

THE DIVINE COMEDY

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A big dark forest panorama. The sky is covered with low dark clouds. The sun is gone. It is late afternoon.

VOICE (V.O.)

When I had journeyed half of our
life's way, I found myself within a
shadowed forest, for I had lost the
path that does not stray.

A closer look reveals there are no animals or other
creatures, just trees. They are really old and dark, but
still alive.

VOICE (V.O.)

Ah, it is hard to speak of what it
was, that savage forest, dense and
difficult, which even in recall
renews my fear, so bitter death is
hardly more severe! But to retell
the good discovered there, I'll
also tell the other things I saw.

A closer look: there is only grass.

VOICE (V.O.)

I cannot clearly say how I had
entered the wood; I was so full of
sleep just at the point where I
abandoned the true path.

FADE TO BLACK.

Nothing but sounds of a sleeping man's breath.

FADE IN:

EXT. GLADE - DAY

DAN lies on his back on the ground. He is casual looking,
early 30s. Hair is short and dark. His T-shirt and jeans are
old and frayed, but clean.

Dan's eyes are closed in sleep. Suddenly he opens his eyes.
They seem deep, but empty.

Dan sits up and holds his head, moaning; he has one hell of a
hangover.

He looks around confused and sees nothing but trees.

DAN
Hey! Where am I?

He tries to stand, but his feet disobey him. He falls to the ground. The second attempt is successful. He's on his feet.

DAN
(louder)
Anybody there?

Looks around again.

DAN
(shouts)
Hey! Anyone?

Dan sits on the ground, still hung over.

DAN
Wait! My phone!

He ferrets in his pockets. They're empty, no phone, no keys, no money.

DAN
Shit! They're gone.

Suddenly a noise through the trees. Dan looks up, but the forest is silent.

DAN
Hey! Who's there?

Sounds of cracking branches. Dan stands again and looks in the direction of the sound.

DAN
Damn it, who's there?

A ROAR comes from the depths of the forest. Dan runs in the opposite direction. He stumbles across a barely visible path and follows it.

EXT. PATH IN THE FOREST - DAY

The path is narrow, surrounded by dense trees, branches everywhere, the sun barely filtering through.

Dan runs, then stops and listens to the forest. It is silent again, no signs of life, no birds, no insects.

Dan catches his breath and follows the path slowly as it narrows until there is no more path.

Dan scrambles through the forest, his face and arms covered with scratches. His shoes are torn, wet and dirty. He can barely see through the branches and leaves.

Dan continues onward, no signs of hearing his own voice.

DAN (V.O.)
Hey! What's going on? Am I
sleeping?

Dan walks silently, pushing branches aside, some slapping him back in the face.

DAN (V.O.)
Stop that! Is this some kind of
joke?
(quietly, terror in his
voice)
Please...

Dan suddenly stops and falls on his knees. He's choking, panic in his eyes.

DAN
(suffocating)
What-- What's going on?

Dan sits on the grass. He has a monster headache, pain grimaces on his face, but soon vanishes.

DAN
This is a sick joke, really sick.
Where the fuck am I?

Dan stands, looks up at the trees towering above and shouts.

DAN
Who is doing this?

The forest is silent, no answer to his plea. Dan trudges off.

EXT. CLIFF - RIVER BANK - CONTINUOUS

The forest ends abruptly and Dan finds himself at the edge of a cliff, a river below, and another cliff on the other side densely covered with trees.

The river looks narrow, but is too wide to jump across to the opposite cliff. Stepping stones protrude from the water, but there is no way down to the river bank from this side.

Dan cautiously approaches the edge of the cliff. His feet loosen some small rocks, and he steps back quickly.

DAN

Whoa!

Dan moves cautiously forward again and looks down at the river. He notices something in the distance on the far bank of the river, but he's not sure what it is.

Sudden roar from the trees, much closer this time. Dan looks startled, doesn't know where to go, but starts walking along the cliff toward some strange object.

EXT. CLIFF - RIVER BANK - LATER

The object turns out to be a wooden gondola, hanging on tense ropes grounded to platforms both sides of the river. The construction is worn, dirty and covered with rust.

Dan steps on the platform and takes a breath. He looks down at the planks of the platform, all rotten; ropes are parched and tattered. The condition is questionable.

Roar from the trees again, getting closer, then silence, followed by more noises from the forest.

No time to think. Dan climbs into the gondola and releases the switch, then moves it back and forth. At first nothing happens, but then it slowly starts moving with a creak.

DAN

Here goes nothing!

Dan holds his breath. The gondola slowly eases across the river, then suddenly stops midway. Dan pushes and pulls the switch in desperation, but nothing happens.

Dan panics and looks back and forth, then down at the river. On the far side he again notices something in the grass along the river bank. He looks intently and realizes it is a human body, laying face down.

DAN

(yells)

Hey! Can you hear me?

No signs of life.

DAN

Mister! Can you hear me?

There is no response or movement. Dan moves back and forth from side to side in the gondola.

DAN
 (yelling)
 Please, answer me! I need help!
 Something is chasing me!

No reply, no signs of life. Dan's strength oozes away; he sits down and stares at the floor of the gondola.

DAN
 (to himself)
 You're fucked, my friend. Totally
 and completely fucked.

Dan looks at the ropes; no way can he climb onto them. Suddenly he hears a growl from the opposite bank.

Dan sees movement between the grass, inching closer to the body. It's an animal, a lynx.

DAN
 (shouting)
 Get away! Get out!

The lynx slows for a second, then sniffs and continues her way toward the body.

DAN
 (screaming)
 Yeowoooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

The beast stops and stares at Dan, then turns her head and crawls toward the body.

The body's hand stirs.

DAN
 He's alive!

Dan jumps up desperately, rocking the gondola.

Dan searches the gondola for a stone or a rock, something hard. Nothing he can scare the beast away with, just some chips and dust. The lynx closes in on the body.

Sudden roar from behind. Dan turns his head. A lion slowly comes out of the trees toward the platform.

DAN
 What the hell...

The lion roars much louder. The lynx freezes and stares at the lion. She roars back.

The lion crawls closer to the edge and stares at Dan, pondering whether or not to jump. Dan starts pulling the switch back and forth rapidly, but the gondola remains still.

The lion turns away, giving Dan hope, then changes its mind and returns to the platform, snarling.

The lion is on the platform striking the rope over and over with its paw until the rope snaps.

The gondola violently shakes up and down.

EXT. RIVER BANK - CONTINUOUS

Dan holds on as the rope snaps and the gondola swings through the air, coming to rest on the opposite bank.

Dan recovers and scrambles out of the wreckage, looking around. The lynx growls and brings Dan back to reality.

Dan finds a stick on the ground and rushes toward the body, yelling and waving the stick.

DAN
Get away from there!

The lynx growls again and steps back as Dan moves in.

DAN
Go! Go! Go!

He waves his arms and jabs at the beast with the stick. Dan's adrenaline is working overtime. The lynx is surprised, growls, turns her back and vanishes through the grass.

Dan pauses, then walks over to the body and turns it over. It's a girl! Elly is late 20's, long brown hair, wearing a dirty white singlet with a shirt on top, dirty jeans. Dan takes her pulse.

DAN
Just sleeping...

He shakes her shoulders. Elly moans, then opens her eyes with fear and confusion. She pushes Dan and crawls away. Dan falls on his back in the grass. Elly meanwhile grabs the stick and threatens Dan with it.

ELLY
Who the fuck are you?

Dan gets up from the ground and holds out his empty hands.

DAN
Calm down. I've just saved you--

ELLY
--From what?

She looks around suspiciously.

ELLY
Where am I? What happened to
Martin? Where is he?

DAN
Who's Martin?

ELLY
My boyfriend. Where is he? What the
fuck is going on?

Dan looks confused.

DAN
I... I don't know. I've just saved
your life. There was a wild animal
not ten feet away... a lynx or
something.

He points in the direction the lynx took through the grass.

DAN
There was another one over there...
a lion... chasing me.

Dan looks across and points to the top of the cliff. Nothing,
the lion is long gone.

ELLY
Where? Are you drunk, or on drugs?

She doesn't trust him, but her bravery dissipates and Elly
starts crying.

DAN
Put that stick down, I'm your
friend.

Dan steps toward her, but she pokes him in the stomach.

DAN
(stepping back)
Shit!

ELLY

Don't you fucking touch me! You're not my friend. I want to know where Martin is?

DAN

I don't know what you're--

ELLY

Don't lie to me! He's gone! You did something to him! Is he dead?

DAN

OK, listen. I haven't seen anybody but you here --

ELLY

You kidnaped me!

DAN

No, I --

He moves forward, but Elly threatens with the stick.

DAN

Calm down, OK? I just saved your life. I'm not going to hurt you.

He takes several steps back and sits on the ground.

DAN

I am going to sit right here until you calm down?

Elly looks at Dan suspicious, hesitates and finally sits at some distance, still crying. She still holds onto the stick tightly.

DAN

That's better. My name is Dan, what's yours?

ELLY

(still sobbing)
Elly.

DAN

Nice to meet you.

She calms down a bit.

ELLY

Where am I?

DAN

That is the question. I woke up and found myself in the middle of a fucking forest on the other side of the river. The only thing I can tell you for sure is that we're in the middle of nowhere.

Dan tears off a blade of grass and starts chewing it.

DAN

And yeah, who the fuck is Marvin?

ELLY

-- Martin!

DAN

Whatever. I have no idea where he is. I don't even know how I got here. What about you?

Elly looks confused.

ELLY

I... I don't know, really. I... I think...

Elly clutches her head and falls to the ground. Dan rushes to help her, but she grabs the stick and pokes him again.

DAN

-- the fuck you doing?

He jumps away and rubs the spot where Elly hit him.

ELLY

Keep away from me!

She gets to her feet and waives the stick.

DAN

Fine. Whatever. You're nuts.

Dan sits on the ground. Elly holds the stick tightly. She doesn't cry anymore.

DAN

Are you all right?

No reply from her.

DAN

I hope so. And now please drop the
fucking stick. I'm not going to
bite you.

Elly puts the stick down slowly with hesitation.

DAN

Good. So what was that?

ELLY

What was what?

DAN

You fell on the ground. Were you
dizzy?

Elly gives him a funny look.

DAN

Well, what happened?

ELLY

Nothing. I guess I'm just tired.
And my brain refuses to understand
that this is not just a nightmare.

Elly pinches herself. Her thoughts are all mixed up.

ELLY

Nope, I'm still here. The same
trees. Same strange guy.

Elly looks around, Dan follows her gaze.

ELLY

So what's your story? How could
some guy like you find himself in
the middle of the forest?

DAN

What do you mean "guy like me?"

Elly finds it funny.

ELLY

(laughing)

I mean look at yourself.

Dan lifts his arms and looks himself over. His clothes are
dirty, his torn boots wet and dirty. He looks like a bum.

ELLY

So what happened?

Dan gets up and looks at the cliffs on the other side.

DAN
I wish I knew.

Dan walks off toward the remains of the gondola and Elly follows at a distance.

He looks over the wreckage and fingers the broken rope.

ELLY
What's that?

DAN
How I got here... crash landed.

Dan walks to the river's edge, picks up a stone and throws it across the water.

DAN
No going back that way... not that
it matters --

ELLY
You were going to tell me your
story. It better be interesting.

They walk back, Dan sits on the grass and rubs his head.

DAN
I don't remember exactly. I had a
birthday, just turned thirty-five.
There was a party.

Dan engrosses himself in thought, tries to recall.

FLASHBACK

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Dan and two male friends sit at a table covered with empty shot glasses in a rowdy bar. His friends urge him to stay for another round but Dan has had enough.

He stands, knocking over a glass and stumbles toward the exit, pushes the door, then realizes that he must pull it to open it.

DAN (V.O.)
Yeah, a party. Me, Jim and Paul. We
were celebrating my birthday and
the last thing I remember was
leaving the bar.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Dan stands in the street and tries to hail a cab, but all those that pass by have passengers and no one stops for him...

DAN (V.O.)
I couldn't get a taxi, so I went
home on foot. I guess.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

Dan sighs.

DAN
And then I found myself here in the
middle of nowhere. I started
walking and...

Dan stops and tries to think over what happened to him. Elly listens attentively to the whole monologue.

DAN
And then I came to the river and
saw you. There was an animal. A
cougar or something.

ELLY
I'm not really a zoologist, but I
don't think cougars live in
forests.

DAN
Fine. There was a big cat and she
was moving through the grass toward
you. And there was --

Dan stops talking and looks around aggrieved.

ELLY
What?

