# **BLACK EASTER**

Screenplay by

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Based On The Novel By

James Blish

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For the experimentally minded, be forewarned:

Although the quotations, diagrams, and rituals presented are authentic, they are in no case complete.

What follows is not vade mecum, but a cursus infamam.

----- JAMES BLISH

OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE, FOLLOWED BY:

# Preparation of the Operator

INT. THE MAGICIAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

An elite, discreet, PROFESSIONAL'S OFFICE - within a large Italian Estate, some time in the fall. A briefcase concealing a recording device rests at the feet of two men who sit comfortably before a magnificent desk. They are:

BAINES - early 50's, billionaire, born captain. Wanted more. Seized and became bored by more's limitations.

JACK GINSBERG, early 40's, Baines's Chief-of-Staff. No lap dog, Jack's a biter with no scars. It's his briefcase.

At his ease behind the desk:

THERON WARE mid-30's. Shaved head, diamond ear stud, expensive suit and accessories: rings, watch, cuff-links in the shape of a chess piece - the rook. Successful practitioner. Ware is mid-explanation:

> WARE --No, I can not help you 'persuade' a woman. (Beat.) Should you desire her raped, I can arrange that. Should you desire to rape her yourself, that is also manageable. With difficulty - more possibly than if one simply accepted one's notions and with obvious discretion acted accordingly. (Beat.) Is that your purpose here today? To hide your nature? You contemplate a dangerous cloak.

CLOSE UP:

Jack watches Baines watch Ware.

WARE (CONT'D) MAGIC, unfortunately, is a tool involving disproportionate risk to reward ratios. (Beat.) There are no philters, nor formulae'. My specialty is crimes of violence. (Beat.) Chiefly, murder.

BAINES You're very frank.

#### WARE

I try to leave as little mystery as possible. From the client's point of view, black magic is a body of technique, like engineering. The more they know about it, the easier I find it is coming to an agreement.

BAINES No trade secrets? Arcane lore?

### WARE

Some - mostly the product of my own research, and very few of any real importance to you.

#### BAINES

I enjoy secrets.

# WARE

The main schoolism of magic is 'arcane' only because most people don't know what books to read, or where to find them. Given those books you could learn everything I know in a year.

(Beat.) To make something of the material, of course, you'd require talent, as magic is also an art. (Beat.)

With books and the gift, even you could become a magician - as in becoming with child, either you are or you aren't.

(Beat.) (MORE)

# WARE (CONT'D)

Presuming you weren't devoured in some equivalent of a laboratory accident.

# BAINES

That simple?

WARE

I don't mean to sound flippant, or imply that you wouldn't find the cause formidable. However the age of secrecy is past and the most challenging of the Grimories remains less difficult to navigate than a Harry Potter novel.

GRETA enters - more than Ware's assistant, Greta represents motion in a universe of rock - the anchor in a fiery sea. Greta carries her beauty as that of a tentatively reformed porn star, someone you promised yourself never to love, or an opponent's wife.

Greta assumes the room and her role without acknowledging the clients, presents to Ware a silver plate.

On the plate is an expensive invitation sized envelope, sealed with signet wax.

WARE (CONT'D) Thank you, Greta.

Greta leaves only the room.

WARE (CONT'D) Pardon me, gentlemen. We would not have been disturbed had this not been of some urgency. (Glances at envelope, discards without reaction:) Of course it's also faster if the client is equally frank.

BAINES I should think you'd have all you needed.

# WARE

Henriksen Baines, minor inherited wealth. Gun running panache made you the fourth or fifth richest man in the world - the arms dealer's arms dealer. Discretion AND valor. (MORE)

# WARE (CONT'D)

I'll still need to ask some questions.

BAINES Why not read my mind?

# WARE

More trouble than its worth. I mean your excellent mind no disrespect, Mr. Baines. However one thing you both must understand is that magic is hard work. I don't use it out of laziness.

#### BAINES

You've lost me.

# WARE

All magic - I repeat, ALL magic, no exceptions whatsoever - depends upon the control of demons.

(Beat.) By demons, I mean specifically fallen angels. No lesser class can do a thing for you. Now, I know one such whose earthly form includes a long tongue. You may find the notion comic.

# BAINES

Not exactly.

#### WARE

In any event, this is also a great prince and president, whose apparition would cost me three days of work and two weeks of subsequent exhaustion. Shall I call him up to lick stamps?

BAINES Ask your questions.

# WARE

Who sent you to me?

#### BAINES

A medium in Bel Aire - Los Angeles. She attempted to blackmail me, so nearly successfully that I concluded that she must have some real talent, and would likely know some one with more. (MORE)

# BAINES (CONT'D)

I had several of her fingers chopped off until she--

WARE Sent you to the Rosicrucians?

BAINES I already knew that dodge, which cost her an eye. (Beat.) She sent me to Monte Albano.

# WARE

That surprises me. I wouldn't have thought a man of your means in need of treasure hunting monks.

# BAINES

Certainly not. I wanted some one of your school. Frankly, I ventured to see the White Magicians only to test your reputation.

WARE You mentioned me by name?

BAINES Their horror at which was sufficient to convince me we should meet.

#### WARE

Sensible. Then you don't really believe in magic yet - only in E.S.P. or some other sort of paranormal nonsense?

BAINES I'm not a religious man.

#### WARE

Precisely put. Did you bring the pocket mirror as instructed?

Jack reaches into his pocket, produces a small mirror and hands it to Baines, who on a nod from Ware looks at his own reflection.

CLOSE UP:

Out of a corner of Baines's left eye, TWO SLOW BLOOD RED THICK TEARS creep down his face.

BAINES Hypnotism. (Beat.) I'd anticipated better.

WARE Wipe them off.

Baines does so with a monogrammed handkerchief.

The blood tears have become GOLD, on the white cloth.

WARE (CONT'D) Have those analyzed, where you wish. I could hardly have hypnotized every lab technician within your reach.

BAINES I thought you said--

WARE

That even the simplest trick requires a demon? One sits at your back now, Mr. Baines, and will be there until the day after tomorrow at this hour. (Beat.) It will cost me dearly to have

indulged in this silliness, and it will be included in my bill.

BAINES Any scruples?

WARE

Quite a few. I don't kill my friends, for any client. Possibly I might balk at certain strangers. However in general I do have strangers sent for on a regular scale of charges.

BAINES

May we explore possibilities? Ex-wives, for example?

WARE Are there children involved?

BAINES

None.

WARE

Then there's little concern to me, for that sort of errand my fee is five hundred thousand dollars.

BAINES

That's ALL?

# WARE

That's all. Not precisely pro bono, dispatching spouses on behalf of one percent of the one percent. Nor would a black magician need consider the concept of 'giving back,' however keeping my name in respectful circulation has temporal advantage - provokes fear in the right enemies, and ensures prompt seating at the right restaurants. Necessary lab work - Ph.D's must publish.

BAINES

What if I wanted someone to die badly? To suffer?

WARE I don't charge extra for that.

BAINES

I'm sorry?

#### WARE

Ethical restraints. I am not the killer, merely director of the agent. I think it very likely - in fact, beyond doubt - that any patient I send for dies in an excess of horror and agony beyond power to imagine. Now and again a divorce client asks that the ex be carried away painlessly, sweetly, from residue of sentiment. I COULD collect extra for that, should the body show no signs of abuse, however my agents are demons. Sweetness is not a trait they can be compelled to exhibit. I accept no conditions: Death is what you pay for, death is what you get. The circumstances are up to the agent, and the wise magician knows better than to offer clients what can not be delivered.

(MORE)

WARE (CONT'D)

(Beat.) That would be wrong.

BAINES Consider another spectrum, suppose instead I should ask that a great political leader be - sent for?

