

MORTAL KOMBAT

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Atomic Monster

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EXT. ROMAN WOODS - NIGHT

OPEN ON: A FACE, African descent, mired in filth and grime; DREADLOCKS dangle like vines over a pair of black eyes.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: The SLAVE is locked inside a cramped iron cage, shackles around his wrists and neck. The cage sits in a HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE.

A small GUARD accompanies the wagon through a MISTY FOREST. ABOVE THE TREELINE: A BLOOD RED MOON towers in the night sky.

They arrive at their destination: A RING OF TORCHES and SPIKED TIMBER, a FIGHTING PIT in the middle of the woodland.

AROUND THE FIGHTING PIT: Roughly two dozen ROMAN DIGNITARIES gather with their cadre of servants.

DREADLOCKS

Peers through the cage bars, eagerly searches the assemblage until he finds: AEMILIA, a strikingly beautiful HANDMAID, pouring wine for the noblemen.

They lock eyes, her face wracked with grief for him. She touches ONE-HALF of a PENDANT draped around her neck. Dreadlocks holds her gaze. He mirrors the gesture, tracing the place above his heart where he once wore the other half. These two have been in love for some time.

A grizzled SLAVE TRADER dismounts his steed. He walks towards a GENERAL'S TENT perched above the pit.

INT. GENERAL'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

A pair of GUARDS part to reveal: The all-powerful ROMAN EMPEROR. The Slave Trader bows before him.

SLAVE TRADER

I brought our strongest slave.

(then)

Forgive me, Caesar. I thought we would stage this in the Coliseum?

THE EMPEROR

(condescending)

This is NOT theater.

The Emperor gazes upward at the foreboding Blood Moon.

SLAVE TRADER

Do you know if he'll grace us with his presence?

THE EMPEROR
 I never know.
 (with a hint of fear)
 That's why we must always be ready.

EXT. ROMAN WOODS - CONTINUOUS

THUNDER billows from the HEAVENS; a gentle RAIN SHOWER falls.

SUDDEN GASPS from the CROWD OF DIGNITARIES! Everyone scrambles, noblemen and servants alike, pulling up their linens, dropping to their knees in reverence.

The Emperor anxiously turns. As the patrons part, we REVEAL:

LORD RAIDEN, framed in the TREELINE. (Think Gandalf from 'Lord of the Rings,' but far more powerful). He carries a divine presence. His eyes narrow into ELECTRIC BLUE SLITS.

Only the Emperor and Lord Raiden remain standing. Then the Emperor takes a knee as well.

THE EMPEROR
 Rome salutes you, My Lord.

Raiden approaches; the Emperor nervously offers his THRONE, but the Thunder God remains standing, his ageless eyes fixed on the PIT below.

THE EMPEROR
 You'll be pleased to see. We have found our Champion.

A PRAETORIAN SOLDIER (the most awesome, Roman warrior imaginable), jumps into the FIGHTING PIT. He wears HEAVY ARMOR, carries a SHIELD emblazoned with a ROMAN EAGLE.

AEMILIA

Looks to Dreadlocks, fear in her eyes. He tries to silently console her. The CAGE DOOR is suddenly RIPPED OPEN!

A PAIR OF GUARDS seize Dreadlocks by the arms, drag the chained slave from his cell, throw him into the pit. A SHORT SWORD lands by his side.

Still chained, he grabs the sword, staggers to his feet.

The Roman Warrior rushes him, CLOCKS Dreadlocks in the face, sending him HARD to the mud, right in front of Aemilia.

(NOTE: the fight choreography will feel more akin to Mortal Kombat, than to gladiator bouts we've seen before).

ABOVE THE PIT:

The Emperor gestures with assurance to his Champion.

THE EMPEROR

Thirty straight victories. No
mortal man can defeat him. You'll
never find a stronger...

Raiden lifts his hand, stopping the Emperor cold.

DOWN BELOW:

The Roman Warrior batters Dreadlocks, nowhere near a fair fight. Eventually, beat to within an inch of his life, Dreadlocks looks towards Aemilia. She pleads for him to GET UP. A MOMENT between them. She's all the strength he needs.

JUST AS... The Roman PLUNGES his sword downward...

... Dreadlocks SPINS, SHIELDS THE BLOW WITH HIS OWN FOREARM!

The short sword SKEWERS HIS ARM, very nearly reaches his face... but the hilt catches. Dreadlocks sweeps his ruined arm in a WIDE ARC, SLICING his opponent's KNEECAP!

And now the comeback is on: The slave PUMMELS the shell-shocked Roman until the brute has nothing left in him.

And only now does Dreadlocks look up at Lord Raiden, standing beside the Emperor.

ABOVE THE PIT:

The EMPEROR stares wide-eyed at the victorious slave. *How could this be?*

THE EMPEROR

Impossible. Forgive me, my Lord.
I've wasted your time...

But Raiden only smiles:

RAIDEN

He is exactly as I had hoped.

The Emperor gazes at Dreadlocks with confusion. Then he thrusts out his arm, turns his thumb down.

DOWN BELOW:

Dreadlocks reels his arm back, then SWIPES AT THE AIR. The impaled sword SLICES through the ROMAN'S JUGULAR...

And it's during this moment that Dreadlocks grabs a MEDALLION draped around his opponent's neck.

The Roman Warrior falls back. The necklace goes TAUT, SEVERING his head from his body!

Dreadlocks dislodges the sword from his arm, studies the bruised SILVER MEDALLION hanging from the rusted chain.

We see the ICONIC MORTAL KOMBAT DRAGON.

Raiden appears SUDDENLY by his side. Rain deflects off his wide-brimmed hat. He removes the slave's shackles. In their place, he drapes the DRAGON MEDALLION around his neck.

RAIDEN

Now the REAL FIGHT begins.

Raiden takes a step back, lifts his arms to the sky...

A LIGHTNING BOLT CRASHES DOWN, STRIKES THE THUNDER GOD!

The CROWD SCREAMS in terror. They run for their horses.
Everyone except for AEMILIA.

Raiden absorbs the POWERFUL CHARGE, his ELECTRIFIED SKELETON flickering in the SURGING BLUE LIGHT!

Dreadlocks shields his eyes. When he dares look again, a PORTAL STANDS in the FIGHTING PIT.

Raiden takes a MOMENT to recover, his body weakened by this act. He gestures to the dimensional gateway.

RAIDEN

Come. Your destiny awaits.

Dreadlocks stares at the mysterious portal, then he turns and gazes upon Aemilia, heartache in his eyes. We watch as a tear sleds down her stunned face.

RAIDEN

For all that you hold dear.
(off Dreadlocks's look)
For Earth.

Dreadlocks knows what he has to do. He nods to himself, turns away from Aemilia, steps through the PORTAL. As the TWISTING, BRILLIANT LIGHT consumes us, we...

CUT TO:

OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE (HOW THE MEDALLIONS ARE MADE):

We're in a STONE FORGE, somewhere divine, ancient. FIRE. SMOKE. The CLANGING and POUNDING OF TOOLS.

HOODED FIGURES carry raw chunks of metal and stone to a BLAZING FURNACE - (some of the materials we recognize: GOLD, SILVER, BRONZE - while others, like a mysterious BLACK ROCK, are clearly not from this world).

The STRANGE BLACK ROCK is melted down, poured into a MOLD of the iconic MORTAL KOMBAT COILED DRAGON, and then COOLED.

As a BURST OF STEAM evaporates before our eyes, the newly forged BLACK MEDALLION solidifies.

We GO IN CLOSE on the MYSTICAL MEDALLION. The DRAGON'S eyes FLASH BLOOD RED, and we...

SMASH TO TITLE:

-MORTAL KOMBAT-

FADE IN:

EXT. SOUTH PHILLY BOXING GYM - DAY

An SUV pulls up across the street from the age-old South Philly boxing establishment.

INT. SUV - SAME

JACKSON "JAX" BRIGGS, (30s, black), arms like cannons, sits behind the wheel. He opens a FOLDER on the passenger seat and double-checks the DOSSIER inside.

CLOSE ON THE DOSSIER: We see surveillance photos of the same boxing gym, as well as black and white SHOTS of a BOXER wearing a WHITE ROBE. On the back of the WHITE ROBE, we see a stitched patch of the MK COILED DRAGON.

Jax has CIRCLED the DRAGON and added his NOTES:

COLE MORINO - FORMER MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPION.

Jax lowers his shades, studies the gym. *This is definitely the place...* He opens his door.

INT. SOUTH PHILLY BOXING GYM - PRESENT DAY

RAUCOUS CHEERING. PUNCHES and GRUNTS. Two warriors SLUGGING AWAY in the ring.

As Jax weaves his way through the bloodthirsty crowd, a
VOICE SCREAMS OUT:

VOICE (V.O.)
FINISH HIM!

A GLOVE rips across FRAME and DETONATES our hero's face!

Blood and sweat spray. COLE MORINO, (30s), drops to the mat;
his head CRACKS the canvas.

CHEERS ERUPT as Cole shakes the stars from his eyes. The long
count hovers over him: "*FIVE... SIX... SEVEN...*"

Cole rolls to face his corner. We expect a team of trainers
and coaches. Instead we find only his daughter, EMILY, (12).

EMILY
Get up, Dad! Never quit!

Her voice is all the spirit he needs. Cole plants one foot,
then the other... He's up!!!

The BELL SOUNDS. Cole retreats to his corner. Emily dabs
coagulant on his wound, sprays water into his mouth.

COLE
I'm getting my ass kicked. He's
faster than I am... Got a longer
reach too.

EMILY
What was our plan?

COLE
Be smarter. Get in close. Use the
ring to my advantage.

EMILY
Stick to it. You got this!

She holds up her fists. Cole taps them with his gloves. The
REFEREE walks over, inspects Cole's vision.

REFEREE
Sure you want to keep going, Champ?
I can call it now.

Cole glances at Emily, perched on the ropes.

COLE
(aside, to the Ref)
I get another hundred if I make it
through three.

REFEREE

I wouldn't take that bet, Champ.

COLE

We'll see.

The Ref shakes his head, steps away. The BELL RINGS.

Cole works his way to the center of the ring. Bobbing. Weaving. But MISSING with every punch he throws.

EMILY

Let's go, Dad! Get in close!

Cole heeds Emily's advice, shortens the gap, lets it rip. Head. Body. Head. The comeback is on!

JAX

folds his arms across his chest, watches Cole with interest.

We see flashes of the champion Cole once was! Cole ducks a punch, lands a HARD CROSS, staggers his opponent, RAMIREZ, backwards. Ramirez holds a glove to his mouth, impressed.

EMILY

That's how you do it!

Ramirez fires off a series of RAPID PUNCHES and...

-WHAAAM!-

Cole's DECKED HARD, right back to the canvas.

COLE tries to PUSH HIMSELF UP again. Nothing left. He falls back to his chest. The BELL RINGS.

Emily comes to her Dad's side. She holds a towel to his open wound, gets an arm under him, guides him to his feet.

The CROWD BOOS both of them as they exit the ring.

JAX

lowers his head, disappointment in his eyes.

A BIT LATER:

Cole exits the lockers, wearing his robe, the MK COILED DRAGON emblazoned across his back. Much like Cole, the robe has seen better days.

Ramirez walks by.

RAMIREZ
 (with genuine respect)
 Nice fight, Morino.

Cole nods his thanks as he rubs his bruised knuckles.

Emily waits for him, his boxing gloves slung over her shoulder. They leave together.

EMILY
 You sure you're okay?

Cole rubs his jaw, hurts like hell, doesn't let her see it.

COLE
 Yeah. Kid had a nasty left hook.
 Right wasn't bad either.

EMILY
 Ramirez is legit. They have him
 pegged to win the Golden Gloves
 this year.

COLE
 (puffing out his chest)
 And your old man lasted three
 rounds against him...

EMILY
 Uh... like two and a half. Like two
 and ten seconds.

Cole playfully jabs at her. She blocks it with a laugh.

COLE
 I must be doing something right.
 (off her look)
 I got the best trainer in Philly.

Cole tries to tuck the hair behind her ear. She brushes away his hand.

EMILY
 (glancing around)
 Dad, stop. I'm not a kid anymore.

Cole backs off as Jax approaches them.

JAX
 Cole Morino.
 (off Cole's look)
 I'm a big fan. I was ringside when
 you beat Eddie Tobias back in the
 day. You were something else.

Emily smiles at her Dad. Cole brushes off the compliment.

COLE
That was a long time ago.

Cole turns to leave.

Jax walks with him, points to the EMBLEM stitched on Cole's robe: THE COILED DRAGON, BATHED IN FLAMES.

JAX
I've always wondered... Where'd you get your logo?

COLE
It's something my Dad left me.

Jax perks up at this. He plays it off, acts natural.

JAX
Oh yeah? He a fighter to?

COLE
Wouldn't know. Never met him.
(then, to Emily)
Come on, baby. We're gonna be late.

Cole puts his arm around his daughter. They leave together.

JAX
(calling after them)
Nice meeting you, Champ.

We HOLD ON Jax. His smile fades. He sharpens his eyes with certainty. *This is the guy he's been looking for...*

EXT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - A BIT LATER - DAY

Cole and Emily sit on a bench together outside the shop, sharing an ice cream cone.

EMILY
Hey, maybe next Sunday, if you don't have a fight, we could go see a movie. That new Johnny Cage one looks cool ... We can't tell Mom about it though. She's got this weird thing against violent movies.

COLE
You remember that time Cage was fighting that one guy and he did that split...

EMILY

That was awesome. He punched that
dude right in the balls.

They both laugh. After a MOMENT, her smile fades.

EMILY

I wish we could hang out on more
than just Sundays.

Cole's heart breaks.

COLE

I do too. It's just... Mom and I...
we're still figuring stuff out...

EMILY

It's been almost two months. I
don't want to live with Grandma
anymore. Everything in her
apartment smells like Ben-Gay.

Cole laughs.

COLE

I'm working on it. I promise.

A CAR turns onto the street.

COLE

(RE: the ice cream)
Better not let Mom see that before
dinner.

Emily hands over the cone. Cole takes the last bite, tosses
it in the trash as the CAR pulls up to the curb. Cole's wife,
ALLISON, (30s), gets out.

She takes one look at Cole. The cut above his eye. The
bruising by his jaw. She folds her arms with a sigh.

ALLISON

Ice cream before dinner?

Cole wipes his mouth. Busted.

ALLISON

(aside, to Emily)
Get in the car, sweetheart.

EMILY

Bye, Dad. See you next weekend.

Cole gives her a monster hug. She holds out her fist.

EMILY

Never quit.

COLE

Never quit.

Cole taps her fist. Emily gets in the back of the car as Allison walks over to Cole. He pulls the fight money out.

COLE

It's six-hundred. Em's gonna need school supplies next month...

Allison reluctantly takes the money.

COLE

I know what you're gonna say...

ALLISON

I don't want you taking Emily to any more fights.

COLE

It came up last minute. It was easy money, Ally...

(then)

For what it's worth, she has fun.

Allison shakes her head, looks at Cole.

ALLISON

Ten years ago, it was fun, Cole. But this... They throw you in, you get your ass kicked by guys half your age. When's it gonna be enough? ... When Emily watches you die in the ring someday?

Cole looks away.

COLE

Not many places are looking to hire a washed up boxer with no high school diploma. This is all I got.

Allison waits for his gaze.

ALLISON

You got us.

(then)

Tommy said he could get you an interview with a security firm.

COLE
(with a smile)
That's what you want? To be married
to some rent-a-cop?

ALLISON
The man I fell in love with isn't
defined by his job.

Allison reaches her hand to the TAPED CUT by Cole's eye,
wipes a TRICKLE of BLOOD from his face.

Cole locks eyes with her, moved by the gesture.

A MOMENT between them.

COLE
You win. No more fighting.

ALLISON
(skeptical)
I've heard that before.

COLE
Swear to God. I'll give it up
right now...
(then, with a smile)
If you go on a date with me.

ALLISON
(matching his smile)
I'll think about it.

COLE
Come on. One date. We'll go to
Lambertis...

ALLISON
(hard to get)
I said, I'll think about it.

COLE
Good. You think about it.
(then, as he walks away)
I'll pick you up at seven.

Allison laughs as she opens her door.

COLE
Oh, one more thing...
(turning back around)
I might need you to pay.

ALLISON
 (playful, with love)
 Get the hell outta' here.

