

SIGNS

by

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FADE IN

EXT. SHINING LUC MOTEL - EVENING

MICHAEL, 35, palpably introspective, exits a room of a charming two-storey building.

At his car he looks back, gulping water. Around him, people stroll with surfboards, coolers and towels.

From the side of a building, ASH watches Michael. As he drives off, Ash shakes his head and saunters away.

EXT. BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Michael's car cruises past a sign: "You're Leaving Luc Juan. You probably won't make it back, so Best of Luc!"

At the bar's entrance, KINGBOY discreetly passes a tiny envelope to a man. He gazes after Michael indifferently from his crowd of fun-seekers.

INT./EXT. MICHAEL'S CAR - LATER [DRIVING]

Michael downs water and turns up the air conditioning. He comes to an intersection and hesitates.

He focuses on directions below traffic lights on his right: "Meeting your devils? Keep Driving here". He takes a right.

His eyes wander to a sleek card on the dashboard. It depicts a woman in a cocktail dress perched on a dinner table. "Sophisticated Companions" is printed on its surface and below it, a number and an email address.

MICHAEL

Nope.

He sticks the card above the sun visor. Outside, a multigenerational group strolls along the grassy expanse.

They regard him with hostility. One teen hurls a stone at his car. A woman wearing a principal's badge shakes her head at him in contempt.

A corporate baron smirks as he digs into his pocket and flings a handful of coins in Michael's direction.

EXT. SHOPPING COMPLEX - LATER

A MAN and WOMAN argue aggressively as Michael exits with food. A young BOY, clad in red T-shirt and black shorts, stands silently at their side.

A poster promoting an amusement fair stands nearby. The words draw Michael's attention: "Free snacks for kids! Why be afraid of Spooky Weekend? Stench from your first horrorhouse never left".

The Man delivers hard slap to the Boy's face. Michael stares at them as he walks by. They ignore him.

INT. MICHAEL'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Fingers tremble as Michael eats. He pauses to mop sweat from his face and neck. He guzzles water and gazes intently at his reflection in the mirror.

His cheek bears the reddening imprint of a hand.

INT./EXT. MICHAEL'S CAR - NIGHT [DRIVING]

Michael swipes away a drop of blood from his nose and grips the wheel tightly. Angry news commentary plays on the radio.

RADIO BROADCASTER #1 (V.O.)

Why the hell should we bother with these guys, huh? You don't like your cards? Get over it! Everybody gets opportunity.

RADIO BROADCASTER #2 (V.O.)

Exactly. And you know-

He snaps the radio off as his cell phone rings.

MICHAEL

Hello.

MICHAEL'S MOTHER (V.O.)

I always say it. Don't blame the  
past for your future. You never had  
anything better to do-

He drops the phone, swerving. He rights the car and skates to  
an awkward stop in front of a gas station.

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Michael staggers out and makes it to the grass to vomit. From  
across the road comes a distant guttural call. A hooded,  
ROBED FIGURE stands, uttering indistinct monologue.

NADIE (O.S.)

Here.

A small hand holds a wad of napkins near his face. He accepts  
it.

When he stands up he sees a young olive-skinned woman.

MICHAEL

Thanks.

She nods, unsmiling. He watches her walk away, then he heads  
for the nearby diner.

INT. DINER - MOMENTS LATER

A lively crowd mingles. Michael exits the restroom.

DANNY (O.S.)

Mikey! Hey man what you doing here?

Michael sees DANNY at the exit, surrounded by revellers. As  
he makes his way to them, static bursts on a TV.

In between a commercial, its screen delivers a message:  
 "Beware of passersby- leechers stagnate the journey".

DANNY (CONT'D)

You don't look so hot. You okay?

Michael nods.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I didn't know you were up here.  
 Come with us, we're going to the  
 bay for a little sightseeing, you  
 know? Totally private.

MICHAEL

You mean Kingboy organized it.

DANNY

Pfft! If he wants to crash he  
 better make it worth it. You sure  
 you don't want to come?

Michael nods, looking back at the TV, where the message  
 replays.

EXT. DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Propped against a car eating, SAMUEL observes Michael as he  
 exits. A waitress walks up and hands him a paper cup.

SAMUEL

Look at his face. You want to bet  
 he's headed for doom tonight?

INT. MICHAEL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Michael removes a plastic case from the glove compartment and  
 fishes out a photo.

It shows Michael and others, clad in dark attire, gathered  
 around a casket. Atop it sits a framed photo of the Man and  
 Woman.

Another photo depicts the Boy, dressed as before. He sits on a swing in a park, a side of his face bruised.

EXT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Nadie stands alone looking back and forth. Michael comes up. They speak soundlessly.