Ware nods. Baines asks:

BAINES (CONT'D) Such as the president of the United States?

WARE

I must admit to surprise - I should think she's been good for business. Checking my ambitions?

#### BAINES

More an alignment of sights - one must have confidence in a weapon's aim. Especially fresh ordinance.

# WARE

The President, surely - However you'll recall in the divorce scenario I inquired of children? Questions would have followed on surviving relatives, as my fees rise in direct proportion to the number of individuals affected by any given death. This is partly scruples, partly self-preservation. In the case of a president, I charge ten dollars for each vote they received when last elected. (Beat.)

Plus expenses.

# BAINES

You're the first man I've ever met who's worked out a system to make scruples pay. And I can see why you don't care about divorce cases. Someday, Mr. Ware--

WARE Doctor Ware, please.

#### BAINES

Sorry. I only meant to say that someday I'll ask you why you want so much money. (MORE)

# BAINES (CONT'D)

You aesthetics seldom can think of any good use for it. In the meantime, however, you're hired. Is it all payable in advance?

# WARE

The expenses are payable in advance. The fee is cash on delivery. As you'll realize when you stop to think about things, Mr. Baines--

BAINES Doctor Baines. I am an LL.D.

Ware and Baines both try to out-refrigerate the other's smile.

#### WARE

I want you to realize, after all of these courtesies, that I have never, ever been bilked.

BAINES

By the same token, we won't need a contract. I agree to your terms.

WARE

Terms for what?

# BAINES

Three commissions. Second and third contingent upon success of the prior. (beat)

See if you can kill the president. Manage that and the rest we'll sort out. Points for style.

WARE

I'll do my best.

# BAINES

Will the, uh, demon on my back go away on his own? Must I see you again?

# WARE

It isn't on your back, and it will go by itself. Marlowe to the contrary, misery does not love company.

BATNES We'll see what we can do about that.

Baines gestures to Jack as he rises, and departs. Jack remains seated.

> WARE Further questions? Concerns?

JACK You mentioned expenses?

WARE Chiefly travel. I'll need to see the president - our patient personally.

JACK (curious) Will you need to touch her?

WARE Not necessarily, however I must witness her existence. Faith in such matters is insufficient.

JACK Is that irony?

WARE

Irony-ish.

JACK

We can arrange a private handshake.

WARE

Excellent. All that remains then is the trip to the United States, which is a vast inconvenience. Air fare, hotels, meals, out of pocket. I should say an advance of thirty thousand dollars would be none too small.

JACK I like your style.

WARE Is that what you like?

Thrown off his game, Jack recovers.

# JACK

We understand you'd rather not ride a demon when you can fly first class with less effort.

# WARE

I'm not sure you do, but simper not and ask about the girl.

#### JACK

I beg your pardon?

#### WARE

You envision my lamia Greta doing things to, and with you, sexually is that it, Mr. Ginsberg?

JACK You lied about reading minds.

#### WARE

I don't read minds, and I never lie. Do you think she's cute? Shall I arrange for a princeling of Hell to slip her a note in study hall?

JACK

That's disgusting.

WARE

Disgusting would be if I asked if you carried your own knives or would need to be borrowing mine? (Beat.) I do so enjoy discomfort in others as strong as you are, shame before me has just become possible. (Beat.) Life's last horror - we are all, in the end, so embarrassed to die. Humiliated at how we lived. So hopeful of redemption - until that place be reached where on orders of the gate keepers, all hope must be abandoned.

Jack gives the notion some consideration.

Silently Greta appears in the room, leans back upon Ware's desk.

Greta, between Jack and Ware.

Greta smiles provocatively, seductively.

WARE (CONT'D) Do you wish her? It's easily arranged. I can have her sent to you invisibly if you like.

As Greta eases by Jack her hand trails and touches him, and for a moment the lamia's hands seem a part of him, her arms a mile long.

JACK (Trembles.) No.

WARE

Not invisibly. I'm sorry for you. Well, then, my godless and lustless friend, what do you want?

Jack is frustrated for the first time ever.

JACK

(stammers) Why should we have to pay for your travel?

WARE Because I'm not a common gunman -I'm a Doctor of Theology.

BLACK SCREEN.

MIDDLE AGED MAN (V.O.) Ceremonial Magic becomes increasingly unrewarding.

EXT. MONTE ALBANO, ITALY - NIGHT

An eight hundred year old Monastery, atop a hill in northern Italy. Ancient, but modernized - satellite dishes and a RADIO TELESCOPE are visible additions. The perimeter surrounded by military style fencing, including razor wire, and the black special utility vehicles of private security patrols.

INT. MONTE ALBANO CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Illuminated by florescent lighting - there is ALSO the occasional burning torch in a wall rack as two ROBED MONKS walk and confide - JOANNES, late 20's, and the Middle Aged Man who's voice we heard, FATHER BRUNO DOMINICO, mid-40's.

Each man is relieved to not yet, or no longer, see themselves as trapped as the other.

#### JOANNES

Three months in a row we have not discovered but lost a fortune. Is it possible centuries of unremitting practice by sorcerer's white and black has located all the buried treasure?

# DOMINICO

That or the invention of the metal detector. (Beat.)

Harder living is the cost of survival. Black magicians have made the better of it.

# JOANNES

How can you even?

# DOMINICO

In this world only, they are damned eternally. Everyone knows this. No secrets in Hell. Indeed, the Baines meeting was awaited by all Nine Circles since before either man was born.

# JOANNES

(Shocked.) Baines and OUR Director?

DOMINICO Baines and Ware.

#### JOANNES

Theron Ware? (Beat.) Once again I wonder why Infernal spirits such as Lucifuge Rofacle would share so much power with a mortal Hell was sure to win? Considering the character of the average sorcerer.

#### DOMINICO

As well as how easily such pacts may be voided.

# JOANNES

That God would allow so much demonic malice to be vented through sorcery upon the innocent--

DOMINICO No one is innocent.

JOANNES Even if no one is to be spared.

DOMINICO Simply another version of the Problem of Evil. The Church replies - free will, original sin.

JOANNES White magic too is a mortal sin.

DOMINICO His Holy Father grants us continued dispensation.

JOANNES Until all the treasure runs out.

DOMINICO You fear you will never be allowed to practice?

JOANNES The great room stinks of demons.

DOMINICO (Shocked.) Demons? (beat) Not unprecedented.

JOANNES I suspect a Sending. One of the others perhaps?

DOMINICO (Dismissive.) Could raise one of the Fallen without every presence on this mountain sharing the dread?

JOANNES It's worse than that.

# DOMINICO

Something is abroad. In the secular world, the world at large. The American arms dealer did not visit us for penance, nor needed us to find Ware - what is occurring? What role are we playing even now?

#### JOANNES

Shall we call upon a Power--?

# DOMINICO

We've no question to pose, and unnecessarily troubling the movers and governors of the universe is petulant.

# JOANNES

Which the Heavenly Host of course forgive, and the hatred of demons is indiscriminate.

# DOMINICO

(Mentor reminder:) Remember that should one seize you by that hair - HAIR CUT, Brother Joannes. Hair cut.

Ruffles Joannes hair.

### DOMINICO (CONT'D)

Practicing magicians leave no hair free for demonic grasps - that's how it happens in the moment of inattention. All that you were or are is in all that pretend. They'll shred you, kill you, and see you later. Practicing magicians take no chances.

(Beat.) Practicing monks on the other hand vow obedience - they DO AS THEY ARE TOLD.

(Beat.)

There is vanity also in the casual, vanity is denied to our order. Formality, courtesy, like magic demands practiced attention to all detail.

# JOANNES

Apologies, of course, Brother. I shall attend. For you now the Director waits, what will you say? DOMINICO That we all need hair cuts.

