

FOLLOWERS OF JOHN

Anton A. Hill

FADE IN:

INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - EVENING

Fingers drop vegetables into a pot of bubbling soup. A ladle slips in. Stirs carefully. Slowly lifts to the mouth of a SOUP COOK, early 20s. He tastes the concoction. Grins. Is about to replace the ladle when a hand catches his arm.

The hand belongs to JOHN, late 20s, chiseled face, honest eyes, in a white chef's uniform.

JOHN  
T-minus 20 minutes, everybody!

The Soup Cook hands over the ladle. John sips. Shakes his head. Dips the ladle back in. Tosses in another clove of garlic. Gives a sly smile.

JOHN  
There's no such thing as too much  
garlic.

He runs over to a DESSERT COOK, early 20s, clearly having a bit of trouble.

DESSERT COOK  
You sure you wanna introduce your  
new dessert on your opening night?

JOHN  
That bad, huh?

DESSERT COOK  
I can't get a good balance between  
the lemon and the cream.

JOHN  
Yeah, desserts have always kicked  
my ass.

He tastes the dessert.

JOHN  
Mix in a little more powdered  
sugar, and we'll call it good.

He pats the guy's back. Just as he moves on to the next assistant, LIAM, late 20s, dressed like a used-car salesman, bursts in.

LIAM  
Johnny!!

John runs over to him. Pushes him out.

JOHN  
Liam, I've told you, not while I'm  
cooking!

Liam dips his finger in John's dessert. Licks it. Smiles.

LIAM  
Damn, that's good!

JOHN  
Out.

LIAM  
I'm telling you, Johnny, I've got a  
plan --

JOHN  
Keep your used-car pitches on your  
lot, and I'll keep my spices in my  
kitchen.

LIAM  
After your opening tonight, we do  
one on the east side. Next month.  
Push the family angle.

John rubs his temples. Hasn't got time for this.

JOHN  
There is no "family angle."

LIAM  
We'll open real slow, market all  
family-friendly, then boom, you're  
everywhere! The next Mickey D's!

John shudders.

JOHN  
They dish out dog crap, then demand  
payment. That's extortion. I give  
people the definition of "savor."

With that, he gets back to work. Liam tags along.

LIAM  
Always le artiste. Alright,  
Spago's then! We'll push the  
yuppie, connoisseur angle.

JOHN  
 There's no "connoisseur angle"  
 either. I'm a grill man. I don't  
 wanna be the next Spago's.

LIAM  
 Then what do you want?

John takes Liam's shoulder. Moves him to a quieter corner of  
 the kitchen.

JOHN  
 Liam, you're a good friend, I  
 appreciate your enthusiasm, but  
 honestly, all I wanna do is feed  
 people.

LIAM  
 Puck feeds plenty.

John gestures to the kitchen.

JOHN  
 This, here, is all I need.

LIAM  
 You're afraid of success.

JOHN  
 No, I'm afraid I won't be ready  
 before Thompson gets here.

He checks his watch.

JOHN  
 In five minutes.

LIAM  
 Who's Thompson?

The Dessert Cook chimes in.

DESSERT COOK  
 Reginald Thompson. His reviews've  
 made or broken every restaurant in  
 this town for the last fifteen  
 years.

SOUP COOK  
 And there's nothing he loves more  
 than breaking a place.

JOHN  
Which is why I need to finish up.

LIAM  
You need a woman.

JOHN  
No time. Now get out.

Liam obeys. John goes back to food preparation.

INT. RESTAURANT DINING ROOM

A quiet, welcoming area perfect for first dates, fiftieth anniversaries, and everything in between.

MOLLY, early 30s, pretty but haggard, impatiently drags in her tired, hungry, grade school-age kids, MARCUS and JUDITH.

On his way out of the kitchen, Liam bumps into them. He clicks on the charm.

LIAM  
Molly. So lovely to see you again.  
How are you and the kids?

Despite Molly's current mood, her defenses crumble. She smiles warmly. While Liam listens to her, he kneels in front of her kids. Performs cute quarter-based magic tricks.

MOLLY  
The furnace exploded, and Jack's late with child support again.  
Other than that, my day was shit.

Liam whips a quarter out from behind Marcus's ear. Holds it out to him. Marcus grins mischievously.

LIAM  
You should've married me.

Molly rolls her eyes. Heard it a thousand times.

MOLLY  
How's Johnny doing?

Liam reveals a lollipop from behind Judith's ear. She smiles shyly. Liam stands.

LIAM  
Not listening to me.

MOLLY  
No one listens to you, Liam. I  
meant the food.

LIAM  
Great as always.

MARCUS  
I'm hungry!

JUDITH  
I'm thirsty!

MOLLY  
Let's go see Uncle John!

They all head off to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

They find John dashing spices and lemon on some grilled  
salmon.

MARCUS/JUDITH  
Hi Uncle John!!

John swings around. His face brightens. He runs over. Hugs  
the kids. Kisses Molly's cheeks.

JOHN  
Molly Polly!

Her childhood name. She smiles. He's the only one allowed  
to use it.

MOLLY  
How's my baby brother?

JOHN  
So far so good. You're early.

He runs over to a little table. Grabs a pair of pastries.

MOLLY  
Johnny, you'll spoil their dinner.

Offering them to the kids, John warns her.

JOHN  
Never doubt a chef in his own  
kitchen.

The kids dig in.

MOLLY  
What do you say?

Their faces already covered in fresh-baked goodness, the kids obediently look up at John.

MARCUS/JUDITH  
Thank you, Uncle John!

JOHN  
You're very welcome.

He confides in his sister.

JOHN  
Baked not fried. Plenty of fruit.  
A dash of cacao. Perfectly  
healthy.

SOUP COOK  
John, more garlic!!

John helps the Soup Cook. Molly turns to Liam and the kids. Gives Liam a desperate look. She needs alone time. Liam nods, understanding.

MOLLY  
Uncle John and mommy need to talk.  
Be good to Uncle Li.

The kids tug at Liam's arms as if Liam were a lifeboat saving the kids from the depths of the Sea of Boring Mom. Liam lifts Judith. Cradles her in his arm. Holds Marcus's hand.

LIAM  
Let's see where Uncle John keeps  
his ice cream.

MOLLY  
Don't ruin their dinner!

Liam feigns offense.

LIAM  
Wouldn't dream of it.

Marcus and Judith giggle at him. They all head off to the ice cream.

Molly joins her brother. John continues to prepare his dishes as he chats with her.

MOLLY  
The furnace exploded.

JOHN  
I'll get Anthony to take a look at  
it.

MOLLY  
And Jack's late again.

JOHN  
That son of a bitch!

He grabs a butcher knife. Deftly chops a carrot into paper-  
thin slices.

JOHN  
I'll dice him a new one.

MOLLY  
You're a cook. Not an assassin.

JOHN  
I know forty ways to grill a man.

MOLLY  
I'll deal with it.

JOHN  
You know, my friend Brad just made  
partner at Strandberg, Strandberg,  
and Zimmerman. He could easily  
"take care" of the problem.

Molly holds his hand.

MOLLY  
You're too good to me.

JOHN  
Penance for all those times I  
flushed your dolls' dresses down  
the toilet.

MOLLY  
Don't forget their heads.

JOHN  
You always gotta bring that up.

MOLLY  
You need a woman.

JOHN  
Not ready yet.

MOLLY  
Johnny, it's been a year.

JOHN  
I just can't see myself with anyone  
but Angela.

MOLLY  
She was a cold-hearted, insensitive  
bitch who never appreciated your  
cooking.

John nods. Knows it's true.

MOLLY  
I know someone who'd love you.

JOHN  
Not another blind date.

MOLLY  
Just lunch.

JOHN  
Too busy.

INT. DINING ROOM

ANTHONY, early 30s, stout, in a lousy suit, arrives with his  
wife and baby.

ANTHONY  
Hey John! Where are ya, buddy?

Right after them, BRAD, late 20s, handsome, dressed like a  
man who just made partner, shows up.

BRAD  
John, it's Brad and Anthony!

John and Molly emerge from the kitchen.

JOHN  
Guys! Glad you could make it!

They all greet each other. John takes Anthony and his family  
aside.

JOHN  
The furnace blew.

ANTHONY

Those damn Austrian parts.

Brad hits on Molly.

BRAD

You know it's funny. John talks about you all the time. I can't believe I haven't met you.

Molly can't take her eyes off his.

MOLLY

I'm usually pretty busy. Kids and all.

BRAD

Kids?

Molly hesitates. Expects him to hate the idea.

MOLLY

Two. Marcus and Judith.

BRAD

Such nice names. I love children.

MOLLY

You do??

John negotiates with Anthony.

JOHN

If you could take a look at it.

ANTHONY

Sure, buddy, no problem.

John moves him and his family over to the tables.

JOHN

I'll have appetizers in a second.

He goes back to Brad and Molly.

JOHN

So, Brad, Molly's bastard ex-husband still isn't paying up --

MOLLY

Johnny, not now.

Brad hands her a snappy business card.

BRAD  
Give my assistant a call. I'll  
take your ex to the cleaners.

MOLLY  
I can't possibly afford --

Brad holds up a hand.

BRAD  
I'd consider it payback for all the  
times John's fed me.

He slaps John on the back.

Liam carries Molly's kids from out of the kitchen. Followed  
by one of John's COOKS.

LIAM  
Johnny, problem!

He joins Molly and Brad. Throws Brad a jealous glance.

JOHN  
Thompson's gonna be here any  
minute!

Liam pulls out a digital camera. Grabs John. Drags him back  
to Molly and the kids.

JOHN  
Liam, I gotta go!

LIAM  
One shot. Between the kids.  
Kneel.

John, Molly, and the kids pose. John puts an arm around the  
kids. They're all smiles. Liam snaps the shot.

INT. KITCHEN

John rushes in. His cooks surround him.

COOK  
Salmon doesn't taste right.

John tries it.

JOHN  
Spices are off. It's finished.

He scoops it onto a plate.

COOK  
Dammit. I was sure --

JOHN  
Always have a back-up plan.

He hesitates with the dish. Eyes the trash. Shakes his head. Doesn't want to toss it.

JOHN  
Break out the steak.

Outside, he spots a homeless guy picking through the dumpster. John heads out.

EXT. ALLEY

Salmon in hand, John quietly approaches the MAN.

JOHN  
Excuse me, sir?

The Man spins on him with crazed eyes. John offers the salmon.

JOHN  
Not perfect, but it'll fill you up.

The Man sniffs it. Snatches the plate. After a few bites, he looks John in the eyes.

MAN  
You're a good man.

The guy's intensity takes John off guard.

JOHN  
You're very welcome.

Feasting on John's creation, the Man is no longer listening. John heads back inside.

INT. DINING ROOM

Everyone's seated, with appetizers. Two men approach the restaurant. The first is REGINALD THOMPSON, 40s, short, fat, and determined to be unimpressed. Following him is FRANCIS BONAVENTURA, 40s, rugged, Italian.

Liam jumps up. Runs into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

John's working at a neck-break pace. Liam bursts in.

LIAM  
Thompson's here!

INT. DINING ROOM

Stepping in, Thompson scans the room. Lifts an eyebrow.

THOMPSON  
The decor isn't a total waste.

Anthony recognizes Frank. Points emphatically.

ANTHONY  
Hey, you're Francis Bonaventura!  
You got that cooking show!

Frank deflects Anthony from Thompson. With an air of faux humility:

FRANK  
It's just a little, local program.

ANTHONY  
My wife and me! We love it! Don't  
we, honey?

His wife nods and smiles.

INT. KITCHEN

John throws directions at each of his cooks.

JOHN  
Everyone, we're doing fine. Baste!  
Sauté. More garlic!

He pulls Liam out.

INT. DINING ROOM

Thompson takes off his coat. Frank hangs it up. John and Liam come running out. John goes to Frank first.

JOHN  
Frank! So glad you could make it!

FRANK  
Congratulations, John. The place  
looks great.

Frank directs John's attention to Thompson. John shakes Thompson's hand.

JOHN  
Mr. Thompson! It's a real honor.  
Please, follow me.

He leads Thompson to the best seats in the house.

THOMPSON  
I'll start with the wine.

John's face goes white.

JOHN  
Of course. One moment.

He runs back into the kitchen. Frank goes after him.

INT. KITCHEN

John's about to have a break-down.

JOHN  
I forgot the wine!!

FRANK  
Two years as my sous chef, and I  
still gotta remind you: It's all in  
the details. Lucky for you...

He whips a bottle out from under his coat. Hands it to John.

JOHN  
Frank, you're a lifesaver!

FRANK  
Tell me you picked a good dessert.

John shirks.

JOHN  
I'm going with... mine.

