

DANCES WITH SHADOWS

Written by: Kevin Beckles

Draft Date: July 2025

Copyright © 2025 Kevin Beckles. All rights reserved.

Contact: Kevin Beckles – kevinbeckles@gmail.com

EPISODE 1 - WELCOME BACK, MR. BUTCHER

BLACK SCREEN.

The faint thump of a heartbeat. Slow. Heavy.
Then the whisper of drums. Low, ancestral.

FADE IN:

EXT. SHADOWED LANDSCAPE - NIGHT

Moonlight cuts through mist. A massive MANGO TREE dominates the clearing. Its roots twist like veins in the earth.

SOMEONE'S POV:

The ground shimmers unnaturally. **SHADOWS** ripple across it, not following the light, but moving of their own will.
A faint **WOMAN'S LAUGHTER** echoes – warm, layered, but unsettling.

WOMAN (V.O.)

(soft, overlapping tones)

Dance with them, Patrick... or they'll never rest.

POV SHIFTS DOWNWARD:

Hands covered in blood. It drips, then reverses, rising upward like smoke toward the moon.

A WHISPERING CHORUS builds.

SHADOWS (V.O.)

Patrick... Butcher... Patrick...

POV SHIFTS FORWARD:

Faceless, fluid SHADOW FIGURES emerge, circling. Their limbs sway to a rhythm unheard, ritualistic.

The ground trembles.

POV SHIFTS DOWNWARD:

The earth splits open. A WELL yawns wide. From the dark within, a pale hand claws upward, seizing a denim-clad ankle.

POV SHIFTS FORWARD:

The shadows close in, circling faster. Their movements are a dance – hips, shoulders, feet, syncopated.

POV SHIFTS DOWNWARD:

Feet begin moving in sync. Stamping. Sliding. Hips swaying. Possessed.

A breathless SCREAM – distorted, echoing into silence.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT – DAY

PATRICK BUTCHER (30s) jerks awake in his seat, sweat on his brow. The steady hum of jet engines replaces the dream's drums. His hand grips the armrest.

He's handsome, black and stylishly dressed.

Beside him, **LUCY** (mid-20s) - pale-skinned, excited, dressed in floral tourist chic - clutches a well-thumbed Barbados guidebook.

LUCY

(squeals)

We're landing. Beach. Cocktail. Umbrella. Trouble.

Patrick shifts in his seat, clears his throat and composes himself effortlessly.

PATRICK

(smooth, casual)

As I said, Barbados is paradise - if you know where to look.

(pause)

And who to know.

LUCY

Lucky me, I'm sitting beside one of the who's.

(beat)

Let's take a selfie.

Before Patrick can respond, she's already struck a flawless pose: phone up, lighting adjusted, chin tilted just right. Click-click-click-click-click.

Patrick barely glances at the lens before she's done.

LUCY

(checking the screen)

Ooh, that one's gold.

PATRICK

(grinning)

I usually try to stay low-key. But let's just say... I've been known to make vacations unforgettable.

He leans back; arms folded with relaxed confidence.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

I just hope they don't embarrass me when I land. All that "Welcome back, Mr. Butcher" stuff gets old.

LUCY

(laughs)

You're joking.

PATRICK

(smirk)

Not really.

The ding of the cabin speaker cuts through the flirtation.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The **PILOT**'s voice hums through the intercom, warm and professional.

PILOT (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Grantley Adams International Airport. The local time is 2:07 PM, and I'm pleased to say we've arrived right on schedule.

A ripple of polite applause.

PILOT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We ask that you remain seated for a few moments while we complete a brief, pre-coordinated procedure. Thank you for your cooperation and enjoy your stay in Barbados.

Passengers exchange puzzled looks.

LUCY

What's happening?

PATRICK

(grinning)

Probably something to do with me. They might be rolling out
the old red carpet.

The forward cabin door opens with a soft hiss.

INT. PLANE - CONTINUOUS

A **BARBADIAN IMMIGRATION OFFICER** (40s) in pressed khaki uniform boards briskly, trailed by a **SECURITY AGENT** (30s) with mirrored shades and a tight jaw.

Flight attendant **MARIA** (40s) walks up the aisle, stopping at Patrick's seat.