They share a final smile as she gets inside the car.

INT. COLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

About as low-rent as South Philly gets. Bare walls. Mattress on the floor.

Cole walks in, drops his keys, pulls a beer from his fridge.

He stares at the fridge door. We see pictures of Cole, Allison, and Emily. Birthdays, Eagles games, trips to the Jersey Shore. There isn't a recent photo for months.

MOMENTS LATER:

A CLOSET DOOR SLIDES BACK.

The CLOSET IS STUFFED TO THE BRIM with artifacts of Cole's early years in the ring, from back when he was a champion.

Cole carefully repositions a few BOXES until he can hang up his gloves and robe. He pauses, staring at the COILED DRAGON emblazoned on the fabric.

WHEN JUST THEN: BOXES tumble down, SPILLING their contents all over the floor.

COLE
 Shit.

Cole starts cleaning them up. He STOPS. One of the FALLEN BOXES grabs his attention.

An ANCIENT WOODEN CHEST - Carved into the dark wood are Japanese characters (translated to: FIGHT FOR WHAT MATTERS). Cole pops the lid.

First thing we see: OLD HOSPITAL ADMISSION PAPERS. CLOSE ON: PATIENT RECORDS:

"ON-CALL NURSE FOUND ABANDONED CHILD SLEEPING INSIDE STRANGE BLACK CHEST. PARENTS UNKNOWN."

And there... in the bottom on the chest: THE DRAGON MEDALLION, forged from black rock. (the same one we saw forged in our opening credit sequence).

Cole considers the strange relic, unsure what to make of it.

His eyes fall to the STRANGE CHEST. He runs his fingers along the engraved wood. *What do these symbols mean?* He turns the chest over. More ENGRAVINGS.

Cole traces his finger along the ghastly IMAGE OF A SKULL.

A LOUD -POP- A SIDE COMPARTMENT of the chest opens!

Cole reaches in to find: A RUSTED CHAIN. He turns his gaze back to the MEDALLION. *Could it be...?*

Cole fastens the CHAIN to the MEDALLION. *Here goes nothing...*

He places the medallion around his neck for the first time.

The DRAGON'S EYES FLASH BLOOD RED! Only for a MOMENT. We see it. Cole doesn't.

He removes the medallion, tosses it on his desk. We GO IN CLOSE on the mystical dragon and...

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK - NEXT DAY

A gritty, South Philly apartment block. Cole walks up the cracked steps of an apartment building.

He rings the buzzer. SOPHIA, (60s), Allison's Mom, answers.

COLE

It's Cole.

SOPHIA

Hi, Cole. If you're looking for Ally, she's still at work.

COLE

Actually, Sophia... Is it cool if I talk to Em' for a second?

SOPHIA

You're her father, Cole. You don't have to ask.

She BUZZES him in.

INT. EMILY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Emily's temporary bedroom. A VINTAGE POSTER FOR: COLE MORINO VS. EDDIE TOBIAS - CHAMPIONSHIP BOUT - hangs over her bed.

Cole shuts her door; Emily pulls off her headphones.

EMILY

Dad? What are you doing here?

She walks over, buries into him. He hugs her tightly.

Cole reaches into his pocket, takes out the chained medallion. He dangles the relic before her eyes.

EMILY

So it's a medallion...

(then)

I always thought it was some weird old rock.

COLE

It got me thinking. If it's some sort of antique jewelry...

EMILY

...It's probably worth a fortune.

They share a smile. *Like father, like daughter.*

MOMENTS LATER:

Cole hovers over her laptop. Emily stands beside him.

He types "DRAGON MEDALLION" into GOOGLE. A bunch of random links and images appear.

Clearly not what they're looking for.

EMILY

Let me.

Cole pushes over the keyboard. Emily runs a reverse image search. A SECOND LATER, SMACKS the ENTER KEY and BINGO!

"MORTAL KOMBAT" -- TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS.

EMILY

Try that one.

Cole shoots her a look.

COLE

Show off.

He clicks the link.

A SEIZURE-INDUCING WEBSITE BLASTS HIM IN THE FACE - SCORED BY THE FAMOUS EAR-SPLITTING MORTAL KOMBAT TECHNO TRACK!

Cole tries to mute the volume, somehow makes it even louder!

COLE

How do you turn it off?!

Emily quickly cranks down the volume.

COLE

You thinking what I'm thinking?

EMILY

How did Techno ever become popular?

COLE

No. This thing is important. Look.

ON COLE'S SCREEN:

We see: THE SAME COILED DRAGON! Here represented in multiple mediums, across cultures: An ETRUSCAN FRESCO, AZTEC STONWORK, CHINESE STEEL...

Emily scrolls down, reads from the page:

EMILY

Fought since the dawn of time, the ancient battle fast approaches. Will Earth's greatest champions rise to defend us? Or will our world fall to the forces of darkness?

Emily looks at her Dad, shares in his look of not just confusion. There's something very unnerving about this.

EMILY

This is some freaky s-h-i-t.

COLE

Tell me about it.

(then, as a parent)

Spelling it out still makes it a curse, baby.

EMILY

Sorry, Dad.

Cole sits back in his seat, thinks it through carefully.

When just then: *BANG! BANG! BANG!*

There's someone outside the apartment building, HAMMERING on the FRONT DOOR!

Cole goes to the window to see: JAX.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Cole reaches the door just as Sophia opens it. He pulls her back, then squares up opposite JAX.

The MOMENT Jax sees Cole's black medallion:

JAX

You need to come with me.

COLE

You out of your mind? I'm not going anywhere with you.

Jax reaches into his vest, extracts: a DRAGON MEDALLION of his own. It's the same one DREADLOCKS wore in our opening scene, forged in SILVER. Ancient. Coarse. Rugged.

We NOTE: The Dragon's eyes are GLOWING RED. As are the ones on COLE'S MEDALLION.

EMILY

Dad...?

COLE

Not now.

(then, to Jax)

What are you doing here? ... Why are you following me?

EMILY

Dad...?

COLE

Not now, Emily.

JAX

It's extremely important, Cole. I can explain on the way.

Jax grabs Cole by the arm; Cole shakes him off.

EMILY

DAD!

COLE

YES, EMILY! ... What is it?

Cole finally turns to Emily. She's staring out the lobby window, her face filled with WONDER.

EMILY
It's snowing...

Sure enough, we see SNOW, gently falling from the sky. Cole pushes past Jax, eyes wide.

EMILY
(with excitement)
... in the middle of summer!

OUTSIDE: A few NEIGHBORS, dressed in shorts and t-shirts, stop to marvel at the mysterious change in weather.

The SNOW quickly INTENSIFIES. HEAVY. POUNDING.

Jax surveys the apartment block, realizes... *something's wrong.*

JAX
We need to leave RIGHT NOW!

-SMAAAASH!!!-

A THREE-FOOT ICICLE ERUPTS THROUGH THE LOBBY WINDOW, SPEARS RIGHT PAST EMILY'S HEAD, AND DETONATES THE WALL BEHIND HER!

Emily lands on the ground; Cole and Sophia race towards her.

COLE
You okay?!

She nods, scared out of her mind.

Cole stares at the SHATTERED WINDOW, SNOW gusting inside.

COLE
Stay here.

Cole puts on his medallion.

EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

An EERIE, HOLLOW WIND WHISTLES from down the block.

Cole reaches Jax's side, follows his gaze:

That's when they see him. And so do we. BUT ONLY FOR A SINGLE TERRIFYING MOMENT.

The GHOSTLY FROZEN SILHOUETTE of SUB-ZERO. The ICE NINJA stalks the road; each footfall FREEZES the ground beneath it. His visage half-obsured by pounding snow. He wears a DRAGON MEDALLION forged from BLUE CRYSTAL.

JAX
GET IN THE TRUCK, COLE!

HEADLIGHTS. A CAR turns onto the street. Cole recognizes it.

COLE
ALLY!

The car SWERVES VIOLENTLY over a patch of ice, SMASHES into a TREE! Cole runs towards her.

Ally, still dazed from the air bag, looks up at Cole as he helps her out of the car.

ALLISON
Cole..?

COLE
You need to get inside now!

Cole turns towards SUB-ZERO. The Ice Ninja clocks the MEDALLION hanging from Cole's neck.

Cole notices, glances down at the rock. When he looks back up, Sub-Zero is gone!

Cole spins back towards Allison.

SUB-ZERO IS STANDING BEHIND HER!

The demon GRABS Ally by the THROAT! She GASPS for AIR as BLUE ICE RACES over her skin!

She reaches her hand out to Cole.

COLE
ALLY!!!

A GLIMMER OF LIFE in Ally's eye, BEGGING Cole to save her, before the DEAD ICE overtakes her face. It races down her arm, finishes at her outstretched hand.

Sub-Zero turns his gaze slowly towards Cole.

A MOMENT between them.

Sub-Zero's OPAQUE, LIFELESS EYES locked on Cole. Making sure Cole knows who's responsible. Making sure Cole sees what he's about to do....

Sub-Zero clenches his fist.

ALLISON SHATTERS INTO A MILLION PIECES.

Cole SCREAMS! AN EXPLOSION OF PAIN and FURY! He steps towards Sub-Zero, but the demon THRUSTS OUT HIS HANDS, DRILLS Cole with an ICE BLAST, LAUNCHING him into the air!

Cole lands on his back. He pushes himself up. REELS BACK in ANGUISH as he cradles his left arm. A NASTY LACERATION, the skin severed.

Still in a daze as Jax reaches his side. Cole pushes him off, sits up to see:

Emily and Sophia. Standing in the doorway. They just witnessed the whole thing.

COLE

Oh God...

Cole staggers to his feet. Overwhelmed with pain and anguish, all he can do is scream.

COLE

WE HAVE TO GO!

Cole takes his daughter (still shocked, speechless) into his arms. He hurries her towards the truck.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Jax SLAMS the gas; they speed off through the dense snow. He checks his rear-view.

SUB-ZERO pursues them. Methodical. Relentless.

Tears explode from Emily's eyes. Cole keeps his one good arm wrapped around her, clutching her to his chest. With his wounded arm, he holds Sophia's hand.

JAX

I'm sorry, Cole.

COLE

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO US?!

JAX

(locking eyes)

There's a war coming. Bigger than anything you can imagine. And you're at the center of it.

Cole tries to process this. Can't.

A BUZZ on Jax's phone. He holds a finger to his ear piece.

JAX
 Sonya. I found the medallion.
 (a somber glance at Cole)
 Yeah, I have him too...

We can read the compassion in Jax's eyes.

JAX
 What about the mercenary?
 (then)
 I'll meet you at the Farm in
 two hours.

Jax hangs up, steers the SUV into an UNDERGROUND TUNNEL.
 DARKNESS consumes them.

Emily lifts her head from Cole's chest. As the TUNNEL LIGHTS
 wash over her tear-strewn cheeks...

EMILY
 He killed Mom...

Cole holds her back to his chest.

COLE
 I got you.

AN ICICLE ERUPTS THROUGH THE REAR WINDOW, SPEARS PAST COLE'S
 HEAD, EMBEDS ITSELF IN THE DASH!

CLOSE ON: the truck's TEMPERATURE DISPLAY: the digital number
 plummets: -10...-15...-30...

Jax SLAMS the brakes. He leaves the keys in the ignition,
 shoulders open his door.

Jax walks to the trunk, pausing by Cole's window.

JAX
 You need to GO, find Sonya Blade!
 BROOK MILL FARM. LANCASTER. She's
 the only one who can help you!

COLE
 What about you?!

JAX
 I'll hold him off. Take the truck.
 Get your family out of here!

INT. ROAD TUNNEL - DAY

Jax pops the frost-covered trunk to REVEAL: A DUFFEL BAG filled with WEAPONS.

He pulls out a COMBAT SHOTGUN, SLAMS the trunk, catches Cole's gaze. We can see Cole's hesitation.

JAX
(racking the gun)
GO, COLE! NOW!

Cole nods to him, slides behind the wheel, SLAMS the TRUCK into DRIVE.

As he escapes with his family, Cole locks eyes with Jax in the REAR VIEW. A silent THANK YOU.

HOLD ON JAX:

A MOMENT of TERRIFYING STILLNESS. A GENTLE SNOWFALL dances before his eyes.

The OVERHEAD SODIUM VAPOUR LIGHTS in the TUNNEL SUDDENLY GO OUT pitching the entire scene into DARKNESS.

JUST THEN: The SNOWFALL INTENSIFIES!

TRANSLUCENT BLUE ICE CREEPS DOWN THE TUNNEL WALLS!

Jax flips on the gun's ATTACHED FLASHLIGHT. He tracks his aim through the icy darkness, no sign of Sub-Zero.

Heart pounding, breath steaming from his lips.

Jax takes a few steps forward...

A SHADOW NEXT TO HIM!

Jax spins and BLASTS a SHELL into the CONCRETE WALL!

That's when he senses something... BEHIND HIM.

Jax spins around!

The FLASHLIGHT illuminates SUB-ZERO'S GHASTLY FACE! Those dead eyes, that gruesome mask!

SUB-ZERO grabs the SHOTGUN in his FRIGID GRIP. He FREEZES the gun, rips it from Jax's hands.

Sub-Zero BREAKS the SHOTGUN over his knee.

He then STARES at JAX for a LONG MOMENT, daring him.

JAX

Fine.

Jax pulls off his jacket. He's wearing a BLACK TANK-TOP and a PAIR OF SILVER DOG TAGS.

He FLEXES his MASSIVE ARMS, marches on his opponent, and...

DRILLS SUB-ZERO in the FACE with a SHATTERING RIGHT CROSS.

The TWO GO AT EACH OTHER: HAND-TO-HAND. (No powers).

Trading blows.

Jax puts his cannons to good use!

He launches a rapid-fire assault, finishes with a BONE-SHATTERING UPPER-CUT!

Sub-Zero staggers backwards.

A MOMENT as JAX catches his breath, staring down his weakened opponent, knowing he has him on the ropes.

He readies the FINISHING BLOW, throws a MONSTER LEFT HOOK.

Sub-Zero catches his FIST. Jax counters with a RIGHT CROSS.

Sub-Zero catches his OTHER HAND.

With both fists now clenched in his grip, SUB-ZERO FREEZES JAX'S ARMS!

Jax can only stare in horror as the ICE RACES down his trapped limbs

The Ice Ninja stares deep into Jax's soul.

Then... he RIPS both of Jax's ARMS OFF!

Jax drops to his knees, collapses onto his side.

POLICE SIRENS CLOSING IN FAST! - RED AND BLUE LIGHTS rapidly approaching his position.

Sub-Zero tosses the arms away. He stares down the tunnel in the direction of Cole's escape.

Then he takes a step backwards, DISSOLVING into darkness.

BLACK.

EXT. MOUNTAINOUS PASS - (OUTWORLD) - NIGHT

We TRACK MILEENA, the female Outworld assassin, (think Elektra from Marvel Comics but twice as vicious and deadly), magenta leather armor, dual sais strapped to her back, BLOOD RED DRAGON MEDALLION around her neck. She hikes up a barren, black mountain pass.

There's a desolate, lifeless feel to the world around her. FLAKES OF ASH dance through RAW WIND.

She reaches the apex of her climb and we REVEAL:

SHANG TSUNG, Outworld General, ageless, robed in black and gold, standing at the edge of a cliff, hands behind his back. (think Ken Watanabe as an evil fucking sorcerer).

His ELITE GUARD stands by his side. TEN MEN TOTAL - armed with POLE WEAPONS. They don BLACK ARMOR topped with BRONZE MASKS that resemble the ANGUISHED FACES OF TORTURED SOULS.

A DEEP TREMOR shakes the Earth!

Mileena braces herself as a chunk of RETAINING WALL breaks off behind her. The DEATH RATTLE subsides.

MILEENA

I wasn't expecting to find you out here, Sorcerer. It's not safe.

Shang Tsung inhales a long, deep, breath through his nose, stares out over the CRUMBLING HORIZON.

IN THE DISTANCE: We can see the OUTLINE OF A MIGHTY OUTWORLD CITY, at the mercy of the elements.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

I come here often, to see what my people see. To feel as they feel. Every day, the ash falls thicker, suffocating them. Those that remain look to me for sanctuary, the last hope they have for a better world.

(then, with emotion)

Never forget what it is we're fighting for, Mileena.

MILEENA

Earthrealm.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

(correcting her)

Salvation. From this dying rock. I will not fail them.

