

SINKHOLE

By Michael Kurt

PAGE ONE

Title: **SINKHOLE**

Two teenage boys run from a forest that is on fire. Nearing the end, the city lights not too far away, the fire is catching up to them. It's a big one.

CODY (V.O.)

You never forget the night you set
the world on fire.

PAGE TWO

Standing with a crew of workers, at the edge of a completely burnt forest, CODY and SAMUEL are ready to start work, a decade from when we last saw them. Everything is grey and filled with the smoke from fires that are still burning.

CODY

It wasn't just my fault. But when coastal fires met mountain fires, it sure **felt** like something we could have avoided.

The crew is making progress with the old trees. It's slowly starting to clear out, regrowing in the tiniest of budding greens - barely moss.

CODY and SAMUEL carry a stump to a cart. Around them people dig, and chop at the fallen trees, planting seeds in the holes they leave behind. Rebuilding is slow work.

CODY (V.O)(CONT'D)

I used to say: *We built a bomb from expired M80s we found in my brother's room.*

CODY (V.O)(CONT'D)

Nearly lost all my fingers.

PAGE THREE

In the distance, two people are standing at a hole they've made. One with a shovel and the other is looking down at something we can't see.

CODY and SAMUEL are by the cart.

CODY
What do you tell people?

SAMUEL
About what?

CODY
About the fire.

SAMUEL, who has mostly moved on from their past, does his best to avoid the topic of *fire* whenever possible.

SAMUEL
I don't tell 'em anything.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)
Who's asking you about the fire
all these years later?

The person with the shovel, in the background raises it. nearly above his head...

CODY
No one.

CODY (CONT'D)
Forget it.

...And Spikes it into the ground hard.

CODY (V.O.)
It's the anniversary of -

SAMUEL
Is it the anniversary or
something?

PAGE FOUR

A giant sinkhole opens up where the two people were standing in the background.

SFX
CRRRRRRRSSSSSSSSSSSS!

From above, five city blocks worth of pit opens; a dark cavern that some of the workers have been swallowed by.

CODY and SAMUEL stand at the edge, looking down.

PAGE FIVE

NOTE: I feel like this could be a full-page shot, fragmented.

On a real shitty looking rope, CODY and SAMUEL are being lowered into the pit. Workers form a line at the top of the sinkhole, gently easing them down. It's not a great system.

SAMUEL

How did I let you talk me into this?

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

There's **no way** someone would survive this fall.

CODY (V.O.)

Sam talks when he's nervous.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

I had a date tonight, too.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

I know you're thinking: *a date with who?*

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Well, maybe I didn't want to **tell you about it.**

CODY (V.O.)

He talks **a lot.**

Lower in the hole, small parts of trees cling to the walls. Human debris. Old license plates. Trash.

SAMUEL

...Because every time I tell you about someone I like you always ask all these **questions...**

CODY is looking down. They're getting closer to the bottom. The walls, dark with moisture, start to change. The budding ends of green vines, thick and dark. Aged, like they've been living for centuries.

SAMUEL

...and that makes me nervous, so it's better not to tell you **anything.**

PAGE SIX

CODY hits the ground first and is preoccupied with the small pool of water he's landed in. SAMUEL hasn't noticed anything.

SAMUEL

...then I start to hear your voice
in my head.

Landing in the same pool of water, SAMUEL is distracted by how tight the rope is.

CODY bends down, towards the water - amazed.

SAMUEL

*Be careful, Sam. You don't want to
date another Jennifer.*

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Well, guess what CODY? I **liked**
Jennifer. I liked her a lot
actually.

CODY, very cautiously, puts his hand into the water...

SAMUEL

So what if she traded some of my
stuff?

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Good. I don't need stuff.

... and brings it to his face with his hands.

SAMUEL

I'm a -

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

What do they call it?

SAMUEL finally looks down and notices the water.

CODY

You're not a minimalist.

PAGE SEVEN

While SAMUEL catches up, CODY walks curiously towards the edge of the light. He has a small flashlight, but it barely helps once he exits the light from the opening above them. There's something in the dark.

SAMUEL

Cody, come on, man. We should go back up.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

These little flashlights aren't going to do anything.

CODY is at a shimmering barrier in the darkness. Something that is only illuminated when he shines his flashlight on it. SAMUEL can see it, but doesn't want to. It's creeps him out. But CODY is called by its mystery. He can't help but continue.

SAMUEL

Cody?

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

We can come back down in the morning, I promise. Just **please** let's go back up and get some help.

CODY pushes through the border. Closer, it looks like a dark and clouded mirror. He sees his own hand touching himself from beyond the fog and darkness behind him. SAMUEL is barely visible.