MARIA

Mr. Butcher... please come with us.

PATRICK

(flashing a smile)

You're gonna make the others jealous.

He stands, slings his duffel from the overhead and turns to Lucy.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

If you don't see me on the beach, just ask anyone about me.

LUCY

What's your name again?

PATRICK

(smiling as he walks away)

Patrick Butcher - local celebrity.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRPLANE STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

PATRICK begins to descend. The **SECURITY AGENT** halts him mid-step.

SECURITY AGENT

Passport, please.

Patrick hands it over with an easy smirk.

PATRICK

Gotta follow procedure, huh?

The agent scans the passport and nods.

SECURITY AGENT

Patrick M. Butcher. Identity confirmed.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRPORT TARMAC SIDE ENTRANCE - MINUTES LATER

Bright sun. Caribbean breeze. The trio walks inside to a customs desk.

IMMIGRATION SUPERVISOR (50s), seasoned and unreadable, stands by with two officers.

IMMIGRATION SUPERVISOR

Mr. Butcher. Your deportation order is in the system. We'll
keep it simple from here.

PATRICK

Only way I like it. Simple. Fast. Warm welcome optional.

A **CUSTOMS OFFICER** unzips Patrick's duffel. Clothes, sneakers,
playing cards, a single cologne bottle tumble out.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

That's "Sun Song" by Louis Vuitton. Lady in Miami said it made
her weak in the knees and a little reckless. Thought I'd test
that theory back home.

The officers chuckle despite themselves.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Anything to declare?

PATRICK

Yeah. War on Trump and these new immigration rules that landed
me back here.

Another chuckle. They finish searching.

IMMIGRATION SUPERVISOR

You're cleared. Don't leave the island without notifying us.

PATRICK

Believe me... I ain't going anywhere.

He slings the duffel over his shoulder and walks away, stride
loose, almost defiant.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRPORT ARRIVALS CURB - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick exits and scans the crowd - strangers embracing their people. No one for him. He exhales. Winks at no one in particular.

Approaches the **TAXI COORDINATOR** (40s), clipboard in hand.

PATRICK

Applewhaite, St. Thomas.

TAXI COORDINATOR

That'll be \$50 Barbados.

He signals. A faded Toyota Corolla rolls up. Patrick climbs in.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI - MOVING - AFTERNOON

TAXI DRIVER (50s) glances in the rearview.

TAXI DRIVER

Where to exactly, boss man?

PATRICK

St. Thomas. Just past Applewhaite Plantation. Blue shutters.

Mango tree in the yard.

TAXI DRIVER

(laughs)

Man know exactly where he going?

PATRICK

Used to live there a long time ago.

TAXI DRIVER

You sound more Yankee than Bajan. When last you did here?

PATRICK

Maybe twenty years.

TAXI DRIVER

Wuhloss. You in for some changes.

The car pulls onto the highway. Patrick watches the island pass by. New developments where cane once grew. Familiar landmarks swallowed.

PATRICK

You mind playing something local?

TAXI DRIVER

Say less.

He turns the dial. Static. Then the music of **MIGHTY GABBY** floods the interior of the taxi.

MIGHTY GABBY (V.O.)

I can't believe that I was hearing right. What Jackie Opel told me Friday night...

Patrick smiles.

PATRICK

Burn Mr. Harding. Gabby. Used to play all the time when I was a boy.

TAXI DRIVER

Yeah boy. Gabby talking to a ghost in this one. Whole thing
spooky sweet.

Patrick chuckles, leans on the window. The car winds into the
hills. Rum shops turned minimarts. New construction
everywhere.

His gaze lingers - searching, measuring what was against what
is.

EXT. ISLAND ROADS - CONTINUOUS

Sunlight spills across the countryside. A boy rides by on a
bike. Laundry flutters. A sign: "You Are Now Entering the
Parish of St. Thomas."

OVER THIS: TITLE CARD FADES IN: DANCES WITH SHADOWS

OPENING CREDITS ROLL OVER: • Patrick's reflection in the
window • A mango tree in the sun • A chattel house with blue
shutters.

GABBY's song continues.

FADE OUT.