FRANK  
You never finished it! Making it  
real easy on yourself, aren't you?

INT. DINING ROOM

A few more guests have arrived. Everyone is gathered around Thompson. He basks in the attention as he nit-picks every bite. John hangs on his every syllable.

THOMPSON  
Bread's a little dry.

He cuts a tiny bite of steak. Drops it into his mouth.  
Chews with excruciatingly slow care. Everyone waits.  
Watches. John's about to burst.

THOMPSON  
Hardly original... but not bad.

Before he thinks to stop himself, John cheers. Everyone  
joins in. Thompson can't help but catch a bit of it. He  
hand-writes an invisible review in the air.

THOMPSON  
Where the steak lacked in  
innovation, it more than made up  
for in splendid care of flavor.

John lets out a huge sigh of relief.

JOHN  
That's more than generous, Mr.  
Thompson.

THOMPSON  
I'll touch it up a bit later. Now,  
where's this famous new dessert?

As John's about to answer, the front door flies open.  
FENTON, late 20s, dirty, unkempt, and thoroughly inebriated,  
stumbles in.

FENTON  
She left me, John!! She took the  
kids!!

All goes silent.

MOLLY  
What the hell are you doing here,  
Fenton?!

Her kids gasp at her outburst. John crosses over to Fenton.  
Leads him out.

EXT. STREET

John closes the door behind them.

FENTON  
I'm sorry, John. I didn't know  
where else to go. I need to talk.  
Help me figure some shit out.

Frank interrupts.

FRANK  
What are you doing?!

JOHN  
Just two minutes --

FRANK  
Reginald Thompson does not wait,  
John! In two minutes, he, and your  
career, are gonna waltz right out  
this door!

Reaching a decision, John faces Fenton.

JOHN  
Fen, gimme a second with Frank.

Nodding, Fenton trudges off.

FRANK  
Don't let that loser ruin the most  
important night of your life.

JOHN  
He's my oldest friend. I'll be  
back in two minutes.

FRANK  
Don't do this.

John starts off toward Fenton. Turns around. Holds up a  
peace sign. Reassures Frank.

JOHN  
Two minutes!

He and Fenton disappear around a corner. With a heavy sigh,  
Frank goes back inside.

INT. RESEARCH LAB

John and Fenton stand at an observation window ten feet above  
a giant, chrome bathtub. His eyes fixed on the tub, Fenton  
proudly strokes a bank of buttons.

FENTON

Top secret, experimental, sub-atomic, particle accelerator. This sweet baby sure as shit ain't your grandma's microwave.

JOHN

She's amazing. Listen, Fen, why don't you crash at my place for a while? Till you get back on your feet.

FENTON

You gotta check this out!

He presses a button. A section of the observation window slides away.

JOHN

You know how much I hate heights!

Fenton ignores him. Flips a beer bottle cap down into the tub. The window slides back into place.

JOHN

What are you going?!

FENTON

Relax. I'm the night watchman.

He presses another button...

At first, nothing happens. Then, the room begins to emanate a low hum.

JOHN

Fen?

FENTON

Watch.

Crackle! Waves of energy rip around and through the bottle cap. It bends, arcs, and fades, seemingly in and out of reality. Then, as fast as it all started, the electric display ends with a flash. The cap's gone.

John waits a moment.

JOHN

Where'd it go?

FENTON  
No idea! Doesn't that frickin'  
rock?!

JOHN  
Let's get back.

Fenton presses the button that slides away the window.

FENTON  
I got somethin' really cool here.

He runs into the hallway. Retrieves a broomstick. John takes the broomstick.

JOHN  
Fen, let's go.

FENTON  
Ah, come on, John!

He and John play tug-of-war with the broomstick.

JOHN  
Let - it - go!

FENTON  
Just - one - more!

They pull back and forth. Just as John's about to pry it from Fenton's finger's --

FENTON  
Nah, you're right.

He lets go --

With a shout, John flips backwards through the window. Tumbles down. Lands on his back. Groans at the wind knocked out of him.

FENTON  
John!!

JOHN  
Fen! Hold on! I'll climb out!

The window slides closed. Fenton freaks. Searches for the button to open it.

JOHN  
Don't touch anything!

Too late. Fenton can't hear him.

FENTON  
Shit! Shit! John, hold on!

But John can't hear him either.

JOHN  
Leave it be! Go get help!

He waves his arms to the left.

FENTON  
The left button?!

John cups his hands around his mouth.

JOHN  
Go get help!!

Fenton hears nothing. He gives John a questioning look.

FENTON  
You sure?

John nods insistently. Fenton hits the button.

The dreaded hum returns. Both John and Fenton hold deadly still. Then Fenton starts pounding the glass.

FENTON  
John!!

The energy waves race toward John. Envelope him. He takes a quick breath. Squints his eyes shut. Ready for the end.

Silence. Nothing happens. No crackling. No warping of his body. He takes a couple cautious breaths. Carefully opens an eye. The area looks exactly the same...

Except for a black marble staircase leading from John's toes to the open observation window. Fenton's gone.

JOHN  
Fen?

No answer.

JOHN  
Fen, this isn't funny! I've gotta get back!

He climbs the stairs, through the window, and heads into the...

INT. HALLWAY

Looking more like an ancient, Gothic cathedral than a modern research facility, John's awestruck at his drastically altered surroundings. He cautiously steps through the hallway. Periodically calls out to Fenton.

He doesn't notice the security camera tracking him as he moves into the...

INT. SANCTUARY

More than an ornate, hand-carved, gargantuan cathedral, this is the kind of monstrous space reserved for the center of a world-dominating religion.

John stops dead in his tracks. Grips the edge of the wall. Scans his surroundings.

A few feet to his right, John spies a gold-trimmed, mahogany casket with a glass lid. He inches over to it. Finds not a corpse, but an empty bed, except for the pillow where Fenton's bottle cap rests.

John stares at the cap. Then it hits him.

JOHN

It's a dream!

He laughs out loud. Pats the coffin. Marvels at the very real cold he feels from it.

JOHN

A lucid dream!

He leans on the coffin. Laughs some more. Gets a hold of himself. Pinches himself. Shouts at the pain.

JOHN

A very lucid dream.

VOICE

Who's there?!

John freezes.

VOICE

Who's in there?!

John swings around. All the way down at the other end of the sanctuary, he sees a bent old figure, shadowed by the outside light, holding a mop and bucket.

JOHN  
Fen, is that you?

He sprints over to the figure.

VOICE  
Of course it's Fen! I'm the night  
watchman. Who in The Greatest Chef  
are you --?!

John steps into the light. He finds not his friend, but an ancient man. The mop and bucket hit the ground. The man points a shaky finger at John.

VOICE  
It's --! It's --! You --!!

He faints. John crouches over him. Attempts to wake him up.

JOHN  
Sir?! Hello?!

No response. John takes a moment to process.

JOHN  
This is no dream.

He props the man up against the wall.

JOHN  
I don't wanna leave you here, but I  
have to get back to my place.

He dashes off into the night.

EXT. STREET

John hurries down the sidewalk toward his restaurant. On the way, he passes a BUM pushing a shopping cart. The Bum swings around. Proclaims:

BUM  
You've answered my prayers, John!!

John stops. Cautiously turns around.

JOHN  
How do you know my name?

BUM  
 There's no one in this world who  
 doesn't! You're the Greatest Chef  
 The World Has Ever Seen!

John snickers at the Bum's insanity.

JOHN  
 Sounds like a line Liam would've  
 used.

The Bum's overjoyed at John's observation.

BUM  
 Yes!! Li-Um the Evangelist!!

JOHN  
 He may be a lot of things, but  
 Liam's no evangelist. Take care of  
 yourself.

He heads off. The Bum falls to his knees.

BUM  
 Praise you, my Lord!! I shall  
 cherish your blessing the rest of  
 my days!!

The closer John gets to his place, the stranger his surroundings become. The streets have been re-paved, the buildings renovated. It's as if in the last few minutes, a renaissance exploded over the city.

EXT. SQUARE

Like St. Peter's in Rome, the area has become a pillar-rimmed plaza. In its center stands a building formed of a mishmash of John's restaurant, a church steeple, and a temple dome.

JOHN  
 What's going on??!

Completely overcome by all this, he high-tails it.

EXT. STREET

Running off in no particular direction, John comes upon a regular old, run-of-the-mill Catholic church.

JOHN  
 Finally, something normal.

Hearing a mass-in-progress, he quietly ducks inside.

## INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

John finds a seat in a pew in the back. Doesn't yet notice the PRIEST, 30s, stirring a light pasta as he speaks. The Priest is dressed in a mixture of a traditional vestment and a chef's uniform. A silver fork hangs from his collar.

PRIEST

"There's no such thing as too much garlic." What our Lord meant by this was...

Calming down, John takes a look around the congregation. Completely normal people. Men and Women. Young and old. A wide range of ethnicities...

And SECTATORA MOLLY, mid 20s, covered in a mix of a nun's habit and a chef's uniform. A silver spoon hangs from her neck. A beautiful, if insane smile stretches across her face. She stares right at John.

John's eyes meet hers. He checks to make sure no one else is staring at him. None yet. He quietly stands. Gets the hell out of there.

## INT. CHURCH ENTRANCE

John marches to the door. As his fingers touch its surface --

MOLLY

John?

John faces her.

MOLLY

I knew it was you!

She prostrates herself at his feet. John struggles to keep quiet.

JOHN

Stop that!!

He stands her up.

JOHN

How the hell do you know my name?!

Molly touches his face.

MOLLY

I've known you my whole life, John.

She kisses him with the passion of a little girl greeting her Prince Charming. John pries her off.

JOHN  
What are you, insane?!

MOLLY  
Apologies, my Lord. You must be confused, disoriented.

JOHN  
You're damn right I am! Who the hell are you, and what the hell is going on?!

MOLLY  
It'll take some explanation. If you'll come with me --

JOHN  
I'm not going anywhere with you, lady!

He opens the door.

MOLLY  
They're all dead, John.

John swings around. Grabs her.

JOHN  
What are you talking about?!

MOLLY  
Your sister Molly, your nephew Marcus, and niece Judith. All your friends.

JOHN  
How do you know their names --?

MOLLY  
Come with me, and I'll explain everything.

EXT. STREET

John and Molly approach an old, welcoming Victorian mansion, Molly's convent.

MOLLY  
This is the House of Judith. My Order. The oldest in the Fact.

JOHN  
Fact?

MOLLY  
I'll explain in a moment.

JOHN  
So you're a nun?

MOLLY  
Sectatora Johannis. A Follower  
of... you.

JOHN  
And that priest giving the sermon?

MOLLY  
A Sectator.

JOHN  
Right.

They reach the front door.

MOLLY  
Don't be alarmed if their reactions  
seem a bit... adverse.

INT. HOUSE OF JUDITH

A comforting abode filled with Sectatorae cooking, reading,  
cooking, writing, cooking, meditating, cleaning, and cooking.  
Molly cautiously enters. Hides John just behind the door.

MOLLY  
Can I have your attention,  
everyone?

Her fellow Sectatorae dutifully drop what they're doing.  
Face her.

MOLLY  
During Late-Evening Meal, I found  
someone whom we've all been dying  
to meet.

A young SECTATORA, early 20s, speaks up.

SECTATORA  
The cute, new Magnus Sectator?!

An older SECTATORA, 30s, takes a stab.

SECTATORA  
Our old cleaning lady who skipped  
out on her last job?

MOLLY  
No and no.

Another SECTATORA, 60s, grows tired of guessing.

SECTATORA  
Then who is it, child?

MOLLY  
Brace yourselves.

She swings the door open. John takes an uneasy step inside.  
Gives them a polite wave.

JOHN  
Hey.

One of the other Sectatorae points a trembling arm at John.

SECTATORA  
It's John!!

She and a dozen others faint. The rest throw themselves at  
his feet.

MOLLY  
Everyone, please. He doesn't like  
that.

She pulls John a little farther inside. Introduces him to  
the conscious ones.

MOLLY  
John, these are Molly, Molly,  
Emmie, Polly, Molly, Molls, Molly,  
Molly, Emmie, and Polly.

JOHN  
You're all named after my sister?

MOLLY  
Since the Death of Judith, it  
became a very popular name.

JOHN  
How do you keep each other  
straight?

The younger Sectatora answers.

SECTATORA

You get used to it.

JOHN

I'm not gonna be in Wonderland long  
enough for that.

He points to the youngest, the older, the oldest, and finally  
all the rest of the Sectatorae.

JOHN

You're Alice. You're the Mad  
Hatter. You're the Queen. And the  
rest of you're gonna have to wait.

MAD HATTER

How do we know he's the one, true  
John?