ANOTHER, MORE VIOLENT, TREMOR SHAKES THE WORLD AROUND THEM!

MILEENA

You'll be pleased to know Sub-Zero tracked the black medallion as you ordered. He killed one of Earth's champions.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

Excellent.

MILEENA

We have the numbers. We should attack now with force, finish the rest of them!

Shang Tsung turns to face her for the first time.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

Patience, Mileena. This plan has been in motion for some time.

MILEENA

There's no time to be patient. Outworld is...

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

... Outworld is MY concern! The Earth Mortal who wears the black medallion is the key to everything! He will lead us to the rest of them. That's when we strike. By the time the tournament begins, we will already be victorious.

MILEENA

What of Lord Raiden? If he discovers we're breaking rules set in stone by the Elder Gods...

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

Lord Raiden gave up on Earthrealm a long time ago. He abandoned his people. What kind of leader does such a thing?

Shang Tsung turns back to the horizon. Ash clings to his black hair as he sharpens his eyes on his dying world.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

As long as we fight for what matters... we cannot be defeated.

INT. SUV - NIGHT

The SUV winds through the PITCH BLACK WOODS.

Emily's restless, but asleep, curled into Sophia's arm in the back of the truck.

Sophia stares out the window, her face blank with grief.

Cole grips the steering wheel.

REVEAL: his lacerated arm, wrapped in BLOOD-STAINED PHARMACY GAUZE and DUCT TAPE.

He stares at his WEDDING RING, blood caked around the band.

As the MOON shines through the windshield, casting rays of light across our vision, we...

FLASH TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - TWELVE YEARS AGO - DAY

COLE, younger here, fewer scars and bruises, opens his eyes. Half asleep, shirtless, wrapped in hotel sheets.

We notice a few TATTOOS on his chest. His daughter's name, Emily, written in cursive. And two words: NEVER QUIT.

ALLISON, as gorgeous as ever, appears above him. She's carrying EMILY, then four-months-old.

Cole smiles as she lowers Emily into his arms. He holds his daughter to his chest.

Emily grasps her father's fingers, playfully reaches for his wedding ring.

Ally gets into bed next to them. She leans in, kisses Cole softly on the cheek. He reaches his arm around her.

SUNLIGHT washes over the scene and we're suddenly back to:

INT. SUV - NIGHT

They reach their destination at the end of a LONG DRIVE. A CABIN nestled deep into the PINE BARRENS.

Cole parks, glances back at Emily, asleep in Sophia's arms.

COLE
I'll carry her.

INT. SOPHIA'S CABIN - A BIT LATER - NIGHT

Cole leaves Emily asleep, shuts a bedroom door.

He joins Sophia in the kitchen. She shakes her head, trying to understand, eyes red, exhausted with grief.

SOPHIA
What was that thing?

COLE
I don't know, but it's after me. I won't let anything happen to Emily. That's why I have to go.

Sophia nods, wipes the edges of her eyes.

SOPHIA
What do I tell her... when she wakes up...?

COLE
Tell her I love her. And I'm gonna find who did this.

A flash of anger crosses Cole's face.

COLE
When I do, I promise you, Sophia... I'm gonna kill him.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. SUV - (DRIVING) - LATER STILL - NIGHT

The clock reads 3AM. *He's been at this for a while.*

Cole peers out his window: a rusted mailbox comes into view:

"BROOK MILL FARM."

He pulls over.

EXT. DESOLATE ROAD - NIGHT

Cole places the DRAGON MEDALLION around his neck, pulls his hoodie over his head, takes off on foot.

THICK, BLACK WOODS encroach on both sides. BARBED WIRE FENCES stand guard. HAND-PAINTED SIGNS tacked up:

"NO TRESPASSING" - "24 HOUR VIDEO SURVEILLANCE"

BROOK MILL FARM comes into view.

Ghostly quiet. The old FARMHOUSE and ADJACENT BARN overlook a derelict survivor's compound - Overgrown vegetation. Corroded shipping containers. Shells of rusted cars, some dating back thirty years. A row of TURBINES, upgraded and abandoned.

CLOSE ON: Cole's medallion. The Dragon's eyes are glowing red again. He inspects it. *What the hell is that...?*

-WHAAAM!- Someone STRIKES him from behind!

Cole tries to stand but his legs GIVE OUT. As he stumbles, a KNEE STRIKES HIS JAW. He SPITS OUT A GOB OF BLOOD...

He INSTINCTIVELY throws a PUNCH.

His assailant catches it, bends his arm backwards, and sweeps him HARD to the ground.

A VICIOUS KICK to the RIB CAGE spins him onto his back.

A MILITARY-GRADE SPOTLIGHT FLASHES ON FROM SOMEWHERE!

Cole shields his eyes from the BLINDING WHITE LIGHT!

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

What are you doing here?

Cole squints through the light, can't see a thing.

COLE

I'm looking for Sonya Blade. Jax told me to find her.

SILENCE. Then the SHADOW moves into the light.

REVEAL: SONYA BLADE, (30s), (think a jacked Charlize Theron), dressed in military gear, blonde hair pulled into a ponytail.

She JUTS her gloved fist into Cole's shirt and fishes out his black medallion. She stares at the dragon with fascination.

Cole cradles his BANDAGED ARM, rolls to his side.

That's when he sees: KANO, (30s), (think Jason Clarke), the rugged, bearded Australian, sitting in a rocking chair on the front porch, feet up, beer in hand.

KANO

She did the same thing to me a couple days ago. Though to be honest, I fared a bit better.

SONYA

Not that much better.

Sonya grabs Cole by his good arm, pulls him to his feet.

SONYA

It's nice to meet you, Cole. I'm
Sonya Blade.

(then, the obvious)

Jax hasn't checked in. It's been
hours. Where is he?

COLE

He stayed behind to fight. This
guy, he shoots ice out of his
hands...

SONYA

You saw what attacked you?

COLE

(nodding to her)

He was something else... Not of
this world.

SONYA

I knew it.

Sonya fights back her emotion, turns and walks back to the
farmhouse.

Kano chugs the rest of his beer, CRUSHES it in his grip.

KANO

You didn't happen to bring any more
beer, did ya?

(off Cole's look)

I'll take that as a no.

INT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Cole and Kano wind their way through the house. The decor is
country quaint meets conspiracy theorist.

Shipping crates filled with cassette tapes and old newspapers
stand at odds alongside a neatly kept china cabinet, a vase
of blooming sunflowers. Pockets of a woman's touch.

PICTURE FRAMES line a hallway. They tell a story. The OLDEST
ONES show Sonya playing around the farm, a care-free kid.

MORE RECENT ONES show Sonya, dressed in MILITARY FATIGUES,
posing with her SPECIAL FORCES BATTALION around the world.

Cole warily eyes his new companion.

COLE
Who are you?

KANO
I'm Kano.

COLE
Kano. Kano what?

Kano walks up to Cole, sizing him up.

KANO
Just Kano.

The brute STARES at Cole, an unhinged look in his eyes.

COLE
Okay, then...

A LOUD -BANG- from inside the house. SONYA CURSES to herself.

KANO
There's something wrong with that
woman. I'm sure of it.

Cole considers this, moves further down the hallway, steps through a REINFORCED STEEL DOOR to reveal:

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

A RESEARCH COMMAND CENTER, built into the adjacent barn. Computers (some broken) line one wall; an enormous MAP OF THE WORLD covers the other. The map is spackled with hundreds of images and notes related to years of information that Sonya has gathered on Mortal Kombat.

Sonya types FURIOUSLY at her COMPUTER, muttering to herself:

SONYA
How are they able to find us? It
doesn't make sense.

Kano whistles to Cole, twirls a finger by his head.

KANO
See what I mean.
(then, to Sonya)
So it's clear you live alone, hoard
all your stuff. My new friend here
was just wondering... Where you
keeping all your cats?

Sonya marches towards Kano, drives a finger into his chest.

SONYA

You don't get to call me crazy.

COLE

(at a breaking point)

That thing killed my wife! I need to know what this has to do with me. Can you help me or not?

A MOMENT as that news sinks in. We can see the sympathy in Sonya's eyes. After a MOMENT, she nods to Cole, guides his attention to her wall of research.

SONYA

I first learned about this when I was stationed overseas. A bar in Malaysia. This old man was going on about it... At first, I thought he was full of shit but...

(with passion)

I couldn't get it out of my head.

Cole studies the wall: We see ANCIENT DEPICTIONS OF FANTASTIC BATTLES, rendered on various canvasses across time.

SONYA

This was my first discovery. Images of men fighting for the favor of the Gods. In every culture: Chinese, African. Egyptian. Cultures that had no crossover, yet they all shared this one myth in common. How?

She points to an IMAGE OF THE COILED DRAGON.

SONYA

The answer lies with this symbol. In almost every instance of this myth's portrayal, the COILED DRAGON is present. See for yourself.

CLOSE ON A FEW OF THESE IMAGES:

An EGYPTIAN PAPYRUS: A slave confronts Anubis. Tucked into the hieroglyphics bordering the image: THE COILED DRAGON.

A GRECIAN VASE: Zeus strikes down a mortal man... the Dragon visible in the swirling heavens.

An INDIAN TAPESTRY: Kala Bhairava rains down unholy vengeance... and again... and ALWAYS... THE DRAGON.

SONYA

One myth. One symbol. Shared by different cultures, throughout time. There's only one explanation: They weren't repeating stories they heard... they were reporting things they saw. That one shared myth was no myth. It was true. At various points in the past, Earth's greatest champions went to war for mankind's survival. An eternal war. To protect Earth from foreign enemies. The war was known as:
(then, as a throwaway)
Mortal Kombat.

She gesture to the name, written across the wall.

KANO

(interrupting them)
Did you make that part up?
(off Sonya's look)
It sounds like you made it up. Plus you spelled it wrong.

Sonya ignores him.

SONYA

The thing that attacked you was an assassin, sent by our enemies to kill anyone with a medallion.

Cole shakes his head, struggling to believe any of this.

COLE

That's insane.

Sonya gestures for Cole to join her in front of another wall.

We see surveillance on DOZENS OF PROSPECTIVE CHAMPIONS wearing medallions. People, like Cole, Sonya and Jax were scouting. Cole is pictured here with his BOXING ROBE on.

Cole takes off his MEDALLION, stares at the strange relic.

COLE

So these people...

SONYA

Like you. Champions selected to fight in Mortal Kombat. Most of them are already dead.

KANO is pictured here. Cole turns to face him.

KANO
Don't look so surprised...

Kano reaches into his shirt, extracts a MEDALLION of his own. This one, made of RUGGED BRONZE.

COLE
Where'd you get yours?

Kano points to the wall of known medallion holders. --
STRYKER, KURTIS, 34, UNITED STATES -- **LOCATION UNKNOWN**

KANO
I found it on HIS dead body. After
I killed him.
(then, with a smile)
You should really update that. He's
currently in a landfill in Rio.

Cole just STARES at Kano, then turns back to Sonya.

COLE
Where's yours?

Sonya looks away, bothered by this.

SONYA
I wasn't chosen. For whatever
reason, you two were.

COLE
I didn't kill anyone to earn this.
My Dad left it to me.

Sonya considers this, walks over to him.

SONYA
Tell me about your parents.

COLE
I was raised in foster care. I
never met them.

SONYA
My research shows there are only
two ways to earn a medallion. Pass
it down through one's lineage, or
kill its current owner. Blood or
Bloodshed.

KANO
(interrupting again)
You definitely made that part up.

SONYA

Our enemies won't stop. Not until
all of Earth's champions are dead.

JUST THEN:

THE POWER GOES OUT. A HUSHED DARKNESS takes hold.

Sonya LISTENS carefully, then locates a flashlight.

FOOTSTEPS. FAST.

RUNNING ALONG THE FLOORBOARDS ABOVE THEM!

SONYA

They found us.

Sonya hurries towards the REINFORCED DOOR, SLAMS it shut,
SNAPS the DEAD BOLTS into place.

Kano moves to his gear, pulls out a HANDGUN, CHAMBERS a
ROUND, aims it at the door.

KANO

Moment it comes through, I'm taking
its head off.

SONYA

That's reinforced steel. Nothing's
getting through that.

A -LOUD CRACKLING SOUND- BENDING. BUCKLING OF METAL.

A DARK GREEN ACIDIC SUBSTANCE EATS AWAY AT THE STEEL DOOR. A
GAPING CORROSIVE HOLE slowly expands as the steel dissolves
before their eyes.

Kano OPENS FIRE at the widening hole -BANG- -BANG- -BANG-

A BLACK, BARBED, WHIP-LIKE TONGUE, SNAPS INTO FRAME, RIPS THE
GUN RIGHT OUT OF HIS HAND. SO FAST, WE BARELY SEE IT.

Kano grips his hand. BURN MARKS on his skin.

COMMOTION BEHIND THEM. RESEARCH TOPPLES. DISCS SCATTER. A
CHAIR UPENDED.

COLE

It's inside the room.

They hold their breath, as the FLASHLIGHT searches the
darkness for the unseen enemy.

SONYA

You see anything???

BEHIND SONYA: The unseen assassin blinks off his invisibility to reveal: REPTILE (think Alien meets The Terminator).

The OUTWORLD CHAMPION wears a suit of DARK GREEN ARMOR. What little we can see of his face appears to be BLACK and SCALY. CLAWS hang from his fingertips. His eyes are piercing YELLOW. He wears a DARK GREEN MEDALLION.

Reptile VANISHES. REAPPEARING with a NIGHTMARISH -HISS- right behind Kano, leaping onto his back!

KANO

Christ, he's on me!

CLAWING, TEARING INTO HIS SHOULDER.

Kano SPINS WILDLY, trying to shake the assailant free... REPTILE manages a BRUTAL SLASH across Kano's right eye!

Sonya DARTS FORWARD, blade in hand. The assassin sees her coming, BLINKS INVISIBLE again. She STABS at NOTHING!

REPTILE APPEARS behind her, KICKS her HARD in the back, sending her CRASHING into research equipment.

Cole sets his fists like a boxer. He charges Reptile, throws a jab. Reptile vanishes. He hits nothing but air!

The DEMON REAPPEARS behind Cole, stares at him... sees something. The NOW EXPOSED medallion hanging from Cole's neck. Reptile COCKS HIS HEAD, studies it, then he SNAPS INVISIBLE moments before Sonya can strike him.

KANO rummages through Sonya's SURVIVAL SUPPLIES. His eyes fall on a STACK OF FLARES and some DUCT TAPE.

He POPS a FLARE. The BLACK ROOM LIGHTS UP IN BLOOD RED LIGHT.

SPARKS FLY, FLAMES CATCH. THEY QUICKLY DEVOUR the STACKS OF OLD NEWSPAPERS and BOOKS.

Sonya watches in HORROR as her WALL OF RESEARCH burns!

SONYA

What the hell are you doing?!

KANO

Giving us an edge!

Kano tapes the flare to his KNIFE. He waits for Reptile to appear and STABS THE KNIFE into the assassin's BACK!

Reptile **BLINKS INVISIBLE**. But NOW they can track him.

The **CRIMSON FLARE** dances around the room as our **HEROES** land a few quick strikes, evening the odds.

Reptile **STAGGERS** back, gives up on his invisibility.

SONYA

Get me a knife, Cole!

Cole sprints towards Sonya's **RACK OF KNIVES**.

Reptile **TRACKS HIM**, **SPITTING FASTBALLS OF GREEN ACID**, barely **MISSING** as Cole slides behind cover.

Reptile turns his **YELLOW EYES** to Kano.

The demon **LASHES** out his **TONGUE**, **STICKS** it to the side of **KANO'S HEAD** and pulls him in. Then he wraps his tongue **AROUND KANO'S NECK** like a noose, unhinges his grotesque jaws.

KANO

I could use a hand, here!

Cole locks eyes with Sonya on the opposite side of the room, squatting behind an overturned table.

Cole pulls down the first **BLADE** he sees, **FASTBALLS** it towards Sonya. She ducks as the blade **WHIZZES** past her head and **SPEARS** into the wall behind her.

SONYA

What the hell are you doing?!

COLE

Trying to help!

SONYA

Killing me isn't helping!

Kano writhes as the demon opens his mouth even wider, about to devour his entire head in one bite when...

SONYA

The machete, you see it?! SLOWLY on three. One... Two... NOW.