EXT. AURIEL BUTCHER'S CHATTEL HOUSE - ST. THOMAS - LATE

AFTERNOON

The taxi pulls up in front of a well-kept chattel house, aged
but proud - with blue shutters, a garden thick with hibiscus,
golden apples and a towering mango tree. Birds chirp. Wind
rustles leaves. **PATRICK** climbs out, stretches like a man
shaking off chains. The **TAXI DRIVER** pokes his head through the
window.

TAXI DRIVER

That'll be sixty, boss.

Patrick looks momentarily surprised, pats his pants pockets.
Frowns. Checks the inside of his duffel.

PATRICK

You're not gonna believe this... I think my wallet disappeared
somewhere over the Atlantic.

TAXI DRIVER

(stern)

Boss man, I got a family to feed.

PATRICK

Hold on. My Gran's inside. She'll cover me.

He steps toward the house and yells with practiced
desperation.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

GRAN! Gran, I'm home!

A moment passes before the wooden door creaks open. **AURIEL
BUTCHER** (72) appears - dignified despite her frailty. Her eyes
sharp, mahogany coloured skin, wrapped in a house dress with a
faded apron. She steps onto the porch, squinting.

AURIEL

Patrick? Patrick, is that you?

PATRICK

(smiling wide)

Come and gimme a hug, Gran.

They embrace tightly. He leans in close.

PATRICK

(whispering)

I need eighty dollars to pay the man. I'll explain later.

AURIEL

(mutters, making a rude sound)

Back two minutes and already costing me.

She hobbles inside and returns moments later with a single \$100 bill.

AURIEL (CONT'D)

Give the man my change, yuh hear?

PATRICK

(laughing)

Course, Gran. I'm reformed now.

He hands the money to the driver, who returns the change, nods and drives off. Patrick surreptitiously slides it into his pocket.

CUT TO:

INT. AURIEL'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Modest, spotless. Doilies on side tables. A photo of young Patrick with his late parents sits framed atop a crocheted runner. **PATRICK** and **AURIEL** sit across from each other on worn cushions. An oscillating fan hums lazily. Outside, the sound of whistling frogs.

AURIEL

You look older. But you still got that same slick mouth.

PATRICK

You raised me with it.

AURIEL

(grinning)

You might be right.

A moment of peace.

AURIEL (CONT'D)

Yuh eat yet?

PATRICK

Nah. Couldn't stomach the plane food knowing your cooking was waiting.

AURIEL

Yuh feel like rice and stew pork? With sweet potato?

PATRICK

Now you talking.

(beat)

Gran... I missed this house.

She smiles, but her eyes flick subtly to the corner of the room. Like she's listening to someone. Patrick doesn't notice.

AURIEL

So... what happen to that girl you wrote me about?

PATRICK

Chanel? She couldn't keep up. Wanted structure. I wanted..
options.

AURIEL

Options are what get you deported.

PATRICK

(mock offended)

Now, that's harsh.

AURIEL

Boy, don't throw away good women 'cause they got sense. You
getting old too, you know.

PATRICK

(grinning)

Okay, okay. But since we digging into my love life.. what about
yours, Gran?

AURIEL

(snorts)

Love life? I ain't able with that foolishness. My heart too
old and my joints too stiff.

PATRICK

(laughing)

I could swear you winked at the taximan just now.

AURIEL

Keep talking foolishness and I throwing you back in he car
myself.

They laugh, the sound easy and familiar. Then a quiet beat.

PATRICK

(softer)

But real talk, Gran... how you really doing?

Auriel leans back, eyes drifting upward, then to the far wall.

AURIEL

I here. Still breathing.

(hand on her chest)

I am how God wants me to be.

PATRICK

Which God? The Christian one you dragged me to church for every Sunday? Or the African one you whispered to before bed?

AURIEL

(turning to him)

God is God. And you better put respect on Oshun name when you call she.

PATRICK

(half-smile)

Yes, ma'am.

A pause. She looks toward a photo of his parents.

AURIEL

You ever think about them?

PATRICK

Sometimes.

AURIEL

I do all the time. And I know they still watching you and want
you to be best man you can be.

(leans towards Patrick)

You know that's the only reason I send you by Monroe when you
started acting up.

PATRICK

(softly)

I know. I messed up. I was young.