MOLLY

Look at him!

QUEEN

Don't be so naive, Molly. My grand-  
nephew had a more convincing John  
at his birthday party last month.

Molly points out various places of John's physique.

MOLLY

Look at his nose, eyes...

She points to his pants.

MOLLY

Nether region.

John shoves her hand out of the way.

MAD HATTER

He does bear a striking  
resemblance.

QUEEN

He's an imposter.

MOLLY

Polly, does not Lord John himself,  
in his Codex tell us, "Never doubt  
a chef in his own kitchen"?

QUEEN

He's not in a kitchen.

ALICE  
Now, Polly. You know it's not  
meant to be taken literally.

JOHN  
I never meant it as anything.

All heads turn to him.

JOHN  
I was just talking to my sister...

He notices them hanging on his every syllable, gesture, and  
nuance. He faces Molly.

JOHN  
You said you were gonna explain  
everything.

MOLLY  
Our Lord is right. We'll be in the  
Library if anyone needs us.

She leads John into the next room.

QUEEN  
We must alert His Holiness Maximus  
Sectator Kane!

John freezes.

JOHN  
Who's that??

Molly ignores the Queen. Shoves John into the Library.

INT. LIBRARY

A huge room, decorated with a sprawling series of paintings  
resembling mediaeval murals, and crammed with hundreds of  
volumes of a thick tome titled Codex Johannis.

MOLLY  
So, my Lord, where would you like  
to start?

JOHN  
First, my name's "John." Not Lord.  
Not Johannis. Not Greatest Chef --

MOLLY  
But you are all those things --!

JOHN  
Molly, please, call me "John."

MOLLY  
If you insist, my --

JOHN  
I do.

MOLLY  
Where would you like to begin,  
John?

JOHN  
How did all this happen?

Molly directs him to the first of the series of paintings.  
It's a romanticized, Baroque version of Fenton pressing a  
button.

MOLLY  
On the night of your restaurant's  
opening, you and the Prophet Fen-  
Ton --

JOHN  
Fen became a prophet??

Molly grabs a nearby Codex.

MOLLY  
Of course. He wrote this.

JOHN  
Fen was at best a loyal friend, at  
worst a drunken madman.

MOLLY  
His later prophecies were a bit...  
cryptic.

John skims a few pages.

JOHN  
This is just a bunch of my recipes  
with a few notes.

MOLLY  
It's history, philosophy, and  
prophecy.

JOHN  
No, it's recipes.

MOLLY  
It predicted what you'd be wearing.

JOHN  
That's because I haven't changed.

He closes the book.

JOHN  
Look, Molly, just because a book's  
over a thousand pages long, really  
old, and written in Greek --

MOLLY  
Latin.

JOHN  
That doesn't mean it's true.

Molly frowns, hurt.

JOHN  
I'm sorry. You know what? Let's  
start at the beginning, go to the  
end, and stop.

EXT. HOUSE OF JUDITH

John barges out. Molly comes running after him.

MOLLY  
John, wait!

JOHN  
If there's a tombstone with my name  
on it, I wanna see it!

MOLLY  
No one's allowed to see it! It's  
sacrilege!

John stops. Molly catches up.

JOHN  
I'm the one, true, John, right?

MOLLY  
Yes.

JOHN  
Your Lord and master?

MOLLY

Of course.

JOHN

The Greatest Chef The World Has  
Ever Seen?

MOLLY

There's no doubt in my mind.

JOHN

Then who the hell's gonna stop me?

He marches on.

EXT. MEMORIAL OF JOHN

Molly keeps after John as he stomps past iron gates, onto the grounds of an immaculate, circular park. At its center rests a single, simple monolith.

MOLLY

Please, John! We mustn't!

JOHN

I'll believe this isn't a dream  
when I see my name etched in stone.

He parks in front of his memorial. His face goes white. He looks down at his feet. Stepping on the foot of his own grave.

JOHN

Oh no.

He kneels for a closer look. The inscription reads, "In Loving Memory of John. Brother, Uncle, Friend, Chef. Lost, but never forgotten." John stares straight ahead. Determination clouds his eyes.

JOHN

I have to get home.

He stands, turns around, and heads out...

...In the darkness behind him, someone dressed in dark robes peeks out from the shadows.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. KANE'S CHAMBERS - MORNING

On a bed of shimmering, black, satin sheets, a gorgeous Sectatora, barely 16, takes it, doggy-style, from MAXIMUS SECTATOR JOHN KANE, 40s, iron body, vicious gaze.

Kane's next-in-command, MAGNUS SECTATOR JOHNOPHER, 30s, knocks on Kane's chamber door.

JOHNOPHER  
Your Holiness?

Kane halts his congress. The young Sectatora stiffens with fright.

KANE  
Did I, or did I not ask not to be disturbed?!

JOHNOPHER  
You did, Your Holiness --

KANE  
Then why, in the name of The Greatest Chef, would you feel the need to do so, Johnopher?!

JOHNOPHER  
Your Holiness, there's been a John sighting.

Kane sighs impatiently.

KANE  
There are thousands of John sightings every single day. What could possibly make this one unique?!

Johnopher runs over. Splashes a set of surveillance pictures onto the Sectatora's back. Kane picks one up. Studies it.

KANE  
He does bear a striking resemblance. What has the Brotherhood said?

JOHNOPHER  
I thought it best to alert you first, Your Holiness.

Kane's fury fades.

KANE

You did the right thing.

He pulls out of the Sectatora, stands, and wraps himself in a bathrobe. Johnopher gathers some sheets around the girl. Attempts to restore her sense of dignity.

KANE

Inconvenient, but right.

He heads out of the room.

KANE

Send for the Brotherhood. I'll be in my office.

JOHNOPHER

Right away, Your Holiness.

INT. KANE'S OFFICE

More the extravagant, over-indulgent seat of an emperor than a center for business, Kane relaxes in his huge leather chair. Stretches his legs across his mighty black walnut desk.

Behind him hangs a giant, highly stylized, Baroque oil painting, taken directly from the photograph that Liam took of John, his sister, and her kids.

Hanging opposite the painting, measuring nearly double its size, is Kane's flat-screen. He clicks it on. Flips channels.

He stops on a recorded portion of the State of the Union Address. The current PRESIDENT, a trained monkey of a man in a suit, finishes up.

PRESIDENT

John bless you all! John bless America!!

Kane grumbles.

KANE

Such an idiot. Can't believe I let him get elected. I should have him killed.

His ASSISTANT, another gorgeous Sectatora, early 20s, rushes in with his news, coffee, and mail.

ASSISTANT  
Good morning, Your Holiness.

Kane doesn't look at her.

KANE  
Molly. What have we today?

The Assistant reads off some messages.

ASSISTANT  
The presidents of the European Union, Mexico, and Brazil, and the kings of Hungary and Hawaii send their anniversary congratulations --

KANE  
That's nice.

He stops.

KANE  
Bill's late? Again?

ASSISTANT  
Yes, Your Holiness. Third year in a row.

KANE  
Close the Canterbury Cathedral.

The Assistant makes a note.

KANE  
That ought to remind the king of England to check his damn calendar. Anything else?

The Assistant treads cautiously.

ASSISTANT  
The Marcus Memorial Orphanage wanted to remind you that you have yet to give your annual pledge.

Kane sighs.

KANE  
It's a good thing you'll never be Maximus, Molly. Everyone wants something.

Johnopher bursts in with ABBOT FEN-TON, 60s, a tired, bespectacled man.

JOHNOPHER

Abbot Fen-Ton of the Fact, Your Holiness.

Kane turns off the TV. Slaps his Assistant's ass, and shoves her away. Offers Abbot Fen-Ton a seat.

KANE

Johnopher tells me there's been a reliable John sighting.

ABBOT FEN-TON

That's magnificent, Your Holiness!! During your tenth anniversary as Maximus! What wonderful news!

KANE

Possibly. What irks me, Abbot, is if this really is John, why were we not prepared?

ABBOT FEN-TON

I'm not sure, Your Holiness.

Kane sits up.

KANE

Wasn't it the duty of the Brotherhood to accurately predict the day of John's return?

ABBOT FEN-TON

Yes, Your Holiness.

KANE

And did they not predict, in their "infinite wisdom" that he would, in fact, return three years from now?!!

Abbot Fen-Ton swallows hard.

ABBOT FEN-TON

Yes, Your Holiness.

KANE

You're the scientist. What the hell happened?!!

ABBOT FEN-TON  
 Science, Your Holiness, is only as  
 precise as the scientist who  
 practices it.

KANE  
 And since you didn't make the  
 original prediction, I suppose  
 you're blameless?

ABBOT FEN-TON  
 Perhaps not, Your Holiness, but --

Kane stands.

KANE  
 I've heard enough. Go back to your  
 temple, or wherever you came from.

With a quick nod, Abbot Fen-Ton scuttles out of there.

KANE  
 Johnopher?!

Johnopher pops his head in.

JOHNOPHER  
 Your Holiness?

KANE  
 Find this John.

INT. HOUSE OF JUDITH

John sits at a kitchen table with Molly, Alice, the Mad  
 Hatter, and the Queen. A flurry of Sectarorae serve them  
 breakfast.

JOHN  
 Let me see if I've got this  
 straight. I didn't travel 200  
 years into the future, the future  
 travelled to me?

They nod.

JOHN  
 That doesn't make any damn sense.  
 Alright, nobody found a body, so  
 that explains the memorial, but why  
 a religion?

MOLLY

With the help of the Prophet Fenton and the Evangelist Li-Um, as your restaurants spread, so did the legend of your disappearance.

JOHN

And this became some sort of cult?

They shudder at his use of the "c" word.

MAD HATTER

With greater influence came greater knowledge.

QUEEN

The Prophet and the Evangelist were soon able to prove why you'd disappeared.

ALICE

And predict when you'd return.

JOHN

So why do you call it "The Fact"?

MOLLY

Until that point, all religions were based on faith. No one could prove their myths, beyond a reasonable doubt.

JOHN

But you could.

MOLLY

Advanced quantum mechanics is a wonderful thing.

JOHN

And the Church controls knowledge, governments. What else?

ALICE

Your Church blesses all things.

JOHN

So what happened to the Christians, Muslims, Hindus?

MAD HATTER

Almost gone.

MOLLY  
Except for a few million.

JOHN  
Every one of them converted?

ALICE  
It took a generation to save our  
culture, then another to save the  
rest of the world.

JOHN  
No Sikhs? Buddhists?

ALICE  
Hardly any.

JOHN  
What about the Jews?

The three women exchange a glance.

MOLLY  
They stayed about the same.

The Queen scoffs.

QUEEN  
Still waiting for their "Messiah."

Alice takes John's hand.

ALICE  
But we have ours.

MOLLY  
And now that you've returned, you  
must take your natural place as  
religious leader to the world.

John politely removes his hand from Alice's grasp.

JOHN  
What about this Maximus Kane guy?

MAD HATTER  
He's the administrative head to  
your Church.

ALICE  
And your humble servant.

JOHN  
You people are insane.

QUEEN  
99.9 percent of the world?

JOHN  
Just because everyone believes  
something doesn't make it true.

He stands. Backs away.

JOHN  
Now, I'm sorry to ruin your  
prophecies, but I have to figure  
out how to get back home.

QUEEN  
You can't.

JOHN  
Didn't we just establish that I'm  
basically a god to you people?

They nod.

JOHN  
Then it seems to me, I can do  
whatever the hell I want.

ALICE  
Are you just going to abandon all  
your Followers?

JOHN  
That was the idea.

MOLLY  
But we've waited 200 years for your  
return.

JOHN  
Not my problem. I've got a life to  
get back to.

QUEEN  
How do you expect to accomplish  
that, my Lord?

JOHN  
You still have scientists, don't  
you?

They nod.

JOHN  
Then let's go talk to one.

They shake their heads.

JOHN  
Why not?

QUEEN  
You're the most famous person on  
the planet. Do you truly expect to  
wander the streets unnoticed?

John sits.

JOHN  
I'm listening.

INT. CLOAK ROOM

Dressed in a habit, John glares into a mirror at his  
reflected image.

JOHN  
You have got to be kidding me.

MOLLY  
It's the only way.

JOHN  
I look ridiculous.

MAD HATTER  
It's the standard Sectatora  
garment.

JOHN  
That's nice. I look ridiculous.

ALICE  
We forgot something.

She wraps a scarf around John's mouth. Covers most of his  
face.

QUEEN  
Now he looks ridiculous.

ALICE  
And now, no one will possibly  
recognize him.

John sighs.

JOHN  
So where do you people keep your  
scientists?

MOLLY  
The Brotherhood of the Fact.

JOHN  
Let's go.