Cole detaches a **10-INCH-MACHETE** from the rack; the **MOMENT** Sonya gets to her feet, Cole **UNDER-HANDS** it towards her.

FIRE LIGHT GLINTS OFF THE BLADE as it **SPIRALS** towards Sonya.

She times it perfectly and in one beautiful move...

... CATCHES the MACHETE BY THE HANDLE, LUNGES forward, and DRIVES the blade through Reptile's chest.

REPTILE SCREAMS, SPINS, KNOCKS Sonya away.

Allowing just enough time for a recovered Kano to rip the BLADE out of REPTILE'S CHEST, and BRING IT SHARPLY ACROSS the ASSASSIN'S THROAT.

KANO

How's that taste, dick head?

Reptile emits a PANICKED -HISS-, GRASPS AT HIS NECK...

The DEMON drops to his knees, falls forward.

His body dissolves through the floorboards, leaving a charred black hole behind.

OVERHEAD SPRINKLERS DOUSE THE FLAMES. A MOMENT as our crew collects themselves, beat to hell, breathless.

KANO

(grimacing through pain)

I think we can all agree...

(then)

That's definitely my kill.

A BIT LATER - NIGHT

Sonya, devastated, stands before what's left of her research. Most of it destroyed, burned beyond recognition.

Seated nearby, Cole holds a BAG OF ICE to his head; Kano's right eye is BLOOD RED, framed by CLAWED SKIN.

Despite the injuries, Kano's got a SKETCH BOOK open in his lap. He's drawing a rather impressive portrait of Reptile.

Cole stares at the sketch book.

COLE

What the hell is that?

KANO

What? ... Oh, this?

(flipping through pages)

I like to document my kills.

COLE

Those are ALL your kills?

KANO
No, mate, of course not.
(then, with a smile)
This is volume two.

Cole shakes his head, pushes himself up. He approaches Sonya, who's all but given up at this point.

COLE
You said we were fighting for
Earth... what happens if we lose?

Cole helps Sonya gather up her research.

SONYA
What do you think?

COLE
I have a daughter. There must be
something we can do.

KANO (O.S.)
What's that? ... Right there.

Kano points his knife at the wall. With most of the clutter burned away, a SINGLE IMAGE stands out.

A DRAWING of an ANCIENT BUDDHIST TEMPLE. Forged into the old stone are BOLTS OF ELECTRICITY.

SONYA
Legend says it's a temple devoted
to the Thunder God, Lord Raiden.
He's said to be some sort of...
protector of Earth. Prior to the
start of Mortal Kombat, Earth's
champions would meet there to train
for the upcoming fight. I've never
actually seen the temple myself.

Kano walks over to the map of the world.

He STABS his knife down on a remote area of CHINA.

KANO
I used to run guns through here. I
remember, the villagers worshipped
that thing. I still got a contact
in that area. He might be able to
show us where your temple is.

COLE
Call him.

KANO

Guys like him don't carry phones, mate. Nope, we'd have to go in person. Lucky for us, I got a contact with a plane.

COLE

You got a lot of contacts.

Kano digs the tip of his knife between his teeth.

KANO

I'm a popular guy. Who wouldn't want to be friends with me?

He spits on the ground.

SONYA

I'm in.

Sonya wastes no time. She grabs her bag, heads to a wall comprised of STEEL SLIDING DOORS, pushes open the first one and starts packing up her gear.

Cole goes to her side.

COLE

Maybe we should think this through...

SONYA

If we find that temple... All of our questions will be answered.

Cole considers this. *What choice does he have?*

KANO

(with a smile)

Looks like I'm proving myself quite useful, huh, Blade?

(then)

Speaking of which... Is that really your last name? Blade?

Sonya pushes open the next SLIDING DOOR. REVEAL: EVERY TYPE OF AWESOME BLADED WEAPON you could possibly think of. From daggers to swords to everything in between.

SONYA

It's more of a nick name.

KANO

Got it.

INT. BEAT-UP CARGO PLANE - (FLYING) - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A TURBO PROP PROPELLER spinning mid-flight. The very used plane LURCHES and CHOKES through the night sky.

Kano rides shotgun in the cockpit, feet up on the dash, chatting with the ANCIENT PILOT next to him.

IN THE BELLY OF THE PLANE: Cole sits alone, thoughts locked on his daughter.

Sonya approaches, sits across from him. A MOMENT of SILENCE between them.

SONYA

I wish we could have gotten to you sooner. Maybe then...

Cole shakes his head, takes off his medallion. He studies the ancient rock. *Where did it come from?*

SONYA

If your father wore that medallion, then it means he was a champion like you. If it's true Mortal Kombat occurs once a generation, it's possible he fought for Earth before you were born.

COLE

(staring at the medallion)
Why wouldn't he give me some kind of warning?

Kano strolls over.

KANO

Sorry to break up this lovely moment. It's time.

The BAY DOORS OPEN with a LOUD GROAN.

Cole stares at the doors. He nods to himself, psyching himself up. He wraps a CHUTE PACK around his shoulders, fumbles with the straps.

SONYA

First time?

Sonya helps tighten the chute to Cole's back.

COLE

Thanks.

SONYA
Count to 30. Pull this cord.

She smiles, smacks Cole on the shoulder.

Cole takes a DEEP BREATH, walks to the edge of the plane and stops. He stares into the void.

COLE
On three. One... Two...

Kano SHOVES Cole out of the plane!

KANO
We haven't got all day, princess.
(off Sonya's look)
What?

EXT. CHINESE MOUNTAIN RANGE - DAWN

Cole touches down atop a LUSH, UNTOUCHED, MOUNTAIN RANGE. Not a road or path for miles.

Sonya and Kano lands beside him. As they strip their chutes:

SONYA
How close are we to your contact?

Kano takes out his HAND-HELD GPS DEVICE.

He taps his finger on the glass, holds the device to his ear.

KANO
We're a little off mark.

COLE
How far off mark?

KANO
Nothing major. Twenty-seven. Twenty-eight kilometers. Call it thirty to be safe.
(clearing his throat)
Thirty-two. To be safe.

Kano walks off towards the horizon.

COLE
(aside to Sonya)
Can we trust this guy?

As Sonya packs up her gear:

SONYA

He's ex-special forces turned merc-for-hire. Wanted by Interpol for arms dealing, drug running. He's killed at least two dozen people that I know about, assassinations most of them...

Cole just STARES at her.

SONYA

Point I'm trying to make is... we don't know if the remaining champions are alive or dead. It doesn't matter if we trust him. He has a medallion. We need him.

She slings her pack around her shoulder, follows Kano out.

EXT. FIGHTING PIT - (OUTWORLD) - NIGHT

As RAW and BARREN as we remember. ASH falls thicker from the dead sky. SKULL TORCHES ring a BLACK, CRAG-FILLED ARENA.

Shang Tsung, (the evil Outworld sorcerer and enemy of Earth), watches from the perimeter. An eternal, dignified presence to him. He addresses a YOUNG OUTWORLD WARRIOR.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

You fight today for the privileged honor of representing Outworld in Mortal Kombat.

The Warrior bows, then turns to face a DARK, MENACING CAVE.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

Your competitor awaits. Six-hundred and one straight victories.

A MONSTROUS, CARNAL -ROAAAAAR- echoes from within the cave. The Young Warrior's eyes go wide.

STOMP! ... STOMP! ... STOMP! ... STOMP! ... STOMP!

The WARRIOR charges his OFF-SCREEN opponent. We hear the CLANGING of SWORD AND SHIELD. A tremendous -ROAAAAAAR!-

And then: The TOP HALF of the warrior's body lands in front of Shang Tsung. BLOOD pumps from his twitching corpse.

Shang Tsung kneels by the FALLEN WARRIOR.

He places his hand on the man's forehead.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)
 You have given your life for
 Outworld, my son. In the name of
 our great emperor, Shao Kahn, your
 sacrifice will not be forgotten.

The SORCERER'S BODY SHAKES as he ABSORBS the DEAD WARRIOR'S SOUL into his own.

Shang Tsung's eyes roll back into his head. His body relaxes with a sort of satiated release.

As he slowly rises, DARK SHADOWS FLIT across his IRISES.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)
 FA-TAL-ITY.

Mileena (the female Outworld assassin) approaches. She holds her ground, though clearly unsettled by this.

Shang Tsung turns slowly towards her.

MILEENA
 Reptile is dead. You should have
 sent me. We're running out of time!

Shang Tsung grabs Mileena by the throat, the veins in his neck pronounced, black like his eye sockets!

Mileena struggles to break his grasp. Can't. Suffocating.

A VICIOUS TREMOR, stronger than we've felt before, SHAKES the ENTIRE WORLD around them!

Shang Tsung releases Mileena. He stares with alarm at the CRACKED EARTH, then studies the LIFELESS HEAVENS. The falling ash clings to his ageless skin.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)
 Sub-Zero is tracking the black
 medallion. It will lead us to
 Raiden's temple. Be ready to move
 on my command.
 (then)
 And Mileena...

She looks up at him.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)
 Tell me what to do again... And I
 will rip the soul from your body.

Mileena nods, slowly backs away from him.

EXT. WHITE FOREST - LATER - DAY

OPPOSITE from the LUSH GREENERY they started in, our team winds through a MAZE OF LEAFLESS WHITE TREES. Their slender BRANCHES bend at JAGGED ANGLES.

We can tell they've been at this for a while.

KANO
I need a break.

Kano plops down on a twisted tree stump.

COLE
You took a break five minutes ago.

Sonya shakes her head, patience wearing thin.

SONYA
Give me the GPS. I'm taking point.

KANO
I don't take orders from you.

Sonya turns around, walks right up to Kano, who's now got his feet stretched out, hands behind his head.

SONYA
You don't know how lucky you are to have one of those medallions.

KANO
Didn't seem so lucky when Lizard Man was trying to eat my head.

Sonya massages her temples, patience at its end.

SONYA
The idea that you, of all people, were chosen...

KANO
Ah... I see what's going on here. There's no need for jealousy. You want a medallion so badly... Take mine.

There's something unhinged in the way Kano's challenging her. He's not offering it, he's insinuating a fight to the death.

COLE
I wouldn't mess with her, man.

KANO
Stay out of this, numb nuts.

Kano STANDS, walks right up to SONYA, never taking his crazed eyes off of her.

Sonya doesn't budge. Not even an inch.

KANO
(cold, unstable)
You know, the guy who had this medallion before me underestimated me too. Last mistake he ever made.
(then, with a smile)
Shall we dance?

SONYA
It's your blood.

Kano LAUGHS, breaking the tension for a SPLIT SECOND before, THROWING A SUCKER PUNCH AT SONYA.

She ducks it, follows up with a VICIOUS CRACK TO KANO'S JAW.

-WHAAAM!-

SONYA SWEEPS KANO OFF HIS FEET, ROLLS ON TOP OF HIM, BRINGS HER RAZOR-SHARP KNIFE TO HIS NECK.

Kano CHALLENGES her!

KANO
GO ON, DO IT!

Sonya PRESSES the blade tighter to his neck. The STEEL slices into his skin; blood seeps.

KANO
DO IT! KILL ME! TAKE MY MEDALLION!

Sonya grits her TEETH, PRESSES the blade even DEEPER and...

...pulls the knife away. Kano laughs in her face.

KANO
See? You don't have it in you.
(RE: his medallion)
That's why you don't have one of these.

WHEN OUT OF NOWHERE: A VOICE SPEAKS.

VOICE (O.S.)
Champions of Earthrealm?!

Cole, Sonya, and Kano all turn to see: LIU KANG.

(think Henry Golding from "Crazy Rich Asians" with the fighting skills of Bruce Lee) Red pants. Matching vest. Handsome as hell.

Kano, as usual, considers this a challenge. He walks towards Liu Kang, fists clenched.

The Shaolin warrior THRUSTS out his hand.

A FIREBALL shoots from his open palm and DETONATES the ground by Kano's feet!

KANO
What the hell?!

LIU KANG
I am not your enemy. I am Liu Kang
of the White Lotus Society.

SONYA
A champion.

LIU KANG
From Earthrealm. Like you. You came
to China to seek Raiden's temple. I
will take you there.

SONYA
How did you find us?

Liu Kang reaches into his vest, extracts a DRAGON MEDALLION forged from ancient Chinese jade.

The Dragon's eyes are GLOWING RED.

LIU KANG
Earth's medallions are linked
together. The eyes will glow when
other Champions are near.

KANO
Forget the medallions. You made a
fireball come out of your hand.

LIU KANG
There is much to learn. But not
here. You must follow me.

Liu Kang walks away.

SONYA
We just came from that direction.

Cole shoots Kano a look.

KANO

My bad.

EXT. RAIDEN'S TEMPLE - LATER - DAY

They follow Liu Kang through a maze of THICK VEGETATION.

As Sonya hacks away the overgrowth with her machete, we come to REVEAL: RAIDEN'S TEMPLE.

A ONCE GLORIOUS BUDDHIST TEMPLE hidden from the world.

But whatever marvelous temple this once was, today it appears run-down, forgotten. From the caved-in roof, to the crumbling walls, covered in vines.

LIU KANG

It wasn't always like this. For thousands of years, this temple was a holy place of worship, dedicated to the great Lord Raiden.

They follow Liu Kang towards the old, forsaken building.

COLE

What happened to it?

LIU KANG

The temple's former worshippers abandoned their faith. Turning instead to the simple pleasures of wealth and sin. Time took care of the rest.

As they reach the temple entrance: a GHOSTLY WIND swirls the loose gravel by their feet.

Sonya crosses her arms; a chill creeps over her.

Liu Kang stops. He turns around and LISTENS.

Are they being followed?

But there's only SILENCE. *No sign of anyone...*

LIU KANG

It's just through here.

Liu Kang and Kano FORCE OPEN the temple's front door.

INT. RAIDEN'S TEMPLE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

A disused, forgotten place. FADED MURALS of Raiden decorate the walls.

Liu Kang lifts open a TRAP DOOR hidden beneath the SHRINE.

Our heroes follow him down a RICKETY WOOD LADDER.

EXT. RAIDEN'S TEMPLE - SAME TIME

REVEAL: SUB-ZERO. Camouflaged amongst the foliage, hand pressed to a TREE TRUNK. As BLUE ICE creeps over the BARK, he sharpens his eyes on Raiden's once-hidden temple.

A SWIRLING, NIGHTMARISH BLACK PORTAL suddenly opens behind him. Leaves swirl. Trees sway. We can see IMAGES OF OUTWORLD in the portal's surreal window.

Sub-Zero turns to leave, his mission accomplished.

INT. CRYPT - DAY

A festering burial place.

Earth's champions move past the mummified remains of ancient kombatants and arrive at:

A TOWERING STONE DOOR. Built underground.

In the center of the door: A GOLD RELIEF of the MORTAL KOMBAT COILED DRAGON.

SONYA
(stunned)
It actually exists...

Liu Kang pulls the medallion from his chest. The STONE DOOR reacts to its presence.

A DEEP TREMOR shakes the crypt.

The DOOR slides open for our champions!

INT. MYSTERIOUS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The door seals shut behind them. SILENCE takes hold.

Unlike the crypt, this HALLWAY feels alive. Cleansed of cobwebs and debris. The walls are decorated with murals. Torchlight guides their path.

Our heroes pass by a SERIES OF PAINTED MURALS. ABOVE EACH MURAL: a ROMAN NUMERAL. The murals depict the following in chronological order:

I. ANCIENT EGYPT. Pyramids. The Sphinx. Ten human combatants battle otherworldly monsters.

II. ANCIENT GREECE. A new set of battles waged outside the Parthenon, in the Theater of Apollo.

CLOSE ON: MURAL III. The full outcome of the battle having been recorded centuries ago in ANCIENT ROME.

We see: DREADLOCKS'S LIFELESS BODY (the slave from our opening scene), held aloft by a FOUR-ARMED MONSTER OF A MAN, who we all know as PRINCE GORO.

MURALS (IV-IX) have also been drawn, battles waged across time. Each one shows Earthrealm badly defeated.

SONYA

These drawings...

LIU KANG

The Living Hallway. All stories begin and end here.

Cole STOPS by MURAL X.

We see SILHOUETTES of our heroes: Kano. Liu Kang. Kung Lao. And a FIGHTER wearing BOXING GLOVES. Cole studies the figure closely: *Is that him?*

INT. ARCHIVES - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

They pass through a STONE KEEP built into the underground catacombs.

