Great. Going to tell your parents?

SHANNA

No, for what?

A touch of irritation.

ROBERT
Still going to work for them?

SHANNA
Just for a little while.

ROBERT
And they're going to let you stop?

Shanna sighs, perturbed.

SHANNA
I don't know. I'll work it out.

ROBERT
Just tell them what you want to do.
Get it over with so you can start.

SHANNA
It's not that simple.

Robert shrugs.

ROBERT
Okay. However you want it. I'll be
right there with you either way.

Shanna smiles and hugs him.

SHANNA
See? That's what I love you!

INT. CHRISTINE'S CAR (PARKED)

Christine sneers at patrons boiling in and out her workplace,
a rocking sports bar built for a wild college crowd.

Obnoxious glowing letters above the door spell: THE CORNERS.

ROBERT AND SHANNA stroll by laughing in conversation--

Christine sits up, attention-caught. She STUDIES Robert.

The couple enters a JEEP parked in front of Christine.

The jeep cranks, backs up, and

HITS Christine's car.

Robert steps out his jeep--Christine hops out her car.

ROBERT

I'm so sorry. I don't how I--

He pauses when he sees her. Vague recognition in his eyes.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Christine? Psych class, right?

Christine nods, silently holding his gaze.

After a moment, Robert breaks away and looks the cars over.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Don't see any damage.

CHRISTINE

Don't worry about it. My cars a piece of shit anyway.

She never takes her eyes off him--

SHANNA

Is everything okay?

She stands by her man. Loops her arm around his.

ROBERT

Yeah, just a little bump.

Christine and Shanna size each other up covertly.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Guess we'll see you class then.

CHRISTINE

...yeah.

Robert and Shanna get back into the jeep and pull off.

INT. THE CORNERS (LOCKER ROOM)

Christine shoves her belongings into a paint-chipped locker.

RALPH: her boss, an older man clinging to youth with a ball cap and beer can, looks her over from the doorway.

Messy hair, tattoos, dark clothes, bad attitude--

He shakes his head.

RALPH

Why you here so early?

Christine pauses, then continues putting her things away.

CHRISTINE
Nothing else better to do.

Ralph twists his mouth disapprovingly.

RALPH
I didn't ask you to come in early
so, no overtime.

CHRISTINE
...Okay, whatever.

She reaches up to stuff her bag into the top of her locker--
Ralph spots a large FOLDING KNIFE clipped to her waist.

RALPH
Didn't I tell you about that knife?

Christine's hand jerks to the weapon.

CHRISTINE
Sorry. Forgot I had it on me.

RALPH
I'm not going to tell you again.

Christine nods.

RALPH (CONT'D)
Go see what Tracy needs help with.

Christine eyes him hard.

CHRISTINE
...Okay.

INT. THE CORNERS (BAR AREA)

Christine walks up behind TRACY, a Young Ms. Popular,
jabbering away to her friends crowding the bar--

The group of friends look from Tracy to Christine and back.

Tracy stops, looks Christine up and down, continues talking.

CHRISTINE
...Tracy.

She's ignored.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Tracy!

Tracy turns as if seeing Christine for the first time.

TRACY
Yes, what do you want, Christine?

CHRISTINE
Need help with anything?

Tracy flashes a conniving grin.

TRACY
There are a few things.

INT. THE CORNERS (WOMAN'S RESTROOM)

Christine pulls in a rolling trash can of cleaning supplies.

She freezes in shock, scans the room in sheer disgust, Double checks the sign on the door, and shakes her head.

INT. THE CORNERS (DINNING AREA)

Christine wipes down tables, gathers plates and glasses.

Heading to the kitchen, she SLIPS

And DROPS the plates in a SHATTERING MESS.

Patrons laugh as she scrambles to clean it up.

INT. BAINBRIDGE APARTMENTS (LOBBY)

Shanna enters, nearly bumping into

ALLEN: White male, well-groomed, smug and confident. He takes her in with a broad smile.

ALLEN
Shanna.

SHANNA
Hi, Allen.

ALLEN
You look beautiful as always.

Shanna blushes.

SHANNA
Thank you.

Allen approaches. A wolf stalking prey.