QUEEN  
We can't.

JOHN  
Why not?

ALICE  
Sectatorae aren't allowed on any of  
the Brotherhood's premises.

JOHN  
I can't get home standing here.

QUEEN  
What do you suggest, my Lord?

EXT. HOUSE OF JUDITH

Holding the scarf to his face, John leads the Sectatorae out. In the daylight, John now sees that all non-religious structures are crumbling shambles. Clearly, the Fact is this world's only true priority. The Queen stays behind.

QUEEN  
I can't support this.

JOHN  
Fine. Stay here.

Molly holds him back.

MOLLY  
John, wait. Polly, why not?

QUEEN  
I am a Sectatora, and it is my duty  
to follow the doctrine of the Fact.

ALICE  
It's your duty to follow John.

The Queen takes a step toward them.

QUEEN

Yes, he looks and sounds like John,  
but we don't know that he is.

JOHN

So, like I said, stay here.

He sets off again.

MOLLY

We'll be back soon.

The Queen retreats inside. Molly, Alice, and the Mad Hatter follow John.

INT. SUBWAY STATION

John and the Sectatorae enter the dirty, decrepid station. John marches straight for the fare dispenser. Molly grabs his arm. Whispers urgently.

MOLLY

Sectatorae don't pay.

John nods. Molly leads him and the other two past the turnstiles, down to the platforms.

INT. SUBWAY

John and the Sectatorae file into the packed little train. Once the four nearest passengers notice them, they vacate their seats. John and the Sectatorae all sit down.

John scans the train. It looks like any other... except for a GENTLEMAN across the way staring straight at him. Their eyes meet.

GENTLEMAN

Good day, Sectatora.

John nods his greeting.

GENTLEMAN

Feeling under the weather?

JOHN

Excuse --?

He catches himself. Fakes a more feminine voice.

JOHN  
Excuse me, my child?

The Gentleman points out John's scarf.

JOHN  
Oh, just a little cold running  
around the House of --

Molly elbows him.

JOHN  
Running around the house.

GENTLEMAN  
I wish you well.

JOHN  
Thank you so much.

Molly stands. John realizes it's their stop. Follows.

JOHN  
Good day, my child.

They exit.

EXT. STREET

Once they're outside the station, John grabs Molly. A few passersby notice. Alice and the Mad Hatter attempt to distract the onlookers.

JOHN  
What was that for?!

Molly throws his arms off her.

MOLLY  
You almost revealed the name of our  
House!

JOHN  
So what?!

MOLLY  
If he'd thought you were acting  
strange, all he'd have to do is  
contact the House. If you want to  
go home, we can't let that happen.

John nods.

JOHN  
 Alright, sorry. You're right.

MOLLY  
 The Brotherhood is this way, my  
 Lord.

They all follow her.

INT. HOUSE OF JUDITH

The doorbell rings. A SECTATORA runs to answer. In step a dozen SECTATORI, followed by Johnopher. Instead of the usual forks hanging from their necks, these Sectatori wear knives.

SECTATORA  
 Your Holiness.

She bows. Johnopher pats her head in blessing. Gives her a warm smile.

JOHNOPHER  
 Greetings, my child.

The Sectatora stands.

SECTATORA  
 How can we be of service?

JOHNOPHER  
 The Office of His Holiness Maximus  
 Sectator Kane was alerted that you  
 beheld The Greatest Chef.

SECTATORA  
 Not me, Your Holiness. Sectatora  
 Polly.

JOHNOPHER  
 Is she here?

SECTATORA  
 Yes, Your Holiness. Still at Mid-  
 Day Meal. Would you like me to get  
 her?

JOHNOPHER  
 His Holiness would.

The Sectatora fusses with her hair.

SECTATORA  
 Is he here?! Now?!

Kane steps inside. A cocky grin.

KANE

Yes he is.

The Sectatora drops to her knees. Stammers nervously.

SECTATORA

Your... Holiness...! It is such an  
overwhelming blessing to have you  
in our house --!

KANE

Yes, I suppose so. Mid-Day Meal?  
Fetch her for us, won't you?

SECTATORA

It would be the greatest honor --

KANE

Before our bones turn to dust.

SECTATORA

Of course, Your Holiness.

She runs off.

EXT. BROTHERHOOD OF THE FACT

Resembling London's Westminster Abbey, the dark, stone  
building stands regally over the bustling city streets.  
Before its iron gates, two Sektatori stand guard. Molly,  
John, Alice, and the Mad Hatter march up.

MOLLY

Excuse me, we need to see one of  
the Brothers.

SECTATOR

Sektatorae are not allowed inside.

MOLLY

Yes, I know. But this is urgent  
business.

SECTATOR

Sektatorae are not allowed --

JOHN

For Christ's sake!

He steps forward. Tears off his scarf and habit. The Sectatori's mouths hang open. The one who addressed them points a shaking hand at John. The other one faints.

SECTATOR

You're --! You're --!

JOHN

That's right! It's me! The Greatest Chef. Your Lord and Master. Now, let us in, or burn in the dark pits of... eternal peril!

INT. HOUSE OF JUDITH LIBRARY

The Queen is seated across from Kane, Johnopher, and their Sectatori.

KANE

You're sure they went to the Brotherhood of the Fact?

QUEEN

Absolutely, Your Holiness.

KANE

And you've spoken of none of this to anyone outside the House?

QUEEN

No one except the ones who went, and Your Holiness.

KANE

You're a very wise woman.

He motions to his Sectatori.

QUEEN

Thank you, Your Holiness.

KANE

You will be sorely missed.

The Queen's brow furrows, but before she has a chance to question --

One of the Sectatori seizes her by the neck. Her fingers claw desperately at the table, but in only a few moments, the Sectator crushes the breath out of her. Lets go of her head. With a fleshy slap, her head smacks on the table.

Kane stands. Delivers the expired Sectatora's obituary as if for the billionth time. Kane's Sectatori whip out notebooks. Write it all down.

KANE

Today we mourn the passing of  
Sectatora Polly Whatever.  
Witnessing Maximus Sectator Kane's  
glory overwhelmed her to suicide.

The Sectatori wait.

SECTATOR

How, Your Holiness?

Kane gestures dispassionately to the Queen's corpse. His tone drips with annoyance.

KANE

By hanging?

They nod. Kane snaps his fingers.

KANE

String up the prune.

The Sectator who killed the Queen gets to it.

KANE

To the Brotherhood.

INT. BROTHERHOOD HALLWAY

Like a king home from conquest, John marches down the towering stone and marble hall. Behind him, Molly, Alice, the Mad Hatter, and a growing army of Sectatori and Brothers dutifully follow. John takes a right. Grabs a door.

INT. BROTHERHOOD RESEARCH LAB

Surrounded by various editions of the Codex, stacks of quantum mechanics, theoretical relativity, and organic chemistry books, plus heaps of 18th century observation equipment, Abbot Fen-Ton peruses a few pages of texts.

A knock on the door breaks his concentration.

ABBOT FEN-TON

Come in, John.

John eases the door open.

JOHN  
How'd you know it was me?

Abbot Fen-Ton faces him.

ABBOT FEN-TON  
No one else would have knocked.

He stands. Collects his papers. Goes to the door. Gives the waiting crowd a fatherly smile, then closes the door.

ABBOT FEN-TON  
Have a seat.

John sits.

JOHN  
Expecting me?

ABBOT FEN-TON  
We've all been expecting you.

JOHN  
I mean today.

ABBOT FEN-TON  
Not until His Holiness brought your presence to my attention.

JOHN  
So you think I'm the real John.

ABBOT FEN-TON  
I have encountered many imposters in my days, but they were all raving lunatics or fame-seekers. You seem... genuinely confused.

JOHN  
Molly explained most of it to me. Your world's interesting. Maybe even a nice place to visit, but all I want is to get back home.

ABBOT FEN-TON  
I've been Abbot a long time. Like everyone else in this world, I've waited for your return my whole life.

JOHN  
So?

ABBOT FEN-TON  
 Any moral person in my position  
 would turn you over to His  
 Holiness, fulfill the prophecy,  
 have a nightcap, and go to bed.

JOHN  
 Right.

ABBOT FEN-TON  
 Any ethical person would consider  
 your wishes and do whatever it took  
 to fulfill them.

JOHN  
 Which one are you?

ABBOT FEN-TON  
 That all depends on Abbott Fen-Ton  
 the Fiercely Determined.

INT. BROTHERHOOD RESEARCH LAB

Abbot Fen-Ton pulls a sheet off an odd apparatus resembling a  
 gazebo-for-one that's fashioned from metal and glass tubing.  
 John regards it curiously.

ABBOT FEN-TON  
 Three generations ago, the Maximus  
 Sectator resolved to return the  
 Church to more traditional values.

JOHN  
 A fundamentalist movement?

Abbot Fen-Ton folds up the sheet. Places it on a table.

ABBOT FEN-TON  
 Essentially. Funding for the  
 sciences was reappropriated in  
 favor of monument construction.

He skims some notes. John touches one of the glass tubes.

JOHN  
 Why?

Abbot Fen-ton politely removes John's hand. Shrugs.

ABBOT FEN-TON

To glorify your name. All this despite the fact that we were near a breakthrough in the prediction of your return date.

John faces him.

JOHN

Strange considering how important that seems to be.

Abbot Fen-Ton shows him a set of notes.

ABBOT FEN-TON

My forebear took our research in a new direction. He set out to reverse engineer the process of your disappearance.

JOHN

Why is it hiding under a sheet?

ABBOT FEN-TON

The Maximus Sectator didn't exactly approve. The project was scrapped, and we were ordered to return to our previous work.

John grins.

JOHN

Doesn't look scrapped to me.

Abbot Fen-Ton gestures to the folded sheet.

ABBOT FEN-TON

We covered it up.

John touches a metal tube.

JOHN

How does it work?

Abbot Fen-Ton politely removes John's hand again.

ABBOT FEN-TON

That would take a while to explain. Suffice to say, it's nuclear-powered, and very rudimentary.

JOHN

Rudimentary?

ABBOT FEN-TON  
It's technically still just an  
experiment.

JOHN  
Can it get me home?

ABBOT FEN-TON  
I have to run a few experiments,  
and, after about two days time, if  
everything goes well, then, yes, I  
should be able to get you home.

JOHN  
Should?! Two days?!

ABBOT FEN-TON  
Don't rush me, John. You rush a  
scientist, you get rotten science.

He goes back to his desk.

ABBOT FEN-TON  
Be aware that even if the  
experiments go well, I can't  
guarantee your safety.

JOHN  
I understand.

ABBOT FEN-TON  
And if you do return home, my world  
will cease to be.

JOHN  
Why's that?

ABBOT FEN-TON  
My time was created from your  
departure from your time. Once you  
return, it will create a new time-  
line.

JOHN  
Will you survive if I go back?

ABBOT FEN-TON  
Impossible to tell.

JOHN  
So what do I do for the next two  
days?

Abbot Fen-Ton eyes him.

ABBOT FEN-TON  
Stay out of trouble.

EXT. BROTHERHOOD OF THE FACT

Kane arrives with Johnopher and his Sectatori. Instead of bowing in his presence, a Brother runs out and grabs Kane.

BROTHER  
Your Holiness! Come quick! My  
John! It's amazing!

At first, Kane is offended by the lowly Brother's insolence, but with a grin, Kane quickly realizes everything's working out. He nods to the others. They head inside.

INT. BROTHERHOOD HALLWAY

John steps out of the Abbot's office. Instead of finding the crowd awaiting him, he finds the crowd on its knees, facing the other way. At the end of the hallway, John's eyes find Kane.

KANE  
My Lord!

The crowd stands part-way, does an about-face, and kneels to John. Silence. John whispers to Abbot Fen-Ton.

JOHN  
What do I do?

ABBOT FEN-TON  
A blessing would be appropriate, my  
Lord.

JOHN  
How do I do that?

ABBOT FEN-TON  
However you want, my Lord.

John hurries across the hallway to Kane. Touches Kane's head.

JOHN  
Hey.

Kane doesn't dare look up at him. John attempts to politely lift the man to his feet, but Kane seems determined to remain on one knee.

JOHN  
You can stand.

Kane looks up at him.

KANE  
Thank you, my Lord!

He obeys. John notices that Kane towers at least five inches above him. John instinctively steps back a couple feet.

JOHN  
You must be Maximus Sectator Kane.

KANE  
My purpose is to serve you, my Lord.

JOHN  
That's... very nice. If you have any suggestions on how --

KANE  
We must deliver you to your Holy See and arrange your coronation.

JOHN  
Coronation?

KANE  
As The Greatest Chef The World Has Ever Seen. Then you will take your proper place as leader to the world.