Sonya, eyes wide with excitement, struggles to take in the history of Mortal Kombat on display.

CLOSE ON: A GLASS CASE. We see a GORGEOUS CERULEAN FAN resting inside, inlaid with calligraphy. A GOLDEN PLACARD reads: CEREMONIAL FAN of PRINCESS KITANA.

A group of ARMED, ROBE-CLAD MONKS gather before our heroes. They stand in reverence, swords pinned to the earth.

LIU KANG

Those who have kept their faith.
From the moment they are born, they
devote their lives to protecting
this hallowed place.

A YOUNG BOY parts through the crowd.

YOUNG BOY (O.S.)
The champions!

He's wearing a medallion made from paper maché, carrying a hand-crafted doll of Lord Raiden.

The boy walks up to Kano, face full of wonder.

YOUNG BOY
A medallion... Can I touch it?

The boy reaches a hand to Kano's medallion.

Kano smacks the boy's hand away.

KANO
Hands off the merchandise, kid.

The boy takes up a fighting position; he throws a few punches. Then he sets himself and fires off a few kicks.

YOUNG BOY
I'm training to be a champion myself. Perhaps you could give me a few pointers.

Kano SHOVES the boy to the ground.

COLE
What the hell, man?!

KANO
What?
(then, with a shrug)
That's how my father taught me.

Cole helps the young boy up, hands him his doll.

COLE
Here you go, bud.

YOUNG BOY
Thank you. You honor us with your presence. You are a true hero.

Cole considers this as he scans the faces of the temple's devoted protectors.

All eyes watching him with respect and admiration.

COLE
I don't know about that.

YOUNG BOY

I do.

The boy hurries away.

Liu Kang leads our heroes through the archives.

LIU KANG

Since the dawn of time, Champions of Earth have come here to train. To fight in Earth's eternal war against Outworld.

SONYA

Outworld?

LIU KANG

Earth is one of many realms. The Elder Gods that oversee these realms, in order to keep balance and prevent constant war, struck a deal centuries ago. Once a generation, a realm could send its eight greatest champions to fight those of another. Slay all eight of your opponent's champions, win the battle. Win ten straight battles, win the war and with it, control of the losing realm. The idea of winning ten straight battles was deemed an impossible task, so the balance was always kept.

Cole stares at a TIME-WORN MAP showing DOZENS OF REALMS. Among them: Earthrealm. Outworld. Netherrealm. Edenia. Chaosrealm.

LIU KANG

Across every realm and throughout history, this eternal war has been known by a single name...

(then)

Mortal Kombat.

SONYA

How do you spell that?

LIU KANG

With a K.

Sonya leans into Kano, flashes a pretentious smile.

SONYA

Told ya' I didn't make it up.

LIU KANG

Our culture doesn't speak of these stories anymore. But I have always believed. I have dedicated my life to this. Waited for my moment to serve.

Sonya pulls an ancient book from the shelf. She flips through several pages depicting great warrior crucibles: The Ancient Olympics. The Roman Coliseum. Medieval Tournaments.

LIU KANG

All around the world, different cultures would hone their very best, in hopes that he or she might represent Earth in the next Mortal Kombat. They fought for the right to wear the medallion. Many have given their lives protecting Earth.

REVEAL: Kano. Sitting in an OLD CHAIR. Head propped in his hand, eyes closed.

Cole kicks his leg.

KANO

(snorting awake)
Huh?! Fireballs!

A SIDE ROOM catches Sonya's attention.

Inside, a team of MONKS tend to a PATIENT lying in bed.

CLOSE ON: the bedside wall. Hanging on a hook, we see a DRAGON MEDALLION. Forged in bruised SILVER. We've seen this one before. So has Sonya.

She immediately walks towards it.

INT. INFIRMARY - MOMENTS LATER

As Sonya reaches the doorway, her face drops. She shakes her head, trying to process what she's seeing.

JAX.

Intubated. Unconscious. His arms are missing, the remaining stumps wrapped in white bandages. Patches of BLACK FROSTBITE decorate his chest and neck.

Cole reaches Sonya's side, can't believe his eyes.

COLE
He's alive...?

LIU KANG
It has been my charge to track down
Earth's champions. By the time I
found Jax, I was too late. I should
have been there to help. I'm sorry.

SONYA
Will he be okay?

LIU KANG
The ice cauterized his wounds, kept
him alive. Still, I'm afraid
there's no guarantee.
(then)
Come. He is waiting.

Cole turns Sonya away, eyes heavy.

Liu Kang leads our heroes towards a STONE DOOR, lightning
bolts chiseled into the rock.

Once again the door reacts to the presence of Liu Kang's
medallion and opens for them.

INT. RAIDEN'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

A simple circular chamber. Empty, save for a ROCK SLAB
THRONE. On which, sits LORD RAIDEN.

A far cry from the REGAL GOD we saw at the beginning of our
story. His ornate robes and hat are hung up behind him. He
wears a simple white tunic now, a rope around his waist. His
eyes cast down.

LIU KANG
The Great Protector. Lord Raiden.

Liu Kang immediately bows in reverence. Cole looks to Sonya.
They both awkwardly follow suit. Only Kano remains standing.

LIU KANG
I have fulfilled your mission, my
Lord. I have gathered the remaining
champions of Earth.

After a MOMENT, Raiden lifts his head. The energy in his eyes
is gone. All that remains are his gray pupils, empty like his
chamber, and twice as cold.

RAIDEN

What you did... was pointless.

Raiden pushes himself up, walks towards our heroes. His eyes linger over Cole's wounded arm.

RAIDEN

You ... You are in no physical or mental shape to fight.

(then, to Sonya)

You don't even have a medallion.

KANO

What about me, huh? ... What's my fortune, Gandalf?

Without looking, Raiden BLASTS Kano with a BOLT of ELECTRICITY, launching him backwards!

RAIDEN

Powerless. Insubordinate. This changes nothing. You should go.

Raiden shakes his head with disappointment.

SONYA

That's it? We almost died finding you. Jax was crippled.

RAIDEN

You're too late. It's over.

COLE

What do you mean, "it's over?"

RAIDEN

There was a time when Earth respected Mortal Kombat. That time has long passed. Outworld has taken advantage of humankind's ignorance for many years.

Raiden returns to his throne.

RAIDEN

They have claimed nine straight victories. One more victory, and Outworld will gain control over Earth. Forever.

A MOMENT as our heroes exchange stunned, apprehensive looks.

Kano stumbles back over, shirt smoking.

KANO
What'd I miss?

RAIDEN
You did this to yourselves.

Cole steps forward, determination in his eyes.

COLE
When does Mortal Kombat begin?

RAIDEN
On the next blood moon.

The group exchanges a few confused looks.

KANO
I didn't bring a moon calendar.

RAIDEN
(silencing him)
Five days! But I already told you,
you're wasting your time.

COLE
We've already killed one of them.
You used to help humanity train for
this. Help us now! We can still
beat them!

Raiden looks at Cole, his ancient eyes boring into him.

RAIDEN
You've seen what they're capable
of. Your wife, Allison. You were
powerless to save her. That's what
you came here for, Cole Morino.
Revenge. But you will not find it.
Only more death.

Cole looks to his teammates. He holds his ground.

COLE
If what you said is true... we lose
this, we lose everything, then I'd
die to keep my daughter safe. You
don't want to help us, fine. We'll
do it ourselves.

Cole walks away. Sonya and Kano right behind him.

We HOLD ON: Raiden's eyes. He sharpens them, considering
Cole's final words... *very carefully.*

INT. ARCHIVES - MOMENTS LATER

Liu Kang leads our heroes away from Raiden's quarters.

LIU KANG
That could have gone better.

A SUDDEN EXPLOSION ROCKS the entire temple! They spin towards the bombardment with shock!

Cole can see his BREATH steaming before his eyes. A single SNOWFLAKE lands on the back on his neck.

He knows EXACTLY what this means.

COLE
It's him.

SONYA
Who...?

Cole clenches his fists, races back the way they came.

LIU KANG
Wait!

INT. LIVING HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The SNOW INTENSIFIES as Cole reaches the Living Hallway. The GREAT STONE DOOR - breached!

COLE
(screaming out)
FACE ME!

Slowly reveal: The MENACING, FROZEN SILHOUETTE of SUB-ZERO, stepping out of the darkness.

Cole keeps his eyes locked on him.

We can see the SAME COLD, UNDEAD LOOK HE GAVE COLE RIGHT BEFORE HE KILLED ALLISON.

The ANGER, the RAGE, the NEED for VENGEANCE burning inside of Cole! He CHARGES Sub-Zero!

The Outworld assassin patiently waits for him.

Then... HE DEMOLISHES COLE.

But not with his powers. With his brutal martial arts skill.

BONE-SHATTERING PUNCHES. KICKS. It would be too easy to just freeze Cole solid. Sub-Zero wants to enjoy this.

Cole MISSES with a PUNCH. Sub-Zero SWEEPS his legs out.

Cole lands HARD on the ground, cradling his WOUNDED ARM.

Sub-Zero marches on him. He extends his arm; a MASSIVE ICICLE grows into his waiting palm!

Seconds from FINISHING him, WHEN...

A RAZOR-SHARP HAT WHIPS DOWN THE HALLWAY, SLICES THE ICICLE IN HALF!

The FORCE of IMPACT launches Sub-Zero backwards.

A HAND appears above Cole's face. MEET: KUNG LAO! - (think Donnie Yen, his looks say a million words).

The stoic WARRIOR MONK wears a dragon medallion around his neck. His hat returns to him like a FRISBEE. He catches it using TELEKINESIS. A GLOWING BLUE HALO FRAMES THE WEAPON.

Kung Lao pulls Cole to his feet as the rest of Earth's champions arrive.

MILEENA (female Outworld assassin) steps out of the tunnel.

One of the temple's ARMED MONKS races towards her, sword raised in defense.

Mileena easily counters his attack, pulls a SAI from her back, ready to end him...

LIU KANG steps forward. A FIREBALL engulfs his hand.

Mileena stares at him. Liu Kang shakes his head. Don't.

Mileena smiles, releases the Monk.

SHANG TSUNG (the evil Outworld sorcerer and enemy of Earth) emerges from the DARKNESS.

His presence is a storm cloud of dark energy. An evil smile unfurls from his lips as he walks towards our heroes.

The sorcerer looks to Cole, cocks his head slightly.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)
Interesting. You look... *different*
than I imagined.

Cole looks to his teammates: *What's that supposed to mean?*

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)
The time has come to FINISH this!

Shang Tsung turns and walks away. With a cavalier hand gesture, he commands his soldiers:

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)
Take whatever trophies you desire.
But their souls are mine.

RAIDEN'S VOICE SUDDENLY ECHOES THROUGH THE CHAMBER:

RAIDEN (O.S.)
SILENCE! This is a violation of the
HIGHEST ORDER!

Shang Tsung stops in his tracks. He slowly turns around to see: RAIDEN. Standing behind Earth's champions.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)
You're too late, Raiden. Earth
belongs to Outworld now.
(then, with a smile)
I wonder if a part of you isn't
pleased by that.

RAIDEN
The blood moon has not yet risen
in the sky! It is forbidden to
claim victory until the tournament
begins!

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)
Why prolong the inevitable? Every
day, millions of my people die.
Upon the ashes of your conquered
planet, I will rebuild our realm
into a glorious empire!

Raiden takes a STEP FORWARD.

RAIDEN
You will leave this place at once,
Sorcerer!
(then, with intensity)
Or I will have NO CHOICE but to
alert the Elder Gods. An eternity
of punishment will be cast upon
your soul!

Shang Tsung steps forward, meeting Raiden face-to-face. His ever-changing eyes swirl with DARK ENERGY.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)
 (glancing at our heroes)
 These are your champions?
 (then, with a laugh)
 Five days changes nothing. I will
 return to claim what's rightfully
 mine. You FAILED Earthrealm,
 Raiden. Soon you will have the
 pleasure of watching it die.

Shang Tsung turns and leaves.

Sub-Zero holds his ground, cocks his head, stares at Cole.

Cole holds his gaze.

Mileena winks at Sonya. Then the Outworld Warriors follow the great sorcerer out.

A MOMENT passes.

COLE
 (to Raiden)
 Thank you. For giving us a chance.

RAIDEN
 (brushing him off)
 I only did that to afford you
 enough time to say goodbye to the
 people you love. Make no mistake,
 Shang Tsung WILL return in five
 days. Earth WILL die.

With that, Raiden turns and walks away.

Kano steps to Cole's side.

KANO
 I have to say... For some super
 powerful protector guy... he's a
 real bummer.

INT. TRAINING AREA - A BIT LATER - DAY

Built into the underground catacombs, the TRAINING AREA features a FIGHTING PIT filled with RED SAND. EXPOSED ROCK high above the pit offers NATURAL SUNLIGHT to cascade downward upon the arena.

This is where Earth's CHAMPIONS have trained for centuries. Ancient. Antique. Awesome.

Liu Kang and Kung Lao lead the others towards the pit.

Liu Kang introduces Kung Lao.

LIU KANG
This is my brother, Kung Lao.

KANO
(smacking KL's shoulder)
Nice to meet you, mate. But...
getting back to my question about
the fireball thing...

LIU KANG
In order to properly prepare for
battle, it is essential that you
discover your Arcana.

COLE
Our... what?

LIU KANG
It is the true power within you.
Unique to each champion. It is your
greatest weapon, and your only
chance of victory.

Liu Kang looks at his hands. Kung Lao takes off his hat. The
brothers exchange a glance.

LIU KANG
My brother and I have found our
Arcana. Perhaps we can help you
discover yours.

COLE
How?

LIU KANG
It will not be easy and there is no
guarantee. All you can do now is
TEST YOUR MIGHT. If you do have the
Arcana inside of you, only you can
bring that power forth.

A MOMENT as that final piece of wisdom washes over our group.
Then, Kano leans in to Cole.

KANO
I hope I get fireballs.

COLE
Yeah. I got that.

Liu Kang holds out his hand, allowing Kano and Cole access to
the training area.

But when Sonya tries to cross, Kung Lao juts out his hat, blocking her entry.

LIU KANG

You're welcome to stay here with us, Miss Blade, but the training area is for Champions only.

Sonya takes a step back, her spirits visibly crushed.

COLE

Hang on a second. We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for her.

Kung Lao shakes his head, refuses to budge.

LIU KANG

A fighter without their medallion can never achieve their Arcana. A fighter without their Arcana is a liability to the others.

COLE

She's one of us.

Sonya shakes her head, resigned to her fate.

SONYA

No I'm not, Cole.

As much as it pains her, she turns and walks away.

LATER:

Cole stands opposite Kung Lao in the fighting pit. Liu Kang sits between them on the sidelines.

LIU KANG

Ready? ... Fight.

Before Cole can take a step...

The Warrior Monk pulls the hat off his head, whips it into a GLOWING DERVISH, and flings it at Cole.

Cole instinctively BLOCKS with his wounded LEFT ARM.

The resulting impact FLATTENS him, sends him skidding back into the sand.

He GRIPS his ARM in pain. We can see the LACERATION has opened. Blood trickles into his open palm.

Cole scrapes himself off the ground.

COLE

How do you summon this "Arcana?"

Liu Kang focuses on his hand, igniting a FIREBALL.

LIU KANG

No strength of desire, no acuity of reflexes will summon it. It must come from your soul.

Kano waltzes up to the pit, smacks Liu Kang HARD on the back.

KANO

Super helpful. Thank you.
(then, to Kung Lao)
What's up with you, mate? Cat got your tongue or something?

LIU KANG

As part of his dedication to Kung Fu, my brother has taken a vow of silence.

KANO

Oh yeah? ... Give me a chance, I'll knock some sound out of him!

ON SONYA:

Seated on a bench, watching from a short distance away. Longing in her eyes.

Something catches her attention. IN THE FAR CORNER OF THE ROOM, bathed in shadows...

RAIDEN. Watching the champions train. He turns his head to Sonya, sensing her gaze.

She quickly looks down. After a MOMENT, she looks back up. The Thunder God is gone.

ON LIU KANG:

His fireball slowly diminishes, but still he concentrates intently on it, willing it to maintain.

LIU KANG

Your Arcana can manifest in different ways. Mine is different than my brother's; we've heard tales of levitation, teleportation, all manner of impossibility. So don't be discouraged if your first attempts prove fruitless.

Liu Kang's flame finally snuffs out. He turns to Cole.