AURIEL

Thought a change of place in New Orleans would change your
pace.

PATRICK

It did. For a while. Till I got clever.

AURIEL

(stern)

You got caught!

PATRICK

Technically true.

AURIEL

A Ponzi scheme, Patrick?

PATRICK

It was elegant. Worked for a while.

AURIEL

(smiling)

Too bright for your own good.

She looks toward the hallway.

AURIEL (CONT'D)

So, what's the plan now?

PATRICK

Something that suits my skills. Sales, maybe. I can still sell sand in the desert.

AURIEL

I hope you mean a proper job.

PATRICK

That's the plan.

AURIEL

Make your parents proud. That should be the only plan.

Patrick shifts, uneasy. Auriel leans back, suddenly looking weary.

PATRICK

You good, Gran?

AURIEL

Just old.

She stands.

AURIEL (CONT'D)

Come. Lemme show you where you laying that slick head tonight.

CUT TO:

INT. PATRICK'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A small, neat room. A single bed. Simple dresser. Mosquito net overhead. A Bible and a hand mirror sit on the nightstand.

PATRICK picks up the mirror. It's clearly old, set in carved mahogany, adorned with African symbols and worn smooth with time. He replaces it carefully.

Tosses his duffel on the bed. Then himself. He pulls out his iPhone and turns it on. The screen lights up. Searching. "NO SERVICE." He sighs.

PATRICK

(shouting)

Gran! I need some money for a SIM card!

AURIEL (O.S.)

What you need is a job - and the Lord.

PATRICK

Which Lord? The Christian one or...

AURIEL (O.S.)

(sharply)

Patrick Malachi Butcher. Do not test me! Come eat this food
before I give it 'way!

Patrick chuckles. Sits up. Looks at the phone again. "NO SERVICE."

His smile fades - just a touch.

FADE OUT.

INT. PATRICK'S ROOM - LATE MORNING - NEXT DAY

Birdsong filters through the open window. Sunlight dapples the mosquito net. **PATRICK** is dressed in a crisp polo and jeans. He grabs his phone and wallet, heads to the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. AURIEL'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

AURIEL is at the table, sipping tea and going over handwritten notes on a lined notepad. **PATRICK** peers over her shoulder.

AURIEL

It's Saturday so if you leave now, you better take the route 5 to town and then switch at Fairchild Street for the Oistins bus to Sheraton.

PATRICK

(studying her map)
This looks like calculus, Gran.

She tears a page from the notebook and hands it to Patrick.

AURIEL

Barbados bus routes don't play. But I write it down for you, so don't get lost.

She stands and hands him some folded bills.

AURIEL (CONT'D)

Pocket money. Just in case.

PATRICK

(grinning)
I'm too old to be taking lunch money.

AURIEL

I know that ain't going stop you from taking it though.

He kisses her on the cheek and heads out.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEARBY BUS STOP - LATER

PATRICK stands at the side of the road, waiting. A loud, colourful minibus screeches to a halt. Bass music THUMPS. The song is **BIRDS** by **MOLE** featuring the "**VAN MAN**" **RIDDIM**.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - SET TO A MEDLEY OF "VAN MAN" RIDDIM TRACKS: ONE JOB BY CRAB SOLDIER, WHINE PUN IT BY LADY ESSENCE, SNOWCONE BY BRUCELEE ALMIGHTEE, WUK IT UP BAD BY SHANTA PRINCE, SHAKE IT ALOT BY TIONNE HERNANDEZ

INT. MINIBUS - CONTINUOUS

Cramped. Overcrowded. Blisteringly loud. **PATRICK** wedges himself between a preteen boy and a woman with a market basket.

EXT. BRIDGETOWN - FLOW OUTLET - LATER

PATRICK waits in a long, slow-moving queue outside the FLOW store. Eventually, he makes it in.

INT. FLOW OUTLET - LATER

PATRICK sits at the service desk. The agent installs his SIM card. The phone lights up, as does Patrick's face. Signal acquired.

INT. MINIBUS - TO SHERATON - LATER

Another ride. This time **PATRICK** is standing. A man preaches loudly up front. Someone's baby is crying. Music pounding. Everyone else seems oblivious. Patrick, looking uncomfortable and dazed, holds onto the overhead bar.