BLACK SCREEN.

# The First Commission

EXT. MONTE ALBANO, ITALY - NIGHT

Every window in the monastery glows yellow. Gothic, secluded, shrouded in fog. Then a number of security lights assert themselves and a black SUV laps the perimeter.

INT. FATHER UMBERTO'S OFFICE - BETTER LIT

Father Dominico reports to his boss FATHER UMBERTO. Umberto stands away from his desk, over a stand-alone chess board. In his hand he holds the black rook, contemplative.

UMBERTO We've received another impassioned letter from your witch smeller.

DOMINICO In the matter of Theron Ware?

UMBERTO

The American billionaire went directly to Ware - as seemed all too likely. Father Ucello writes that there's now every sign of another series of Sendings being prepared in Positano. Ucello insists we interfere.

DOMINICO We're in no position.

UMBERTO

According to his information, all Hell has been waiting for Ware and Baines to meet since the two of them were born.

DOMINICO

(Dryly.)
I'd heard earlier.
 (Beat.)
Perhaps the principal was a demon,
slipping one by?

#### UMBERTO

Ucello is out of practice. Of course there's no answer to that.

# DOMINICO

Shall I call upon whatever it was and put the question to it?

# UMBERTO

You know you'll get the wrong one, most certainly, or phrase the question inelegantly. The great Governors have no time sense, and so rarely know what's going on outside of their jurisdictions.

# DOMINICO

Quite so.

# UMBERTO

I don't want to jeopardize your usefulness - or your soul - in calling on some spirit we can't even name. As for interference--

# DOMINICO

Ucello should know we are forbidden by the covenant to chance anything of the sort.

# UMBERTO

To be certain, however he wants us to impose an observer directly to Positano. We're just barely empowered to do this, whereas of course Father Ucello cannot. The matter must be explored. I've given Ware the usual formal notification. We're not obliged to follow up on it, but...

DOMINICO Me? To Ware's cathedral?

#### UMBERTO

Dominico you are the strongest here.

DOMINICO Ware even stronger.

#### UMBERTO

Baines perhaps the strongest. Might we hope Ware and Baines devour one another?

#### DOMINICO

Hope less forbidden than prayer. What they send for across the mountain may affect us all. How can the greater sin be praying for action to prevent it?

#### UMBERTO

One runs counter to God's choices, the other denies there ever were choices. God's mysteries must remain so - justice can be denied ONLY to the innocent. No one else is entitled. And none are born innocent.

# DOMINICO

Perhaps the most any - man or Host - might manage is to stand with the Lost Regiment of the Archangel Tol.

# UMBERTO

(Nods.) Who rebelled not, yet afforded to their God no loyalty. It is said that deepest Hell rejects them.

DOMINICO For beside such equivocators, all Sinners may stand proud.

EXT. LOS ALAMOS NEW MEXICO BLACK GLASS BUILDING - AFTERNOON

# Baines's corporate offices CWS - DEFENSE GUIDE PATHS INTERNATIONAL - A Partnership For Peace.

INT. BAINES'S LOS ALAMOS NEW MEXICO OFFICE - DAY

Wall art emphasizes various weapon systems displayed as if the Italian Masters blew stuff up. On a screen saver of Baines's lap top computer - colorful tactical charts and projections map the stages of a chemical-biological war escalation originating between India and Pakistan, unreadable streams of projected casualties scroll the bottom of the screen.

Baines instead reads a metallurgy report:

# "...24-karat gold, worth about a dollar and twenty-three cents." Near but not close beside the figurative throne, Jack Ginsberg entertains Baines's melancholy. BAINES My father wasn't twenty miles from here, of influence, when nuclear weapons ruined the arms business. JACK You have influence. BAINES Wrong currency. JACK Hess rang - twice. BAINES She was instructed never to ring more than once. JACK Which is why I mentioned. BAINES (Grimaces.) Apologize and have me return Cynthia's call before I leave this room. JACK And, the President of the United States has committed suicide. BAINES Say that again.

JACK It happened.

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - CORRIDOR - DAY

From behind we follow MADAM PRESIDENT as she turns to the OVAL OFFICE and enters

Madam President locks one door, JAMS up another with whatever stack of nonsense is there, and the trembling president climbs up on these boxes and--

INT. BAINE'S OFFICE - EVENING

Baines and Jack observe the end of the world as any might know it via television and their computers.

BAINES Jesus Christ, are they SURE?

JACK

That's the universe of the media for the next few weeks. Nothing but dead president. Time to dig out the Blu-Rays.

BAINES How did she die?

JACK Listened to icky sticky voices.

BAINES Is there any doubt?

JACK

Hung herself in the anteroom off the Oval Office. No one saw it coming.

A moment.

JACK (CONT'D) Coincidences do happen. Conspiracies do happen. We can't know for sure that we - Ware - had anything to do with this.

Baines gives a glance, Jack nods.

JACK (CONT'D) Shall I launder the money? (Beat.) That's a tremendous amount - even in bits, it will be noticed.

BAINES You want to leave Ware waiting? (Beat.) (MORE) BAINES (CONT'D) I'll take my chances with the NSA. (Beat.) Pay the magician.

# INT. BAINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Televisions and monitors convey the week of the president's suicide. On the televisions an AGGRESSIVE PUNDIT slimes through the channels. Backgrounds, interviewers blink by as Aggressive Pundit remains seated and angry:

> AGGRESSIVE PUNDIT MANY are saying MANY with ACCESS and amongst those who - Many indicate that the president's sudden decline into her depression stemmed from inadequacy to the office. She KNEW that she lacked the STRENGTH to go after the threats, to KILL our enemies. The real tragedy was her inability to accept that through resignation, or counsel rather than what I'm sure she saw as a minor act of courage in the face of so much cowardice.

The door opens, CYNTHIA HESS enters. Mid-40's, more interesting than interested - Hess has all she wants except a reason why to not want any of it.

HESS (Looking about.)

Baines? I don't see you.

Baines is caught in a glare, steps out of the light.

BAINES Any interest in sorcery, Cyndi? Personally, I mean?

HESS

Sorcery? Nonsensical, yet highly important in the history of science. Especially the alchemical side, everybody wanted to turn lead into gold. Distracted many great minds.

Baines tucks the metallurgy report away.

BAINES I'm talking about black magic.

#### HESS

Then no, I wouldn't have bothered to know much about it.

# BAINES

You're about to learn. We're going to visit an authentic sorcerer in about two weeks. I want you along to study his methods.

#### HESS

I'm not sure I'm the best choice for that. A professional stage magician, the Penn and Teller type--

#### BAINES

Not trying to catch him at anything, need to form an accurate impression of the procedures in case something should sour in the relationship.

HESS

Relationship?

#### BAINES

We're having the man manipulate the universe a bit.

Hess watches Jack scroll his computer across the way and she makes a connection.

# HESS

Truly?

#### BAINES

I want you to know as much about the subject as an expert. The man indicates that's possible for me, which means it shouldn't tax you.

HESS Other than my patience.

# BAINES

Expedite.

Hess leaves, Jack watches her go, Baines observes it all. Baines hands Jack the envelope with the report and tears.

> BAINES (CONT'D) Get rid of this. I don't want anyone asking what it means.

JACK Remember how Ware said the demon would leave after two days?

BAINES

Yes, why?

JACK Look at this.

CLOSE UP:

On the handkerchief, with the report, now two smears of lead.

EXT. ARLINGTON CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

Before an Eternal flame, the late president's husband who either was or will be president himself one day does his best to make sense of senselessness:

> PRESIDENT'S HUSBAND Some look into darkness and see no light. Some look into darkness and see nothing but darkness. She some - Some become light.

BAINES (V.O.) The rest just burn.