John gives Abbot Fen-Ton a questioning glance. Abbot Fen-Ton nods. John faces Kane.

JOHN  
Let's coronate.

Everyone in the building leaps up in cheers.

EXT. BROTHERHOOD OF THE FACT

As John, Kane, Johnopher, and Kane's Sectatori leave the building, one of the Sectatori seizes John's arm. Sticks it with a needle. John yells.

JOHN  
What was that for?!

JOHNOPHER  
A blood test, my Lord.

JOHN  
For what?!

Kane doesn't face him.

KANE  
Even we must make sure you're the  
one, true John.

A double-decker stretched limo pulls up. Kane opens the door  
for John.

KANE  
My Lord?

Completely unsure of what to make of Kane, John pauses, then  
jumps in.

EXT. JOHN'S HOLY SEE

One of the tallest structures in the world. Like other holy  
buildings, it consists of a blend of architectural styles.  
From the ground up, it grows from stately to grotesquely  
gaudy.

The limo arrives. Out steps Kane. He proudly gestures to  
the See. Gives particular attention to its sky-scraping top.

KANE  
Behold, your See.

John peers up at it. Isn't at all sure of what to make of  
this either. Chooses the diplomatic route.

JOHN  
Nice.

All the Sectatori behind him clap and cheer. Led by Kane,  
they all shuffle out of the limo, up to the front doors.  
Kane stops. Bows to John.

KANE  
Welcome home, my Lord.

He opens the door. John steps in.

INT. GREAT HALL

Unlike its more elevated counterparts, the ground floor is the respectful work of love and dedication, featuring tasteful marble floors, stone walls, and hand-made bronze fixtures.

Several Sectatori greet the arrivals.

KANE

Prepare Noon-Meal for our Lord, and see to it that each of his desires is met.

One of the Sectatori addresses John.

SECTATOR

This way, my Lord.

Kane and his group head off in the opposite direction.

JOHN

Where are you going?

Kane freezes as if caught stealing candy from a baby. He spins around.

KANE

To prepare for your coronation, my Lord.

JOHN

You're not joining me?

KANE

My eternal gratitude for your glorious invitation, my Lord, but I'm afraid that our work cannot wait.

JOHN

Alright then.

He follows his set of Sectatori to Noon-Meal.

INT. WARDROBE

The most tastefully regal room John's seen so far. A group of Sectatori lay out a fabulous garment much like what Kane and the others wear, but splendid to the nth degree.

JOHN

So that's my get-up?

SECTATOR

It was designed specifically by the Prophet Fen-Ton.

John laughs. Takes a closer look. They dust it off.

JOHN

Seriously??

SECTATOR

So the scriptures tell us.

JOHN

Not bad, Fen. Can't we ditch the gold trim?

They stop. Stare at him. Apologize profusely.

JOHN

You know what? I'm sure it'll be fine.

INT. KANE'S OFFICE

On Kane's TV, Kane and Johnopher watch a group of Sektatori and Brothers test the vial of John's blood.

KANE

Well?!

SECTATOR

Just a few more minutes, Your Holiness.

KANE

In case you hadn't noticed...

He points emphatically at the floor.

KANE

...John is here right now!!

He stands up from his desk.

KANE

The sooner you figure out whether he's the one, true John or not, the sooner we can either celebrate his coronation, or execute him!

SECTATOR

Your Holiness, we are working as quickly and accurately as --

Kane clicks off the TV. Rubs his temples.

KANE  
I'll be in my chambers. Send  
Molly.

He escapes to his chambers.

INT. DINING HALL

Dressed in his new robes, John enjoys an intimate, candle-lit dinner hosted by a small army of Sectatori.

JOHN  
This is fantastic. How long do you  
guys train as chefs?

SECTATOR  
All our lives, my Lord.

His answer catches John, but upon a moment's reflection, it makes sense.

JOHN  
The salad's amazing.

A younger Sectator speaks up.

SECTATOR  
I made that, my Lord.

John makes a show of his enjoyment of the salad.

JOHN  
And you did a very good job.

SECTATOR  
Thank you, my Lord.

That moment, a couple Sectatori let in Kane, Johnopher, and a few others.

JOHN  
Hey there. Finish your work?

Kane doesn't answer. He eyes the others.

KANE  
Johnopher?

Johnopher steps forward. Between Kane and John.

JOHNOPHER

It is as we suspected. You are the one, true John.

Kane rushes right over to John.

KANE

And not a moment too soon.

He gestures to John's plate.

KANE

More?

JOHN

No, no. I couldn't eat another bite. It was great --

KANE

Prepare his bed chambers.

He smiles at John.

KANE

If you'll come with me, my Lord.

INT. KANE'S CHAMBERS

Kane and John stand before a huge window overlooking the city.

KANE

As far as you can see. And farther. It's all your empire.

JOHN

All of it?

KANE

...Most of it.

He puts a hand on John's back. Leads him to a set of chairs. They sit.

KANE

The problem, my Lord, is that despite the great strides that the Fact has gained, scattered factions remain who deny your divinity.

JOHN

What do you mean factions?

KANE  
Organized cells of terrorist  
infidels, remnants of the false  
religions, who demonstrate open  
defiance of you.

JOHN  
How do they do that?

KANE  
They torture small animals,  
slaughter innocent women and  
children, even lay siege to entire  
cities.

JOHN  
I see.

KANE  
Over the decades, we've eradicated  
most of them, but there are still  
those who refuse to believe.

JOHN  
And now that I'm here...

KANE  
The whole world will see that the  
Fact was right all along.

JOHN  
How will the world see that?

KANE  
We'll present you at your  
coronation. That will draw out the  
terrorist infidels. We'll offer  
refuge, and then --

JOHN  
Kill them?

KANE  
We prefer "neutralize." Once we've  
captured all terrorist infidels,  
our supremacy will be unquestioned.

JOHN  
Our supremacy?

KANE  
Your supremacy. My Lord.

JOHN  
Listen, I need a little time alone.  
To reflect on my divinity.

KANE  
Of course, my Lord. You must be  
exhausted.

JOHN  
Could you send for Molly?

KANE  
Which one?

JOHN  
The one who found me. House of  
Judith.

KANE  
Straight away, my Lord.

He departs. John goes to the window. Stares at his domain.  
Lost.

INT. KANE'S CHAMBERS - AFTERNOON

John stares out the window. Kane enters. Ushers in Molly.

KANE  
The one who found you, my Lord.

JOHN  
Thanks. You can go now.

KANE  
Of course, my Lord.

He leaves.

MOLLY  
What's going on, John?

John closes the door. Takes Molly by the hand. Crosses over  
to the window. Whispers.

JOHN  
Kane's insane!

MOLLY  
What do you mean?

JOHN  
He wants to take over the world!

MOLLY  
Of course he does.

John laughs sarcastically.

JOHN  
Molly, I don't mean in a "spreading  
the good word" kinda way. He's  
gonna slaughter everyone who  
doesn't believe in me!

MOLLY  
The Maximus Sectator would never  
wish to harm anyone.

JOHN  
He told me himself. He's gonna  
kill the infidels. All of them. I  
have to stop him!

MOLLY  
You misunderstood. He meant we  
have to convert them.

JOHN  
He was not talking about  
conversion.

He rummages through the room.

MOLLY  
What are you doing?

JOHN  
There's gotta be something here.  
Plans, a journal, memos. Something  
that details what Kane's up to.

He tears the sheets off Kane's bed, but finds nothing. He  
stops.

JOHN  
His office.

He leaves. Molly's right after him.

MOLLY  
John, wait!

INT. KANE'S OFFICE

Kane, Johnopher, and the Sectatori patiently await them.

KANE  
My Lord! Is there anything we can  
do for you?

John considers his options. Takes Molly's hand again.

JOHN  
No thanks. We'll be in here.

KANE  
As you wish, my Lord.

John pulls Molly back into Kane's chambers.

INT. KANE'S CHAMBERS

John returns to the window.

JOHN  
We gotta get outta here.

He faces Kane's bed.

JOHN  
Help me with these sheets.

INT. KANE'S CHAMBERS

With a sheet wrapped around his waist, John holds a long rope  
of sheets tied end to end.

JOHN  
You have no idea how much I hate  
heights.

MOLLY  
Actually, it's well documented in  
the Codex.

John faces Kane's bed.

JOHN  
We tight?

Molly tugs at the rope. Nods. John takes a deep breath.

JOHN  
Here goes.

He climbs outside.

JOHN  
You got it?

Molly nods. John lets go of the edge --

EXT. JOHN'S HOLY SEE

John drops ten feet.

INT. KANE'S CHAMBERS

The force yanks the rope right out of Molly's hands. Luckily for John, the rope pulls tight at the knot tied to Kane's bed.

EXT. JOHN'S HOLY SEE

John bounces a couple times. Dumps his dinner. Hugs the rope for dear life. Wipes his mouth. Takes a couple more deep breaths. Very slowly opens his eyes. Glares up at Molly.

MOLLY

Sorry!

John groans to himself. Kicks the wall. Swings to the left. Close to a window. Every time he gets near it, it's just out of reach. He loosens the knot around his waist. Hyperventilates. Closes his eyes. Breathes deeply.

MOLLY

John?

JOHN

I'm okay!

He very carefully eases himself free of the rope. Grips the end with both hands. Takes a final breath. Opens his eyes. Kicks the wall.

On the next swing back, he kicks the window --

Bang! It cracks. He swings away. Kicks a couple more cracks into it. Finally, John kicks it as hard as he can --

Smash! He breaks through.

INT. OFFICE

Cluttered with robes and manuscripts. Glass shards spray everywhere. John finds a couple cuts on his legs, but his robes have protected him from most of the damage. He also finds that he's no longer holding the rope.

EXT. JOHN'S HOLY SEE

John sticks his head out the window. Sees the rope dangling a few feet out of reach. Cranes his neck up to Molly.

JOHN  
I dropped the rope! You'll have to  
slide down and swing over!

MOLLY  
What?!

JOHN  
I'll catch you!

Molly slips out the window, and on down the rope. She carefully slides to the end. Swings toward John. When she gets close enough, he grabs one of her legs. Pulls it up over his shoulder. Wraps his arms tightly around.

JOHN  
I've got you!

MOLLY  
Are you sure?

JOHN  
Yeah. Let go!

Molly releases the rope. Dangles helplessly from John's grip.

MOLLY  
John?!

JOHN  
I've got you!

Molly looks down. Loses her breakfast, lunch, and dinner. John gingerly lifts her up through the office window.

INT. OFFICE

Once Molly's safely inside, they each take a moment to catch their breath. John stands. Helps Molly to her feet.

JOHN  
Let's go.

INT. JOHN'S HOLY SEE

Hand in hand, John and Molly sneak up a staircase to Kane's office. John opens the door to a crack.

Kane's chamber doors are open. Kane, Johnopher, and the Sectatori are all inside.

SECTATOR  
They're not here, Your Holiness.

KANE  
Where in John's name could they  
have gone?!

John goes to open the door. Molly gets in his way.

MOLLY  
You can't!

JOHN  
Why not?

MOLLY  
He's Maximus Sectator --

JOHN  
Are you a Follower of him, or me?

Molly's about to protest, but decides against it. John gets on his hands and knees, kicks the office door open as hard as he can, and dives behind Kane's desk.

JOHNOPHER  
What was that?!

KANE  
For John's sake, Johnopher! Pay  
attention! Search the entire  
building if you have to! I want  
them found! Now!

He, Johnopher, and the Sectatori march out. John searches through Kane's papers. It doesn't take long before he finds a memo with the words: "Infidels," "Factions," and "Eradication." He grabs it. Runs outside.

INT. JOHN'S HOLY SEE

John shows Molly the memo.

JOHN  
Well?

Molly scans it quickly.

MOLLY  
This could be referring to any  
number of --

JOHN  
You still don't believe me. Then I  
guess we'll just have to find these  
"infidels."

He heads the opposite direction of Kane and his men.

MOLLY  
Are you crazy?!

John stops. Faces her.

JOHN  
You know, for one of my zealots,  
you don't seem to believe in me at  
all.

MOLLY  
Forgive me, John.

JOHN  
Forgiven. Now let's go.

INT. GREAT HALL

John leads the charge to the front doors. Molly trails after  
him.

MOLLY  
My whole life has been defined by  
the Fact. The Maximus' authority  
was second to none.

JOHN  
Well, like you said, now that I'm  
here, that's all changed.

Heartbreaking disappointment clouds Molly's face and voice.

MOLLY  
I suppose so.

EXT. JOHN'S HOLY SEE

John starts down the front steps.

MOLLY  
John, you can't keep... revealing  
yourself like you did at the  
Brotherhood of the Fact!

John stops.