Nearby, a BURLY MAN eyes Michael's car before he enters a vehicle and heads in the opposite direction.

INT./EXT. MICHAEL'S CAR - LATER [DRIVING]

Nadie sits in the passenger seat, looking at Michael.

NADIE

Your nose is bleeding.

In the rearview mirror he sees blood trickling from his nose. He cleans it with a trembling hand. Outside, a group of the robed figures stroll beside the road, watching him.

NADIE (CONT'D)

When you drop me off you can have a rest. My aunt's a healer, she'll help you. If you want.

He looks at her, barely able to nod.

His gaze wanders back outside. A robed figure points to a cobblestone arrangement on the shoulder: "If you possess 1 Demon, get another!"

He looks away and focuses on her quietness.

MICHAEL

So you got fed up of the holiday weekend?

NADIE

Not really. I left my group to help someone. I might go back, depends.

MICHAEL

You- Are you pressed to get home?

She shakes her head.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I got something to do back in Luc  
Juan. I- It won't take long. We  
could get dinner when I'm done.

EXT. SHINING LUC MOTEL - LATER

Michael's car comes to a jagged stop in the parking lot.

INT. MICHAEL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

He digs a motel key out of his pocket and turns to Nadie.

NADIE

I could drive us back.

Michael nods, fixating on her necklace. It holds a PENDANT of  
wood and silver with the engraving: "Serva me, servabo te".

MICHAEL

Save me...save you?

She shrugs.

NADIE

Maybe.

EXT. SHINING LUC MOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Burly Man spots Michael unsteadily entering a room. He pulls  
out a phone and dials.

Nearby, Ash sees Burly Man watching Michael.

INT. SHINING LUC MOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

As he washes his face in the bathroom Michael hears a dry rustle. Behind the shower curtain, a hint of a robed figure peeks out. He blinks. The figure is gone.

On the floor is a plastic packet half-full of iridescent crystals. He manages to chuck its contents into the toilet bowl.

He staggers to the bedroom, discovers two more packets and discards them as before. He flushes.

Blood streams from his nose. The sound of laughter drifts in.

At the window he sees two children crossing the parking lot. They hold a plastic banner celebrating the Luc Juan Beach Festival. It reads: "When friends enjoy your misery they want a bigger celebration".

One child smiles at him as he trembles and collapses.

LATER

Commotion erupts outside. A group bursts into the room. Paramedics attend to Michael.

SAMUEL

I guess you expected this?

A sheriff's badge hangs on his belt.

ASH

Who didn't? But how the hell did he make it back here?

DEPUTY #1 (O.S.)

Found this in the bathroom.

DEPUTY #1 walks up. He holds up plastic packets. Traces of its contents are visible.

SAMUEL

Kingboy's new toy. Shit, how is he even alive? And driving like a loon all-

ASH

(whispering to Samuel)

'Cause maybe he took something else?

DEPUTY #2 runs in.

DEPUTY #2

We got a tip he was delivering. We got to search his car.

SAMUEL

What?

Ash looks at Michael's unconscious form on the floor with trepidation.

EXT. SHINING LUC MOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

From a stretcher Michael's eyes flutter and he mumbles, trying to speak behind an oxygen mask.

ASH

Kingboy's out for you, Mikey. I hope your head's cleared.

Samuel strides up.

SAMUEL

Trunk's empty. I want to know what-

MICHAEL

Nadie. Waiting for me in the car.

We're going back. Tell her...

Samuel and Ash look towards Michael's car. No one is inside. Samuel regards Ash suspiciously.

SAMUEL

I damn well better get a straight  
story when-

DEPUTY #2 (O.S.)

Sheriff! Come take a look-  
Kingboy's car. Big surprise.

As Samuel runs off Ash puts a photo in Michael's hand.

ASH

Hold onto this. You left it on the  
bed.

The photo shows Michael and Nadie at a table. Scribbled  
across it is: "Michael & Nadie - 1st dinner".

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

Nadine sits among a talkative group having dinner. Her phone  
rings.

NADIE

Hello.

ASH (V.O.)

You come up to Luc Juan tonight? To  
keep Mikey company?

NADIE

What? No. I haven't seen Michael in  
weeks. Why?

ASH (V.O.)

Hmm. You didn't even talk to him.

NADIE

No, not me. Aunt Muna said he came  
down to see her a couple weeks ago.

ASH

Ah. That makes a ton more sense.  
Guess his mind went its own way.

NADIE

Will you tell me what's going on?  
Is he alright?

She listens for awhile, fingering a pendant on her necklace.

NADIE (CONT'D)

Maybe he needed that drive. You'll  
stay with him until I get there?

She turns her pendant upwards. Its carved words gleam in the moonlight: "Serva me, servabo te".

FADE OUT