INT. BAINES'S PERSONAL JET - NIGHT

Baines, Jack, and Hess are attended to by an all but invisible STEWARD, who knows when not to be. Hess reads books on magic - Jack lifts one. Baines shows no interest.

> BAINES Once that becomes clear, fate becomes mostly an issue of fuel efficiency.

On one of the TV monitors, funeral highlights, which include:

EXT. ARLINGTON CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

Among the more distinguished of the more distinguished of the mourners: Baines and Jack Ginsberg. Also among the elite, hiding perhaps behind sunglasses - Greta. Who Jack damn near recognizes recognizing him in the clip only its way gone now.

#### BAINES

Turn that shit off, I'm sick of it. Throw on A Christmas Carol. Let's get drunk and watch a weepy old man run from ghosts, rather than think to offer them better jobs.

#### JACK

Somewhat surprised Ware wants to do this over Christmas.

## BAINES

Yes, you'd think it an inauspicious season for servants of Satan.

JACK

# Our magician made no objection?

# BAINES

Remarked simply - by e-mail - that December 25th is a celebration of great antiquity.

# JACK

Maybe that was autocorrect.

# HESS

Ware's suggesting Christ wasn't actually born on that date, although in this universe of discourse I can't see what difference that makes. If the word 'superstition' has any of its old meaning, the sign comes to replace the thing.

BAINES Facts mean what we say they mean.

JACK Same as in the real world.

BAINES Call it an 'observer effect.'

# INT. MONTE ALBANO, ITALY

A haunted looking Father Dominico has just received instructions via a thick handwritten passport.

DOMINICO Is this necessary? UMBERTO We have no choice, the covenant is clear.

DOMINICO Celebrate the birth of our Lord in the maw of Hell?

EXT. MONTE ALBANO, ITALY

A vehicle, a TAXI - unusual for the monastery - waits outside.

CLOSE-UP:

Dominico approaches the vehicle carrying luggage, including a book bag, as Joannes follows with another bag.

They load him in as a nervous taxi DRIVER watches, waits.

INT. WARE'S ESTATE - NIGHT

A long hallway, as a very sexy Greta walks the tile, methodically. Click, click, click.

She checks the lines on a carpet, her skirt, her stockings.

EXT. ITALIAN MOTORWAY - NIGHT

The taxi drives to, from, while transporting despair.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

The TAXI DRIVER nervously prattles on as Dominico stares out of the window. The other side of the mountain in the shadow.

> TAXI DRIVER This cannot be the place. No one comes here. No one MUST come here.

> > DOMINICO

Yes.

TAXI DRIVER What do you mean, yes?

DOMINICO No one should ever come here. (Beat.) And yet we arrive. INT. BACK OF LIMO - DAWN

Baines sits in the back of the vehicle, more confused than concerned at this odd unexpected standoff.

BAINES

A priest?

JACK Disconcerting.

INT. TAXI - DAWN

Dominico stares across towards the limo. Disgusted.

DRIVER Shall I wait?

DOMINICO

No. Graze.

Dominico hands over a small clip of money, accepts the receipt.

INT. BACK OF LIMO - DAWN

Jack frowns, ready to assert himself and impress.

JACK You want me to confront him?

BAINES How? To what purpose?

HESS Vatican influence?

BAINES

Troubled?

HESS If the Vatican believes in this...

BAINES

Yes.

EXT. WARE'S ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

The Great Doors Open. Greta stands there, awesome and insignificant.

# EXT. LIMO - DAWN

The door opens, and Jack rises out of the vehicle, makes eye contact with Greta.

What Jack sees looking back at him are not precisely eyes.

INT. WARE'S ESTATE - DAY

Ware escorts Dominico through the castle to the cell prepared for him.

Behind them, Greta moves to receive the other party. She shrinks away from Dominico, all but hissing at his back.

WARE (In Latin.) Under the Covenant, I have no choice but to receive you.

DOMINICO Your Latin is excellent.

WARE It's only a dead language to those with nothing further to contribute.

DOMINICO

(Wryly.) Concedo.

# WARE

Under other circumstances I might have enjoyed discussing the Art with you, even though we are of opposite schools. But this is an inconvenient time for me. I've an important client, as you've seen, and I've already been notified that what he wants from me is likely to be ambitious.

# DOMINICO

I shan't interfere in any way. I know any such interference would cost me all my protections.

### WARE

I was sure you understood that, but your very presence here is an embarrassment. I'll be forced to tell them some sort of story.

#### DOMINICO

The truth?

WARE

The 'Good News,' perhaps? As necessary. In the meanwhile your presence changes the atmosphere unfavorably, makes my operations more difficult than necessary. (Beat.)

The increased effort draws years from my life, you might consider the personal ill will you acquire with each moment.

#### DOMINICO

Retribution?

#### WARE

Also forbidden. So. An Observer. I can only hope - in defiance of all hospitality - that your mission is speedily satisfied.

DOMINICO

On that we agree.

#### WARE

A prime nuisance.

# DOMINICO

I can't bring myself to express any regret, however we both know the ultimate indulgence - and punishment - comes from our Lord.

WARE

Your Lord.

# DOMINICO

(Smiles.) Interesting concession.

#### WARE

I suppose I should be grateful to have not been blessed with this sort of attention from Monte Albano before. Evidently what Mr. Baines intends is even bigger than he thinks. I conclude you know something I do not.

DOMINICO It will be an immense disaster.

### WARE

From your point of view - I don't suppose you're prepared to offer further counsel? On chance of, perhaps, dissuading me?

# DOMINICO

If eternal damnation didn't stop you before, I'd be a fool to make the attempt.

# WARE

Are Priests no longer charged to salvage souls? The Vatican shifts so often these days.

### DOMINICO

I'm a Jesuit.

# WARE

Ahh, of course.

# DOMINICO

A monk, not priest. Any information available to you would be used to abet evil, not turn it aside. I don't find the choice difficult.

#### WARE

Then perhaps a more practical consideration? I don't know yet what Baines intends, but I do know well enough that I remain an agent, not a Power. I've no desire to--

#### DOMINICO

Bite off more than you might chew? Now you wheedle. A magician must know his limitations.

#### WARE

As a cleric. You are advised to adhere to every letter of the Covenant. One step over the line, one toe, and I SHALL HAVE YOU. (Beat.)

No outcome in this universe, including salvation, would please me more. I WOULD RATHER gloat in Hell at your side, than escape that fate myself. I presume I've made myself clear? DOMINICO Unto the Last Judgment.

DISSOLVE TO:

# Three Sleeps

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Baines, Ware, Hess, and Jack enjoy a splendid meal, serviced by several iterations of Greta - as many as needed in the moment.

BAINES Just a nuisance, you say?

WARE

Surely.

BAINES I have my own resources.

WARE No action may be taken.

JACK

Why is that?

WARE Terms of the Covenant.

JACK What Covenant?

Hess chews her food. Considering that area between smug and not listening.

Ware is not buying:

WARE Would you elaborate for the benefit of your associates, Dr. Hess?

BAINES

Go ahead, Cynthia.

HESS The distance between God and his creations being so - once created, none can be enlightened. (MORE)

# HESS (CONT'D)

Not to understand, to perceive, to know anything of what this God or this creation intend - as if by looking through the Hubble to a star system billions of light years away, we might learn what they prefer on their pizza.

(Beat. )

God cannot know us either, though He's tried. We have but three links to our spiritual father. The first was Scripture, access to His word. No matter how distorted. These distortions brought us understanding of the protections of the third covenant, this demarcation between good and evil. Another life line thrown us.

JACK What was the second?

HESS

The rainbow.

BAINES What are the terms of this Covenant?