Dan is concerned now, when he remembers the lion.

DAN
Nothing. Come on, we have to move,
it's getting late.

Dan stands and approaches Elly, but she grabs her stick again.

ELLY
Move where?

DAN
Oh shit, not that again.

Dan moves toward Elly, but she raises the stick.

DAN
(pointing up)
You see that? It looks like a trail
up to the top of the cliff.

ELLY
Stop right there. I wake up in the
middle of nowhere with a strange
man. Now we have to climb up a
cliff. I'm not going anywhere with
you!

Dan is angry and shows his irritation.

DAN
Suit yourself. I'm going alone; I
don't want to spend the night in
the forest with wild beasts.

He makes his own path through the grass toward what looks like a trail leading up to the top of the cliff. Dan looks up from time to time at the trail.

Elly sits on the ground still holding her stick and stares off at Dan, thinking.

The grass gradually gets taller and Dan's head finally vanishes from sight. Blue fire appears in Elly's eyes for a second. Or maybe it was just a glint from the sun.

EXT. CLIFF - RIVER BANK - PATH - DAY

Dan emerges from the grass and climbs up the rough path cut into the rock, using his hands to maintain balance. He looks down at Elly and waves goodbye.

Elly gets up and runs after Dan.

ELLY
Wait for me!

EXT. CLIFF - RIVER BANK - PATH - CONTINUOUS

Elly struggles to climb along the trail, Dan pausing now and then to let her keep up.

EXT. PATH IN THE FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The path is overgrown and sometimes seems to disappear, but they plod on. Dan goes first and Elly follows in his tracks.

The environment hasn't changed from the forest on the other side. Big old trees surround the path making it dark and gloomy, with little light filtering through.

The only thing different here is that birds are singing from somewhere far away. They are not joyful songs, more like alien noises which make this place even more terrifying.

EXT. PATH IN THE FOREST - LATER

Dan's face looks determined as he trudges forward along the path, occasionally pushing aside branches.

DAN

So where are you from?

ELLY (O.S.)

Me? Romania.

Dan suddenly stops and Elly bumps into him. He turns around and looks at her, shock in his eyes.

DAN

Romania?

ELLY

You never heard of the country?

DAN

Yes... but isn't Romania somewhere in Europe?

ELLY

Wow. You know geography. Amazing.

She points at the path, pushes him slightly.

ELLY

Come on, we have to move. It's getting late and I don't like this forest, not at all.

Dan resumes walking, followed by Elly, but he's curious about what he just heard.

DAN

Romania, huh!

ELLY
Something wrong with that?

DAN
Not at all. I mean you weren't just
born there? You still live there?

ELLY
Of course I do.

They keep walking in silence, except for the sounds of the forest. Dan thinks this over.

DAN
You know, this is really weird. The
last thing I remember was that pub
in L.A., and you, your boyfriend.
And somehow we both woke up in the
middle of a forest. How could we
cover 10,000 miles in one night?

Elly looks more serious, concerned about what has happened.

DAN
To make matters worse, this place
looks more like Romania than
California.

ELLY
Have you ever been to Romania?

DAN
No, I just think all of Eastern
Europe must look like this, dense
forests.

Elly sneers as they continue walking in silence. The path is getting wetter and the air more humid.

Dan hears the whine of a mosquito; Dan swats a mosquito on his neck with a loud slap.

DAN
So this place doesn't look like
Romania?

ELLY
Not quite.

Dan chuckles and they stop talking. As they walk along the path small puddles start appearing near the edge.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - NIGHT

The forest opens onto a lake. Several feet of sand and grass separate the woods and the water's edge. Heavy fog hangs low on the water. The shore is partly obscured by the mist.

Dan emerges from the forest first and takes in the lake. His stride picks up as he sees the water through the mist.

ELLY (O.S.)
Where are you?

Dan comes to the water's edge, scoops and drinks. Freezing! His face screws up for a moment and his teeth chatter

DAN
Over here!

Elly appears from the woods, shock and excitement in her eyes. Thirst! She rushes toward the lake, leans on all fours and gulps the water, then realizes how cold it is.

Dan looks at her and laughs as she coughs.

ELLY
What's so funny?

DAN
Nothing, was just curious how--

Strange sounds interrupt him - something between a holler and a howl.

ELLY
What was that?

Elly turns her head; nothing human could sound like that.

DAN
Let's go.

ELLY
Where?

Dan realizes that the path has ended and they have two ways to go. He tries to orient himself, hopelessly, then points in the direction partly clear of fog.

DAN
Let's go --

Another howl, much closer and coming from the direction he was pointing at. They go the opposite way.

ELLY

Run!

She scoots and disappears in the fog. Dan stands alone and listens to the fading echo of Elly's steps.

Another howl, much closer, jars him into action. He follows Elly and disappears in the fog.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - FOG - NIGHT

Dan runs, too terrified to call Elly.

Tree! Last second collision avoided. Still he stumbles and the tree branch scratches his cheek.

Dan is back up and running, gasping. His leaps are shaky. Water comes out of the fog. No time to avoid it, so Dan tries to jump over it, but falls short and splashes into it.

Howl somewhere off in the fog.

Dan's eyes flash with terror. He hardly lifts his feet.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - FOG - CONTINUOUS

Dan still runs, ready to break any minute.

Another howl.

DAN (V.O.)

What? Again?

No sign that he hears his voice as he runs, only terror and desperation in the eyes.

DAN (V.O.)

Wake up! Stop that!

Dan continues running. A strange black figure emerges from the fog!

DAN (V.O.)

Look out!

Too late. Dan bumps into the figure at full speed.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - FOG - CONTINUOUS

Dan, eyes closed, lies on the ground, completely dirty. He's bruised and surrounded with total silence.

Water splashed in the face revives him. Deep inhaling!

Elly leans toward him.

DAN
What... What happened?

ELLY
No time! Follow me!

She turns and pulls his hand in desperation. Dan hesitates; he's still out of it.

ELLY
Get up, please.

Steps in the fog and muted growling make him alert.

ELLY
Come on!

She lifts Dan from the ground. The mist isn't as heavy now; some outlines can be seen. Near the water's edge an old wooden boat dances on the waves of the lake, anchored to a wooden stake with a rope that hangs in the water.

ELLY
Come on, Dan, please!

She shoulders Dan and drags him on. Dan's mind is still disconnected from his feet. Another growl, getting closer. Elly looks about. Even if there is something in the fog, it's invisible.

Stepping into the freezing water revives Dan. He grabs the rope and wades out to the boat, Elly not far behind. A few more steps and Elly falls into the water.

ELLY
My leg!

Dan pulls her up and pushes her into the boat with a thud. Elly manages to sit up.

DEEP GROWL nigh as they turn their heads back only to see two glowing dots in the fog.

ELLY
(shrieks)
Let's go! Fast!

Dan tries to get over the edge with no success. He's still not strong enough and Elly's holding her leg. Agony distorts her face.

Dots move a little closer and reveal the outline of the beast - a big grey wolf. Saliva drops from its graze.

Finally Dan manages to climb inside and grab the paddle. He unties the rope, but escape looks impossible. The boat is only five or six feet from the shore.

The wolf understands and lurches forward. Dan defensively throws up the paddle and cringes.

The wolf jumps into the air, fangs growling, eyes glowing.

Suddenly a strange shape bursts out of nowhere toward the wolf.

They collide in the air.

The shape bursts into thousands of ashes. But for a brief moment the shape forms an image through the falling ashes - a big dog (golden retriever) - and then the image fades.

Dan's pupils are enlarged.

FLASHBACK

EXT. FRONTAGE OF HOUSE - DAY

Lawn fronting a typical house in the United States suburbs.

A BOY, 9, plays with his dog - a golden retriever. He laughs, throws a tennis ball and the dog jumps and catches it in the air.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. LAKE SHORE - FOG - MOMENTS LATER

Dan still holds the paddle, petrified.

The wolf is staved, but it takes him only a few moments to recover.

ELLY

Paddle!

Her yell wakes Dan from his stupor.

A couple of fast strokes moves the boat away from the bank. Too far for a new jump. Safe for now!

The boat vanishes in the mist.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - FOG - CONTINUOUS

The wolf stands at the edge of the water staring into the fog, a grin on its muzzle.

A pair of burning eyes appears in the fog behind them. Another pair! They slowly come closer.

The lynx and the lion step out from the mist and near the wolf. Blast of wind bares part of the full moon in the cloudy sky. The wolf merely snarls, sits and howls.

EXT. LAKE - BOAT - FOG - LATER

The boat seems to float not through the water, but through the fog itself. The vessel is old, partly covered with mold and moss. Dan sits on the bow and paddles. Elly rubs her legs furiously. She has already rolled up her jeans, her boots kicking about the boat.

DAN
Everything is fine?

Elly keeps her mind on her legs.

ELLY
No better than it should be.

DAN
Well, at least we're alive.

Elly harrumphs. The boat floats in the fog.

EXT. LAKE - BOAT - FOG - CONTINUOUS

Nothing has changed. Dan paddles and Elly sits on the bench in the middle of the boat.

DAN
(mumbling)
Lion, cougar, wolf. Fucking wild
beast show.

ELLY
What?

DAN
Nothing. What's next? Nessie? Big
Foot?

ELLY
I'd prefer a small hunting lodge
with warm soup and hot tea.

She sneezes and coughs.

DAN
Bless you.

ELLY
Damn this place. It's so cold here.

Dan stops paddling and looks around.

DAN
I'd love to know where in the hell
we are. I haven't a clue, not a
fucking clue.

ELLY
Could be hell, except that it's
freezing here.

No answer from Dan.

DAN
(to himself)
I woke up in the middle of the
forest... Surrounded by wild
animals... Beasts, forests, lakes
and not a fucking single person...
Just this crazy woman.

ELLY
Crazy, huh?

DAN
Sorry...

Paddles one more time and lets the boat drift.

DAN
The most reasonable explanation is
that we're in the Narnia, apart
from fact that the lion wants to
eat us, not save us.

Elly smiles bitterly.

ELLY
I have a better explanation. We're
in a lunatic asylum with amnesia,
schizophrenia and a couple more
nice illnesses. We imagine...

FLASHBACK

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Dan sits at the bar with two young men. They laugh and saw the air while talking. They're all pretty drunk.

YOUNG MAN #1
 -- and yeah, you know. A great house. Really big, facing the lake. Let's go?

YOUNG MAN #2
 To freeze our asses?

They laugh, obviously drunk.

YOUNG MAN #1
 Yeah... I mean no. The weather is just fine right now. It's like Alaska, or Siberia. My dad will give us a couple of rooms and a keg of his great homemade beer. He's kinda crazy 'bout that since he visited Ireland...

YOUNG MAN #2
 Maybe he can find us a couple of pretty girls...

DAN
 Two for each of us!

They start laughing again.

YOUNG MAN #1
 Alaska, let's go!

END FLASHBACK

EXT. LAKE - BOAT - FOG - NIGHT

Dan and Elly sit in the boat quietly.

DAN
 Alaska...

ELLY
 ...and while we're telling stories to each other our imaginations created this world. You know, maybe I'm not from Romania. I could be from Mexico!

Elly claps her hands.

ELLY
La senorita loco.

She laughs. Dan is silent and bemused.

ELLY
Hey! You haven't heard a word I
said, right? You slept all through
my great story. Men.

Something heavy knocks into the side of the boat, throwing
them off balance.

ELLY
What was that?

They look around in the darkness. Finally they see something
long and dark floating near the boat.

Dan lifts the paddle and smashes whatever is with a loud dull
sound. He peers into the water.

DAN
It's just a log.

ELLY
You're sure?

Dan hooks a branch on the log with the paddle and pulls it
closer. Seven feet long, chopped down long ago.

DAN
Leftovers of civilization. Maybe
we'll find a logger hut or...

Dan gives the log a push with the paddle and it turns over.

ELLY
Look!

She points at the log. There is something carved on the other
side, but not easily visible through the fog.

ELLY
There's something there... Might be
important! Pull it back!

Dan fiddles about with the paddle and after a couple of
attempts hooks the log again.

As the log is pulled closer to the boat, the outline of a
carving is revealed. It is a full-sized carving of a man
lying on his back with his arms crossed on his chest.

DAN
Shit! If this is some kind of local
arts and crafts, I don't like it.

ELLY
Looks very old...

They peer into the face of the carving.

DAN
Wait! The face looks familiar.

FLASHBACK

INT. HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A boy and a man sit in front of the fireplace; everything is decorated for Christmas: stockings hanging from the fireplace, a tall Christmas tree. MAN's face resembles the carving. They're laughing and fooling around.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. LAKE - BOAT - FOG - NIGHT

Dan continues to stare at the log.