PAGE EIGHT

Adult CODY is in the dark forest of his childhood, from the first panel, before the fire. It's green and lush and the night is clear. No smoke.

He walks through the trees as if in a dream. Not too far behind him, SAMUEL comes through and grabs his arm.

CODY

What are you doing?

SAMUEL

What am I doing? Look around, man.
Where the hell are we?

YOUNG SAMUEL (O.S.)

Did you bring it?

SAMUEL and CODY duck behind some trees. *What the hell?*

Their younger selves walk by with flashlights and backpacks.

YOUNG CODY

No, I left it at home.

YOUNG CODY(CONT'D)

Of course, I brought it!

Following their younger selves, they return to where the fire started. A ritual; a love spell.

YOUNG SAMUEL

Which way's west?

YOUNG CODY

What do I look like, a compass?

PAGE NINE

Their past is playing out in front of them.

YOUNG SAMUEL
Your phone, dude. It has a
compass.

YOUNG SAMUEL starts to light the candles.

CODY (V.O.)
Sarah Berkley. Perhaps the only
girl I've ever loved, truly, wrote
me a note once.

CODY (V.O.)(CONT'D)
Her friend Mary dropped it on my
desk in third period. History. Mr.
Kervich's class.

YOUNG CODY has the note in his hands. It's folded up in a
triangle with a little heart on the front. He's hesitating.

YOUNG SAMUEL
Just do it, man.

CODY (V.O.)
In the talent show, before summer
break, Sam and I played three
songs on guitar. Acoustic version
of heavy metal songs. It was
stupid.

Adult CODY starts to leave from where they are hiding, to stop
what's about to happen.

CODY (V.O.)
But she liked it, the note said.

But SAMUEL stops him. He's scared.

CODY (V.O.)(CONT'D)
She thought it was cool.

SAMUEL
(Whisper)
What are you doing?

PAGE TEN

The ritual is starting, but adult CODY and SAMUEL are still hiding.

CODY shakes him off.

YOUNG CODY (O.S.)
With flame!

CODY
(whisper)
I have to stop it.

CODY pulls away and goes towards his younger self.
YOUNG CODY holds up the triangle note, which has been set on fire.

YOUNG CODY (V.O.)
With Spirit!

CODY grabs his younger self's arm, which is raised in the air above his head. YOUNG SAMUEL is terrified and runs off.

YOUNG CODY
ACK!

CODY shakes his younger self's arm so hard that the flame extinguishes and the kid passes out.

CODY and SAMUEL stand over the fainted body of YOUNG CODY in the dark.

SAMUEL
Now what?

PAGE ELEVEN

CODY is carrying his younger self over his shoulder. SAMUEL is not happy about what's happening, but he carries the backpacks anyway. Before them is the edge of the forest and the sleeping town below.

CODY (V.O.)
Sarah Berkley wore a black jean
jacket with no patches.

CODY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It was clean, but it *looked* punk
and that was all that mattered.

Outside of CODY's family home, they sneak passed lit windows.

CODY (V.O.)
Sam said it made her look older,
which I said I liked.

CODY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Loved, really.

SAMUEL pushes YOUNG CODY through a window where adult CODY is waiting to grab him. It's his bedroom on the first floor. Band posters on the walls and burned CDs on the windowsill.

CODY (V.O.)
On the note, in a different
handwriting, it said: "ask her to
the dance, dummy."

CODY (V.O.)
But I never go the chance.

Sneaking back out of the window, CODY pauses when he hears the voice of his mother from the other room.

CODY'S MOM (O.S.)
...he used to do so well in
school. I don't know if it's his
friends, or what...

CODY (V.O.)
When the fires started, we had to
stay inside.

CODY (V.O.)
It wasn't safe for people with
asthma.

PAGE TWELVE

Back in the forest, back to where the mirror put them.

CODY (V.O.)
It wasn't safe for me.

CODY (V.O.)(CONT'D)
I heard she left for the East
Coast, where the fires weren't so
bad.

CODY's at the forest mirror, which stands like a dark monolith
- shimmering, pale white, like it's been poorly green screen'ed
into an existing world.

CODY (V.O.)
I sent an e-mail, not too long
after she moved.

SAMUEL
Do we have to go?

CODY turns back.

CODY (V.O.)
But she didn't write back.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)
We can go somewhere else. Get
names... jobs, and just...

CODY puts a hand on his shoulder.

CODY (V.O.)
They say you never forget your
first love.

SAMUEL
What if everything's still bad?

CODY walks through the black mirror, leaving SAMUEL alone in
the forest.

CODY (O.S.)
We have to go back.

SAMUEL, reluctantly, walks through the mirror.

The mirror disappears and we're left in a dark, quiet night.

END