HESS

No one can know for sure, without violating them. One view is that all there is, is the line - no one will be driven to darkness by being tempted beyond their ability to resist, and no one shall slip into Heaven without being tempted to that point. Others believe free will itself allows for cheating this line. Some consider themselves the line.

A moment.

JACK

Thus explains our Holier than Thou friend.

WARE Dominico's not significantly holier. (Smiles.) He's in for a surprise in the next world. (MORE)

# WARE (CONT'D)

(Beat.) That said, for the time being we're stuck with him. For how long depends upon you. What is your second commission?

BAINES The death of Everett Knighthawk.

Even Hess seems shocked. The magician hesitates.

WARE

Pity.

BAINES You decline?

WARE Not immediately. I do have questions.

BAINES

Certainly.

WARE What are you aiming towards?

# BAINES

Something long term. For the present, strictly business. He's nibbling at the edges of something most think impossible that my company prefers remain impossible. It's currently a monopoly of knowledge we've no desire to become a human birthright.

WARE

How can you possibly be convinced the elimination of one mind would prevent that?

# BAINES

We know we can't conceal this truth forever, two or three years concerns fortunes. Enough to preserve the present economic balance, social tiers, working classes.

#### WARE

Fair enough.

BAINES

And no dramatic accidents, either - that itself could be--

WARE

Suicide, then.

# BAINES

If possible.

WARE It will be an expensive undertaking.

JACK

Why? Nobody ever voted for him except maybe on Dancing with the Stars.

BAINES

Shut up, Jack.

WARE

It's a reasonable question. His work connects him to many, which I must consider. As well as the notion that I've taken pleasure in his company.

#### BAINES

You've met?

#### WARE

From time to time. In gathered circles. Not enough to balk at sending for the man, however sufficient to drive up his price. One suspects Everett would almost appreciate that.

JACK

Fair enough.

# WARE

The major impediment is that owing to his peculiar predilections our software designer lives damn near the convictions of the devout. Only a few venal sins to account for nothing in the least meriting the attention of Hell.

(Beat.)

(MORE)

# WARE (CONT'D)

I'll check that with Someone who knows, but it was accurate as of six months ago, and I'll be astonished if there's been any change. There's a chance Knighthawk might be defended against direct assault.

BAINES Successfully?

WARE

Depends upon the forces involved. Care to chance a pitched battle that might rip apart half of a major city? It might be cheaper to nuke Silicon Valley.

#### BAINES

No bombs, lab accidents, or obvious homicide. More than the angels watch over this guy.

WARE Another suicide.

BAINES Man's best weapon against himself...

# WARE

Has always been himself, and men being men there's always another temptation or torment, however some men do not fall. Even if he does it would take weeks if not months of close monitoring.

JACK Enough to bore away your observer, perhaps. Cost?

WARE Eighty million dollars. Entirely contingent, as I see no obvious up front expenses. Should some present, I'll absorb them.

JACK How decent.

BAINES Jack. (Beat:) (MORE)

BAINES (CONT'D) Fair enough. I appreciate consistency in an intellectual. We need more, not less - right? JACK Without question. BAINES I do remind you, Dr. Ware that --WARE Dr. Hess be allowed to observe? Gladly. (Beat:) I'm sure she shall enjoy its proximity to reality. You may all observe, if you like. (Very false smile.) I may even invite Father Dominico.

EXT. WARE'S LAB - AFTERNOON

Hess shakes Ware's hand outside of the LABORATORY.

HESS

Coals to Newcastle, bringing me here early to meet you. Is it uncomfortable for you that I'm a woman? I understand you've vowed celibacy.

WARE Among other things. My eyes enjoy for me more than most men ever manage for themselves carnally. As an example, I enjoy meeting you.

HESS (Flustered, recovering noting the door alarm.) Interesting security system.

The GUARDIAN - a HUGE DOOR KNOCKER, fashioned as a MASK OF TRAGEDY, however with live CAT EYES.

WARE There's nothing in here really worth stealing, however if taken would cost me tremendously. There's the problem of contamination above all.
HESS

One ignorant touch might destroy months of preparation.

WARE

Rather like a bacteriological lab in those respects, thus the Guardian.

The GUARDIAN recognizes Ware and allows entry.

INT. WARE'S LAB - AFTERNOON

Ware and Hess enter, his sin is pride and she forms intelligent questions.

HESS No standard supply source for your tools.

WARE No, not even theoretically possible. The Operator must make everything himself - not as easy now as in the Middle Ages, when most educated men had the requisite skills.

Along the wall towards the front of the room is a lectern, bearing a book as big as an unabridged dictionary, bound in red leather and closed and locked with a strap.

Hess recognizes this.

HESS A Book of Answers?

WARE Very expensive.

HESS Are all the answers really in there?

WARE For me? So far.

The lectern is flanked by two standing candle sticks with fat candles in them. Pushed back behind them, two modern electrical lamps on stilts.

On the table is another book: HANDBOOK OF CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS, 73rd edition. Beside it - an open lap top computer, printer, and a rank of quill pens and inkhorns.

WARE (CONT'D) Now you can see something of what I meant by the requisite skills. I blow much of my own glass, but any ordinary chemist does that. But should I need a new sword for instance, I'd have to forge it myself. I couldn't just pick one up in a costume shop. And I'd have to do a good job of it, too. As a modern writer says somewhere, the only really serviceable symbol for a sharp sword is a sharp sword.

Hess nods as Ware points out a long heavy table, bearing a neat ranking of objects ranging in length from six inches to about three feet, all closely wrapped in red silk.

Beside the table, affixed to the wall, a flat sword cabinet.

A few stools are casually set about. Ware notices an annoying SCUFF on the floor and rubs at it with his shoe a moment before proceeding.

# WARE (CONT'D) The wrapped instruments are all prepared and I'd rather not expose them. But of course I keep a set of spares.

Ware opens the cabinet door, revealing a set of blades hung in order of size. There are thirteen of them, most inscribed with an odd alphabet.

> WARE (CONT'D) The order in which you make these is important. Hence I begin with the uninscribed instruments, this one, the boline or the sickle. Rituals differ, but the one I use requires starting with a piece of unused steel. It's fired three times in the furnace over there, then quenched in a mixture of magpie's blood and the juice of an herb called foirolle.

HESS The Grimorium Vernum says mole's blood and pimpernel juice.

### WARE

Ah, good, you've been doing some reading. I've tried that, and it just doesn't seem to give quite as good an edge.

### HESS

I should think you could get a still better edge by finding out what specific compounds are essential. You'll remember that Damascus steel was tempered by plunging the sword into the body of a slave. It worked, but modern quenching baths are a lot better. Free you from having to constantly trap elusive animals in large numbers.

### WARE

The analogy would hold if tempering were the only end in view, or if the operation were only another observance of Parcelsus, doing for yourself what you can't trust other's to do. In magic the blood sacrifice has an additional function - tempering of not just the steel, but the Operator.

### HESS

I suppose there's also some symbolic function.

### WARE

In goetic art, everything must.

They walk.

### WARE (CONT'D)

As indicated in your reading, the forging and quenching is to be done on a Wednesday in either the first or the eighth of the day hours, or the third and the tenth of the night hours, under a full moon. There is again an immediate practical interest being served here - for I assure you that the planetary hours do indeed affect affairs on Earth - but also a psychological one, the obedience of the operator in every step. (MORE)

# WARE (CONT'D)

The grimoires and other handbooks are at best so confused and contradictory that it's never possible to know completely what steps are essential and which are not, and research into the subject seldom makes for a long life.

## HESS

All right. Go on.

#### WARE

The horn handle has to be shaped and fitted, again in a particular way at a particular hour, and then perfected at still another day and hour. And so on and so on for each and every element and instrument within the laboratory.

Hess glances Ware's way, who nods approval. Hess leans forward to inspect the writings on the graven instruments.