DAN
Uncle Tim?

ELLY
What?

DAN
No, nothing...

He releases the log again and it slowly floats away. Dan sits in silence unable to understand what's happening. Elly keeps silent as well. Suddenly Dan perks up...

DAN
Of course!

ELLY
What is it?

DAN
Fucking Bingo! That explains
everything.

ELLY
Not to me. What's going on?

Dan looks off into the fog, ignoring Elly.

DAN

It was your mistake, Jim. You sick motherfucker! Only you've known him.

ELLY

What are you talking about?

DAN

My uncle Tim is long dead, but Jim has seen him! He remembers! Are you with them?

Dan looks wild, out of his mind. He closes in on Elly and she cowers in fear. The wind gets up meanwhile.

ELLY

Whom are you talking about?

DAN

Of course you know them. Only Jim has known him! He died in 1989! Sick bastards!

ELLY

Calm down, Please--

Dan leaps on his feet.

DAN

Hey you fuckers! Jim! Paul! Get the fuck out! Now!

Dan passes his hand through the fog. It's as heavy as cream.

DAN

Cheap tricks! Smoke generators, wild fucking beast show, now this girl.

Dan points at Elly still facing the fog.

DAN

And... Alaska! Am I right?

The wind blows harder and harder, Dan's voice hardly struggles through the wind's howling. He laughs, madness and supremacy in his eyes.

DAN

Of course I am. Morons! But what a show! I'm impressed, really. Come here and I'll kick your asses you...

A blast of wind uncovers the moon and a beam of light penetrates the thinned out fog. A boat in the water glides along surrounded by hundreds of carved logs, with images of women, men and children.

Each of them has his or her own appearance, but the arms of everyone are crossed on their chests. Each of them has a small green spark on their chests.

Dan stops short, unable to make a sound.

ELLY
What is this place?

She is terrified, her mouth open, unable to say another word.

The log with Dan's uncle floats away from the boat. A small green spark appears on the chest of the carving.

Dan sits in place floored.

DAN
I know...

Elly wills herself to shift her glance from the lake to Dan. He looks ill, almost physically ill. In the moonlight he looks like the living dead.

DAN
I know them all.

MONTAGE - EVERYTHING IS MIXED UP

- Boy playing with an old lady.
- Bunch of kids on the lake shore.
- Two teenagers running from cops.
- Dog chasing a ball.

The scenes repeat several times, each very briefly

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. LAKE - BOAT - FOG - NIGHT

Dan gets sick and leans forward. He feeds the fishes, then scoops up water and washes his face.

ELLY
What do you mean you know them all?

Dan plops down on the boat bottom.

DAN
Her, over there --

Dan points at the young woman's carving.

DAN
She's my first teacher.

Points to another log.

DAN
He was my best friend when I came
to my grandpa's Texas ranch in the
summer.

Another log.

DAN
My first girlfriend.

One more.

DAN
The guy she left me for.

Dan sits helplessly, can do nothing.

ELLY
We have to get out of here. Now!

She reaches past Dan for the paddle, but he takes it.

ELLY
You sure?

Dan silently nods his head. Paddles once more. The boat glides between the logs in silence. The fog clears a bit and the moonlight illuminates the lake. Green sparks everywhere.

ELLY
Wait a second.

Dan stops and turns to her.

ELLY
Look at the logs.

Points around.

ELLY
They're all pointed in the same
direction.

Indeed, heads of all the carvings are turned in one direction. The destination is hidden by the fog.

DAN

Anyway...

He continues paddling. No reaction or sign of surprise. Determined and calm, but some kind of crazy calm.

The water in front of Dan forebodes.

Dan paddles. Wind blows. More paddling. Blowing stronger. Paddling harder. Wind strengthens. The boat is almost flying. The fog is torn apart by the wind and the lake clears.

EXT. LAKE - BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly an island appears. In the middle, an old stone tower rises far above the lake and its surroundings. Nine floors, a small window on each floor except the fifth, which has a breach in the wall instead. The top of the tower disappears into the clouds. The logs are aimed toward the tower.

DAN

(putting the paddle down)

Wow...

ELLY

(screams desperately)

Look!

She points at the water. Something is glowing inside. Closer look. It is fire! Flames of blue fire dance everywhere underwater.

They are unable to say a word. Elly cautiously touches the water and pulls her finger out quickly. It is still cold.

The wind dies down and the water is mirror-like. The moon disappears behind the clouds again, but everything is lightened from the underwater fire instead.

They are too shocked to speak. Dan silently heads the boat toward the tower and starts paddling, slowly, cautiously. Elly can't shift her glance while the boat skims the surface of the water; she just stares at the fire, hypnotized.

Suddenly a spark flies out of the flames. As soon as it emerges it slowly turns into a firefly. It circles the boat and lands on Elly's hand. Puff! Only a small piece of cold coal remains on her skin.

Elly opens her mouth to tell Dan, but then changes her mind.

The boat skims on the surface toward the tower over the blue fire. Logs surround it. Surreal.

EXT. ISLAND SHORE - BOAT - NIGHT

The boat approaches the shore, Dan jumps into the water and pulls it onto the sand, then holds out a hand and helps Elly out of the boat.

ELLY

The lights are on... someone should be here.

DAN

(indifferently)
Rapunzel?

ELLY

Maybe woodcutters! Have you ever been told you're a fucking asshole?

DAN

In the middle of the burning lake, right?

Elly chokes in anger.

ELLY

Idiot.

She turns her back and heads toward the tower. We can see Dan's face. He observes the tower, no longer mocking, fear in his eyes.

Dan takes a step, then looks backwards. The lake glows with the calm blue fire. Logs sway slowly on the waves. The fog is getting thicker, so not much can be seen - only small green sparks in the distance. Dan moves on.

EXT. TOWER FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Elly is waiting when Dan reaches the door. It is wooden, old and massive. Instead of a ring there is a door hammer with a big copper plate.

Elly lifts the hammer and drops it. Boom! No reply. Drops it again. Nothing, just an echo in the tower.

DAN

Well, I guess your woodcutters aren't home.

Elly glares at Dan, but is silent. She knocks again.

ELLY
(yells)
Hey! Anyone home?

No answer.

DAN
Even if it's outdoors, I prefer
sleeping on this deserted island
than in the forest with wild
animals.

He points at the lake and waits for a response. Elly offers none.

DAN
(irritated)
Fine! Be like that!

Dan sits on the ground and leans against the cold stones of the tower. Dirt on his clothes can be seen even at night.

ELLY
(yells)
Hey! Open the door please!

No reply, but she's not going to give up her attempt to get into the tower. She pounds her fists on the door.

DAN
Come on, don't waste your energy.

Elly is ready to follow his advice, but then has an idea.

ELLY
The key.

DAN
What key?

Elly is already feeling the surrounding walls.

ELLY
When people leave home they always
hide a key near the front door.

DAN
They may do that if they have a
home in the city, but this is a
castle in the middle of nowhere.

ELLY
Doesn't matter.

DAN

And you're going to find it? You know what, it's trespass... a crime. I don't want to go to jail...

Elly glances at a massive rock near the door. She tries to move the stone, but it's too heavy for her.

ELLY

Will you help me or are you just going to sit there?

Dan stands unwillingly and they push the stone. It gradually rolls, but underneath is nothing, just earth and bugs.

DAN

You see? Now let's just get some rest, can we? We'll think of something tomorrow.

Dan returns and sits against the wall. Elly gives him a look.

ELLY

Fine, tomorrow morning...

Elly sits near him and leans against the wall, worn out. She's not comfortable so she twists around. As she moves, a fist-sized stone falls out of the wall.

ELLY

This place is falling apart.

She kicks the stone, looks at the wall and notices a hole where the stone fell out of the wall. A quick look inside reveals nothing, but Elly is curious now. She sticks her hand inside to feel around and pulls out an old twisted metal key.

DAN

What are you doing?

Elly holds up the key, smiling victoriously. She gets to her feet and inserts the key into the lock and turns it. After a click the door opens with a loud creak as she pulls it open.

She tries to pull the key out of the lock, but the key breaks in half, the other half stuck in the lock.

ELLY

Oops.

She shrugs her shoulders and throws away the broken half key.

ELLY
(disappearing inside)
Welcome!

Dan jumps up and follows her inside.

INT. TOWER - FIRST FLOOR PASSAGE - LATER

All is enveloped in darkness. Faltering steps of Dan and Elly are heard as they move about cautiously. They stumble upon some wood and metal objects that clang to the floor.

Sound of a solid object smashing into something wooden.

ELLY
Shit!

DAN
What was that?

ELLY
My head, you asshole!

More sounds of movement, and a narrow strip of light glowing along the floor.

ELLY
I found a door.

Elly tries to open the door; it's futile. Dan comes over.

DAN
Let me...

Dan smashes the door in with his shoulder, followed by a loud crack of old wood breaking and a beam of dazzling light.

INT. TOWER - FIRST FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

The door flies open as Dan breaks it and falls inside to find himself in a large room.

The stone walls are decorated with animal heads - trophies from bears, wolves and lions to horses and dogs. Dozens of them. The back wall is veiled with a great red flag, the letter "G" in the middle and two boars on the sides.

A massive wooden table occupies most of the space in the hall. The table is loaded with food and drink of all sorts. There must be enough for hundreds of people, but there are only two empty place settings and chairs at the table.

The opposite side of the table is occupied by a man eating ravenously. Gula is about fifty, extremely fat, dirty grey hair, partly bald; he vaguely resembles Dan.

Gula is eating as Dan breaks into the room. He pays no attention to the intruders. A small, ugly monkey serves him - bringing food from another end of the table. Gula swallows everything almost without chewing.

Dan gets to his feet as Elly ventures into the room, eyes hurting from the light. They stare at the old man silently.

GULA

What do you want?

Dan regains his self-control. Elly stands by him, scared.

DAN

I'm sorry, we are lost and we--

Gula swallows a big loaf of bread.

GULA

How did you get inside?

DAN

(pointing at Elly)
She found--

ELLY

-- The door was open.

Gula swallows something again. It doesn't seem that he cares about anything but food.

GULA

And why did you break this door?

DAN

I thought there was nobody home --

GULA

-- Whatever.

He looks at them suspiciously, but interested.

GULA

The food is getting cold and this is the worst thing that can happen with a perfect roast.

He motions to the two empty seats.

GULA
My brothers are late again anyway.

He grins.

GULA
(mockingly)
Working.

Gula looks at the monkey sitting near him.

GULA
Pour some wine for my guests!

He's too fat to do it himself. Dan and Elly gingerly take their places. Gula slurps something from a cup that looks like a human skull.

GULA
So how did you get here?

INT. TOWER - FIRST FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

Dan and Elly eat with zest. Gula swallows large pieces of food without chewing.

DAN
-- and then we found the tower --

ELLY
(with her mouth full)
-- We knocked on the door, but nobody came.

GULA
This tower is very old and the acoustics aren't that good. The doorbell is long broken.

Everyone eats in silence for some time.

GULA
So how come you are here?

DAN
It's a bit complicated. We don't remember anything, but last night and --

GULA
(laughs)
The better the night was the worse morning will be.

Elly screws up her courage.

ELLY
I want to know where we are? What
is this place?

Gula sips from his skull cup again.

GULA
Believe it or not, I don't know
that for sure myself. But I can
tell you --

Gula suddenly changes his mind and stops. He thinks for a few seconds.

GULA
Actually, I'm not the best advisor
for you. I... I can't tell you
anything... Not right now.

He tears meat from the bone and chews noisily.

GULA
You'd better try the ragout... an
authentic recipe from French
Polynesia.

The monkey jumps on the table and grabs the bowl of ragout. It maneuvers between plates, bowls and bottles, reaches the opposite side of the table and passes the bowl to Dan. The monkey is old, sick and ugly, fur worn in some places.

GULA
The only thing I know for sure is
this ragout is damn tasty.

Dan tries the meat; Elly hesitates, but then joins in.

GULA
How is it?

DAN
Really tasty. Tender, but mature.

GULA
Yeah. Mature.

Gula laughs.

GULA
(ostentatiously)
The only thing I know for sure is
cooking.

(MORE)

GULA (CONT'D)

You know, I can tell you the difference between ratatouille from Dijon and Lyons. This is ridiculous, because I have no idea where Dijon or Lyons is.

Gula sips from the skull again.