JOHN  
Why not?!

MOLLY  
Because... if word gets around of  
your arrival before the Fact has  
sanctioned it, it will destroy  
people's most deeply held beliefs!

John spins around.

JOHN  
Not my problem! I've gotta stop  
Kane!

That second, a black van screeches up right behind him.  
Wearing a silver Muslim crescent moon necklace, a man in  
black jumps out.

MUSLIM  
John?

John faces him. Screams with frustration.

JOHN  
What?!!

With obvious military training, the Muslim nabs John. Tosses  
him into the van before he even knows what hit him.

MOLLY  
John!!

Just as she finishes her sentence, three other men leap out  
of the van. One wears a Christian cross, the second a Jewish  
Star of David, and the third a blank silver necklace. They  
grab her. Jump back in.

BLACK.

Surrounded by darkness, John comes to. Grumbles to himself.

JOHN (V.O.)  
...What? ...Where? Ow, my head!

MOLLY (V.O.)  
...John?!

JOHN (V.O.)  
Molly?! What happened?!

RIP!! An unseen hand tears the blindfold off John's face.

INT. WAREHOUSE - EVENING

The headquarters of a highly organized covert ops network. Dressed exactly like John's captors, hundreds of people carry out tasks ranging from sending coded messages to training recruits.

John sees that he's tied to a chair, under a bright lamp. His captors sit nearby.

MOLLY  
Infidels!!

John's eyes find her. She's also tied up. Scared out of her mind.

JOHN  
Where?!

The Muslim speaks up.

MUSLIM  
My associates and I are members of a network of freedom fighters working for religious tolerance in the face of the Fact.

MOLLY  
You're terrorists!! Murderers!!  
All of you!!

The man wearing a simple silver necklace yells at her.

ATHEIST  
That's a Fact lie!!

MOLLY  
You butchered half the population of Geneva!!

The Atheist gets in her face.

ATHEIST  
That was a peaceful protest until your Maximus Sectator had the police open fire on the crowd!!

MOLLY  
His Holiness would never have done such a thing!!

ATHEIST  
Another Fact lie --!!

The Muslim raises a calm hand.

MUSLIM  
Brother Atheist, please.

Glaring at Molly, the Atheist sits down.

JOHN  
So, freedom fighters.

MUSLIM  
From all faiths. Either by birth  
or by choice.

JOHN  
What happened in Geneva?

CHRISTIAN  
The Geneva Incident was  
unfortunate.

Molly snarls.

MOLLY  
You slaughtered three million  
people!

The man wearing a Star of David intervenes.

JEW  
Both sides suffered heavy  
casualties.

JOHN  
Why did you bring us here?

ATHEIST  
She was a mistake.

MOLLY  
You make a lot of those.

MUSLIM  
We've been watching you since your  
arrival, John.

JEW  
We believe you can bring unity to  
the world.

John nods toward Molly.

JOHN  
Funny. So do they.

MUSLIM  
We all want the same thing.

JOHN  
I know what Kane's plan is. What's yours?

The Muslim stands. Unties John.

MUSLIM  
All in good time. First let's get you out of those hideous clothes.

JOHN  
What about...?

He gestures to Molly.

MUSLIM  
She can come.

He calls to the Jew.

MUSLIM  
Brother Jew?

The Jew unties her. Offers Molly a friendly hand.

MOLLY  
Lay one finger on me, and I'll tear it off, infidel!

The Jew backs away. John goes over to her.

JOHN  
I don't think they wanna hurt you.

MOLLY  
John, they're lying, thieving, murdering terrorists!

JOHN  
Don't you think it's possible that if they wanted us dead, we already would be?

He glances at the men in black, not entirely sure of his own assertion. All faces are blank. Except the Muslim's. He gives a slight, reassuring nod.

MOLLY  
They're waiting to torture us.

JOHN  
They obviously want me alive. As  
long as I am, so are you.

Molly glares at him.

JOHN  
Don't trust them. Trust me.

Still glaring at the infidels, Molly offers her hand. John helps her to her feet. She points a warning finger at the Atheist.

MOLLY  
One finger!

ATHEIST  
In your dreams, sister.

MUSLIM  
Brother Atheist!

ATHEIST  
Sorry!

John leads Molly over to the Muslim.

MUSLIM  
This way.

INT. WAREHOUSE

The Muslim leads the small group throughout various areas of the compound. Molly clings tightly to John every step of the way.

MUSLIM  
After the Faith Registration and  
Identification Act was passed, we  
realized the world was too  
dangerous. We went underground.

JOHN  
And you've been fighting ever  
since?

MUSLIM  
We prefer not to, but the Fact  
often leaves us with no choice.

Molly grunts.

JOHN  
Are you terrorists?

MUSLIM  
"Terrorist" is just another word  
for someone who feels they have no  
options left.

JOHN  
How did you find me?

MUSLIM  
The Fact is not the only  
organization with access to  
scientists. We knew you'd come  
soon.

JOHN  
That's one thing you all have in  
common. Faith in my arrival.

MUSLIM  
It's no wonder that the Fact has  
grown so powerful. They're the  
first religion in human history who  
could prove one of their doctrines.

JOHN  
That's exactly what Kane said.

MUSLIM  
Like I said, we all want the same  
thing.

They meet a man wearing a Buddhist Mandala.

MUSLIM  
Greetings, brother Buddhist.

The Buddhist nods. Hands John the clothes he left at his  
Holy See.

BUDDHIST  
Brother Muslim. John. Sectatora.

Molly ignores him. John changes his clothes.

JOHN  
How'd you get these?

MUSLIM

Our operatives permeate every facet  
of society.

That catches Molly's attention. The Muslim notices. When John's finished dressing, the Muslim directs him to a small briefing room.

MUSLIM

Shall we?

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

John and Molly study a map on the wall. John recognizes it as the ground floor plan of his Holy See. The rest of the group awaits his reaction.

JOHN

Let me get this straight. All you want me to do is what Kane wants me to do, but then tell everyone to be nice to each other?

MUSLIM

Yes.

JOHN

That's it?? No coup? No insurrection?

MUSLIM

That won't be necessary as long as you speak words of peace. The Fact will be broadcasting your words all over the world.

John stands. Gestures to all the independent rooms and operatives.

JOHN

So after tomorrow, all of this is gonna disappear?

MUSLIM

...Yes.

JOHN

Doesn't that disappoint you?

MUSLIM

I don't understand.

JOHN  
The thrill isn't in winning the  
war, it's in fighting it.

MUSLIM  
Our struggle has always been  
defined by the hope of surviving  
Fact persecution long enough to see  
religious freedom.

Molly stomps away.

JOHN  
Hold that thought.

He goes after her.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Molly plants herself around the corner. John finds her.  
Molly turns on him, furious.

MOLLY  
I can't believe you're seriously  
considering listening to them!!

JOHN  
I listened to your cock-and-bull  
story!

MOLLY  
I proved what I said!

JOHN  
Now it's their chance to prove what  
they say!

MOLLY  
They're lying, murdering,  
psychotics!!

JOHN  
Who have been unbelievably  
courteous to you!

MOLLY  
John, listen to me, they've  
murdered millions of people!

JOHN  
Which is exactly what Kane promised  
me he was gonna do!

MOLLY  
He didn't mean that!!

JOHN  
You weren't even there!!

MOLLY  
The Maximus Sectator is a great  
man!!

JOHN  
Molly, take a second and look at it  
from my perspective.

Molly folds her arms impatiently. Listens.

JOHN  
I'm in a strange place, surrounded  
by strange people, and one group of  
lunatics seems just a little less  
crazy than the other.

MOLLY  
We are not lunatics --!

JOHN  
My perspective, remember? Now  
considering everything that's  
happened, who would you believe?

Molly looks away.

MOLLY  
You're not who I thought you'd be.

JOHN  
What's that supposed to mean?

MOLLY  
My whole life we were promised a  
man who would unite the entire  
world. I worshipped him. Loved  
him. But you're not that man.

John steps back from her. Despite everything he's just said,  
her words have cut deep.

JOHN  
I'm sorry I'm such a  
disappointment.

Molly says nothing. John goes back to the others.

INT. BUNKS - NIGHT

John sits with a few rebels. They all listen to the Atheist.

ATHEIST

It was the middle of the night. We never even heard them come in. Before we knew it, they'd taken my father.

Accompanied by a rebel, Molly wanders in. Finds a place near John.

ATHEIST

He was never charged. There was never a trial. And we never saw him again.

He takes a deep breath.

ATHEIST

Years later, I found some court documents. The police had mistaken my father for an actual rebel who'd spoken out against the Fact.

He laughs.

ATHEIST

The funny thing is that my father had been one of the most dedicated Followers you'd ever meet. Every day he praised the Maximus.

Silence. John watches Molly. She stares at the floor. John sees a couple tears dampen her legs.

MUSLIM

Thank you, brother Atheist. Would anyone else like to share?

CHRISTIAN

Brother Muslim.

MUSLIM

Greetings, brother Christian.

CHRISTIAN

I was born into a Roman Catholic family. I had 11 brothers and sisters. When I was a boy, some of my closest friends were Followers.

John quietly makes his way over to the Muslim.

CHRISTIAN

One Sunday, we found our pews  
vandalized. Hate messages carved  
everywhere. My mother cried for  
hours.

He sighs.

CHRISTIAN

Next day at school, my best friend  
bragged that he'd done it. He  
laughed in my face. Called me an  
infidel.

Molly lifts her head. Stares at the Christian.

CHRISTIAN

He and some other kids beat me  
senseless. The teacher gave me  
detention for "agitation." My  
friend and I never spoke again.

John whispers to the Muslim.

JOHN

What's the plan?

MUSLIM

We'll transport you to your Holy  
See early in the morning. Once we  
have you safely in position, the  
rest is up to you.

JOHN

I'll do it on one condition.

MUSLIM

What's that?

JOHN

Let Molly go.

MUSLIM

We can't do that. She could warn  
the Fact. They might kill her, or  
worse, kill you.

John loses his patience.

JOHN

Molly doesn't exactly trust you guys. And I'm not far behind her. So I need some assurance that if I leave her here, she'll be safe.

MUSLIM

I swear to you, John. In Allah's name, no harm will befall her.

It strikes John how sincere he sounds.

JOHN

...That's better.

He finds Molly.

JOHN

Got a second?

Molly nods. John helps her up. Leads her away from the group.

INT. WAREHOUSE

John talks to his shoes.

JOHN

They agreed to keep you safe if I go and do this.

MOLLY

They'll kill me!

JOHN

The Muslim promised they wouldn't.

MOLLY

I can't.

JOHN

Molly, do you trust me or not?

MOLLY

It's not you, John. My entire family was killed in a terrorist attack. Infidels don't take Fact prisoners.

John heaves a heavy sigh.

JOHN  
Get some sleep. I'll find you  
later.

Molly nods. Returns to the bunks.

INT. BUNKS

Everyone's asleep. John finds Molly. Nudges her awake.

MOLLY  
John?

John puts a finger to her lips. Motions for her to get out  
of bed.

INT. WAREHOUSE

John leads Molly quietly away from the bunks. They come upon  
a wall. Sneak along it. Find no immediate way out.

MOLLY  
There.

She points to an entrance way down at the corner of the  
building. John checks to see if the coast is clear. No  
one's around. John and Molly head toward the entrance.

As they're about to reach the door, the Muslim leaps in front  
of them.

MUSLIM  
I'm sorry to see we couldn't trust  
each other, brother John.

JOHN  
So am I.

MUSLIM  
You leave us with little choice.

He brandishes a syringe.

MUSLIM  
You will be at the coronation  
tomorrow. Conscious or not.

John backs away. Behind him, he finds the other rebels  
closing in. No way out.

MUSLIM  
Come, brother John. Make it easier  
on yourself.

Snap! Both John and the Muslim turn to Molly. She plants the spoon from her broken necklace square into the Muslim's chest. He growls at the intense pain. Falls to his knees. John swings the door open.

EXT. WAREHOUSE

John and Molly hear rushing footsteps.

MOLLY  
They're coming.

JOHN  
Where to?

Molly looks around. Points in a seemingly random direction.

MOLLY  
That way!

Good enough for John. Still holding Molly's hand, he takes off. But it's too late. A few dozen rebels come rushing out of the warehouse.

EXT. STREET

John and Molly come to a deserted intersection.

JOHN  
Now where?

Molly looks around.

MOLLY  
Unless I'm mistaken, your See is that way.

She points in a new direction. The Muslim's voice echoes from somewhere unseen.

MUSLIM  
You should have listened to us,  
John. Molly would have been safe.