### HESS

What do these words mean?

# WARE

Mean? They can hardly be said to mean anything, anymore. They're greatly degenerate Hebrew characters, originally, comprising various Divine Names. I could tell you what the names were once, but the characters have no context anymore - they just have to be there.

# HESS

Superstition.

#### WARE

A process as fundamental to the Art as evolution is to biology.

As they walk Ware revisits the scuff mark with the toe of his shoe.

# WARE (CONT'D)

I suppose a modern translation of Paracelsus would be 'You just can't get good servants anymore.' Not to ply mops, anyway.

Ware demonstrates more of the lab equipment and resources.

### WARE (CONT'D)

Most of these regents will be familiar to you, some are special to the Art. This, for instance, is exorcised water, which as you'll see I need in great guantities. It has to be river water to start with. The quicklime is for tanning. I also have to grind my own salt, after the usual rites. Candles I use must be made of the first wax taken from a new bee hive. If I need to make images, the earth must be dug by my own hands and reduced to paste without use of tool - and so on. Everything involves special preparation, including the firewood if I want to make ink for pacts. No point in further cataloging, since I'm sure you understand the principles.

HESS Most illuminating, thank you.

WARE (Looking suddenly sick:) You're welcome.

HESS Are you unwell?

WARE

From apprenticeship on we're trained to secrecy. I'm perfectly convinced it's unnecessary these days, and has been since the death of the Inquisition, but old oaths are the hardest to reason away. No discourtesy intended.

HESS

No offense taken. Perhaps you should rest...

WARE No, I'll have ample rest in the next three days, and be incommunicado, preparing for Dr. Baines's commission. If you've further questions, now's the time.

#### HESS

I am curious about a question Baines raised during your initial meeting - I won't insult your intelligence by pretending there was no recording made or made available to me - but...

# WARE

Mr. Ginsberg's briefcase device, yes. Saved Greta the role of stenographer.

### HESS

What's your motivation? From what you've shown me, you've taken tremendous effort, expense, and time to perfect yourself in your Art - and that you believe in it. Whether or not I believe in it is not, for the moment, even relevant. This is no sham construction, no big store con, this is the cloister where a dedicated man works at something he thinks important.

## WARE

Thank you - go on.

### HESS

You don't need the money, you don't appear to collect art or men or women. You're not trying to become president of the world, nor the power behind such a throne, yet by your own lights you have damned yourself ETERNALLY to make yourself expert in this highly peculiar subject. (Beat:) What the fuck for?

Ware smiles.

WARE

I could easily duck the question. I could point out how I'm in a position to prolong my life to as much as seven hundred years, and might not yet be concerning myself over the next world. (MORE)

### WARE (CONT'D)

I could point out - as you've already learned from the texts that every magician plans to cheat Hell in the end - as did several who are now nicely ensconced on the calendar as authentic saints. But the real fact of the matter is I think what I'm after is worth the risk. What I'm after is something you understand perfectly, something for which you've already sold your own soul - or your <u>integrity</u>, to Dr. Baines for - <u>knowledge.</u>

HESS

There are easier ways.

WARE

You don't believe that. You think there may be more reliable paths, but you don't think they're any easier. However science refuses to accept that some of the forces of nature are persons. Well, some of them are. And without dealing with these Persons I shall never know any of the things I must know. This research is as expensive as underwriting the Large Hadron Collider, and no government would be underwriting me. But the likes of Dr. Baines can, if I can keep finding sufficient of them. Just as these sorts underwrite you.

A moment. Ware pours and extends to Hess a goblet of wine, raises one himself.

WARE (CONT'D) I may have to pay for what I've learned with a jewel no amount of money could buy. Unlike Macbeth, I know one cannot skip the life to come. But if it does come to that and probably it shall - I'll take that knowledge with me, along with the rest. And it will have been a worthy transaction. (Smiles.) In the meanwhile, just another of Dr. Baines' fanatics.

Ware raises in toast, Hess as well.

HESS Yes, yes of course. So am I.

They drink.

INT. DOMINICO'S CHAMBERS - WARE'S ESTATE - NIGHT

Dominico lays flat on the hard cot, staring at the cold stone, waiting. He slips off of the cot, on to his knees in prayer:

> DOMINICO Our Great Lord - I am not permitted to pray for any action - for any cause - contrary the covenant, and I shall not. Your will is just, and done. My prayer is for grace. I pray for peace in this oppressive place. Celestial Powers are being invoked, the dead calm of the air cannot deny it.

A CLOCK'S CHIME begins sounding - ten bells. Dominico begins to weep without sound, TEARS welling his eyes and streaming down his cheeks until he closes them tight.

INT. THE CHAPEL - NIGHT

Ware stands at the center, before a drawn circled pentagram. Behind him stand Baines, Jack, and Hess - all wearing white girdled vestments and white paper hats.

They look ridiculous. And terrified.

Ware wears a white Levite surcoat with red embroidered breast, and a white paper hat with the word EL.

In his hand he holds the Wand of Power.

WARE

(Whispers:)
And now we must vest ourselves.
 (Beat:)
Dr. Baines, on the desk you will
find three garments. Take one, and
then another, and then another.
Give two to Dr. Hess and Mr.
Ginsberg. Don the other yourself.

Baines goes to the table.

Baines hands out the robes to each.

WARE (CONT'D) Take up your vestments and lift them in your hands above your heads. At the amen, let them fall. (Beat:) ANTON. Amator. Emites. Theodoneiel. Poncor. Pagor. Anitor. (Beat:) By the virtue of these most holy angelic names do I clothe myself, O Lord of Lords, in my Vestments of Power. (Beat:) Thy Kingdom and rule endureth forever and ever, Amen.

Every one drops their garment down over themselves.

Ware opens the door to the INNER ROOM.

INT. INNER CHAPEL - NIGHT

The room below is lit in yellow candle light - FOUR standing candle sticks in a room dark with invisible fog - light filtered.

On the floor is a vast DOUBLE CIRCLE in white paint. Between them are odd words written in an incomprehensible language, and astrological signs.

SATURN to the north. Ware whispers, gesturing towards squares drawn in chalk.

WARE Tanists, take your places.

Baines moves to the western star - Hess to the east - Jack to the south. Somewhere across the room Ware's Cat wanders, meowing and shocking every one for an instant.

Ware turns about now, holding forth a sword.

WARE (CONT'D) (Normal voice for a moment:) From now on, no one is to move.

From within his garments, Ware produces a small bowl, which he places at his feet before the sword. Small blue flames rise from it, and Ware from a pocket pulls out a small bottle and casts incense onto the flames from the bowl.

WARE (CONT'D) (Incantation:) Holocaust. Holocaust. Holocaust. CLOSE-UP: The flames in the bowl rise. Ware makes a final explanation to those assembled. WARE (CONT'D) We are to call upon "Marchosias," a great Marguis of the Descending Hierarchy. (Beat:) You may be curious to know that before he fell, Marchosias belonged to the Order of Dominions among the angels. (Beat:) He thinks to return to the Seven Thrones after twelve hundred years. (Beat:) He deceives himself. Baines smirks in response. BAINES The sort that might fool you? Any of us? WARE (Cold.) Speak out of turn again, and I shall be rid of you. Baines is embarrassed, furious, yet terrified. Jack takes notice. Hess is very skeptical, however deferential to her embarrassed boss. Ware proceeds - raises his rod in readiness to strike, concluding: WARE (CONT'D) Marchosias's virtue is that he gives true answers. Stand fast. In sudden motion, Ware thrusts the rod into the bowl of soft flame.

The flames RISE and DISTANT AND STRANGE BELLS "CLANG" IN COLLAPSE AND ECHO.