LIU KANG
 Whatever it is that drives you,
 whatever it is that defines you,
 tap into that.

Cole gazes at his hands, curious fascination in his eyes.

COLE
 I wonder what it will be.

The MOMENT he looks back up: *-WHAAM!*- Kano CLOCKS him right in the face! Cole stumbles back, cupping his nose.

KANO
 It's definitely not reflexes.

LATER STILL:

Cole duels with Liu Kang in the fighting pit. He approaches like a boxer, fists raised. He throws a jab, a cross, a hook. Everything he's trained to do.

Just as Cole WHIFFS an uppercut, Liu Kang WHIPS a ROUNDHOUSE KICK to Cole's face, then HITS him in the CHEST with a FIREBALL, launching him ten feet into the air.

He lands on his back, a HOLE burned into his shirt!

Cole grips his busted LEFT ARM, clutches it to his chest.

Kano hovers over him, counts off his fingers:

KANO
 Let's recap. We know it's not
 reflexes. It's not speed. Sure as
 shit ain't strength...

Liu Kang approaches Cole.

LIU KANG
 Your wound is too severe.

COLE
 I'm fine. Let's keep going!

Cole holds up his arm: It's a disgusting, bloody mess.

INT. RECOVERY AREA - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Cole drops onto a bench. Liu Kang stands on the periphery.

A PAIR of MONKS, robed in WHITE, tend to Cole's wound. They cut away the tattered bandages.

We see for the first time, the BRUTAL LACERATION down Cole's forearm.

LIU KANG

How did you sustain this?

COLE

The Ice Man ... after he... killed Ally. I tried to stop him.

LIU KANG

The one they call SUB-ZERO, formerly of the Lin Kuei clan. He was killed in Kombat many years ago. Shang Tsung brought him back to life so that he would fight for Outworld. He is a formidable opponent.

The Monks apply MYSTICAL BLUE PASTE to Cole's wound.

COLE

I need to find my Arcana soon. How did you discover yours?

LIU KANG

My brother and I grew up on the streets. Like many orphaned children, we had to learn quickly how to protect ourselves. But still, the streets are a dangerous place for a child. We wouldn't have lasted long. The White Lotus Society found us. Master Fujin took us in. He saved our lives.

The Monks add a SPRINKLE of TRANSLUCENT POWDER to the wound, then use a hollow bone to blow RED SMOKE onto Cole's arm.

The salve CRACKLES, then instantly CAUTERIZES.

LIU KANG

We were taught about Mortal Kombat. Worshipped the great Lord Raiden and dedicated our lives to training for this moment. Upon graduation, we were offered a final test. A chance to earn our medallions.

Liu Kang takes a seat beside the Monks. He wraps fresh bandages around Cole's wound.

LIU KANG

I was given the name of a man in Hong Kong. A purveyor of rare things... His specialty was selling people. Children mostly.

(off Cole's look)

He had a medallion. So I took it from him. It was in that moment that I discovered my Arcana. Fueled by vengeance.

Liu Kang balls his hand into a fist. It REDDENS with fire.

Then he lets it go, returns to wrapping Cole's arm.

COLE

They killed my wife, Liu. Talk about vengeance... How is that not enough to activate my Arcana?

Liu lowers his eyes in sympathy, finishes his work.

REVEAL for the first time: Cole's new YELLOW BANDAGES wrapped down his arm.

Liu Kang places his hand on Cole's shoulder.

LIU KANG

Vengeance is not what defines everyone, my friend.

INT. DINING AREA - NIGHT

The entire collected crew eats a light meal.

Kano GULPS down his soup, surveys the remaining food.

KANO

Pass me that egg roll, will ya?

Kung Lao reaches for the dish. But instead of passing it, he picks up the last egg roll and takes a bite.

Then he makes a series of hand gestures to his brother.

LIU KANG

He says you wouldn't be ready to fight if you had a hundred days to train. You are a fat, lazy man.

KANO

Is that right? ... Well I know some sign language of my own.

Kano holds up two MEATY MIDDLE FINGERS, cracks a laugh.

Kung Lao throws more gestures at his brother.

LIU KANG

He also says you are a terrible
fighter. Zero skill.

OK, now things are uncomfortable.

Kano STARES at Kung Lao, marble-eyed. That MANIC, UNHINGED
LOOK we saw earlier with Sonya, returning to his face.

LIU KANG

And that you're stupid, like a dog.
(more gestures)
What? ... Oh.
(with a laugh)
Like a dog who fails his training
classes.

Kano clenches his teeth, then his fists.

KANO

You tell him he better put those
hands away or I'm gonna take that
stupid fucking hat off his head and
shove it so far up his monk ass...

Kung Lao STANDS, ready for a fight!

Kano stands. More than happy to oblige.

LIU KANG

You would dare raise a fist against
your best hope of survival?

KANO

Tell him to sit down.

LIU KANG

He's here to save you. Because you
cannot save yourself. Because you
are incapable. Useless. Mentally,
physically...

KANO

Last warning, mate.

Kano looks like a lobster at this point; he's bright red. His
eyes are BULGING.

Liu Kang is unfazed.

LIU KANG

You should be on your knees before
this man.

Cole stands... but Sonya pulls him back to his seat.

At first, Cole's confused by this interference... but then he sees it in her eyes: she's noticed something. The same thing as Liu Kang:

KANO'S DAMAGED EYE IS GLOWING.

Barely at first... but it's growing in intensity by the second. And the angrier he gets, the brighter it becomes...

LIU KANG

Good. Be angry. You should be.
(then)
You failure.

Kano BARES HIS TEETH, unleashes a PRIMAL GROWL... which is matched in intensity only by his DEMONIC EYE: it RADIATES A BRILLIANT, SEARING RED LIGHT.

A split second later, it's ALL WE CAN SEE...

Kano FIRES his EYE BLAST!

Kung Lao DEFLECTS it with his hat.

It RICOCHETS around the room, RIPPING apart everything in its path. Sonya pulls Cole to the floor as the BLAST EXPLODES through the wall and LASER BEAMS across the temple, where it DETONATES one of the many bookshelves.

Kung Lao signs to Liu Kang, punctuates it with a smile.

Kano points to his eye. Big smile on his face!

KANO

Did you see that!? I've got a LASER
BEAM in my eye! A GOD DAMN LASER
BEAM! It doesn't get any cooler
than that...

(then, to Cole)

I knew I'd get my power before you.

No denying that one stings.

INT. TRAINING AREA - DAY

Cole squares off against Kano in the fighting pit. Liu Kang and Kung Lao stand on the periphery.

LIU KANG

We are down to our final day. But do not be discouraged, Cole. We have yet to try pain. It is the ultimate activator. I want you to focus on it. Allow your Arcana to manifest as a defense mechanism.

(then, to Kano)

Hit him.

KANO

With pleasure.

COLE

Does it have to be him?

-WHAAAM!- Kano CLOCKS Cole in the face.

Cole stumbles back, holds a hand to his throbbing jaw.

COLE

GODDAMMIT!

LIU KANG

Focus on the pain, Cole! Channel it! ... Hit him again.

KANO

Yeah. Focus on the pain!

-WHAAAM!-

Kano lands a HAYMAKER, then an UPPERCUT.

Then he holds a finger to his head and EYE BLASTS Cole right in the back.

Cole lands face-down in the sand.

Broken. Beaten. Powerless.

KANO

Champion, my ass.

The brothers share a look of dismay.

Cole punches the sand. Pissed at himself. He wipes the blood off his face, pushes himself up, walks away.

ON RAIDEN:

Once again, watching from the SHADOWS. He studies Cole for a LONG MOMENT...

INT. TRAINING AREA - SOMETIME LATER - LATE NIGHT

Cole sits alone, back against the wall. We see something we haven't seen before in his eyes: Defeat.

Despite Liu Kang's best efforts, the LACERATION on his arm has once again bled through the yellow bandages. He winces in pain as he balls his busted left hand into a fist.

He roots through his pocket, fishes out his PHONE. It POWERS ON. No signal. Battery light flashing 2%.

He digs through his PHOTOS. We see sweet, candid shots of Cole, Emily, and Allison together.

His PHONE BEEPS.

He NOTICES something for the first time:

"ONE NEW VOICEMAIL" - He plays it.

EMILY (V.O.)

Dad. I miss you so much. I know you have to do this...

Cole closes his eyes.

EMILY (V.O.)

(then, fighting tears)

I wish you were here. Please be safe. I can't lose you too.

The PHONE POWERS DOWN in his hand. Cole lets it fall away; he wipes the tears from his eyes, shakes his head, turning all of that ANGER he feels inward.

He pushes himself up to see: SONYA. Standing nearby. *How long was she watching him?*

SONYA

You okay?

COLE

(with rising anger)

Whatever this Arcana thing is, I don't have it. I can't fight for Earth. Not like this.

SONYA

That's not what you said.

(off Cole's look)

I heard what you said to Raiden. That you would never let anything happen to Emily. Is that true?

COLE

Of course.

SONYA

Then fight for her. This is your chance, Cole. You were a champion once.

(then)

You can be that again.

RAIDEN (O.S.)

I'm afraid not.

Raiden walks towards them, gestures to the night sky.

RAIDEN

(with disappointment)

The blood moon soon rises but you have failed to find your Arcana. Without it, you are a liability to the others. I'm sorry, Cole.

Raiden lifts his arms to the heavens...

A LIGHTNING BOLT CRASHES DOWN, STRIKES THE THUNDER GOD!

Raiden absorbs the CHARGE. From this energy, he creates a PORTAL in the center of the pit. A moment to catch his breath, weakened by the effort.

RAIDEN

This will take you home.

Cole nods to himself, walks towards it.

SONYA

Cole... Don't give up on this!

COLE

He's right. I'm no use to anyone here, Sonya. Emily needs me now.

Before Sonya can respond, Cole heads down the walkway. He steps through the portal.

INTENSE BLINDING LIGHT SWALLOWS COLE.

EXT. SOPHIA'S CABIN - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Cole exits the portal to find himself at the edge of the treeline. The gateway seals shut behind him.

A soft light glows from the cabin. Cole heads towards it.

Emily opens the door, buries into her Dad.

COLE
I found him.

EMILY
(pulling away)
The guy who killed Mom?

Cole weakly nods to her.

EMILY
Did you...

Cole's heart shatters.

COLE
I wasn't strong enough.

A flash of disappointment in Emily's face. She buries it down, turns Cole's arm over revealing his VICIOUS WOUND.

EMILY
Let me help you.

INT. RAIDEN'S QUARTERS - SAME TIME - NIGHT

A MOMENT alone with Lord Raiden. He walks towards his iconic wardrobe. He puts on his white robe, places his RAIN HAT on his head again for the first time.

ELECTRICITY crackles across his irises.

INT. TRAINING AREA - SAME

Earth's remaining champions prepare for battle.

KUNG LAO - uses a BLADE to sharpen the brim of his hat.

LIU KANG - prays silently, legs crossed.

KANO - flips a new page over in his sketch book.

RAIDEN enters, stands beside SONYA. His presence draws the attention of the entire room.

RAIDEN
IT HAS BEGUN.

He gazes upward. Through the natural opening in the ROCK FACE ABOVE, we see: The ominous BLOOD MOON.

INT. SOPHIA'S CABIN - EMILY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Just like in the ring, Emily tends to Cole's injuries. He gently takes hold of her shoulders.

COLE

Listen to me, it's not safe here.
We need to leave.

EMILY

You need to rest.

JUST THEN: WE HEAR THE DISTANT SOUND OF A PINE TREE FALLING DOWN! -SHHHH-BOOOOOOM!-

Cole and Emily quickly go to the window. Emily flips on her KID'S LAMP as they peer out at the moonlit forest.

ANOTHER TREE SMASHES DOWN. *What the fuck...?*

Then ANOTHER. -SHHHH-BOOOOOOM!- And ANOTHER. -SHHHH-BOOOOOOM!-

FASTER. CLOSER. The tree tops begin to sway.

Something is coming...

Cole races out of the room.

EXT. SOPHIA'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Cole steps down the porch. He stares across the yard at the WOODS. MOONLIGHT bleeds over the black trees.

SILENCE.

The trees stand perfectly still.

Emily pushes through the door after him.

EMILY

Dad?! ... What's going on?!

Cole sharpens his eyes on the still woods.

SOMETHING SHOOTS OUT of the canopy of trees.

It takes a MOMENT to realize it's a TWO-TON SEVERED TRUNK.

As Cole spins back towards his daughter...

The TREE TRUNK TORPEDOES the CABIN ROOF with a DEAFENING CRASH, throwing debris into the sky!

STOMP! ... STOMP! ... STOMP! ... STOMP! ... STOMP!

THE NINE-FOOT, FOUR-ARMED, ARMOR-CLAD OUTWORLD CHAMPION KNOWN AS PRINCE GORO emerges from the treeline. (Think a four-armed evil version of HULK, as seen in 'READY PLAYER ONE')

The beast THUNDERS its MASSIVE CHEST, ROARRRRS at Cole!

COLE
GET INSIDE, EMILY!

GORO CHARGES!

Emily, shocked, runs back inside the cabin.

GORO LEAPS TWENTY FEET INTO THE AIR... and SMASHES DOWN in front of Cole. The SHOCKWAVE knocks Cole off his feet.

GORO grabs Cole by the CHEST, THROWS him across the yard, then the behemoth rips the cabin's A/C UNIT out of the ground, HURLS it at Cole.

Cole ROLLS TO HIS FEET, as the MACHINERY SKIPS past him.

GORO picks Cole up with his LOWER TWO ARMS, SLAMS him down!

ON EMILY:

Watching from the windows as the monster destroys her Dad, pummeling him with BRUTAL, BONE-CRUNCHING ATTACKS.

The beast tosses Cole away, sends him skidding across the dirt. A MOMENT as Cole lies there.

Then he gets one arm under his chest, then the other.

He pushes himself up.

GORO ROARRRRS, RIPS a WOODEN POST from the cabin, MARCHES on Cole and DRILLS him with it.

Ribs shatter as Cole IMPACTS the ground again. He COUGHS BLOOD. Then after a BEAT, he gets one hand under his chest, then the other...

GORO LAUGHS at Cole's resilience. He lifts his MASSIVE LEG and STOMPS Cole in the back. DRIVING HIM into the earth.

Cole SCREAMS in agony.

ON EMILY:

Watching her Dad beat to within an inch of his life. Tears in her eyes. She runs for the door.

ON COLE:

Again, trying to push himself up.

THE FRONT DOOR OPENS.

Emily steps outside.

Cole sees her, blood coursing down his face.

Goro follows Cole's gaze towards the cabin, slowly turning his head to see... EMILY.

An evil smile crosses the monster's face.

GORO MARCHES ON EMILY NOW!

Emily backs up, paralyzed. Pinned against the front door.

Cole spits blood as he SCREAMS after GORO:

COLE
I'M THE ONE YOU WANT! NOT HER!

GORO laughs as he towers over Emily.

The demon's heavy shadow blankets her terrified face.

Cole REACHES his hand out to Emily. All he can do at this point. Tears break from his eyes.

GORO lifts his ARMS over Emily's head.

He ROARS, brings his fists down with tremendous force and...

..... SHUUUUUUNK!!!

Blood SPRAYS across Emily's face.

The monster staggers for a moment, fists INCHES from Emily's head. Goro glances down at his chest:

A VICIOUS, RAZOR-SHARP, FLAMING, KUNAI SPEAR HEAD juts out of his rib cage. Blood pumps from the wound.

GO WIDE TO REVEAL: COLE. ON HIS FEET! PHYSICALLY STRONGER than before, his muscles chiseled, defined.

The YELLOW BANDAGE on his wounded left arm, SPLIT OPEN.

The SPEAR HEAD's attached to a SYNTHETIC CABLE, that runs directly into Cole's forearm!

Cole grips the attached cable, SCREAMS WITH FURY:

COLE
GET OVER HERE!

HE RETRACTS THE SPEAR, PULLING THE MONSTER IN CLOSE, WHERE HE RAPIDLY SHANKS GORO IN THE HEART WITH THE CLENCHED BLADE!

BLOOD SPRAYS AS COLE VICIOUSLY PUNCHES HIM OVER AND OVER AGAIN, FINISHING THE BEAST OFF WITH A BRUTAL UPPERCUT!

The force of which SEVERES Goro's head from his body!