John and Molly look at each other, then get on their way. As they reach the next corner, a few rebels drop down from the surrounding buildings. A black van pulls up. John and Molly slowly back away, but John sees no other escape --

Honk!! A car pulls up right behind them. John makes a run for the driver's side. Molly takes the passenger side. John swings the door open. The DRIVER gazes at him.

DRIVER

You're --!!

JOHN

Yes. The Greatest Chef. Get out.  
Please.

He helps the Driver out of his seat. The man sits on the ground. Gazes at John. Molly jumps in.

DRIVER

All my life I've dreamt of this  
day!

John gives him a friendly wave.

JOHN

Thanks.

He hits the gas. Knocks through the rebels, and on down the road. The van goes after them.

DRIVER

John be praised! What a glorious  
day!

He suddenly notices the rebels. Without another word, he runs off into the night.

EXT. JOHN'S HOLY SEE

John and Molly pull up onto the front steps. They jump out. Run for the entrance. That second, the van reaches them. But the instant that John's hand touches the building's door, the van speeds off. John and Molly slip inside.

INT. JOHN'S HOLY SEE

Two Sectatori meet them.

SECTATOR

Thank John you're alright! What  
happened?!

John eyes Molly.

MOLLY

John wanted to see...

For a moment, John really can't tell whether or not she's going to give him up.

MOLLY  
...His Holy Gardens.

SECTATOR  
An excellent idea. Did you enjoy  
them, my Lord?

John's staring at Molly. Her eyes meet his. She could've  
done it... but didn't.

SECTATOR  
My Lord?

John faces him.

JOHN  
Lovely! Very lovely.

SECTATOR  
If you'll come this way, His  
Holiness is waiting for you.

John simply nods. The Sectors lead him away. Before he  
exits the chamber, he takes one last look at Molly. She  
pretends not to notice.

INT. KANE'S CHAMBERS

Kane and Johnopher await John. Johnopher holds a roll of  
papers under his arm. They welcome John with proper  
reverence, then Johnopher closes the door.

KANE  
My Sectors inform me that you saw  
your Gardens.

He goes over to the window.

JOHN  
Yes, they were quite nice.

He joins Kane.

JOHNOPHER  
What was our Lord's favorite part?

JOHN  
The plants.

KANE  
They are lovely this time of year.

JOHN  
Very lovely.

KANE  
The preparations are ready for your ceremony.

JOHN  
Good. Thank you.

KANE  
No need to thank me, my Lord. It was an honor.

JOHN  
So, what's gonna happen?

KANE  
It's very simple really. I'll introduce you, then you will greet your Followers.

JOHN  
That's it?

KANE  
A touch of pomp and circumstance. But don't trouble yourself with that. Just follow my lead.

JOHN  
Sounds good.

KANE  
Johnopher? The plans.

With a nod, Johnopher crosses over to Kane and John. Hands Kane the roll of papers. Kane spreads them out on his table. John takes a good look. Kane points out a few features.

KANE  
We have teams ready here, here, and here. Detonators here, here, here, there... and the rest.

John struggles to grasp the weight of what Kane's showing him.

JOHN  
Looks... thorough.

KANE

Once you've declared your arrival to the world, we, your Sectatori, will strike the terrorists once and for all.

John has no idea how to react. He breathes nervously.

JOHN

Good.

KANE

It really is quite remarkable. It won't take more than a few minutes, and you will be the unquestioned master of the entire world.

John's head is swimming.

JOHN

I need to see Molly.

Kane snaps his fingers. Johnopher reacts instantly. Once he's gone, Kane confides.

KANE

You've grown rather fond of the young Sectatora.

John meets Kane's gaze.

JOHN

Yes. I have.

Kane heads for the door.

KANE

Then I'll leave you be, my Lord. Until tomorrow.

John nods.

JOHN

Until then.

Once Kane leaves, John takes a closer look at the plans. Kane wasn't kidding. Even the untrained eye can tell this will be one hell of a military strike.

MOLLY

You sent for me, my Lord?

John looks up. She's standing in the doorway. He rushes over to her. Checks for spies. Satisfied, he closes the door behind her.

JOHN  
Look at this.

He shows her the plans.

JOHN  
Now do you believe me?!

Molly studies them a moment.

MOLLY  
The Maximus Sectator wants to  
convert --

John puts his hands on her shoulders.

JOHN  
Look at that!

MOLLY  
The Maximus Sectator merely wishes  
to --

John holds her face.

JOHN  
People are gonna die!

Molly stops. Tears drip from her eyes. Her lifetime of blind loyalty collides into what she's seeing. She shakes her head.

MOLLY  
The Maximus -- The Maximus --

JOHN  
Stop it!!

MOLLY  
What do you want me to say?!!

John stomps over to the window.

JOHN  
I have to stop it!!

MOLLY  
How?!

JOHN  
I'll... think of something!

Molly goes to him.

MOLLY  
The rebels.

JOHN  
They'll never trust me now.

MOLLY  
Convince Kane.

JOHN  
That he's crazy?

Molly sees his point. Holds his arm. Lays her head on his shoulder.

JOHN  
I guess we should try to get some  
sleep. Deal with this in the  
morning.

He lies down on Kane's bed. Molly joins him, but keeps a safe distance.

JOHN  
Good night, Molly.

MOLLY  
You'll find a way.

JOHN  
How do you know?

MOLLY  
I believe in you.

INT. KANE'S OFFICE - MORNING

The Sectatori from the previous evening greet John and Molly.

SECTATOR  
If you'll come with us, my Lord, we  
can get underway.

JOHN  
After you.

MOLLY  
Good luck.

John gives her a nod, then follows the Sectator.

INT. GREAT HALL

John finds the space arranged for a large assembly, complete with a religiously decorated stage, TV cameras, and packed bleachers. He spots Kane nearby, preparing for the spotlight. John's about to join him when --

SECTATOR  
One thing, my Lord?

John faces him. The man pulls down the neckline of his shirt. A silver necklace with a Satanic Pentagram hangs around his neck.

SECTATOR  
Our operatives are everywhere.

He points to a location across the hall. John sees an unsuspecting Molly with operatives to either side.

SECTATOR  
Compromise our plans, and...

He nods to the operatives. One of them reveals a small gun.

SECTATOR  
...we will execute her.

John opens his mouth. The Sectator holds up a warning finger.

SECTATOR  
You'd best be on your way, my Lord.

John does as he's told. Goes over to Kane.

KANE  
Good morning, my Lord. Everything is prepared. I'll introduce you, then you may address your Followers.

He heads up some stairs to the top of the stage. As the thousands see him, their applause roars through the building.

EXT. STAGE

Before the stage sit thousands of people filling the See to the seams. Several monitors hang above, showing other places in the world, all brimming with people.

Used to the attention of millions of adoring devotees, Kane stands proudly before the podium. Gives them a few moments before he quiets them down.

KANE

It is the great fortune of our age to bear witness to the arrival of the greatest human who ever lived. It is my privilege to present him.

He turns around.

KANE

John?

The See, and everywhere else, falls completely silent. John takes his cue, goes up the stairs, and stops.

The magnitude of everything that's happened hits him. Thousands of eyes before him, and billions around the world. All awaiting his brilliant wisdom. He mutters to himself:

JOHN

Shit.

Kane beckons. John takes a few careful steps toward the podium. As he's about to reach it, Kane's hand, hidden behind the podium, stops him. Kane leans over. Whispers in his ear.

KANE

Compromise my plans...

He tugs John's shirt in Molly's direction. John's eyes carefully find her. A pair of real Sectatori stand near the operatives. One of the real Sectatori reveals the same kind of gun as the operatives have.

KANE

...and I will execute her.

John gives the slightest nod.

KANE

Knock 'em dead, kid.

He steps away. John takes the podium.

JOHN

Good morning. I've only been here a couple of days, but I've already learned how long you've all been waiting for this moment.

He eyes Molly. She smiles her approval.

JOHN  
I've got one or two things to say.

He pauses. Considers his words very carefully.

JOHN  
Look, you don't need to follow me.  
You don't need to follow anybody.

He points out Kane and the rest of the Sectatori.

JOHN  
You've got to think for yourselves.  
You're all individuals. You're all  
different.

He feels a wave of confusion and awkwardness. This probably isn't what they were expecting. But he doesn't let that stop him.

JOHN  
You've all got to work it out for  
yourselves. Don't let anyone tell  
you what to do.

Now a few people are giving each other confused looks. He switches gears.

JOHN  
All you need is love.

He regains some lost attention. He goes for it. The big finish.

JOHN  
Love is all you need.

He checks on Molly. She starts to clap. A couple others join in. It spreads quickly. Before John knows it, the whole building applauds his inspiring, if unoriginal, words. He sees by the monitors that the whole planet agrees.

This is his chance. He steps away from the podium. Casually jumps off stage.

INT. GREAT HALL

John goes past his Followers to Molly. Takes her hand. Glances questioningly between the operatives. They give each other a look. Let Molly go. John and Molly make their way past John's applauding Followers to the entrance.

EXT. STAGE

The armed Sectatori run up to Kane.

SECTATOR  
Your Holiness??

Kane goes to the podium. Gestures for his Sectatori to intercept. They run to the entrance.

INT. GREAT HALL

John and Molly are about to step outside --

KANE  
My Lord?

John turns around.

EXT. STAGE

With a slight grin, Kane makes one last request.

KANE  
Could you demonstrate your dessert  
for us, your Followers?

INT. GREAT HALL

John faces Molly.

JOHN  
What's he doing?!

MOLLY  
Maybe it's part of the ceremony.

Kane's Sectatori meet them. One of them shows John his gun.

SECTATOR  
My Lord?

John and Molly make their way back to the stage.

EXT. STAGE

John points out the obvious.

JOHN  
There's no kitchen.

Kane doesn't respond. A few Sectatori bring in ingredients, utensils, and a hot plate. Seeing as he has little choice, John climbs back up on stage. Kane gets out of the way.

KANE

My Lord.

John snarls under his breath.

JOHN

I never finished it.

Kane shrugs. John gets to work measuring, pouring, mixing, trying to get through it as quickly as possible. With a quick second on the stove, he presents his would-be masterpiece to Kane. The Maximus tries it.

KANE

Mmm. Quite good. But the one, true John would have added more lemon.

John loses it.

JOHN

What??!!

Undeterred by his outburst, Kane points a finger at John.

KANE

This man is an imposter!! He is not the Greatest Chef!!

JOHN

Are you nuts??!!

Whether Kane is or isn't, all those eyes which only a few moments ago looked upon John with unwavering praise are now filled with insane, betrayed rage...

John runs like hell.

INT. GREAT HALL

As John nears the entrance, Kane hammers more nails into John's coffin.

KANE

This man was a test of your belief in the Fact!

With a good distance to go, John sees the power Kane has over the people. Like pre-programmed zombies, they come at him.

KANE

If you are a true Follower of John,  
you will not allow this man's  
actions to defame the name of The  
Greatest Chef!

John punches, pushes, and kicks people away. Sprints for the entrance.

KANE

Wherever he goes, you must find  
him. Whatever he does, report it  
to the Fact. The Imposter must not  
escape!

As John is about to make it out, a young woman and her children latch onto him. Knock him to the ground.

John pries the kids off, but the woman's stronger. John looks into her eyes. Vacant faith. There's nothing he could do or say to make her listen to him.

John pushes her down his leg. Kicks her face as hard as he can. Runs out of the building.

EXT. JOHN'S HOLY SEE

The streets are packed with zealots.

JOHN

Shit.

INT. GREAT HALL

With everyone distracted in John's pursuit, Molly sneaks away.

EXT. JOHN'S HOLY SEE

People come for John. He fights to get away, but it's soon clear he won't make it far. He reaches a telephone pole. Slams the nearest heads into it. Frees up some breathing space.

But it doesn't last long. More people come at him. He spies a nearby, poorly maintained manhole. Leaps for it. Pries off the cover. Uses it both as a shield and a weapon. Fends some people off. Bashes it into other people's faces.

MOLLY

STOP!!!

Everyone obeys. From a side entrance to the See, Molly runs to John's defense.

MOLLY

Does it not say in the Codex  
Johannis, "Speak ill of your fellow  
chef's linguini, and others might  
speak ill of your lasagna."?

John gawks at her. One of the weirdest things he's ever heard. But it does the trick. The crowd considers her words. Then a man speaks up.

MAN

The Codex says a lot of things!  
Get him!!

John tries to comfort Molly.

JOHN

Nice try.

He tosses the manhole cover. He and Molly make a run for it.

EXT. ALLEY

John and Molly escape into the shadows. Take a moment to catch their breath. A bum climbs out of a pile of garbage.

BUM

It's you!!

JOHN

Be quiet!

MOLLY

No, he just looks like him.

The Bum jumps up. Screams.