EXT. SHERATON MALL - MID AFTERNOON

PATRICK exits the bus, eyes wide.

END OF MONTAGE.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERATON MALL - CONTINUOUS

Bright, modern. Air-conditioned bliss. **PATRICK** walks around, passing storefronts that weren't there when he left. People from all walks of life mill about. The contrast to the minibus and Bridgetown experiences is stark. He strolls, marvelling, until a voice cuts through the hum.

SANDRA (O.S.)

Patrick Butcher?

He turns. Blinks. **SANDRA BAKER** (30), dark-skinned, hazel-coloured eyes, pretty, curvy, dressed in smart casuals, moving with confidence. Poised and radiant. She's carrying a couple of branded shopping bags, one clearly from a lingerie store.

PATRICK

(slowly)

Sandra? Oh my god. You got big.. in all the right places.

SANDRA

(mock outrage)

That is not how you greet a lady.

PATRICK

Even if she's my first girlfriend?

SANDRA

That was more than twenty years ago. We were eight!

They burst into laughter and embrace.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

(looking him up and down)

Well, well, well... Patrick *Butcher*.

PATRICK

Look at you, Sandra *Baker*.

He gestures at the craft store nearby.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

And look, that store makes candlesticks, so... the gang's all
here.

Sandra pauses. A beat. Then her eyes go wide, and she bursts into laughter, full and unexpected, doubling over as it overtakes her.

Patrick watches, grinning. Then he cracks too, giving in, laughter spilling out between them.

For a moment, they laugh freely. As it fades, they look at each other - breathless, still smiling.

SANDRA

Where are you heading now?

PATRICK

Honestly? About to catch a couple buses back to St. Thomas.

SANDRA

You're at your Gran's?

PATRICK

I am.

SANDRA

No way I'm letting you take a bus. Come, I'll drop you. I parked this way.

They set off through the food court.

CUT TO:

INT. SANDRA'S SUV - DRIVING - LATER

SANDRA drives confidently. **PATRICK** looks over his shoulder at the shopping bags, notices one with a lacy logo.

PATRICK

Is that Victoria's Secret I see?

SANDRA

(rolling her eyes)

That's for me to know, not for show.

A pause

SANDRA (CONT'D)

But a girl's gotta keep things interesting, right?

PATRICK

(fishing)

Your man's a lucky guy.

SANDRA

(coyly)

Depends on the day.

They drive through the countryside. The mood is light but surprisingly familiar.

SANDRA

I'm an accountant now, by the way. At Price Waterhouse.

PATRICK

That's big. I remember you used to correct everybody's math homework in primary school.

SANDRA

(laughing)

And you used to copy my answers.

PATRICK

And look at us now. Still riding together.

SANDRA

So, what's your story? What are you really doing back?

PATRICK

Let's just say... I needed a reset. Stateside the uh... investment banking business is cold. I missed the sun. The food. Family.

SANDRA

Investment banker, huh? Nice. But that all seemed like a very polished answer.

PATRICK

It's the truth... minus a few inconvenient details.

SANDRA

You always were good at that. Polished deflections.

A beat.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Speaking of family, how *is* your grandmother?

PATRICK

Gran is Gran. Still crotchety but... you know... she still wants
the best for me.

SANDRA

Aww. She was always grumpy back in the day too, but she never
failed to give me sweets when we visited.

PATRICK

(cheekily)

She was only nice to you because she knew you were my future
wife.

She glances at him playfully.

SANDRA

Just so you know, I'm in a relationship now. He's... sweet.
He's also an accountant. Martin. We work together at the firm.

PATRICK

Nice. What's he like?

SANDRA

(smiles)

If you look up accountant in the dictionary, you might see his photo. A real organized, numbers guy. Has a spreadsheet for everything, even date nights. But he really takes care of me.

PATRICK

Sounds dependable.

SANDRA

He is...

A pause.

PATRICK

I only knew eight-year-old Sandra, but that girl was a little chaos magnet.

Sandra chuckles.

SANDRA

Well yeah. But chaos can only get you so far in life.

PATRICK

Sure, sure. But don't you miss it?

SANDRA

(quickly)

Not at all.