GULA

(going into overdrive)

I know everything about all the dishes from the back of beyond, I know the forgotten recipes of the monarchs and princes, I remember the forgotten recipes of Vikings and Egyptians. I know every method of cooking that existed! Ever!

Takes a breath and grabs one more piece of meat. Dan and Elly are paralyzed. They look at him with both fear and disgust, but Gula doesn't seem to notice.

GULA

Please take a look at the walls.

They all look around at the animal heads.

GULA

What do you see?

After some hesitation.

DAN

Animal heads?

GULA

Wrong! Trophies! And what is the difference between mere animal heads and trophies?

Neither Dan nor Elly knows the answer. Gula gnaws on the roasted wing of some bird.

GULA

The answer is very simple. They all are represented here.

Points at the table.

GULA

All of them found their rest here, in these bowls and plates. Isn't it the best end for an animal? Any animal. Lions, deer, cows, dogs --

Elly chokes when she hears the word dogs.

GULA

Does the ancient tradition of eating dogs in Asia shock you, young lady?

Elly can't say a word.

GULA

Then what would you say about eating people? Cannibalism?

Both Elly and Dan are too scared to answer. They already regret getting inside the tower. Gula notices.

GULA

(laughing)

Don't you worry. Nobody here is going to harm you. Only animals in the forest I guess.

(to Elly)

So what about cannibalism?

Gula looks at Elly but she's scared out of her wits. Dan comes to succor, although he looks no better than Elly.

DAN

Have you heard about the soul? --

GULA

-- The soul, right? Who told you it exists?

DAN

Everyone knows that! God--

GULA

(raged)

Who told you there is one?

DAN

I... I don't know...

GULA

(laughs)

God! What about the young lady?

Elly is too frightened to answer. She silently shakes her head from side to side.

GULA

You don't know either?

Gula sips his wine, Elly and Dan stare at him silently.

GULA

Don't you like this wine? As for me
I find it perfect. And the ragout?

Gula chews on another piece of meat

GULA

By the way I dared to decide for
you.

DAN

What do you mean?

GULA

As I told you, the recipe is from
French Polynesia. As you may know,
it is not located in France.

Looks inquiringly.

GULA

(discontentedly)

I am trapped here and I know more
about the world you're living in.
Fine! Aborigines there have their
own food tastes. I mean they have
one special delicacy.

Gula winks at Elly.

GULA

The ragout you are eating is a
precise replica of this culinary
masterpiece. And the main
ingredient is the most tender flesh
of all... Homo Sapiens.

Gula trills with laughter, then looks at his skull cup.

GULA

Poor Yourick!

Gula slurps some wine and eats another piece of meat. Dan
becomes white, Elly's face is green already, but Gula doesn't
seem to notice.

ELLY

You sick bastard!

No sign Gula heard what Elly screamed at him.

GULA

(talking mostly to
himself)

In fact I'm glad his head isn't on
the wall. It might scare visitors.
You know, ancient kings thought
that drinking out of their enemies'
skulls granted --

Finally he looks at Elly.

GULA

Are you sick? Ah, such
sensibilities.

Elly tries to leave the table, but can't get out of the
chair. She's extremely sick.

ELLY

What are you, some monster?

GULA

(apologetically)

Oh, I am so sorry. I've entirely
forgotten to introduce myself. I
have many names to tell the truth.
I prefer Gula. It is an ancient
name that has been forgotten. Now
you may have heard about me by the
name of Gluttony.

He winks at Elly.

GULA

(bored)

Still, I don't like this name.

He takes a handful of grapes and eats them one by one.

DAN

(to Elly)

Let's go.

They stand, but the monkey jumps from the table and blocks
the broken door before Dan or Elly can leave.

As they move toward the door, the monkey bares her teeth.

GULA

He's small and old, but I don't
advise you to try his teeth.

Dan procrastinates and Elly rushes toward the other door.

GULA

Good move, young lady.

Elly opens the door and disappears. Dan follows after her.

INT. STAIRS BETWEEN 1ST AND 2ND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Elly runs up the stairs with Dan on her heels.

GULA (O.S.)

Didn't you enjoy the dinner?

A laugh echoes from the hall they just left.

Dan and Elly come to a new door. Fortunately it opens easily, with a loud creak.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

Dan shuts the door from inside the hall with a thud. Elly falls on the floor flaked out. She is sick.

The hall is a twin of the one on the first floor, but instead of animal heads the walls are covered with all kinds of medieval weapons. On one wall hangs a large coat of arms with the letter "I" in the middle and two swords on its sides.

Dan grabs a spear from the wall, blocks the door to the first floor and catches his breath. He looks at Elly - a pitiful sight, lying on the floor in shock, sick and almost insane.

DAN

Are you okay?

ELLY

Do you think that was really human
flesh?

Her voice is lifeless.

DAN

(quietly)

I don't want to know.

He doesn't look well either. They keep silent for some time, trying to realize what has just happened.

Dan sits with his back against the wall, his glance vacant. His eyes rove around the walls, observing the armory.

DAN

(to himself)

I will kill that son-of-a-bitch!

Elly raises her head.

ELLY

What?

Dan leaps up and grabs a big sword from the wall.

DAN

I will kill that motherfucker!

He shakes the sword and roars. He pulls the spear that was blocking the door, then pushes it. No result, the door is stuck. Dan kicks the door and hits it with the sword.

DAN

(yelling)

Sick bastard!

He tries to knock the door off its hinges. Still, nothing. Dan falls on the floor and just moans.

Silence. Both of them freeze on the floor in their poses.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL - LATER

Dan lies on the floor. Eyes wide open, not blinking. They are full of dismay, fear and anger, totally crazy.

He gets to his feet slowly, like a zombie, the sword in his hand.

Elly raises her head and stares at Dan. He is totally out of control, completely out of his mind.

ELLY

Where are you going?

Dan stares at her furiously.

DAN

Damn you!

Now she understands that something is seriously wrong. Elly sits up and slowly crawls away from Dan.

ELLY

Me?

DAN

You! The one who brought me here.
You are the cause of this.

ELLY
(frightened)
... of what?

Dan doesn't listen to her, just inches closer with the sword raised. A fast leap forward and he's within arms-length.

ELLY
(screaming)
Please! Don't hurt me!

DAN
Who told me to sail here? You!

ELLY
No, I didn't.

He puts the sword against her throat.

DAN
Was it I who broke in here? Because
of you, we're stuck in this hell
hole!

Dan pushes the sword too close, and a drop of blood slides down the edge of the blade.

DAN
This is all your fault!

ELLY
Please, no...

Elly starts to cry and that instantly sobers Dan. He slowly regains self-control, then looks down and notices the sword in his hand.

DAN
Oh, my God...

He throws the sword away and it crashes to the floor. Elly is crying and Dan is completely lost. He goes to Elly. At first she tries to crawl away, but then lets Dan help her up, accepts a hug and cries on his shoulder.

DAN
I'm so sorry. That... That wasn't
me. I... I don't know what came
over me.

He tries to calm Elly.

DAN
Don't cry, please. I won't hurt
you, never. I promise.

Elly sobs and looks in his eyes.

DAN
(looking in her eyes too)
I'm sorry. Really.

Elly nods silently.

DAN
We have to go, are you all right?

ELLY
Not counting you almost killed me.
I'm fine.

A galvanic smile appears on her face.

Dan holds out a hand. Elly is too weak to walk on her own.

ELLY
Take that too.

Points at the sword on the floor. Dan stares at her
inquiringly.

ELLY
Just in case.

He picks up the sword and heads toward the door leading
upstairs, supporting Elly, who's still very feeble.

INT. STAIRS BETWEEN 2ND AND 3RD FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The door behind them slams shut with a loud noise. The
booming echo resonates in the staircase for a while.

Dan leads Elly forward, but she's getting better surprisingly
fast. After several steps she's able to walk on her own. Dan
tries to support her, but she withdraws.

ELLY
I'm fine, thank you.

Dan shrugs his shoulders and takes a step, but something is
wrong with the sword. It starts glowing.

DAN
What the hell?

The sword glows brighter and brighter. It is overheating and glowing bright red.

DAN

Shit!

He drops the sword unable to hold it anymore. The sword falls on the stairs, but instead of the crashing sound of metal it makes a slight poof and turns into ashes.

Dan shifts his gaze to Elly. She is staring at the ashes on the stairs, then their meet eyes. Despair and fear in her eyes, Dan foresees her question.

DAN

I don't know, really. Maybe we will find the answers upstairs.

They reach the door to the next hall in silence side by side.

INT. TOWER - THIRD FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

Dan and Elly enter. Three walls are decorated with beautiful paintings. On the back wall hangs an ornate Persian carpet, the letter "A" in the center and two coins on the sides.

The floor is covered with a beautiful red carpet. In the middle a man sits at a table with two wooden glasses.

Dan and Elly start backing away as soon as they notice him. Avaritii looks at them and starts grinning. He's about fifty-five, looks like Gula, but rawboned, even atrophied. His eyes never stop on anything and his hands are always moving.

AVARITII

Hello, my dears. You are late. Yes, really late. I was afraid you might be lost.

Avaritii bellows with laughter, but soon stops.

AVARITII

How was the dinner?

Dan takes a step back and pushes Elly behind him.

DAN

(suspiciously and full of fear)

Who are you?

AVARITII

Oh, my fault. My fault. My name is
Avaritii. Well, I have many names.
Many.

He rubs his hands, squinting at the table impatiently.

AVARITII

But I don't like them. Greed! Is
this a name? Bullshit!

DAN

So you are --

AVARITII

(with a grin)
-- Yes.

Avaritii winks at him.

DAN

But I haven't even finished --

Avaritii looks irritated.

AVARITII

I know everything about you,
whiffet.

Elly musters her courage.

ELLY

Then why don't you tell us about
your mad brother?

AVARITII

Go down and ask him yourself?

He stares at Dan and Elly furiously, but then calms down
immediately.

AVARITII

Who told you he's mad?

Avaritii laughs at length, suddenly stops and looks at them
attentively.

AVARITII

Anyway... I'd like to apologize for
my brother. He makes a bad
impression on our guests. Very
bad. Yes.

He grabs a coin from his pocket and starts trifling it.

AVARITII

He divides the whole Universe into what can be eaten now and what can be eaten later.

He splutters with laughter, but neither Dan nor Elly finds the joke funny.

AVARITII

And he has an awful sense of humor as well.

He giggles again.

AVARITII

Don't worry. I don't think he could find human flesh nearby; there are only forests around here for miles and miles. Forests, no villages. In the middle of nowhere.

He emphasizes the last word.

AVARITII

No-whe-re.

DAN

So where are we?

AVARITII

I just told you... No-whe-re.

Giggles.

AVARITII

Interesting question, but... I can't possibly answer it. No, no, no. Not now. Ask my brother upstairs.

He motions to the door leading upstairs. Dan attempts to reach the door, but Avaritii steps in front of him.

AVARITII

Not so fast! He is always busy... I don't want to bother him with anything.

Avaritii takes a small golden key from his pocket and places it on the table in front of him.

AVARITII

I'm quite bored. You know, no visitors. None.

(MORE)

AVARITII (CONT'D)

Let's play, shall we? One itchy
pitchy play. Yes. If you win, this
key is yours.

DAN

And if we lose? What's the price?

AVARITII

Hmm. Interesting question... very
interesting question. Let's see...
What do you have?

He first evaluates Dan, then Elly, frustration in his eyes.

DAN

I can offer you --

AVARITII

-- Nothing. You have nothing of
interest to me. No, no, no.

Avaritii is deep in thought for a while. Bingo!

AVARITII

(overexcited)

I have it! You stay here with me
for a week, right? A week, it's not
that long. I enjoy playing. Poker,
black jack, roulette. I'm a
gambler. So what do you say? Just a
week here. I need a partner or two;
yeah, two partners for my games.
Playing. Gambling. Only seven days.

Avaritii laughs again.

DAN

So our stake is our freedom for a
week? And if we refuse?

AVARITII

Who told you there's a choice? You
are here and I have the key. You
can try to go downstairs...

Dan notices that the door leading downstairs is shut.

AVARITII

... but I don't think this door can
be opened. The tower is too old.

Dan moves to the door and pulls it with no effect. It won't
budge. Avaritii rubs his hands together and smiles.

AVARITII

Told you. Gula is offended that you tried to leave him. Yeah. Deeply hurt. He won't let you out so easy. No, no, no. And when you are outside this tower, who knows what can happen. Beasts! Everywhere!

Avaritii breaks into a grin.

AVARITII

So, what will it be?

Dan looks at Elly; she glances at the door and leads Dan to the playing table. He looks bewildered at first, then takes a seat at the table. Elly stands behind him.