The fiery spear slides back into Cole's forearm. He examines his incredible new weapon. Where the laceration once was, we see the SKIN has GRAFTED, HEALED.

THREE JAPANESE CHARACTERS are scorched into his raised skin. They stand for (SHIRAI RYU), an ancient NINJA CLAN.

Cole looks to Emily. Her wild face spattered with blood. She struggles to catch her breath, STARING IN AWE at the hero standing before her.

EMILY
 Holy shit ... Dad?!

She runs over. Cole hugs her tightly to his chest.

COLE
 I promise to explain everything. I have to go now. It's not over yet. There's more of them. A lot more.

EMILY
 (with encouragement)
 It doesn't matter how many of them there are, Dad. You can beat them. Remember, fight smarter, just like we always said...

Cole smiles at Emily, pride in his eyes.

COLE
 That's the one thing I got that they don't...

EMILY
 A crazy spear weapon that shoots out of your arm?

COLE
 The best trainer in Philly.

Cole tucks the hair behind her ear. This time, she lets him.

EMILY

Wait, Dad. Before you go... I made you something.

From inside her shirt, Emily takes out a BEAUTIFUL LEATHER NECKLACE. We notice WHITE LACES elegantly threaded through the leather braids. She takes it off, presents it to him.

EMILY

The necklace was Mom's. The laces are from the gloves you gave me.
(off Cole's look)
The pair you won your championship with. It's so you know we're always with you.

Cole's heart swells. He rips the rusted chain off his medallion, threads his daughter's necklace through in its place. Then he hangs it around his neck.

EMILY

Go, Dad. Finish it.

Cole nods to her.

INT. LIVING HALLWAY - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Our heroes watch as the army of Outworld champions march inside the temple

Led by Sub-Zero and Mileena, we see:

KABAL. (Think Michael Myers meets Jason Voorhees). Outfitted in a black armored vest and trench coat. His entire head covered by a SCARRED BLACK RESPIRATOR. The assassin WHEEZES and HISSES air into his lungs, as he wields his signature weapon: TWO RAZOR-SHARP HOOK SWORDS.

REIKO. (Think an evil Thor). An armor-clad Outworld General with opaque eyes. He drags a MASSIVE WAR HAMMER behind him.

NITARA. (Think Zoe Saldana as a vampire). A PAIR OF LEATHERY BAT-WINGS protrude from her bare shoulders.

Shang Tsung, Outworld sorcerer and enemy of Earth, takes his place beside his warriors.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

(lifting his hands)

The tenth and final Mortal Kombat.

(then)

Your beloved rules state...

RAIDEN

You follow no such rules. On with it, Sorcerer. Select your first opponent.

Kung Lao, Liu Kang, Kano, even Sonya, all step forward.

Shang Tsung smiles at the eager heroes.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

I have already made my selection.

Shang Tsung clenches his fists. ENERGY swirls around him as he creates a NIGHTMARISH BLACK PORTAL.

We can just barely see SOPHIA'S CABIN on the other side of the gateway.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

(gesturing to the portal)

Prince Goro wins.

WHEN JUST THEN: GORO'S SEVERED HEAD bounces through the open portal. It comes to a bloody stop by Shang Tsung's feet.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

Impossible.

Cole steps through the portal next. Stronger. More confident than we've seen him.

Sonya and the other Earth champions welcome him back; the SPEAR slides into Cole's open palm.

We see the slightest smile on Raiden's face.

COLE

That's why you sent me home. You knew.

RAIDEN

Your love for Emily is what drives you, Cole. It defines you.

KANO

(with a wink)

My power's still cooler.

Shang Tsung glances at Cole, the spear clenched in his hand. His eyes linger over him for a LONG BEAT.

He smiles at Cole's "progress." Cole absorbs his reaction.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)
I tire of this.

The sorcerer's eyes TURN BLACK.

A WAVE OF DARK ENERGY spews from his mouth, fueled by the souls he has consumed: agonized faces swirl through the air, scream in silence!

Our heroes back away in TERROR as...

The SOULS wash over the TEMPLE'S ARMED MONKS.

The men collapse; their bodies drained of life, nothing but withered, white husks remain.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)
(aside, to his warriors)
Kill them all.

Raiden emits a LIGHTNING BLAST from his open palms.

Shang Tsung counters. The two magics COLLIDE IN AN EXPLOSION OF LIGHT AND OTHERWORLDLY ENERGY!

KANO'S DRILLED in the CHEST by an UNSEEN ASSAILANT! He's launched across the temple towards the TRAINING AREA.

Our heroes exchange a panicked glance. SONYA pulls two blades, squares up opposite Mileena (the female Outworld assassin).

MILEENA VANISHES, reappears behind Sonya, spins and KICKS her through a door into the DINING AREA!

LIU KANG
We must fight together!

NITARA SHRIEKS; LEATHERY BAT WINGS extend from her shoulders. She grabs Kung Lao with her CLAWS, lifts him into the air!

LIU KANG moves to help his brother.

Only Cole and Sub-Zero remain. They stare at each other.

The SPEAR slides into Cole's hand. He THROWS IT!

Sub-Zero VANISHES, reappears behind Cole.

He grabs Cole's shoulder with his ICY GRIP, spins and THROWS Cole down the hallway!

EXT. TRAINING AREA - NIGHT

Kano wipes the blood from his mouth. He's surrounded by a RING OF TRAINING DUMMIES. He searches for his opponent...

We hear the WHEEZING of a RESPIRATOR.

ONE OF THE DUMMIES slowly... MOVES...

KABAL DASHES towards Kano. The TWO FIGHT HAND-TO-HAND, until Kabal SLASHES Kano with his HOOK SWORDS and VANISHES in the blink of an eye. He repeats the process.

KANO
(clutching his wound)
Neat trick, asshole. I got a rabbit
in my hat, too.

Kano launches an EYE BLAST, sweeps it in a circular arc, decapitating the training dummies.

Kano smirks as the smoke clears. Kabal's standing behind him. He SLASHES Kano, then KICKS him away.

We hear the SOUND of METAL SCRAPING STONE....

REVEAL: REIKO, stalking towards Kano, dragging his MASSIVE WAR HAMMER, the brutal instrument stained with blood.

Kano FIRES another EYE BLAST.

Reiko DEFLECTS it with HAMMER, winds up and DRILLS Kano in the chest, knocking him HARD to the ground.

INT. DINING AREA - SAME

Mileena enters, pulls both SAIS from her back.

Sonya quickly searches for a weapon. Counter tops, tables, something, anything she can use, finally FINDS:

A BUTTER KNIFE.

She spins to her feet, utensil raised.

Mileena ATTACKS. They duel at close range. Sonya somehow manages to defend herself.

DURING THE FIGHT: A LANTERN SMASHES to the ground. FLAMES race up the BAMBOO walls with alarming speed.

Eventually, Mileena breaks Sonya's guard and STABS her SAI through Sonya's shoulder! Sonya SCREAMS.

Mileena lifts the blade to her mouth. A BLACK TONGUE FLITS out, licks the blood from the weapon.

That's when: Mileena notices something about Sonya.

The lack of a medallion around her neck.

MILEENA

You wear no medallion. You were never chosen.

(then)

You no longer interest me.

Mileena VANISHES from sight.

FLAMES spread across the ceiling. A MASSIVE WOOD PILLAR CRASHES DOWN, trapping the wounded Sonya inside the room!

The FIRE encircles her, seconds from being burned alive!

WHEN JUST THEN: -WHAM!-

The WALL SHUDDERS from IMPACT. -WHAAAM!- It SHUDDERS again.

One final strike. -BOOOOOOM!- The WALL BLOWS APART!

A MUSCULAR FIGURE steps through the flames. Silhouetted against the FIRELIGHT, the FIGURE lifts his arms over his head and brings them DOWN, SMASHING the fallen pillar with a THUNDEROUS CRACK!

Sonya readies herself to fight. As the FIGURE steps into the light, we REVEAL: JAX!

In place of his missing limbs, we see a pair of MASSIVE, HEAVILY COILED, BIONIC ARMS!

A MOMENT between them.

SONYA

Holy shit. Nice upgrade.

JAX

(matching her smile)

Good to see you, Blade.

INT. ARCHIVES - SAME

Kung Lao stands alone inside the archives, eyes searching the SMOKE-FILLED RAFTERS above. When just then...

NITARA SWOOPS out of the SMOKE, just misses Kung Lao's face with her claws, then vanishes into the thick cover above.

Kung Lao pulls off his hat. He SPIKES it straight down into the ground where it SPINS like a BUZZ SAW. Then he centers himself. He closes his eyes.

Listening...

NITARA BURSTS out of the SMOKE. Without opening his eyes, Kung Lao jumps and grabs her by the SHOULDERS, SLAMMING her straight down onto his WHIRRING HAT. BLOOD SPRAYS as the hat severs through the better part of her face.

Kung Lao signs to himself:

KUNG LAO
(subtitle)
Flawless Victory.

INT. LIVING HALLWAY - SAME

Cole gets to his feet. He CHARGES Sub-Zero, but the Ice Ninja sees him coming. He FREEZES the ground. Cole slides across the ice, missing wildly with his SPEAR.

Sub-Zero spins and KICKS Cole in the FACE, laying him out.

NEARBY:

Raiden and Shang Tsung vie for control. The two energy fields pushing and pulling until:

With one final flourish, SHANG TSUNG BLOWS RAIDEN BACKWARDS! The Thunder God skids down the hallway.

It's in that MOMENT: Raiden knows they don't stand a chance.

Raiden LIFTS HIS HANDS.

A BOLT OF LIGHTNING STRIKES him! He creates a PORTAL, further weakening his life force.

RAIDEN
THIS WAY!

Jax helps Sonya towards the exit. Liu Kang and Kano, both bloodied and beaten, retreat with them.

SHANG TSUNG
You CANNOT run from me, RAIDEN!

SONYA
Where's Cole?!

SUB-ZERO marches on Cole, seconds from FINISHING HIM!

KUNG LAO sees what's about to happen.

He makes a selfless decision. He takes off his hat and FRISBEES it towards Cole WHERE IT...

RAPIDLY CIRCLES around him, creating a REVOLVING BLUE SHIELD.

Cole locks eyes with Kung Lao.

Then he SPRINTS, shielded, across the TEMPLE, as SUB-ZERO fires ICICLES at him.

Kung Lao's HAT protects Cole the entire way.

SHANG TSUNG appears SUDDENLY behind KUNG LAO! He GRABS the monk by the throat, lifts him into the air!

Cole reaches the portal where his teammates are waiting.

Liu Kang can only watch in horror.

LIU KANG

Brother!!!

Kung Lao locks eyes with Liu Kang, silently telling him: GO.

Within seconds, SHANG TSUNG SUCKS KUNG LAO'S SOUL FROM HIS BODY, reducing the Earth Champion's flesh to nothing but withered white stalk!

CLOSE ON: Kung Lao's MEDALLION as it CLANGS on the FLOOR.

Sonya pulls a destroyed Liu Kang through the portal.

EXT. ROMAN WOODS - NIGHT

Our heroes return to the location of our opening fight. Now, centuries later, a historical site.

Liu Kang drops to his knees, spirit and body broken.

LIU KANG

If we were to die, it was supposed to be together!

Cole goes to his side.

COLE

He gave his life to save me. I'll fight beside you to avenge him.

Liu Kang nods to Cole.

SONYA

They have us outnumbered.

RAIDEN

That was Shang Tsung's intention.
To isolate you. Eliminate you one
by one. So that you have no chance
of fighting back as a team.

Cole stands, addresses the remaining champions.

COLE

(recalling Emily's words)
Then we have to fight smarter.

An IDEA suddenly hits Cole. He sharpens his eyes, remembering his daughter's advice.

JAX

What are you thinking?

COLE

We use the ring to our advantage.
(then, to Raiden)
These portals. You can open them to
anywhere?

RAIDEN

Correct.

COLE

We'll need a few.

Kano spits out a gob of blood.

KANO

Wait a minute!
(pointing at Cole)
Who elected this guy leader?

Kano appeals to the others for support. Clearly, no one shares his feelings.

Jax folds his BIONIC ARMS across his chest, glares at Kano.

KANO

You uh... you been working out?

COLE

If this plan's gonna work, it's
gonna take all of us.
(then, to Kano)
We have to work together.

Kano locks eyes with Cole. A MOMENT between them.

KANO
Alright, sweetheart. I'm in.

EXT. ROMAN WOODS - A BIT LATER - NIGHT

SHANG TSUNG arrives through one of his NIGHTMARISH PORTALS. His army of warriors follow.

No sign of Earth's champions. Instead, they find:

TWO ELECTRIC BLUE PORTALS. *Where they go is anyone's guess.*

A PIECE OF PAPER blows over to Shang Tsung's feet. He picks it up to reveal:

One of Kano's sketches: It shows Kano LASERBEAMING them all in half while laughing and drinking a beer.

Shang Tsung glowers. He DIVIDES his TROOPS: sending REIKO through one portal, KABAL through the other.

Then he turns to SUB-ZERO, nods an ORDER to him. The ICE NINJA retreats through one of SHANG TSUNG'S portals. (Note: This is the MOMENT he goes to get Emily).

EXT. PIT - (OUTWORLD) - NIGHT

REIKO (Outworld's evil version of Thor), arrives through Raiden's portal.

He finds himself standing at the FAR END of a LONG STONE WALKWAY. A few TORCHES offer minimal visibility. Reiko grabs a torch, drops it over the edge.

MOMENTARILY REVEAL: The walkway is suspended two-hundred feet over a SEA OF STEEL SPIKES!

Reiko grabs another torch, carefully inches his way down the railing-free walkway; his WAR HAMMER drags behind him.

AHEAD OF HIM: the TORCHLIGHT slowly reveals:

JAX.

Standing in the middle of the WALKWAY.

COLE'S SPEAR SUDDENLY RIPS INTO FRAME and IMPALES Reiko through the back of the leg! Reiko struggles to keep his balance, his HEAVY HAMMER throwing off his weight.

COLE

Now!

Jax BANGS his FISTS together, marvels at his new "arms."

JAX

I could get used to this.

Reiko swings his HAMMER just as Jax throws a PUNCH! -

-WHAM!- -CLANG!-

The TWO deflect off each other. Jax follows up with a series of BRUTAL PUNCHES.

Jax catches Reiko's hammer on the next swing and -CRACKS- it in half with his BIONIC ELBOW.

Reiko drags his LEG, pulling Cole down the walkway, as he and Jax go at each other.

TRADING PUNCHES.

We get to see Jax kick some ass here with his new GUNS. Still, Reiko is no pushover.

The Outworld champion lands a few HARD STRIKES of his own, staggering Jax backwards. Jax barely keeps his balance, his foot toeing the edge of the walkway.

Reiko goes to FINISH HIM, when Cole YANKS his SPEAR!

The FORCE throws Reiko off-balance for a split second, allowing a recovered Jax to open his MASSIVE ARMS out wide and... PANCAKE Reiko's head!

Reiko's lifeless (headless) body falls over the side... SKEWERED on the SPIKES below!

COLE

You know where to go next?

JAX

Heading there now.

Jax holds out his METALLIC FIST for a bump. Cole stares at it for a MOMENT... then gently touches it.

EXT. LIVING FOREST - (OUTWORLD) - NIGHT

A corrupt, festering woods. HUMAN FACES etched into the gnarled, wide-trunked trees. VILE GREEN GAS rises from the SWAMP WATER, hidden under a BED OF RANCID VEGETATION.

KABAL (Outworld Jason Voorhees) arrives through Raiden's portal, spies KANO, all by himself.

KANO

This is one UGLY world you got here! Want to give me a tour?

The assassin SLICES his HOOK SWORDS together and CHARGES him. Like a FLASH, so FAST, his MOTION BLURS!

But as Kabal SPLASHES through the SWAMP WATER, the THICK MUD hiding underneath clings to his legs, slows him down!

Kabal finds himself STUCK in the BLACK MUD.

KANO

(still squatting)

Whoops! Looks like someone's in deep shit.

LIU KANG races into FRAME behind Kano and - LAUNCHES TWO FIREBALLS at KABAL!

The FIRE CONSUMES the SWAMP GAS.

The ASSASSIN LIGHTS UP!

Despite being on FIRE, KABAL still drags his feet through the MUCK, swinging and slicing his swords!

Only now does KANO stand and EYE BLAST KABAL in the CHEST.