As the BELLS CLANG LOUD nearly drowning out all sound, Ware begins to incant, raising his voice as necessary.

WARE (CONT'D) I ADJURE thee, great Marchosias as the agent of the Emperor Lucifer - and of his beloved son LUCIFUGE ROFACALE, by the power of the pact I have with thee!

Jack looks ready to spring from the room like a rabbit. His mouth stands open in AWE.

Ware makes a gesture with the wand, continuing:

WARE (CONT'D) By the hierarchy of superior intelligences - by the relief of those who CONSTRAIN against THEE -Venite, venite! Sub-mir-trilla-MARCHOSIAS!

Just ahead of Ware, CREATING its own illumination, SOMETHING begins to form.

- LOOKING BACK -

All but Ware become a bit overwhelmed by the stench of nauseous feces or worse.

Ware's face goes pale at the same time his eyes become bright and his smile insincere.

> WARE (CONT'D) I adjure thee, Marchosias - by the pact and by the names - appear APPEAR!

Ware plunges the ROD into the FIRE again!

SURROUNDING ALL - A deep ECHO of a deep SCREAM with but pause, no end.

Ware frowns, yet isn't surprised - not easy.

WARE (CONT'D) NOW - I adjure THEE! Lucifuge Rofacle! (Beat:) WHOM I COMMAND! (Beat:) AGENT of our Lord and the Emperor of LORDS! (MORE) WARE (CONT'D) Send me THY messenger Marchosias! FORCE him to forsake his hiding place! Send him now--!

Ware PLUNGES the rod again into the bowl of fire, the HOWLS of AGONY raise and echo further.

AN EARTHQUAKE LEVEL RUMBLE rocks the chapel and the world.

As the Chapel rumbles:

WARE (CONT'D) STAND FAST!

SOMETHING ELSE in the room LICKS itself and speaks - the demon Marchosias.

MARCHOSIAS

(Unseen as yet:) HUSH. (Beat:) Here I am. (Beat:) What does THOU seek of me?

Baines, listening in quiet horror.

MARCHOSIAS (CONT'D) (Closer, still unseen:) Why does thou disturb my repose? Let my father sleep and HOLD thy rod.

Ware stands firm.

WARE Hadst thou appeared when first I invoked thee, I had by no means smitten thee, nor called thy father. (Beat:) Remember, if the request I make of thee be refused, I shall thrust again my rod into the fire.

MARCHOSIAS Think. And see.

The Chapel and castle SHUDDER once more.

The center of the circle, before them all - a cloud begins to assemble itself from dust and the cooling breath.

The cloud dissipates, becoming a SHE-WOLFISH creature - with BRIGHT GREEN WET EYES.

The demon COUGHS through bared wet teeth - the cough is FLAME.

Ware asserts himself.

WARE STAND by the seal. Stand and TRANSFORM - else I shall plunge thee back whence thou <u>camest.</u> (Beat:) I command THEE!

The demon VANISHES - replaced in the same instant by a MODEST LOOKING YOUNG MAN wearing a long necktie, cod piece, and a dildo of unusual length.

MARCHOSIAS (In form of Man:) Sorry, boss - ya know I had to try. What's up?

Ware nearly shows fear - this is dangerous:

WARE DON'T try to wheedle me, vision of stupidity - TRANSFORM! I demand of thee - thou art wasting thy father's time - and mine! Transform!

The young man rolls his eyes and sticks out his tongue.

ANOTHER flash and change - now the demon appears as a black bearded MAN twice the young man's age, wearing a forest green robe trimmed in ermine and wearing a GLITTERING CROWN.

Ware gestures forward, asserting:

WARE (CONT'D) That's better. (Beat:) Now I charge thee - by those Names I have named and on pain of those torments thou hast known, to regard the likeness and demesne of that mortal whose eidolon I hold in my mind. (Beat:) (MORE)

## WARE (CONT'D)

When I release thee, thou shalt straightaway go unto him - NOT making thyself known to him - but revealing AS IF it were to come from his own intellectual soul, a vision and understanding of that great and ULTIMATE NOTHINGNESS which lurks behind those signs he calls matter and ENERGY. (Beat:) See to that he see thine damage in his private forebodings. And that thou remainest with him. (Beat:) Deepen his despair. (Beat:) Allow him no respite. (Beat:) Allow him to despise his own soul, for its own endeavours - and destroy the life of his own body.

MARCHOSIAS I cannot give thee what thou requirest.

WARE

Refusal will not avail thee. For either shalt thou go incontinently and perform what I command, or I shall in no way dismiss thee, but shall keep thee here unto my life's end.

(Beat:) And in these days torment thee on each day, as thy father permitteth.

MARCHOSIAS Thy life itself, though you may cheat seven hundred years, is but a day to me.

Sparks fly from the beasts's crown.

MARCHOSIAS (CONT'D) AND thy torments but a FARTHING of those I have endured since ere the cosmic egg was hatched, and Eve invented.

# CLOSE UP:

Jack mouths the word 'Invented,' Baines glares, Ware does not see.

In answer, Ware again STABS the fire with the rod, and the crowned figure of Marchosias throws back his head in dignified agony - a ROAR of ANGER! A moment's pause. MARCHOSIAS (CONT'D) I shall do as thou commandest. The Demon oozes HATRED like lava. Ware instructs on details to attending. WARE BE it not performed exactly, I shall summon thee up again. (Beat:) But be it executed, for thy pay thou shalt carry off the immortal part of the subject thou shalt tempt. (Beat:) It is as yet spotless in the sight of Heaven. (Beat:) A great prize. MARCHOSIAS But not yet enough. Marchosias makes his claim on Ware. MARCHOSIAS (CONT'D) For thou must give me also somewhat of thine hoard. A tear of loss. Pain from you. (Beat:) As it is written in the pact.

> WARE Thou art slow to remember the pact, but I would deal fairly with thee, knowing marquis. Here.

Ware reaches under his robe and draws out a small tear VASE, with STOPPER, which he tosses at the demon's man form and

The DEMON bends his head back and wide at an UNSPEAKABLE angle of JOLTS and catches the Vase.

MARCHOSIAS When I have thee in Hell, magician, then shall I drink thee dry, though thy tears flow never so copiously. WARE Thy threats are empty. I am not marked for thee, shouldst thou see me in Hell forever. (Beat:) Enough, ungrateful monster. Cease thy witless plaudering and discharge thy errand. (Beat:) I dismiss thee.

The Crowned Man snarls, and melts from existence in a projectile vomit of fire and sludge.

The Altar, where the fat cat sits, PURRING.

The cat licks sloppy lips, and raises dying eyes which snark and twinkle.

Walking the diagram on the floor, Ware symbolically cuts it with the sword, divining a line, then:

WARE (CONT'D)

(Hoarse:)

It is over. Now we must wait. I shall be in seclusion for the next two weeks, then we will consult further. The circle is open. You may leave.

Baines is pissed and feels safe about it.

#### BAINES

Doctor Ware. You may be the finest sorcerer on the planet, or the world has ever seen, but as you say you are not a power yourself, merely an instrument. I aim higher. You may feel I have no recourse to defy or admonish, however I remind that one thing you educated us on is that as inexorable your powers, preparation remains unavoidable. (Beat.)

You might pack me off to Hell, but it'll take a week for you to get ready. (Beat:)

All I have to do is make a phone call.

WARE Pity it would never occur to a man in my position that such preparations be completed prior to our meeting, Dr. Baines. (Beat.) As Dr. Hess shall recall from her reading you need be real to ME, not simply an article of belief or faith - not just some one I've heard of, read or been told about some one I KNOW inside of me shares this fate with me. (Beat.) How real do I seem to you?

There is at that moment a DISTANT CLAP OF THUNDER.