AVARITII

So my invitation is accepted. Excellent. Let the game BEGIN!

Avaritii laughs again, but then stops and looks at Dan suspiciously. Dan returns the look.

DAN

What game shall we play?

AVARITII

Oh, good question. The good old game. It is called High Dice. Really simple. First I roll the dice. Like that.

Avaritii grabs his wooden cup and rolls two small golden dice. Three and four.

AVARITII

See. I rolled seven. Easy, really easy. You roll next. If you have more than me you win the round. If I have more or equal, I win.

Avaritii grins and grabs the dice.

AVARITII

And the stakes. Yeah, a week is not enough, not enough. How about ten days? Only ten!

Dan stands.

DAN

(brazen tone of voice)
We had a deal. A week, no more!

Avaritii laughs.

AVARITII

Well, let it be so. Seven days are seven days. Every round you can bet one, two or three days. Choose before you throw. And I need something to bet beside the key.

Avaritii ferrets in his pockets for some time.

AVARITII

How about gold? You like gold?

Avaritii reaches in his pocket for a small pouch filled with coins. He carefully pulls out six gold coins.

AVARITII

First coins, then the key. Fair enough, isn't it? Seven days, six coins. Good deal.

DAN

Well, I suppose we don't have...

AVARITII

Then let's play!

Avaritii winks and rubs his hands. He is really excited. Dan takes his cup and looks at the dice. His dice are made of stone. Avaritii throws his dice; four and five come up.

AVARITII

Total nine. Nine. Nice, nice, nice. Your turn. How much you bet... one, two or three days?

Dan thinks for a while.

DAN

I bet one day.

Avaritii looks disappointed.

AVARITII

Well, one is one. Throw them. Now!

Dan throws his dice, total is nine as well (three and six).

AVARITII

Equal. I win one day. Good, very good. A whole day of gambling. I remember Las Vegas, the capital of the world. I --

Avaritii stops and looks suspicious again. He counts his coins and throws the dice. The total is four (two and two).

AVARITII

Not good, not good at all. Too small. Need more!

DAN

I bet three days.

Avaritii looks disappointed again. Dan throws his dice. The total is ten (four and six).

AVARITII

You win. I lose. Not enough for me. You get your day and two coins. My coins!

Avaritii throws the coins to Dan reluctantly. Then he grabs the dice and throws again in despair. The total is nine again (four and five). He looks much more satisfied.

DAN

One... No, two days.

Dan rolls his dice. The total is ten (five and five). Avaritii rages. He takes two coins and silently throws them at Dan. Then he rolls the dice furiously. The total is three (one and two). He is angry. He grabs the last two coins and looks at Dan in a hostile way.

DAN

Looks like you lost. I bet three coins.

Dan rolls the dice quickly. The total is twelve (six and six). Dan tips back in his armchair; he looks confident and his eyes are burning. Avaritii is miserable. He gives Dan the key and two remaining coins.

AVARITII

Please, don't go yet. I have an offer, a really good offer. You'll like it. Really like it. Take the key, I don't need it. Go and see my brother. But my coins. My precious gold.

Avaritii greedily looks at the golden coins.

AVARITII

Let's play again! I can bet more -- I have a lot of valuable things.

(MORE)

AVARITII (CONT'D)

What do you want? Ivory? Diamonds?
Silver?

Elly takes the key and puts it into her pocket. Dan's eyes
flame with greed.

ELLY

We really should --

AVARITII

-- Diamonds? Jewels?

He already caught Dan's glance and knows the answer.

DAN

I always wanted a big emerald.

AVARITII

Then it's a deal?

His eyes light up.

ELLY

Dan, we really should go, this game
is very risky...

Dan shoots her an angry look.

DAN

We have the key. It was I who won
the coins. I want more; maybe this
is my lucky day. Shut up and wait a
little while.

Elly is offended and staggers back and away from Dan. He
doesn't notice and turns to the table. Greed burns in his
eyes. He wants more, a lot more.

AVARITII

Emeralds then. Green ice. Good
choice. Nice, nice.

Avaritii takes a handful of emeralds from his pocket. He
grabs the dice and rolls. The total is eight (three and
five). Dan bets two coins and silently rolls the dice. His
total is six (two and four).

AVARITII

Luck is a courtesan.

Avaritii grins and takes the coins. He rolls the dice. The
total is ten (five and five). Avaritii rubs his hands.

AVARITII

Ah, doubles again. Nice, nice.

Dan thinks for a while.

DAN

I bet one coin.

Dan rolls his dice, total is four (two and two). Avaritii grabs the coin and slips it into his pocket.

AVARITII

Double for me, double for you.

Avaritii laughs, stops suddenly and counts his coins and diamonds rapidly. When he finishes, he becomes calm. He takes the dice and rolls. Total is three (one and two).

AVARITII

Well, not my roll. I guess...

Avaritii looks at Dan and grins maliciously, but Dan doesn't notice. Dan puts the last three coins on the table and rolls the dice.

The dice are rolling in SLOW MOTION. The first comes to rest at number one. The other die continues rolling, almost stops at six, but then flips over to reveal another one.

Avaritii grabs the coins and laughs.

Dan sinks his head in his arms.

Elly gently touches his shoulder.

He doesn't move, then slowly stands. He is angry and disappointed. Dan strikes the table with his fist so hard that both cups and dice fly in the air.

Avaritii grins.

AVARITII

Are you angry? Do not be mad. We can deal. Good deal. You have the key and I have coins, diamonds and more. Much more. I have pearls, rubies. Anything you want. Let's play?

Dan starts to sit at the table, but Elly stops him.

ELLY

We really should go, maybe next time.

AVARITII

If you open the door this key will
be worthless to me. Why do I need
the key for the door that guards
nothing? Decide now.

DAN

I would like to --

ELLY

(aggressively)
-- We are going! That's that.

DAN

But --

ELLY

Upstairs, now!

Dan tries to add something, but Elly moves to the door. She opens it with the key and disappears through the doorway before Dan can do anything. Dan reluctantly follows her, but looks back at Avaritii as he leaves.

DAN

We will continue when I return.

Avaritii looks at Dan with no emotion; his eyes are glassy, no fire in them anymore. Avaritii remains motionless as Dan leaves the room. He stares at his coins and sighs.

AVARITII

(discontentedly)
You will not come back. No, you
will never return...

Avaritii starts to sort his treasures.

INT. STAIRS BETWEEN 3RD AND 4TH FLOOR - LATER

Elly takes Dan by the scruff of the neck and desperately shakes his shoulders. Angry is too mild a word to describe how she looks. Furious is more like it.

ELLY

Are you fuckin' stupid?

Dan doesn't seem to comprehend.

DAN

What do you mean?

ELLY

We've just escaped from one crazy old man that cooks humans for dinner and you're dealing with his brother to risk staying here with them for a week.

She takes a breath.

ELLY

And the stake is a handful of emeralds? Who are you to decide for both of us? I don't even like stupid gems.

Elly sits on the stairs and drops her head. Dan sits near her after a while and hugs her. Now he begins to understand.

ELLY

(escapes from hug)
Don't you touch me!

DAN

I'm sorry. I'm really sorry.

Elly doesn't believe him.

ELLY

Should have thought about it before you bet my freedom with that guy... what's his name --

DAN

Avaritii.

ELLY

Yeah, right. And -- Wait, what?

DAN

What?

ELLY

His name, again?

DAN

Avaritii. Why?

Elly jumps up and runs toward the next floor, Dan runs after her in a moment.

INT. TOWER - FOURTH FLOOR HALL - LATER

Another big hall, empty and dusty, full of spider webs... rusty armor, old toys, broken furniture piled everywhere.

On the back wall is an impression in the dust of a coat of arms, but no coat of arms itself, the letter "I" in the middle. Elly comes into the room and sneezes.

DAN (O.S.)
Elly, where are you?

Dan enters the room. It immediately fills with bright light. He closes his eyes to protect them from the light and then falls on the floor.

INT. UNKNOWN PLACE - NIGHT

Everything is covered with white light. Dan is standing alone in the middle of nowhere, alone and totally lost.

DAN
Hello?

No reply, no echo.

DAN
Where am I?

Silence.

DAN
Elly?

Quiet, but snaky voice from somewhere behind makes him jump and turn around immediately.

PLAGUE DOCTOR
Don't be so loud up here, please.

PLAGUE DOCTOR emerges, a man wearing a doctor's costume from the Middle Ages: a black robe, white gloves, heavy boots. His face is covered with a bird mask and hair hidden behind the hood of his robe.

DAN
Who are you? What's going on here?

PLAGUE DOCTOR
I'm the disease that was eating you from the inside all these years. Nice to meet you.

Dan wants to ask him something, but can't say a word.

PLAGUE DOCTOR
You may be wondering why you are here. Well, you'll know a bit later. As for me --

DAN
What is this place?

PLAGUE DOCTOR
(hissing)
I said later! I'm going to show you something. You've seen a lot here already, but you will see more. Much more.

DAN
Is it some kind of challenge?

Plague Doctor steps away from Dan.

PLAGUE DOCTOR
You can call it whatever you want. The essence of this place will remain the same.

One more step back.

PLAGUE DOCTOR
And now... On with the show.

Something is happening. Strange little things start appearing all around them - glass Christmas balls float down from above. They are all held with thin wires. One wire - one ball. They are all different, and they fill all the space around them.

PLAGUE DOCTOR
You see, everything happens for a reason. Especially here. Let's take a closer look.

He leans toward one ball and invites Dan to follow him.

PLAGUE DOCTOR
I hope you remember that.

Inside the ball is a view of young Dan (19-21 years old) standing in the ring, fighting with another young fighter.

INT. RING - KICKBOXING FIGHT - NIGHT

The same scene. Dan and another fighter are facing each other, kickboxing. This seems to be an important fight.

Crowds fill the room. It is the end of the fight; the referee hits the gong. Dan loses the fight and his rival raises his hand in the air. Everybody congratulates the winner; even Dan hugs him, but there's something artificial in his behavior.

INT. UNKNOWN PLACE - NIGHT

Plague Doctor and Dan continue staring into the ball.

PLAGUE DOCTOR

Nice fight, by the way. But it's
not really the end. You could have
improved yourself, worked out more,
become a champion. But...

He laughs, again hissing in his voice. Something is different
in the ball.

INT. RING - SECOND KICKBOXING FIGHT - NIGHT

Another fight, but the fighters are the same.

PLAGUE DOCTOR (V.O.)

Your choice was revenge.

Dan smashes his opponent's face. He falls down on one knee,
but before the referee can prevent it Dan crushes his
opponent's face again, now with his leg.

PLAGUE DOCTOR (V.O.)

Two teeth and a broken jaw; for
you, disqualification. Nice kick,
by the way.

INT. UNKNOWN PLACE - NIGHT

Plague Doctor takes a pair of old copper scissors from his
pocket and cuts the wire. The ball falls on the floor and
crushes. Immediately after that we can hear two sounds: a
strong kick and a really painful cry.

PLAGUE DOCTOR

(absolutely calm)

That guy could never fight again.

Dan seems to be hurt, even smashed.

DAN

What do you want from me?

PLAGUE DOCTOR

Why do you think I need something
from you?

DAN

But what's the purpose?

PLAGUE DOCTOR

Who told you there is always a reason?

DAN

(raged)

You! One minute ago!

His anger seems to entertain Plague Doctor.

PLAGUE DOCTOR

So trustful you are. Instead of asking somebody else try asking yourself. You will be able to find much more -- Oh, look! I like that.

He turns to another ball. A girl and boy are kissing; Dan is sitting near them - they know each other, but he's the odd one out for the moment.

PLAGUE DOCTOR

You remember Jack, right? Engaged, happy and truly in love. And you?

EXT. BENCH IN THE PARK - DAY

Dan sits there with the kissing couple. Envy sparks in his eyes.

INT. CAMPUS PARTY - NIGHT

Dan whispers something to a rather drunk girl pointing at JACK, who is passed out on the sofa. The girl nods and almost lifts JACK's body to show him the way to the bedroom.

PLAGUE DOCTOR (V.O.)

You wanted to save your friend!

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Dan takes a photo of Jack and the girl in the bedroom.

-- Jack's girlfriend opens the mailbox.

-- Girlfriend opens letter and finds photo of her and Jack.

-- Girlfriend breaks up with him and runs off crying.

BACK TO SCENE

PLAGUE DOCTOR (V.O.)

But he found out it was you too soon.

Jack argues with Dan, pushes him and leaves.