PATRICK

Well, your loss, 'cause Chaos is my middle name.

SANDRA

(laughing)

I believe you. And you smooth with it too...

PATRICK

Note to self: Sandra noticed my smoothness.

SANDRA

(smiling)

Whatever. What about you though? Seeing anyone?

PATRICK

Had a girl in New Orleans. Didn't last. She said I was too much.

SANDRA

Imagine that.

PATRICK

Hard to believe, right?

She laughs, shakes her head. They fall into a brief, comfortable silence.

SANDRA

Well, it's nice to see you again, Patrick.

PATRICK

Likewise. Running into you has been the best part of my return so far.

SANDRA

Let's have lunch next week. Catch up properly.

PATRICK

Are you sure your dependable accountant won't mind?

SANDRA

He's not the jealous type. Besides... I'm allowed to have lunch.

CUT TO:

EXT. AURIEL'S HOUSE - SUNSET

The SUV stops outside the house. **PATRICK** gets out and walks around to the driver's side where **SANDRA** has rolled down the window.

PATRICK

Thanks for the lift. I owe you one.

SANDRA

We'll call it even after that lunch.

They exchange phone numbers and share a lingering smile. She drives off.

CUT TO:

INT. AURIEL'S HOUSE - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

PATRICK enters, hears faint murmuring.

PATRICK

Gran?

He heads to the kitchen. **AURIEL** is alone, seated.

PATRICK'S POV: There is a brief, barely perceptible movement to the far left of the table. Patrick turns towards the movement nothing is there.

Auriel notices him looking.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

You okay?

AURIEL

(quiet)

I'm just tired, baby. That's all. We'll talk in the morning.

She smiles, weakly, then gets up to head to her bedroom, slowly.

He frowns, concerned. Watches as the shadows in the darkened passageway envelop her.

FADE OUT.

INT. PATRICK'S ROOM - EARLY SUNDAY MORNING

Sunlight filters in. Birds chirp. **PATRICK** is half-asleep when there's a sharp knock on the door, followed by **AURIEL** pushing into the room.

AURIEL

Rise up, child. We going to church.

PATRICK

(mumbling)

It's Sunday, Gran. Rest day. That's biblical.

AURIEL

Rest after you bless up yourself. 30 minutes. And dress decent.

PATRICK

But I barely slept. Had some strange dreams.

AURIEL

Stop making excuses and get ready.

Auriel leaves. Patrick groans into his pillow.

CUT TO:

INT. PENTECOSTAL CHURCH - MORNING

The church is alive - tambourines clatter, voices soar, hands wave. **PATRICK** wears slacks and a button-up shirt, clearly uncomfortable. **AURIEL**, in a bright church dress and hat, looks regal. She throws herself into the service with gusto.

AURIEL

(shouting)

Yes Lord! Hallelujah!

Auriel starts stepping in place to her own beat. Not quite a dance, but something slow and focused, like a prayer. She starts to move with more rhythm, swaying her hips, feet tapping the ground.

AURIEL (CONT'D)

Let blessings from above rain down upon you!

She claps, dances and issues pointed blessings toward seemingly random corners of the sanctuary.

Patrick watches, then looks around to see that many in the congregation are dancing and singing their praises, but Auriel's dance is unique.

He sees **TWO TEEN GIRLS** in the pew behind him looking at Auriel and giggling. One is recording the dance on a cell phone. They

notice that Patrick is watching but just continue giggling and recording.

Patrick shakes his head and sighs, equal parts mortified and amused.

FADE OUT:

INT. AURIEL'S KITCHEN - EARLY AFTERNOON

Auriel is full of energy, now doing a jig while moving around the kitchen.

AURIEL

Time to cook proper Sunday food. You helping.

PATRICK

(grabbing apron)

Guess I'm on sweet potato duty.

They cook - stew chicken, rice and peas, fried plantain and sweet potato.

CUT TO:

INT. VERANDAH - LATER

PATRICK and **AURIEL** eat on the veranda, sipping **BANKS** beer.

AURIEL

(sipping)

You can't beat this breeze.

PATRICK

(smiling)

Or your cooking.

The sun dips low. Crickets start. They sit for a while in easy silence, the breeze warm against their skin.