BUM

The Imposter!! He's here!!

JOHN

Shit.

He and Molly keep going.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION

The area's deserted.

JOHN  
We have to get to the Brotherhood.

MOLLY  
Down there.

JOHN  
We'll be trapped.

MOLLY  
Anywhere we go we'll be trapped.  
This is the fastest way. Here.

She removes her habit. John puts it on.

JOHN  
Not this again.

MOLLY  
It's the only way.

JOHN  
Alright. Let's go.

They head down.

INT. SUBWAY STATION

Like the surface, it's deserted. John and Molly pass through the turnstiles.

WORKER  
Hey, lady! You need to pay!

A middle-aged man stomps over to them. John covers his face as best he can. Molly stammers, unsure what to do.

MOLLY  
I'm sorry. I forgot. I don't have any money. Can you make an exception --?

WORKER  
Look lady, I don't get paid to cut people breaks.

John assumes his cheesy, high-pitched female voice.

JOHN  
It's not her fault, my child. I asked her to accompany me, and we were in a hurry, and, well, you know how these things go.

WORKER  
She's with you, Sectatora?

JOHN  
Yes, that's right.

WORKER  
Well, I guess I can make an  
exception this time.

MOLLY  
Thank you so much.

They get going --

WORKER  
Hey wait a minute.

They freeze.

WORKER  
Don't I know you from somewhere?

He glares at John. John turns around part way.

JOHN  
You must be mistaking me for  
someone else.

Taking Molly's hand, he gets out of there before the Worker  
has any time to consider the matter further.

On the platform, John and Molly are getting pretty antsy  
waiting for the next train. After a couple seconds, it shows  
up. They scurry on.

INT. SUBWAY

They take a moment to relax, and finally, truly catch their  
breath.

MOLLY  
The Brotherhood is only a couple  
stops away.

John forgets his fake voice.

JOHN  
Good.

An older GENTLEMAN notices John.

GENTLEMAN  
Are you sick, Sectatora?

John resumes his fake voice.

JOHN  
Me? No. But thank you so much for  
your concern, child.

GENTLEMAN  
Headed off to the Brotherhood, eh?

JOHN  
Yes, that's right.

GENTLEMAN  
I thought Sectatorae weren't  
allowed there.

MOLLY  
It's by special invitation.

GENTLEMAN  
Oh yes. I understand.

He jumps up. Snatches John's habit.

GENTLEMAN  
Imposter!!

JOHN  
Shit!!

That moment, they come to a stop.

GENTLEMAN  
Stop them!!

Few people pay him a lot of attention, but the ones who do are right on it. John and Molly are suddenly surrounded by more fanatics. John and Molly shove through them to get off the train.

INT. SUBWAY STATION

Once outside, John and Molly aren't sure what to do next.

JOHN  
Now where?

MOLLY  
There!

She points farther down the tunnel. Without hesitation, John follows her in.

MOLLY

Hurry!

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL

John and Molly run until they find a maintenance tunnel. Duck inside. They wait there as the train zips past them. They can see a few people hammering the train windows with their fists. Crying for John's blood.

Once the train's past, John and Molly start down towards the next station.

JOHN

Since everyone in the world is trying to kill me, how are we supposed to get inside the Brotherhood?

MOLLY

We'll figure that out when we get there.

Soon they arrive at the next station...

INT. SUBWAY STATION

And a crowd is already waiting.

JOHN

Shit.

They duck back inside.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL

They find another hiding place. A dozen or so people are fresh on their heels.

JOHN

I'm getting really tired of this.

A couple moments later, another train comes whizzing through. The zealots following John and Molly don't seem to notice. Though the new train slows down, it crashes right into the zealots. Screams echo from inside the station.

JOHN

I have an idea. Come on.

Molly follows him into the station.

INT. SUBWAY STATION

Distracted by the carnage, the crowd doesn't notice John and Molly climb up the side of the train. John and Molly brace themselves on top. Wait quietly. Soon, the authorities arrive. Shut down the station. Clear everyone out.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL

Now free of Followers, John and Molly run to the next station.

INT. SUBWAY STATION

John and Molly enter the one they need.

MOLLY  
This is it!

They run out of the station.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION

John and Molly carefully peer outside. Quite a few people around, but no one seems to be looking for them. They sneak off behind some nearby buildings.

EXT. BUILDING

John and Molly hide behind a dumpster.

JOHN  
You're not allowed inside, and I'm  
not allowed alive. We obviously  
can't just walk in.

Molly scans their surroundings.

MOLLY  
There is one way. Come on.

She leads him over to a rusting fire escape. They climb to the top.

EXT. ROOFTOP

Molly points out some sparking, poorly maintained telephone lines.

MOLLY  
We can pull it out, swing across,  
and land... there.

She points to a section of the Brotherhood building.

MOLLY  
That should be Abbot Fen-Ton's  
research lab.

JOHN  
Should be?!

Wrapping her hand in her sleeve, Molly grabs a line. John helps her yank it free. He grabs hold of it. She takes hold of him. Gives him a quick peck on the cheek.

MOLLY  
For luck.

They swing across. Whoosh straight for the Brotherhood building.

EXT. BROTHERHOOD OF THE FACT

John and Molly reach a set of stained-glass windows, but their force isn't enough to break through. John quickly grabs hold of a stone ornament sticking out of the wall.

JOHN  
Great. Hold this.

He passes her the telephone line. He tucks his now free hand into his shirt. Punches a small hole in the window.

JOHN  
Ready?

Molly nods. John crashes them as hard as he can into the window. Shattering the glass. Tossing them straight down.

INT. BROTHERHOOD RESEARCH LAB

The telephone line helps ease their fall. They tumble onto a table piled high with scientific instruments.

ABBOT FEN-TON  
Hello again, John.

Falling off the table, John and Molly collect themselves.

JOHN  
Is the machine finished?

ABBOT FEN-TON  
I told you to give me two days.

JOHN  
I don't have two days!

ABBOT FEN-TON  
Yes, I saw your speech.

John brushes himself off. Goes to the machine.

ABBOT FEN-TON  
Its guaranteed power output is only  
for one person. More than that,  
and you could end up anywhere.

JOHN  
What about the changes to the time-  
line?

ABBOT FEN-TON  
I was only able to complete a  
couple of experiments. According  
to the data, there's a 50-50 chance  
that I'll survive.

JOHN  
What about Molly?

ABBOT FEN-TON  
There really is no way to tell.  
I'm sorry.

MOLLY  
Don't worry about me, John. You  
have to go.

JOHN  
You're right.

He nods to Abbot Fen-Ton.

JOHN  
Juice it up.

Abbot Fen-Ton turns on the machine. John faces Molly.

JOHN  
There's so much I need to say. I  
just don't know where to begin --

MOLLY

John, when I said you weren't the  
one I'd waited for --

JOHN

It's okay.

MOLLY

No, it's not. I --

JOHN

I couldn't've survived without you.  
Thank you, Molly.

MOLLY

I'll miss you, John.

JOHN

I'll miss you too.

ABBOT FEN-TON

Oh, one other thing.

JOHN

What's that?

ABBOT FEN-TON

I'm a moral man.

He calls out to the hallway.

ABBOT FEN-TON

Your Holiness?

Kane storms in with an entourage of armed Sectatori.

KANE

It's about time they got here.

He points to Molly.

KANE

Kill her.

He points to John.

KANE

Arrest him.

John jumps in front of Molly.

JOHN  
Your beef is with me, Kane! Leave  
her alone!

KANE  
Oh, don't worry, John. You're  
going to die too. It's just that a  
public execution would be so much  
more satisfying.

Stuck between Abbot Fen-Ton, Kane's personal army, and his  
gateway back home, John's faced with an impossible decision.

JOHN  
Ah, screw it!

Taking Molly by the hand, he jumps into the machine.

MOLLY  
John, no!

KANE  
Stop them!!

ABBOT FEN-TON  
I can't! If we alter the process,  
it could blow up the entire city!

Inside the machine, the process has already started.

MOLLY  
What did you do?!

JOHN  
The only thing I could.

MOLLY  
We might die.

JOHN  
We were dead already.

With a flash, the lab is gone, replaced by a dark hallway.

INT. RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT

John sits up.

JOHN  
Molly?

He finds her lying next to him. He smiles.

JOHN  
You're here.

MOLLY  
Where are we?

JOHN  
I think we're back in the lab.  
Where it all started.

He gets up. Finds a clock.

JOHN  
And we're only a few minutes after  
I left. We can probably beat Fen  
back to the restaurant.

He helps Molly to her feet.

JOHN  
Come on.

They head down the hallway.

EXT. RESEARCH LAB

They step outside.

MOLLY  
But what will I do here?

JOHN  
You're a trained Sectatora. You  
can help me out at the restaurant.

MOLLY  
It's so strange to be here at the  
beginning.

WHAM! A frying pan smashes her face. She hits the ground.  
Kane stands there. Quite pleased with himself.

KANE  
Don't worry. It won't last.

JOHN  
Molly!

He moves to make sure Molly's okay, but Kane smacks him as  
well. John lands on his ass.

JOHN

Son of a bitch! How the hell did you get back here?!

KANE

My poor John. The Brotherhood's machine can handle one person. We merely set the clock a little earlier. Now, where were we?

He looks at his frying pan.

KANE

Oh yes. That's right.

He raises it. Ready to end John. But John kicks him in the shin. Kane snarls. John takes the moment to run back inside.

INT. RESEARCH LAB

John searches for any kind of weapon. He hears Kane close behind.

KANE

It's no use, John. I'm a black belt in frying pan-fu.

John spots a janitor's closet. Opens it to find a broom. The instant he grabs it, Kane's on top of him. They swing back and forth at each other. Kane wasn't kidding. He's amazing with his frying pan.

KANE

The only reason you're not dead right now is because I'm having too much fun!

John backs up farther and farther toward the room where he first disappeared.

JOHN

What more do you want? You already control your world.

KANE

I want to win. And to do that, I have to bring you back and finish the job.

JOHN

You could just give it a rest.

KANE

I didn't work my entire life to become the most famous, most beloved of Maximus Sectatori only to have you come and ruin it.

They fight some more. Kane swings. John blocks. Kane swings. John dodges. Kane swings. Breaks John's broom in two. Kane kicks John in the stomach. John lands against the window he fell through earlier.

KANE

All you had to do was what I told you! We would have ruled the world together! Fantastic food! Willing women! Unimaginable wealth!

He runs at John. Swings as hard as he can. John ducks. Kane smashes his frying pan into the window. John spins around behind him.

JOHN

I am sick to death of you!!

He digs one broom stick half into Kane's left shoulder. Buries the other broom half into Kane's lower back. Finally, John backs up, and kicks Kane's ass as hard as he can.

Kane smashes through the window. Falls into the machine. John jacks the controls every which way. Kane points a warning finger at John.

KANE

This isn't over --!

With a crackle of light, he's gone.

EXT. RESEARCH LAB

John runs outside to find Molly, in a pool of blood, lying on the sidewalk. He scoops her up in his arms.

JOHN

Molly? You with me?

He checks her pulse.

JOHN

Oh, thank God.

He rubs some of the blood away. Wipes the hair from her eyes. Whispers to her.

JOHN

Molly?

Molly slowly comes to.

MOLLY

John?

John helps her sit up.

MOLLY

I had this horrible dream that Kane followed us back.

JOHN

It's okay. It's over. It's all over. Let's go home.

INT. RESTAURANT DINING ROOM

Fenton's going crazy, sobbing, pacing back and forth, making very little sense. John's sister Molly, her kids, Liam, Brad, Anthony and his family, Thompson, Frank, and John's cooks all wait patiently.

FENTON

And then he just... whoosh! Gone!!  
Oh my God!! I just --!!

Molly holds Fenton. Shakes him.

MOLLY

Fen! Slow down! Start over! Tell us exactly what happened!

Fenton sits down. Grabs a nearby drink. Knocks it back.

FENTON

John is gone.

That moment, the front door swings open. John and Molly step in.

JOHN

Sorry I'm late, everyone. I had to pick up my friend...

RACHEL

Rachel.

Everyone's confused, but all for different reasons.

FENTON  
But you were gone!

MOLLY  
Your "friend"?!

LIAM  
Way to go, Johnny!

BRAD  
You never told me about her!

FRANK  
Better late than never.

THOMPSON  
What are you wearing?

ANTHONY  
What happened to your nose, Rachel?

JOHN  
Oh, we were mugged.

MOLLY  
Mugged?!

JOHN  
Everything's fine now.  
Everything's gonna be just fine.

He puts his arm around Rachel, closes the door, and joins his family and friends in the restaurant's first dinner.

FADE OUT:

THE END