 PLAGUE DOCTOR (V.O.)
In fact it wasn't that difficult,
because your methods of calming his
girlfriend down were rather
unusual.

Dan and Jack's girlfriend are banging on the sofa in his house.

INT. UNKNOWN PLACE - NIGHT

Plague Doctor cuts this wire too. The ball falls on the floor releasing the shout of a woman.

 PLAGUE DOCTOR
Well, we have not much time, but
let's see something else. I find it
fascinating.

 DAN
Please, stop... I can offer
anything, please.

He is almost crying, almost physically hurt with the memories.

 PLAGUE DOCTOR
Are you trying to hire me now? I've
been guiding you all of your life
and you offer me the job now?

Plague Doctor laughs and leans toward another ball, but staggers back.

 PLAGUE DOCTOR
Well, there's not really time for
that one.

He is grinning behind the mask that covers his face. He cuts another wire before Dan can say something. The ball smashes with the sound of loud barking. This is the last straw; Dan is outraged. He steps towards Plague Doctor.

 PLAGUE DOCTOR
Well, I guess you don't really
appreciate our journey.

He steps back into the middle of the Christmas balls, but they don't fall or even swing. He just moves through them.

PLAGUE DOCTOR
So long, I'll let you find
something interesting yourself.

He turns his back and starts walking away from Dan.

 DAN
 (still raging)
Stop! Wait!

Dan tries to run after him, but drops one ball clumsily. It falls down with the yell of an old man. Dan tries to dodge another ball, but it falls. Dan is now tangled in the wires; more balls start falling, one after another.

The space is filled with a cacophony of all kinds of sounds: yells, sighs, roars. Suffering can be recognized by anyone, but these sounds are familiar to Dan, they're his memories.

 DAN
Please make it stop!

Dan covers his ears and moves his head from side to side, but he only drops more balls. The floor is now covered with shattered glass. Dan falls on his knees and plugs his ears, unable to listen to the memories anymore.

 DAN
 (begging for mercy)
Please... Please...

His knees are torn from the glass; he freezes on the floor, but the balls continue falling all around him. The sounds turn into one big noise. Suddenly everything becomes silent.

INT. TOWER - FOURTH FLOOR HALL - NIGHT

Dan lies on the floor. Elly sits near him holding his head. When he opens his eyes, she holds his head up a bit. Dan emits a groan.

 ELLY
Are you all right?

 DAN
I... I think so. What happened?

 ELLY
You entered the hall and fell down.

Dan rubs his head.

 DAN
How long I was out?

ELLY

A minute or so. What happened?

DAN

I'm not really sure myself. Let's forget it.

Elly becomes animated and talks very fast.

ELLY

Have you heard about the seven sins?

DAN

Well, you know, I'm not really a church guy. To tell you the truth I can't remember the last time I've --

She goes on without listening to him.

ELLY

-- Seven deadly sins are a conception of vices. The church divided vices into seven major types, and for each there was its own punishment.

She stops and looks a little confused.

DAN

So?

ELLY

But... I don't really remember all of them. You know, this seems that we are...

Elly stops talking and gets up.

DAN

What were you going to say?

Elly paces up and down nervously, then sits on a pile of boards surrounded with a cloud of dust. Her hands shake.

ELLY

This sounds really weird... too strange to be real.

Elly pauses and sits still.

DAN

What sounds weird?

He is getting irritated.

ELLY

This tower is not just a tower.
Each floor is almost the same, with
large halls, but each hall is
different. They are sins... Each
hall is a sin. You know, we're
somewhere in a tower filled with
our sins or we are...

Elly stops again. She looks scared. Dan doesn't seem to understand or be concerned about anything.

ELLY

(almost whispering)
...in hell.

Elly and Dan look at each other attentively, but he looks skeptical.

ELLY

Well, that can explain everything.
Beasts, carvings of dead people and
-- You know.

She looks down with her eyes.

DAN

What do I know?

ELLY

They are not people... I guess not.

Dan is getting irritated; he doesn't like the conversation.

DAN

Who are they then, demons?

ELLY

That is illogical, but still.

She can't say any more for a while, but then plucks up her courage.

ELLY

You know, we're lifting somewhere.
We have no way back, only to lift
up and up. There are signs, but I
can't decode them.

Elly points at the letter on the wall.

ELLY

To tell you the truth I'm not a church girl either so I can't tell you what's waiting for us above --

Dan stands.

DAN

-- Then I believe we have nothing to do but go upstairs... See what's waiting on the upper floors of this goddamn tower... Whether it is heaven or hell or a psycho ward...

Elly stands, covered with dust and cobwebs. She slowly takes a few steps, and regains confidence.

ELLY

Right. Wherever we are, we must get away from here.

Dan opens the door and leaves, followed by Elly.

INT. STAIRS BETWEEN 4TH AND 5TH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

We can hear their footsteps from the staircase.

Camera focuses on the footprints left by them in the dust.

INT. TOWER - FIFTH FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

The door opens inward and Dan and Elly enter. The hall is completely empty. The walls bare except for the letter "L" drawn with red paint on one side. Another wall is broken, cloudy skies showing through a large crack.

Dan remains standing at the doorway holding the door handle.

ELLY

(looking around)

This is the fifth floor... The fifth sin... There's nothing.

She shifts from foot to foot and shivers.

ELLY

OK, maybe it's not a sin we are guilty of.

She walks to the opposite door as Dan follows her.

ELLY

No, wait!

Too late. A blast of wind through the crack in the wall blows the door shut, the one they entered through.

DAN

I'm sorry.

Elly shrugs her shoulders.

DAN

Maybe it will open.

He pulls the door handle. Nothing, it's stuck.

ELLY

No way back, huh! Did you want to go back there anyway?

DAN

Well, it's always better to --

ELLY

Forget it, let's move on. It's freezing up here.

Elly pulls at the other door but it won't budge. They are locked inside the hall.

ELLY

Great!

DAN

So what now?

ELLY

We're locked in here.

The wind blows intensely. Dan comes to the breach in the wall and looks out. He sees clouds covering the sky, the moon in the rift between the clouds, the lake with logs shimmering in the dark and endless forests beyond.

DAN

That is really a nice place; hard to believe it's hell. That guy on the church corner was way off base.

Dan smiles bitterly.

DAN

(mocking)

You'll burn in hell! Endless pain and torment!

Elly approaches him and looks outside also.

DAN

Look around. No devil, no fires, no sinners. Well, maybe two, but that is certainly not enough.

Elly laughs.

DAN

Still they were right about one thing. It's not a very nice place, that's for sure.

ELLY

But it is beautiful here. If this were real, I'd like a small wooden house somewhere nearby.

DAN

Why don't you think it's real? Maybe we are not real... our lives merely just mirror reflections... theater decorations. Stage managers force us to behave this way or that way.

The wind is blowing through the crack and it is getting very cold inside. Dan moves away and sits in the corner.

DAN

They should plug up the holes and improve the heating system. A couple of fires with caldrons would really be a nice touch.

Elly is enchanted with the view, not really listening to Dan. Then something comes to mind and forces her become alert.

ELLY

So if we're stuck here, what are the rest of the sins?

Elly walks slowly and sits near Dan in the corner.

DAN

Don't ask me. The last time I was in a church was so long ago, I don't even remember.

ELLY

Which sins do we have right now?

DAN

Gluttony and greed I guess.

ELLY

Do you think everything is counted?
Like two halls without people or
demons or whatever they are?

DAN

We've already seen four out of
seven? Not bad, but we haven't seen
all of the halls yet.

ELLY

We've seen wrath. I suppose it's on
the list. Fine, what can be left?

DAN

Jealousy.

ELLY

Yeah, jealousy.

Dan rubs his head and cowers in the corner. Their skin is getting white from the cold and wind.

DAN

No, trust me. I've seen it. I
wouldn't mix it up with anything
else.

Elly is puzzled, but she tries to hold her thoughts inside.

ELLY

Fine. There are three left. There
was something connected with
apathy. So two more.

Dan jumps up, rubs his arms, and tries to warm up without any visible effect.

DAN

So what hell are we in now, apathy?

ELLY

Maybe... or something else.

DAN

Then everything is trivial; we have
to do something.

He runs toward one of the doors and hits it as hard as he can. BOOM! Echoes resonate through the tower, but the door remains solidly in place.

DAN

I'll win. Do you hear me?

Dan strikes the door one more time. Nothing.

DAN
(shouting)
I'll beat you! I will get out of
here! Destroy you!

Dan goes to the breach and pulls a stone from the wall. He throws the stone at the door several times, and finally hits the door with the stone. Exhausted, he drops the stone.

DAN
Fuck you!

He stares at the lock in the door, too tired to struggle any more. Finally he backs away and sits near Elly. She sits calmly in the corner, motionless.

DAN
You don't look so good. Are you
okay?

Elly is frozen, but tries to convince him that she's all right.

ELLY
I'm just fine, thank you! Maybe you
could bring me a cup of hot tea.

She laughs, but can't help shaking from the harsh wind blowing and blowing.

ELLY
It's fucking cold in here, don't
you think?

Dan hugs Elly.

DAN
Body heat may warm us up for a bit.
After the sun rises we'll find a
way out of here.

Dan looks around the hall, at each wall.

DAN
This room looks like it's about
desperation. Is there such sin?

ELLY
I guess, but what should we do?

DAN
Absolutely nothing... just sit and
wait for something to happen,
anything. There must be a sign.

Elly is getting worse, shaking and coughing.

ELLY
There is another way.

DAN
The door is shut tight, we can't --

ELLY
-- we could jump out through the
breach in the wall?

Dan laughs.

ELLY
I'm serious.

DAN
You can't be. That's desperation.
We can't just escape... we have to
struggle, suffer, to endure!

ELLY
If we're really in hell, we are
dead anyway. What's there to be
afraid of anyway?

The wind is blowing harder than ever. Elly and Dan start emitting clouds of condensed breath into the freezing air. They sit in the corner hugging each other.

INT. TOWER - FIFTH FLOOR HALL - MINUTES LATER

A small snowflake carried by the wind. It spins and flies and finally lands on Elly's cheek, turning into a drop of water.

Dan and Elly remain seated on the floor, white as snow, frozen in place.

ELLY
Well, this must be the end... our
circle of hell I guess... our
punishment...

Her strength oozes away.

DAN

I'm thinking there must be an exit,
but can't find any. The doors are
too heavy.

Dan hits the wall and shakes his hand from the pain.

DAN

This is so stupid. To be left here
forever. I'd be better with Gula.
At least it's warm and loads of
food to eat.

Elly raises her head.

ELLY

(hoarsely)

I guess... I know the exit.

Dan has no idea what she's talking about. Elly looks at him
closely.

ELLY

Well, it's not exactly the exit.
But I think I know how we can
relieve our punishment.

Dan looks at her, confused. She no longer looks cold.
Devilish lights dance in her eyes.

DAN

What do you mean? --

Elly pulls Dan close and kisses him. Dan pushes her away.

DAN

(stepping back)

Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!

Dan looks confused and shocked.

DAN

Do you think this is the right
time? You know, everything is
complicated and it may not be...

Elly looks horny.

ELLY

If we are doomed here, why don't we
at least enjoy our trip to hell?
And this will warm us up.

DAN
I still...

Elly pulls Dan again and kisses him slowly. Dan at first resists but then kisses her back. It lasts for some time.

Elly sits on Dan. He looks straight into her eyes and then kisses her again. Their lips touch again, but Elly suddenly leans back. Something strange is happening.

DAN
Elly? Are you --

Poof! She turns into ashes instantly, just like the sword.

DAN
Elly!

No reply. The ashes are caught up by the wind and seem to turn into a grinning skull in the air. Dan looks puzzled, maybe just his imagination.

DAN
Elly?

After a moment the skull disappears and the ashes either fall on the floor or fly out of the breach in the wall. Dan is too shocked to move. He sits on the floor just blinking.

DAN
(hardly moving his lips)
Elly?

He stares at the few ashes still dancing in the air.

DAN
Where are you?

A teardrop runs down his cheek and falls on the ashes. Suddenly apathy is replaced with anger and desperation. He jumps up and runs toward the breach.

DAN
Elly?

EXT. TOWER - OUTSIDE WALL - NIGHT

The tower is in the distance, with the dark figure of Dan standing in the moonlight at the breach of the wall. He cries out for a while but there is no response. He disappears into the darkness of the hall.

INT. TOWER - FIFTH FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

Dan he tries to open both doors in desperation, but they are shut tightly. He slowly approaches the breach again and looks outside. No strength in his eyes, nothing in his eyes at all.