CUT TO:

INT. VERANDAH - SUNSET

PATRICK sips his drink. **AURIEL** leans back in her chair, eyes closed.

PATRICK'S POV: A flicker in the corner of his vision. Then another. Not a trick of light. Long, spindly shadows that stretch and retract unnaturally.

He shifts uneasily.

PATRICK

(grimacing)

You ever notice how the shadows move weirdly at this time of day?

Auriel opens her eyes, glances into the garden and then back to Patrick.

AURIEL

(cautiously)

Sometimes...

PATRICK

Yeah. It's like something's... shifting out there.

Patrick gets up and peers into the darkening foliage.

AURIEL

(quietly)

It's time.

PATRICK

(still looking into the dark)

Time for what?

AURIEL

To understand who you are.

PATRICK

(turning to her)

Huh?

She speaks calmly but with gravity.

AURIEL

You used to have vivid dreams when you were a boy. I believe you still do. And since you get back, I know you starting to see things. Flickers, movement out the corner of your eye.

Shadows

PATRICK

Everyone dreams...

AURIEL

(interrupts)

I know what your dreams are like because I have them too. And I see what you see... but much more clearly right now.

PATRICK

What...

AURIEL

You're part of something old. An ancient line of people who
straddle the light and the shadow.

PATRICK

(grinning uneasily)

Gran, have you been drinking something stronger than beer?

AURIEL

(sharper)

You have a gift.

She stands.

AURIEL (CONT'D)

It's a gift that travels in our bloodline.

PATRICK

What are you talking about?

AURIEL

We are Omo Aṣẹ̀.- children of the covenant. Our ancestors, torn
from their homeland, still found a way to keep it alive.

She walks down the steps. Patrick follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDER THE MANGO TREE - MOMENTS LATER

AURIEL stands under the mango tree. **PATRICK** watches her from a
few feet away.

The air is still and heavy. The leaves shimmer, though there's
no wind.

She raises her hands and starts to chant – soft, steady, in a
mix of English and Yoruba.

AURIEL

Òrìṣà of the threshold... elders of the wind... I call you as
we were taught.

PATRICK'S POV: Shadows move at the base of the tree. They stretch and flicker like water running backwards. Human-like shapes stretch across the yard.

Watching. Patrick steps closer, uncertain. Breath shallow.

PATRICK

(quietly)

Gran... what's happening?

Auriel starts stepping rhythmically, slowly at first.

PATRICK'S POV: The shadows shift in time with her.

He gasps.

Auriel starts to move faster. It's identical to her church dance. Beat for beat.

Auriel's voice rises as her movement deepens - hips swaying, feet tapping earth in ancient patterns.

AURIEL

This is your legacy. You're the next Shadow Dancer. The one
who stands between worlds.

Patrick stands frozen. The air hums around him. He feels it in his chest.

PATRICK'S POV: The shadows begin to dance with her – calm, smooth, almost graceful. He sees flashes of faces: strangers, lost souls.

His breath catches. His eyes sting.

AURIEL (CONT'D)

They were always here, Patrick. Watching. Waiting. And now...

She stops dancing.

AURIEL (CONT'D)

...they're ready for you.

FADE OUT.

INT. AURIEL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen is dim. Only one small bulb glows, casting long shadows across the walls.

PATRICK and **AURIEL** sit at the table - beer bottles now replaced by mugs of cocoa. A silence hangs between them.

PATRICK

(exhales)

Okay. So, let's say I believe you - which I'm not sure I do. But... let's say. What now? I start moonwalking with ghosts?

AURIEL

(softly)

It's not a joke, Patrick.

PATRICK

No, it's not. Creepy shadows, weird vibes. This is horror movie stuff.

AURIEL

And yet you ain't scared, are you, child?

(beat)

It's because your heart... your blood... knows the shadows...
knows what they represent

Patrick stays quiet, thinking.

AURIEL (CONT'D)

They respond to me now. But soon... sooner than you think...
they will dance with you.

Patrick glances at the window. His reflection flickers.

PATRICK

(low)

Why me?

AURIEL

It's a gift in your blood. Like your father. Like me. It
passes down.

(pause)

Why do you think the neighbours call me an *obeah* woman?

PATRICK

The gift of what, exactly? Seeing shadows?