Then he lets out a PRIMAL SCREAM and PUNCHES HIS FIST through Kabal's rib cage. He RIPS out his BLACK HEART!

Kabal's BURNT body falls away.

Liu Kang waves the FOUL SMOKE from his face.

LIU KANG

Toasty.

He glances at Kano, the black heart still beating, clenched in his meaty fist.

Kano shrugs, tosses away the organ.

LIU KANG

Moving to next position.

KANO

Right behind you, mate.

Liu Kang leaves through the portal.

Kano reaches into his pocket, takes out his sketch book. He sits down on the stump, flips through the pages.

KANO
 (licking his fingers)
 An artist must always tackle the
 canvas while the inspiration's
 still fresh.

A SAI BURSTS OUT OF KANO'S CHEST!

The shocked Aussie reaches a hand to his wound. Blood flows over his fingers as he slides off the stump.

REVEAL: MILEENA. Standing right behind him.

MOMENTS LATER:

SONYA arrives. She sees KANO, slumped over. She quickly goes to his side.

She scans the woods. Reveal MILEENA. Twenty yards away. Leaning against a tree. The Outworld assassin twirls her SAI between her fingers, smiles at Sonya. Taunting her.

Sonya GLARES back, presses her hand to Kano's wound.

KANO
 Is it bad?

Sonya hesitates, unsure what to say...

KANO
 At least fuckin' lie.

SONYA
 It's just a scratch.

Kano laughs; blood edges from his mouth.

KANO
 (with all seriousness)
 I want you to have my medallion.

Kano motions to his knife.

SONYA
 I can't.

KANO
 Come on. I know you've wanted to
 kill me since the moment you met
 me. You earned it.

Sonya lowers her eyes, picks up the blade, holds it over Kano's chest, her hand trembling.

KANO
I always liked you, Sonya.

Kano reaches into his pocket, takes out his sketch book.

KANO
Do me a favor will you?

Kano slides the book towards her, his hand shaking.

KANO
Draw one of me.

Sonya nods, tears forming in her eyes.

KANO
Clearly it won't be as good, but...
you know... do the best you can.

SONYA
Asshole.

They share a final laugh.

Kano readies himself, nods to her.

She PLUNGES the BLADE into his HEART, TWISTS IT.

The LIGHT in Kano's eye GOES OUT.

Sonya wipes the tears from her face, sheathes her blade. She takes the medallion from Kano.

As Sonya STANDS, she places the medallion around her neck for the first time.

MILEENA smiles at Sonya. Her BLACK TONGUE traces the edge of her SAI, cleaning Kano's blood from the blade.

Sonya looks down at Kano. Out of compassion for him, an AURA OF ENERGY instantly surrounds her body. She clenches her fists as she looks back up at Mileena.

Mileena takes one step...

SONYA WAVES HER ARM: She EXPELS a PULSE WAVE of ENERGY that knocks Mileena off her feet!

SONYA
Interested in me now, bitch?

As Mileena slowly gets up, she SCREAMS a HIGH-PITCHED BANSHEE WAIL. Her jaws detach like that of a snake, revealing:

A HIDEOUS ALIEN MOUTH, FILLED WITH WHITE TEETH!

Sonya STARES at her, HORRIFIED.

Mileena SPRINTS at Sonya, runs right up her legs and LATCHES onto her CHEST.

Sonya spins wildly, as Mileena CLAWS and BITES at her neck like a rabid animal before KNOCKING Sonya to the ground.

The FIGHT continues at CLOSE RANGE.

Sonya, armed with Kano's knife, SLASHES, SLICES, KICKS Mileena away.

Sonya RACES TOWARDS HER, GRABS her by the NECK, and throws the OUTWORLDER TO THE GROUND.

Mileena lands on her back; Sonya lands on top of her, straddling her chest.

Mileena grips her final sai, stabs it at Sonya. She blocks it, twists her arm, and DIGS the sai into Mileena's gut.

Mileena SCREAMS, her hideous alien mouth agape...

Sonya JAMS her FIST into the back of Mileena's throat and BLASTS A SHOT OF ENERGY out the back of her head!

BRAIN MATTER SPRAYS. The assassin goes limp.

EXT. ROMAN WOODS - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Cole returns to their starting position where he meets up with Liu Kang, their plan working to full effect.

A GENTLE SNOWFALL dances from the night sky. The two heroes spin around, searching for him.

SUB-ZERO emerges from the FOG. He LAUNCHES an ICE BLAST!

Cole returns fire.

The SPEAR BURSTS out of his arm, SNAKES through the trees, SHATTERS the BLAST mid-air, slicing Sub-Zero across the face.

The ICE WARRIOR stumbles backwards, touches his wound. Blood runs over his fingertips. His eyes read SHOCK for a moment, then switch back to rage.

LIU KANG
For my brother.

Cole locks eyes with Liu Kang, nods to him.

COLE
For my wife.

The two champions fight Sub-Zero side-by-side!

Sub-Zero holds his own against both of them, eventually GRABBING Cole by the throat!

ICE RACES over HIM... seconds from meeting the same demise as his wife...

A recovered Liu Kang launches a FIREBALL that DRILLS Sub-Zero in the back, MELTING the ICE.

Sub-Zero turns and BLASTS LIU KANG, FREEZING the MONK SOLID!

A METALLIC FIST SLAMS into Sub-Zero's HEAD!

JAX

Steps up. Sub-Zero narrows his dead eyes on him. Jax bangs his fists together.

JAX
Payback. Mother Fucker.

Jax CHARGES his foe, THROWING a MASSIVE PUNCH at SUB-ZERO who... VANISHES before the attack can land...

... LEAVING a HOLLOW ICE SCULPTURE of himself behind.

Jax demolishes this, searches for his opponent.

Who appears behind him. STRIKING Jax hard in the back.

Jax rights himself, GRIPS the HISTORICAL SITE RAILING, BREAKS off a SHARP PIECE OF METAL, spins around, and CLOCKS Sub-Zero upside the head with it!

Sub-Zero recovers, FIRES an ICE BLAST at the GROUND, freezing the earth. Sub-Zero RUNS, and SLIDES across his icy bridge, LANDING A FROST PUNCH that FREEZES JAX SOLID!

SONYA

Appears by Cole's side. Cole stares at the STRONGER, MORE CONFIDENT CHAMPION.

COLE
You found your Arcana quickly.

SONYA
Women mature faster than men.

COLE
Kano?

Sonya shakes her head. The FINAL TWO CHAMPIONS turn their attention to SUB-ZERO.

They attack together.

Sonya HITS him with a PULSE WAVE as Cole LAUNCHES his SPEAR HARPOONING a TREE BEHIND SUB-ZERO, PULLING the trunk down on top of him!

ICE RACES over the fallen tree.

The wood EXPLODE; SHARDS of ICE splinter out in every direction!

Sub-Zero marches on them. Unscathed. Relentless. He LAUNCHES an ICE BLAST that FREEZES SONYA SOLID!

Then he STARES at COLE. That same, UNDEAD LOOK he gave him before he killed his wife. Only the two of them remain standing. Face-to-face.

A BLACK PORTAL materializes next to SUB-ZERO. The ICE NINJA retreats through it.

Cole RUNS after him, CHARGING through the dimensional shift, only to arrive at:

INT. SOUTH PHILLY BOXING GYM - NIGHT

Cole stops in his tracks. It's the same BOXING RING we saw him fight in (and lose) during the start of our story. Only this time, the RING, the ROPES, the FLOORS, WALLS, CEILING...

EVERYTHING IS COVERED IN ICE.

EMILY (O.S.)
DAD?!

Cole's HEART SINKS when he sees her. EMILY.

She's standing inside the ring. One her hands is FROZEN to the corner buckle.

The ICE IS SLOWLY... MOVING... up her arm.

COLE

EMILY!

Cole races to his daughter, his feet sliding across the floor. He ducks under the FROSTED ROPES.

EMILY

WATCH OUT!

Cole spins away JUST IN TIME as an ICICLE RIPS PAST his HEAD and SMASHES into the WALL.

SUB-ZERO

Steps into the RING, traverses the ICE without hindrance.

Cole SLIPS, fighting to KEEP HIS BALANCE!

Sub-Zero ATTACKS. He THROTTLES Cole PUNCH after PUNCH, grabbing Cole's head, BASHING it against the ROPES.

Cole crumples to the ground.

The ICE washes over Emily's elbow, creeps towards her shoulder...

EMILY

YOU GOT THIS, DAD! FIND THE
ADVANTAGE!

Cole STAGGERS to his feet. He thinks for a MOMENT, heeding his daughter's advice.

He turns around and FIRES his SPEAR into the FROZEN CORNER POST behind him.

A makeshift ANCHOR POINT.

Sub-Zero charges. Cole holds his balance this time, fighting him off with ONE-HAND.

He retracts his SPEAR, JABS it into Sub-Zero's gut, then EXPELS it, LAUNCHING the undead assassin into the opposite corner with a BRUTAL CRASH!

Cole FIRES his SPEAR again.

Sub-Zero catches it, pulls Cole across the ice, twists his wrist, and with one FINAL STRIKE, SNAPS the BONE! Then he KICKS Cole away.

Cole writhes on the ground in front of Emily, cradling his shattered appendage.

The ICE JUST... BARELY... REACHING her neck.

EMILY
GET UP, DAD! NEVER QUIT!

Cole looks up at Emily. It's NOW OR NEVER. She's all the strength he needs.

Cole rolls over, SCREAMS, and THRUSTS out his BROKEN WRIST.

The FLAMING SPEAR ejects out of his arm and -SHUUNKS- right into Sub-Zero's chest!

The Ice Ninja reaches down, tries to detach it.

Cole slowly rises. He grips the cable. His eyes begin to GLOW. With rage, with revenge, for everything he's been through, for the wife he lost, and the daughter he loves.

He SCREAMS as his ENTIRE BODY REDDENS and then...

HE ERUPTS INTO FLAMES! BREATHING LITERAL FIRE!

The FIRE races down the CABLE and ENGULFS SUB-ZERO! The ICE DEMON LIGHTS UP, COOKING in the searing hot flames.

Cole retracts the spear into his arm.

Sub-Zero drops to his knees, falls forward. The fire stops; the glow subsides.

The ROOM BEGINS to MELT.

Cole uses his SPEAR to HACK AWAY the ICE clinging to Emily. He frees her, HUGS her tightly.

EMILY
I knew you could do it.

COLE
I love you, baby.

EMILY
I love you too.

A BURST OF ELECTRICITY (O.S.)

Sonya, Jax, and Liu Kang, now free from Sub-Zero's ice, arrive with RAIDEN, through one of his portals.

The Thunder God glances at Sub-Zero's remains, then nods to Cole, the slightest smile on his ageless face.

SONYA

It's over.

A MOMENT as Cole considers exactly what this means.

A MOMENT later, Shang Tsung (Outworld sorcerer and enemy of Earth) arrives through a portal of his own.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

Impressive. Truly impressive.

RAIDEN

ENOUGH, Sorcerer!

Our heroes FACE OFF opposite Shang Tsung in the ring.

RAIDEN

Earth has won Mortal Kombat. Your streak ends here. You will return to Outworld at once.

Shang Tsung slowly circles Cole, fascinated by him.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

How blind you are, Raiden. To think you've defeated all of my champions
(smiling at Cole)
... when my best fighter still stands before you.

Cole spins towards Raiden.

COLE

What's he talking about?

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

Perhaps if you paid more attention to your realm, Thunder God, you might have realized what I knew to be true all along.

Shang Tsung stops in front of Cole.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

Your father. The brave warrior who fought in Mortal Kombat before you were born... who bequeathed you his "destiny" ... He was one of Outworld's greatest champions. He won his battle, chose to defect, to take up with a human woman. Only to realize the danger he was putting you in. So he returned to Outworld, where he belongs. Where you belong.

Cole's eyes fall to the BLACK DRAGON MEDALLION around his neck. He takes it into his hand.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)
That medallion is one of ours.
We've been tracking it since the
moment you put it on.

Cole shakes his head, his entire world crashing to pieces around him. He turns to Raiden for confirmation.

RAIDEN
(with grim honesty)
The paternal line is the blood line
in Mortal Kombat. I'm sorry, Cole.
You cannot fight for Earth.

LIU KANG
This means that Mortal Kombat...

RAIDEN
Has not ended. Not until one side
defeats the other.

Cole considers these words. He looks to Emily, knows what he has to do. He quickly turns to Sonya.

COLE
I'm all he has left. You kill me,
Earth wins.

SONYA
I'm not killing you, Cole.

COLE
We don't have a choice, Sonya.
Please. Listen to me...

SONYA
I'm not doing it.

Cole looks to Liu Kang, Jax. Eyes begging. ANGRY.

COLE
He planned this! In case he lost, I
was his insurance policy. We can
still beat him!

JAX
It's not ending like that.

Cole turns back to Raiden:

RAIDEN

(with remorse)

If both sides refuse to fight,
Mortal Kombat will be deferred
until new champions have been
assembled. Champions willing to
finish what was started.

Shang Tsung INHALES deeply through his nose. Black energy
swirls through his entire core. His LIPS curl into a SMILE.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

Whether it's this fight or the
next, Earth WILL burn.

(then, to Cole)

As for you, Cole Morino. As long as
you wear that medallion, your soul
is mine.

Cole stares at the medallion around his neck. Then he takes
it off. He frees Emily's necklace from the ancient relic.

Then he tosses the medallion towards Shang Tsung.

It lands by his feet.

COLE

Give it back to my father. I'll
take it from him when I'm ready.

Raiden smiles at Cole's defiance.

Shang Tsung picks up the medallion, locks eyes with Cole.

Each word, like a dagger to Cole's heart.

SHANG TSUNG (OUTWORLD GENERAL)

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE.

Cole FIRES HIS SPEAR!

It ROCKETS right towards Shang Tsung's face and...

Misses. As Shang Tsung VANISHES through his portal.

The SPEAR RETRACTS into Cole's flesh. He stares at it, the
sorcerer's final words echoing through his mind.

EMILY

Dad? ... You okay?

Cole reaches out, takes his daughter's hand.

Then he locks eyes with Raiden.

COLE
What happens now?

RAIDEN
The fight has not ended. I will
assemble a new list of champions.
You must find them at once.

Cole looks to his teammates, to Emily, then back at Raiden.
We can see the steadfast determination in his eyes.

COLE
Tell me who's first.

SMASH TO:

The AIRY SOUNDS of CALIFORNIA BEACH MUSIC mixed with a CHORUS
OF ABRASIVE, HONKING HORNS.

EXT. STUDIO LOT - DAY

A souped-up SUV turns out of traffic, pulls past an iron gate
and stops at a security booth.

A tinted window slowly lowers on the passenger side to
reveal: EMILY. Camera around her neck, shades pushed up.

SECURITY GUARD
(slightly confused)
Can I help you?

EMILY
It's Cole Morino. Here to see
Johnny Cage.

INSIDE THE TRUCK: We see Cole behind the wheel, Sonya in the
back seat. She's got Kano's sketchbook open in her lap,
finishing up a drawing of him.

Cole glances back at her, the medallion around her neck.
Seeing that their situation is now reversed...

COLE
It's a good look on you.

Sonya smiles.

The security guard returns to the window.

SECURITY GUARD
Mr. Cage is expecting you. Park
straight ahead. Second level.

EMILY

Thank you.

Emily sits back down. Cole smiles at his daughter. As the SUV heads deeper into the studio lot, we...

FADE TO CREDITS:

MID-CREDITS FADE IN:

INT. SHANG TSUNG'S CASTLE - (OUTWORLD) - NIGHT

WE FOLLOW Shang Tsung down the black rock hallways of his impenetrable stronghold. He stops at the mouth of a SHADOWY CHAMBER to speak with... someone.

SHANG TSUNG

The war is not over. Your son
stands to fight with Earthrealm.
Deal with him.

The sorcerer extends the BLACK MEDALLION.

An IMPOSING FIGURE slowly unfurls from the heavy darkness, takes the medallion from Shang Tsung.

We see only a glimpse of him.

The YELLOW MASK over his face, the matching tabard, his KUNAI SPEAR clenched in his RIGHT HAND.

Cole's father: SCORPION.

LIGHT passes over Scorpion's face. We see his CLOUDY WHITE EYES, staring into our soul.

Scorpion drapes the medallion around his neck.

Then the darkness consumes him once more.

CREDITS.