DAN
 (yelling into the dark)
 Who the fuck are you? What do you
 want from me? What have you done to
 her?

Dan falls on his knees facing the breach, and looks at his arms. They are covered with ashes.

DAN
 (whispering)
 Nothing to lose. Nothing at all. I
 will not play this game. Never.

Madness now overrules him, but also a flicker of anger in his eyes. He looks out of the breach again. There is a huge moon in the skies surrounded by heavy clouds.

The lake is full of logs with small sparks. There is still blue fire dancing under the water.

DAN
 (yelling into the dark)
 Whoever you are! You are a coward!
 You will not get me! Never!

Dan is afraid, but still confident of himself. He knows what must be done, remains kneeling on the edge; then he wiggles and falls out of the breach.

EXT. TOWER - OUTSIDE WALL - CONTINUOUS

Dan falls out of the tower and drops toward the rocks lying below. But when there are only a few feet left everything vanishes into white light again. There is no sound of anything hitting the ground, only silence and white light.

WHITE SCREEN

DAN (V.O.)
 (calmly and confidently)
 Close, but this is not the time.
 Don't you want to know what lies
 ahead for you? Now is not the time
 to give up. You can do it later.

Dan laughs.

INT. TOWER - FIFTH FLOOR HALL - LATER

The white light gradually vanishes and outlines slowly appear and darken. We are in the same fifth floor hall, ashes on the floor. Dan lies in the corner unconscious. The door leading to the upper floors is now open. Dan slowly awakens and sits up. He looks sick. His eyes are empty.

DAN
(to himself)
What happened?

Dan stands and walks to the door unsteadily. He leaves through the doorway and we hear his steps on the stairs.

The ashes on the floor are swooping up by the wind.

INT. TOWER - SIXTH FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

Dan peers into the next hall, takes a few steps inside and the door slams shut. The hall is a hospital ward. The walls are covered with soft cloth, everything in white. Dan tries without success to open the door, then hits it with his hand.

DAN
(yelling)
Whoever you are, this is becoming
annoying! Show yourself!

Dan is too tired to struggle any longer. He sits on the floor in the center of the room, not interested in the door across from him. The hall is totally empty. The letter "A" is printed on one wall, drawn with something red (maybe blood), with several hand prints around it.

Dan's face shows he's desperate and tired.

He lies on the floor in the middle of the room. He is dirty, clothes torn and hair disordered. He closes his eyes.

INT. TOWER - SIXTH FLOOR HALL - LATER

WHITE SCREEN

DAN (V.O.)
Have you ever noticed what is going
on around you? You were blind. You
are blind. Only I can see. I can
see everything for you and you
don't let me out.

Outlines of the floor and the walls of the room start appearing through the light again. The room is empty, nothing but white walls.

DAN (V.O.)
I am the leader here. Trust me.
Give it one more try. Don't be
stupid.

Ashes start falling from the ceiling.

DAN (V.O.)
And now wake up. Rise and shine.

His voice fades.

DAN (V.O.)
Rise and shine, Dan.

Ash covers the floor and it starts burning. The room vanishes in flames. It becomes whiter and whiter and again hides everything.

INT. TOWER - SIXTH FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

Dan suddenly opens his eyes, sits up and takes a deep breath. Nothing has really changed; no signs of a fire. Still, something isn't the same.

A revolver lies in front of him. Dan takes it and opens the cylinder. There is only one bullet. He pulls it out and looks at it, then puts it back. Slowly he cocks the hammer. Dan looks upward, his eyes still blank.

DAN
(yelling)
Is it what you want me to do? I'm
not afraid of you!

Dan puts the revolver into his mouth and pulls the trigger.

FLASH and SHOT simultaneously.

INT. TOWER - SIXTH FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

Everything now appears all at once, like the consequences of the shot.

Dan again sits with a revolver in front of him. He looks fine, no sign of being shot. Still there is terror in his eyes, truly deep terror.

He slowly takes the revolver and looks at it. No doubts - it's real. He opens the cylinder and sees the same bullet. He cocks the hammer again, and waits for a while.

Then at will Dan raises the revolver and shoots himself in the temple.

FLASH and SHOT again.

INT. TOWER - SIXTH FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

Again Dan sits with the revolver.

Madness is too mild a word to explain the expression on Dan's face. He checks the bullet, cocks the hammer and shoots himself in the temple again, without any hesitation.

FLASH and SHOT again.

INT. TOWER - SIXTH FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

This time Dan just cocks the hammer and shoots himself in the temple.

We hear the click, but nothing happens. One more click, then a surprise. A flag on a stick shoots out of the barrel and hits him in the temple.

DAN

Fuck it all!

Dan rubs his temple, looks at the gun and sees that it is not a real revolver this time. He throws it aside. Then he notices an inscription on the flag and crawls toward it.

He takes it and reads: "You've given up too soon." Dan tosses the fake revolver aside, then looks across to the door leading to the next floor.

DAN

(quietly)

I might as well...

He stands slowly and moves toward the door. It opens with no difficulty. It was neither locked nor stuck all this time. Dan drags himself across the room and out the door.

INT. TOWER - STAIRS BETWEEN 6TH AND 7TH FLOOR - LATER

Dan barely climbs the stairs. He totters and leans against the wall to rest. Slowly he climbs step by step.

INT. TOWER - SEVENTH FLOOR HALL - LATER

The door from the inside is closed. Dan's steps can be heard from the other side. He opens the door and enters the hall.

The walls are covered with paintings. A coat of arms on one wall contains only the letter "S" and is covered with very complicated ornaments.

There are several statues and busts of Dan, or a man that looks exactly like him, and paintings of Dan killing beasts and monsters.

A red carpet covers the floor; two armchairs sit in the center of the room, one empty.

There is an empty armchair in the middle of the room. The other chair is occupied by a man - SUPERBII - who could be Dan's twin, except for a fancy hairstyle and goatee. He is made of self-confidence and aristocratic luxury.

SUPERBII

Good evening, Dan. I've been waiting for you for some time. What took you so long?

DAN

Who are you?

Dan slumps, no more energy for anything.

SUPERBII

My name is Superbii, but you didn't answer me. Each question has an answer, but you didn't give me one. So again, what took you so long?

Dan looks stymied; there is fear in his eyes.

DAN

What do you want from me?

SUPERBII

That is a really a rhetorical question. You will know the answer a bit later. At least I hope so.

Superbii looks bored, and doesn't wait for the answer.

SUPERBII

Sit down, please.

He shows Dan another armchair. Dan sits obediently, unable to stand any longer.

SUPERBII

So if you do not want to answer my question let's skip it, because we both know the answer...

DAN

Who are you?

SUPERBII

You repeat your own questions, the answers to which you already know.

Dan looks confused.

DAN

Are you the devil?

Superbii starts laughing, but Dan remains serious, though totally confused.

DAN

My question was somehow funny?

SUPERBII

Kind of. No, I am not the devil.

DAN

Then are you God?

Superbii laughs even louder.

SUPERBII

Wrong again.

DAN

Who are you then?

Superbii looks bored and angry.

SUPERBII

You repeat your question for the third time. This would be very funny if it weren't so annoying.

Superbii takes a pause and examines Dan.

SUPERBII

I am you, literally. Actually I am the best part of you.

There is supremacy in his eyes. Dan looks confused.

SUPERBII

You are retarded, really. You understood nothing, right?

Superbii sits back.

SUPERBII

Fine. Your stupidity has no borders like the forest around this tower. Let me explain for you.

Superbii clears his throat.

SUPERBII
Where do you think you are?

DAN
I think I am in hell.

Sparks of anger appear in Superbii's eyes.

SUPERBII
Have you ever tried not to listen
to what others are saying?

He calms down.

SUPERBII
Actually I am not sure whether hell
in its orthodox understanding
exists or not, but that is not the
question. Not for now. However,
this place was designed based
partly on the conception of hell
described in "Dante's Inferno."

Superbii looks at Dan, but he remains silent.

SUPERBII
Dan and Elly?

Superbii smiles, but Dan jumps up from his seat. Dan is full
of rage.

DAN
What have you done to her?

Dan starts moving toward Superbii.

SUPERBII
Do not be that stupid. Go back to
your seat. I am the boss here.
Anyway, you are too weak to do
anything.

But Dan seems to be more forceful than ever; he keeps moving,
fists clenched. Superbii looks disappointed.

SUPERBII
I suggest you sit down.

Superbii pulls the leash that was lying behind the arm pad of
the chair. The leash stretches and a lion comes from behind
the armchair. Dan jumps back.

SUPERBII

Please sit.

He looks calm again.

SUPERBII

I can't understand how stupid you are. I cannot believe that I am part of you. This is disgusting.

Dan slowly eases back into his armchair. He is scared, but still raging inside.

DAN

Where is Elly?

Superbii slowly puts his finger to his temple.

SUPERBII

Right here, Dan.

DAN

What do you mean?

SUPERBII

You are much stupider than I thought. She was only a character on the stage, a product of your imagination. Dan and Elly. "Dante's Allegory." How do you find that?

Superbii laughs.

SUPERBII

Well I find it fascinating. I found her somewhere in your distant memories. She was the sweetheart of some guy in some crappy old movie.

Dan looks shocked. His eyes contain nothing but panic and madness. He can't say a word.

SUPERBII

You are such a goddamn pussy.

He shakes his head again in disappointment.

SUPERBII

Okay, let me explain what kind of place this is. I remember much more than you do. You must have forgotten that once long ago you tried to read "The Divine Comedy." Dante has nine circles of hell.

(MORE)

SUPERBII (CONT'D)

So I thought that nine circles here would be nice.

Dan opens his mouth to say something, but Superbii interrupts.

SUPERBII

Do not interrupt me! And no, this is not hell. Just to remind you.

Superbii scratches the lion's head.

SUPERBII

Where was I? Ah, yes. This place was based on the Comedy, but they are really different, this one far better than his. As you would have noticed if you listened to your precious Elly --

Superbii can't help grinning.

SUPERBII

There are seven deadly sins. Let me remind you if you already forgot them. Gluttony. You must remember Gula. He could be a nice fellow if he weren't so keen on his food. He actually would do anything for a dozen chicken wings. If you had something to offer him, he would do absolutely anything.

Superbii sighs. Dan looks distracted.

SUPERBII

Then you could have seen your wrath, greed and envy. To tell you the truth you weren't very nice to Plague Doctor. But that's your problem, not mine. Where was I? Ah, sloth. That was my favorite.

An evil grin appears on his face, as rage overcomes Dan again.

SUPERBII

You should have seen yourself. I was ashamed that you are part of me, really. Wait! My mistake. My favorite part was actually the sixth floor.

Superbii looks at the ceiling dreamily.

SUPERBII

Acedia!

He turns his eyes to Dan, a look of arrogance.

SUPERBII

You are pathetic! You haven't even touched that door! Too bad you can't die here. That would be a much better way to finish it all.

Superbii's face is deadly tired. He sighs again.

SUPERBII

I can't always get your shit done for you. This is boring and tiring. I know what you should do! I know how to make you happy, but you don't listen to me... Instead you listen to your fucking instincts. And presto! You are here talking to me, for the first time in your whole goddamn life.

Dan is no longer scared; now he is interested.

DAN

Are... Are you devil?

Superbii starts laughing.

SUPERBII

Do I look like one?

Superbii starts scratching the lion's mane.

DAN

So you aren't, right?

Superbii looks at Dan with arrogance again and silently sighs, disappointedly.

DAN

So are you God then?

Superbii stops scratching the lion and start laughing again.

SUPERBII

You are so stupid. Your mind is so tiny that I can't even describe it.

DAN

So who are you?

Superbii looks at him attentively.

SUPERBII
Do you really want to know the
truth?

Dan opens his mouth to answer, but Superbii interrupts him.

SUPERBII
But why the hell do I ask when we
both know the answer?

Superbii stands and starts walking around the room.

SUPERBII
Also, who are you to be asked?

He comes close to Dan and leans into him. They are face to
face, nose to nose.

SUPERBII
I am you.

Superbii pauses, and then walks away from Dan.

SUPERBII
Literally, I am you.

He sits back in his armchair.

SUPERBII
To tell you the truth, I am the
best part of you.

Superbii emphasizes every word.

SUPERBII
Creative... Intelligent...
Ideal...

He looks at Dan with indignation.

SUPERBII
And you make me live in this
fucking thicket. You are covered
with your vices. I am not here to
judge you. You are here to judge
yourself.

He clears his throat and continues quietly and hoarsely.

SUPERBII
And I am here to show you the two
next floors.