AURIEL

You don't just see them, you witness them. You help them
speak.

PATRICK

So, I'm a spirit therapist?

AURIEL

(laughs gently)

In a way. But they don't need comfort. They need justice.

Resolution.

(leans closer)

Some spirits can't pass on until their final truth is known - especially those taken by violence, betrayal or sorrow.

Patrick looks down, his hand circling the rim of his mug.

AURIEL (CONT'D)

They'll come in dreams, reflections, water, mirrors. Anything that reflects light, can reflect a memory. They'll show you their last moments. Their final truth.

Patrick shudders.

PATRICK

And what am I supposed to do? Dance them away?

AURIEL

You'll know. The dance ain't just movement - it's a language. When you move with them, you're communicating with each other.

PATRICK

This is...

(beat)

This is insane.

AURIEL

No, it's who we are. We're a spiritual people, Patrick. A long line of power. Ritual. Knowledge.

She places her hand on his.

AURIEL (CONT'D)

The Orisha guide us - Oshun for love, Yemoja for healing, Oya for change. You feel them already, even if you don't know their names.

Patrick exhales slowly. The air in the kitchen feels thick.

PATRICK

What if I don't want this?

AURIEL

(smiles)

You already have it. It's your gift.

A long silence.

PATRICK

Some gift.

AURIEL

It's a blessing. And a burden.

(leans back)

I must teach you the dance so you can communicate with the shadows.

PATRICK

(sarcastically)

Great. Dance lessons.

AURIEL

I have so much to tell you about your father. And why your return to Barbados was foretold.

PATRICK

(surprised)

What, do you mean my deportation was inevitable?

(pause)

Does that mean Trump was consorting with the ancestors,
'cause...

Auriel makes a rude sound.

AURIEL

Boy, I am tired. We'll talk some more tomorrow.

She gets up slowly and shuffles off to bed. This time Patrick can clearly see the shadows coalesce around her.

FADE OUT.

EXT. AURIEL'S CHATTEL HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

The dawn mist clings to the hills. A rooster crows in the distance. Light begins to warm the garden, heavy with dew.

INT. PATRICK'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

PATRICK stirs in bed. He rubs his eyes, groggy. Then he freezes.

PATRICK'S POV: SHIMMERING SHADOWS ripple gently along the far wall. They seem alive, fluid, but deliberate. They pulse in and out of visibility like breath. Patrick blinks.

PATRICK

(softly)

Nope. Not today.

He squeezes his eyes shut, holding his breath, willing the images to vanish. Then opens them.

PATRICK'S POV: The shadows have faded but not gone. Like they've retreated... watching.

He pulls himself up and stumbles to the door.

PATRICK

(yells)

Gran... call off your spirit friends. Man can't even pee in peace.

No response. Just the faint sound of birds outside.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

PATRICK stands at the toilet, glancing at the mirror.

PATRICK'S POV: For a brief second something flickers across the surface. A figure. Gone.

PATRICK

I'm not playing with you all this morning.

He washes his hands quickly and exits.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

PATRICK walks in. The table still holds the mugs from the night before.

PATRICK

(yells)

Gran? You sleeping in today?

No answer. He pauses. Listens.

INT. HALLWAY / OUTSIDE AURIEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Patrick knocks softly.

PATRICK

Gran? You alright?

Still nothing. A growing unease crawls up his spine. He knocks again, harder.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Gran, I'm coming in, alright?

He slowly opens the creaky wooden door.

INT. AURIEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

PATRICK steps inside. The room is still. Sunlight filters through the curtains, casting golden bars across the floor.

AURIEL lies in bed. She looks peaceful. Asleep.

PATRICK'S POV: Around her bed is a **THICK, SILVER-BLACK CLOUD** of shimmering shadows. Dense. Unmoving. Like smoke caught in glass.

His breath becomes ragged. He takes a shaky step forward.

PATRICK

Gran...?

He moves to her side. Kneels. Gently touches her hand.
It's cold. He freezes.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

(quiet)

No. No, no, no...

He touches her cheek. Leans in close. Her chest doesn't rise.
A single tear escapes his eye. He doesn't wipe it.

FADE TO BLACK.

TO BE CONTINUED.