Dan wants to ask something, but Superbii holds up a hand.

SUPERBII

And you will see them, at least the next floor. Whether you want to or not. That is not my problem.

Superbii stands again and goes to the door. He pulls the key out of his pocket and unlocks the door.

SUPERBII

Follow me!

He disappears through the doorway. Dan continues sitting. He is confused again. The lion stands and stretches before it approaches Dan. The lion growls and looks unfriendly.

SUPERBII (O.S.)

You can't die here, but trust me, this little cat will let you know what it means to be eaten alive.

Dan hurries toward the door. The lion roars at him and slowly lies back in its place.

INT. TOWER - EIGHTH FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

Superbii comes first, followed by Dan. This hall contains nothing but two doors and a simple wooden chair in the middle. Superbii motions for Dan to sit in the chair.

SUPERBII

As you must have already noticed, nothing happens here without a particular reason.

DAN

But you've told me that there are only seven deadly sins.

Sparks of anger appear in the eyes of Superbii.

SUPERBII

There are not only seven deadly sins, you moron! This place is nothing like what the church has ever told people!

He takes a breath and calms down.

SUPERBII

These were just your feral instincts. You are not facing God here. You are facing yourself.

DAN
What do you mean?

Superbii ignores him and continues.

SUPERBII
This will be the only sin as I
suppose it, the human sin.

Superbii leans toward Dan and whispers.

SUPERBII
Betrayal.

Suddenly the room starts changing, grass appears and we can see Dan in his chair with Superbii standing near him.

FLASHBACK

EXT. BACKYARD OF HOUSE - DAY

A ten-year-old boy is playing with his dog. Dan and Superbii are there too, but nobody can see them.

SUPERBII (V.O.)
Do you remember him?

DAN (V.O.)
You know the answer.

SUPERBII (V.O.)
Of course I do. Enjoy the show
then.

DAN (V.O.)
I know how this is gonna end.
What's the purpose?

SUPERBII (V.O.)
Knowledge is not enough. Not for
you.

The boy is still playing with his dog, happy and cheerful.

WOMAN (V.O.)
Sweetheart, come home! Lunch is
ready.

The boy runs home with him and his dog chasing each other.
The scene starts transforming.

SUPERBII (V.O.)
He was there when you were happy.

INT. LITTLE DAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

The boy looks pale; he's reading a book. The dog is lying on his legs.

SUPERBII (V.O.)
He was there when you were sick.

INT. LITTLE DAN'S ROOM - DAY

The boy rushes into the room and heads toward the wall. Now he is 13-14 years old.

There are two photos on the wall - a pretty girl is kissing him in the first one and he is with a friend in the second one.

He looks at both photos for a while and then tears them into small pieces. He jumps on the bed and digs into the pillow.

SUPERBII (V.O.)
He was there when everyone betrayed you.

The dog silently walks into the room. He looks at the boy attentively and then licks his cheek. The boy raises his head and smiles.

EXT. OCEAN SHORE - STORM - DAY

Three boys and a dog walk along the shore in the afternoon. It's windy and stormy. The waves are rather high. All the boys are about 13-14.

DAN (V.O.)
Please, I don't want --

SUPERBII (V.O.)
-- I haven't asked you what you want. You need this. That's it.

The boys reach the tongue of sand and stops. There is a beacon wavering in the water rather far from the shore.

1ST BOY
(talking to LITTLE DAN)
I bet you can't reach that beacon.

LITTLE DAN
Neither can you!

1ST BOY
Hah, look!

He undresses and enters the water. It takes some time to reach the beacon and return, but he does it.

LITTLE DAN

Well, you are the swimmer...

1ST BOY

Told you!

2ND BOY

Pussy!

Little Dan is uncertain, but he doesn't really want to lose.

LITTLE DAN

I can do that! Take the leash.

He passes the leash of his dog to the 1ST BOY and starts undressing.

Now Plague Doctor is standing behind him, observing attentively.

SUPERBII (V.O.)

Ah, an old friend.

DAN (V.O.)

Please, don't!

He makes an attempt to stand, but Superbii holds him in the chair.

SUPERBII (V.O.)

You can't change it, so relax.

One more attempt, but Superbii is much stronger than DAN.

SUPERBII (V.O.)

You will just ruin the magic of this place.

DAN (V.O.)

I will, please!

SUPERBII (V.O.)

Just relax.

Superbii rudely shakes Dan until he calms down. Meanwhile the boy is undressed, and Plague Doctor pushes him slightly toward the water.

Little Dan is still not sure, but he can't be a pussy. He enters the water very slowly and starts swimming.

SUPERBII (V.O.)

You can't play God. You can only be God. This is what distinguishes the real man from all the rest.

DAN (V.O.)

What is that supposed to mean?

SUPERBII (V.O.)

Look at yourself, player.

He points at the boy. He has some trouble - the water is too cold, spasms paralyze his leg, he's drowning. His friends are on the beach, but they are too terrified to help him.

LITTLE DAN

(losing his energy)

Help -- help me!

He is hit by a large wave, almost drowned.

Suddenly the dog breaks free and runs into the ocean. He swims toward the drowning boy and rescues him, pulling him to the beach. Little Dan is shaking violently because of the cold and is almost unconscious.

Two other boys hold him and take him home. The dog drags after them; he's exhausted and cold too.

SUPERBII (V.O.)

He saved your life.

EXT. DAN'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - LATER

The boys hold the body of Little Dan in front of the door and ring the bell repeatedly. The door opens and DAN'S MOTHER rushes outside with a look of shock.

1ST BOY

Ma'am.

DAN'S MOTHER

What on earth happened?

1ST BOY

We were on the beach and --

She doesn't want to hear exactly what happened, just takes Dan and pushes him into the car.

He barely opens his eyes and sees the dog running toward the car.

But before the dog can reach the door, it's shut by Dan's mother. She's too concerned about Dan to even think about the dog.

SUPERBII (V.O.)
You could have told her.

The dog sits on the ground as the car leaves. Little Dan looks directly into the eyes of his dog.

EXT. WOODS NEAR DAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Little Dan shovels dirt on a grave. He has already buried the dog.

SUPERBII (V.O.)
He spent the whole night in the street, waiting for you. He was too tired and cold to do anything.

Little Dan finishes the grave.

SUPERBII (V.O.)
This was your best friend --

Little Dan puts a dog bowl on top of the mound.

SUPERBII (V.O.)
-- but you did nothing.

A teardrop runs from Little Dan's eye.

SUPERBII (V.O.)
You betrayed him. Coward!

He waits for Dan's response; gets nothing but silence.

SUPERBII (V.O.)
Not going to defend yourself?

A teardrop runs from Dan's eye.

END FLASHBACK

INT. TOWER - EIGHTH FLOOR HALL - NIGHT

They are in the hall again. Nothing changed.

DAN
Why are you doing this to me?

SUPERBII
If I didn't care, maybe I'd not have created this place.

Dan buries his head in his hands, unable to deal with it.

SUPERBII

Rise and shine, one more place to see.

DAN

I don't really want to...

Superbii shrugs his shoulders and silently goes to the door leading up to the top floor, opens it and stands in the doorway, waiting for Dan.

SUPERBII

I know what's waiting for you upstairs but I can't tell you. It will reveal the secret.

He grins and looks at Dan.

SUPERBII

I don't want to spoil it for you.

DAN

And what if I refuse?

Superbii gives him a look.

SUPERBII

You won't. Otherwise we will both know that you are a coward and should be treated like a coward.

Dan remains silent, and after a moment he rises slowly.

SUPERBII

And you will regret that you've left this seal unbroken for the rest of your life. Trust me. I'm talking now not as your guide, but as the best part of you.

Dan goes to the window and looks out.

EXT. TOWER - NIGHT

The moon is hidden behind the clouds and the contour of the forest is all that can be seen in the darkness. It seems to be covered with a sticky web.

The moon peeks out briefly to give a glimpse of the logs still floating in the lake, but their sparks are gone as is the blue fire underwater.

INT. TOWER - EIGHTH FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

SUPERBII

Go up there and reveal the secret,
whatever it is... or stay with me
and regret it later!

He motions his head toward the door.

SUPERBII

It's your move.

Dan's face is filled with determination, no longer fearful.
He has decided to accept his fate, whatever it will be.

INT. TOWER - STAIRS BETWEEN 8TH AND 9TH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Dan enters the staircase and looks at Superbii, who waits at
the foot of the stairs.

SUPERBII

This is where I leave you.

Dan looks at him doubtfully, but then takes the first step
toward the stairs.

In addition to some light coming through the door from the
8th floor hall, the only light source is a single torch
midway up the staircase between the 8th and the 9th floors.

DAN

I need a torch or something. It's
too dark.

SUPERBII

Trust me, you don't.

Dan hesitates before taking the next step.

SUPERBII

You going or not?

DAN

And what will happen if I don't?

Superbii is annoyed. He stares at Dan with anger in his eyes.

SUPERBII

That is a secret too. And I am not
sure which secret you're going to
like more. So choose. NOW! I'm
tired of you.

Dan takes a few steps up the staircase. Superbii looks at him with no particular emotion.

SUPERBII

So you made your choice? Good luck.

Without turning around Dan starts climbing the stairs. Superbii leaves and closes the door. The staircase is completely dark, except for the flickering torch on the wall.

Dan can barely be seen; only his steps can be heard. The stairs are slippery and Dan loses his balance more than once. Dan climbs step by step in the darkness until he hits something with his head with a thud.

DAN

Shit!

The next sound is Dan trying to open a wooden hatch above his head. Some light appears as the hatch opens.

INT. TOWER - UPPER FLOOR (NINTH) - CONTINUOUS

Dan climbs out of the hatch into a small square room, It has one big window almost at floor level, covered with a screen and held in place by a bar.

Dan goes to the window but can see nothing. He moves the bar aside, opens the window and steps through it.

EXT. TOWER - UPPER FLOOR (NINTH) - OUTSIDE - NIGHT

The perimeter of the roof is lined with a short stone wall, two feet high. Dan takes a few steps in the darkness.

Suddenly the moon appears in the sky, revealing a path that leads into a garden. Dan looks in amazement.

There are paths covered with sand, bushes around them and ancient statues. It is a graveyard, with an old church on Dan's left. Dan falters and stumbles as he walks. He exits the garden through an old arch.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Dan walks through a field along a path which consists in part of the remnants of an old brick road.

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

Dan crosses a small river and sees a building not far away with the windows full of light.

Dan runs towards it, and as he reaches it sees a ball inside. There are a lot of people, all dancing and laughing. Everyone is expensively dressed and chic. Voices can be heard through the open windows but not a single word can be understood.

Dan looks inside and then steps into the room through the low window.

INT. BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

The moment Dan steps inside everyone freezes, then starts running and screaming. They are frightened and try to escape, but the source of their disgust is not seen. Some cover their eyes and run blindly into furniture or into each other.

Almost instantly Dan is alone in the ballroom. He looks around, puzzled.

Then, he sees movement in the arch on the side of the room. The arch is covered with a curtain that obscures the view except for part of the floor in the next room and some movement inside.

Dan rushes to the curtain and pulls it down. He sees an abominable, fearsome and unholy looking creature. It has slime, bones, dirt, decay and rot.

Dan screams in some supernatural manner, but he can't move. He remains motionless, looking at the creature while the creature looks back at him attentively.

Dan tries to step back, but loses his balance and again moves forward. The creature moves toward him. He covers his head with his arm, and the creature does the same.

Dan's hand is covered with slime and dirt. It looks nothing like a human hand. It is the hand of that creature.

Dan inches back, as does the creature. He is not looking into the next room, but at a mirror; the creature in the mirror is Dan. Realizing this, Dan lets out an agonizing scream. His howl is filled with terror and inhuman despair.

As he screams the sun rises above the horizon. As soon as the first ray of sun beams on the mirror it cracks and drops on the floor, breaking into pieces.

Dan continues screaming while everything vanishes into white light.

INT. DAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Dan lies on his back on the bed with his eyes closed (mirror first scene).

He opens his eyes, showing pure terror, sits up with a jerk and looks around. His room is small and full of light, his clothes scattered all over the place. He sighs with relief, closes his eyes and embraces his arms with his hands.

DAN

It was just a dream. Just a fucking dream.

He scratches his head with his eyes closed.

DAN

I will never ever drink in that fucking bar again. No vodka either... Oh, shit!

He still can't believe it was just a dream.

DAN

Just a nightmare...

He sighs and smiles, then opens his eyes. There is something on the inner side of his arm - seven words written with black ink: "The only hell is in your head".

FADE OUT.

THE END