INT. DOMINICO'S ROOM AT WARE'S CASTLE - NIGHT

The thunder rolls distant, and Dominico seems caught between rage, terror, and a sob. He wipes at his eyes, controlling himself.

Near by sits Dominico's satchel, a black bag he goes to now, rooting through. He comes out with a page of thick parchments, an ink bottle, and a quill pen.

Dominico scribbles a series of disconnected words on the page, easily read yet as now unreadable as he scrawls and writes more and more words, then he stops, waves the paper in the air to dry the ink.

Dominico tears the page into individual bits, each containing one of the written words, then

Dominico quickly folds each other page bits as origami shapes: triangles, squares, other and

From a capped vial of Holy Water he sprinkles.

DOMINICO God sees all, all must wait. (Beat:) My Lord Christ, I do not question your will, or your plan. Or your indulgences. I ask only that question permitted by Covenant in this moment, and I do ask. I do ask. (Beat:) Why? (Beat:) (MORE) DOMINICO (CONT'D) Please, if any may know the source of thy will - why?

The thunder rolls again.

DOMINICO (CONT'D) (An incantation:) I conjure thee, O form of these instruments, by the authority of God the Father Almighty, by the virtue of Heaven and the stars, by that of the elements.

Dominico scoops all of the loose papers and as he YANKS his bag open wider, above it, he speaks while he tosses all of the papers into the air.

> DOMINICO (CONT'D) Thou receive all power unto the performance of those things in the perfection of which we are concerned, the whole without trickery, falsehood, or deception.

As Dominico chants, the papers fall and he kicks the bag away, but not before all of the bits of paper fall back into the bag from which they came, except

Three pieces of the paper miss the bag, and land on the floor before it, before Dominico, and they each lose their shape on impact, now just bits of paper, scrawled with the words now read as:

> DOMINICO (CONT'D) God, Creator of the Angels, Emperor of the Ages, most holy Damahi, Luchmeh, Gadal, Pancia, Veloras, Melorid, Lamidoch, Baldach, Mitraton, be ye wardens of this instrument - AMEN.

The papers: PATIENCE/BECOMING/REALITY.

DOMINICO (CONT'D) Good things come, to those who wait. (Grim.) What answer was to be expected on Christmas Eve?

EXT. WARE'S ESTATE - NIGHT

It is snowing. The sun comes up. The snow melts away and

# EXT. WARE'S ESTATE - DAY

More than a month has passed. A crew of grounds keepers removes winter's protections. Greta directs with ridiculous attention to detail. She is appreciated the same way.

From on high, the ghostly face of Ware observes from a window.

The grounds now resemble nothing if not the Garden of Eden.

Baines walks the grounds, chatting into his iPhone.

Jack approaches, Baines looks to him.

JACK

The president took days, this is what now? What does that tell you?

### BAINES

That you're the sort who notices.

JACK

Just if we'd known it was supposed to take this long we ought to have relocated back to Rome for the wait. Any interest? Better accommodations.

#### BAINES

Women, you mean. Bring in what you want, but we're riding this out. Saw the priest again last night, though he won't share the garden. I thought he'd left.

# JACK

No, nor does he show sign of departure. Mostly he just stares at me like I owe him money.

#### BAINES

That's probably what he thinks of you. You've considered the metaphysical implications of all this nonsense, haven't you, Jack?

#### JACK

You mean that since we've seen and felt magic at work, this means angels and demons are real? Which means at some juncture we will be prompted to account for ourselves. (MORE) JACK (CONT'D) Just like Mom and the book always warned. Yeah. Still unmoved, and that's scarier than anything, isn't it? (Beat.) Now that we know, we still don't want to know. BAINES What do we know? (Beat:) And as for Ware? JACK He's walking about, I waved at him down the hall and the gop of a

down the hall and the son of a bitch pretended not to see me.

BAINES Maybe he didn't.

JACK He saw. That spooky weird girl he's got tucked back there brought me this.

Jack extends to Baines an envelope, invitation sized. Inside a card which Baines reads, eyebrows raised.

JACK (CONT'D) What do you think?

BAINES Go see him. See me after.

JACK

Roger that.

INT. WARE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Ware sits behind the desk, Greta ushers Jack to his chair. Jack attempts to seize the initiative:

# JACK

Is there news?

# WARE

None at all. Sit down, please.

Jack does, assessing the room for light, shadows, exits and other such.

### WARE (CONT'D)

Dr. Knighthawk is a tough patient. It's possible he won't fall at all, in which case a far more strenuous endeavour may be required. In the meanwhile I'm assuming that he will, and that I therefore ought to be preparing for Dr. Baines's final commission.

JACK

I haven't any idea what the boss's commission is, and if I did I wouldn't tell you.

#### WARE

You have a remorselessly literal mind, Mr. Ginsberg. I'm not trying to pump you for information. I already know, and it's enough for the time being, that Dr. Baines's next commission will be something major. Perhaps unprecedented in the practice of the Art.

JACK

That priest has you rattled?

### WARE

His continued presence suggests significance. One does well to attend to the significant moments of one's existence.

JACK

That's why I'm here? Feel like attending to my significance?

#### WARE

If I am to tackle the sort of task I anticipate being asked to perform, I'll need assistants. I have no remaining apprentices. They become ambitious very early, and either make some stupid technical mistake or have to be dismissed for disobedience.

JACK

Drive them off, do you? Why am I not surprised at that revelation?

WARE

Oh, you'll be very surprised at the revelation.

# JACK

Touche'.

# WARE

Laymen, even sympathetic laymen, are equally mischancy, simply because of their eagerness and ignorance. However if they are highly intelligent, it's sometimes safe to use them. Sometimes. Given these disclaimers, that explains why I allowed you and Dr. Hess to watch the Christmas Eve affair.

#### JACK

I suppose I should be flattered.

WARE

Not at all. I see that I had better be blunt. I was quite satisfied with Dr. Hess's potentialities but I am none too happy with yours. (Beat:) You strike me as a weak reed.

Jack is embarrassed, recovers.

JACK

I'm not easily offended, Dr. Ware. But I'm more cooperative when people are reasonably polite to me.

WARE

(Exasperated:) Stucor. (Beat:) You think I'm talking about public relations, and getting along with people, and all that goose grease? (Beat:) Far from it. (Beat:) A little hatred never hurts the Art, and studied insult is valuable when consorting with demons. There are only a few who can be flattered to any profit, and the man who can be flattered isn't a man at all. He's a dog.

### JACK

Fair enough.

WARE I speak neither of your footling hostility, nor your unexpectedly slow brain, but your rabbit's courage.

JACK

Never thought of myself as a particularly brave man.

WARE

Non-risk adverse would be more telling. There was a moment during the ceremony when I could see that you were going to step out of your post. You didn't know it, but I had to paralyze you, had prepared for such an eventuality and saved your life.

JACK

How is that?

# WARE

Had you stepped even an inch out of the drawn circle you would have endangered all of us, and had that happened I would have thrown you to Marchosias like an old bone.

(Beat:) It would not have salvaged the ceremony, but it might have kept the demon from gobbling up everybody else but the cat.

#### JACK

Why not the cat?

### WARE

He's on loan. Belongs to another demon, one of my patrons. Do stop changing the subject, Mr. Ginsberg.

# JACK

Apologies.

### WARE

If I'm to trust you as a Tanist in a great work, I'm going to have to be sure that you'll stand fast no matter what you see or hear, and that when I ask you to take some small part in the ritual you'll do so accurately and punctually.

JACK

I'll do my best.

WARE

Why would you do that?

JACK

I'm sorry?

#### WARE

I've no idea what you mean by your 'best.' What's in it for you? (Beat:) I know that there's something in this situation that hits you where you live. My first guess at what it might be proved wrong, did it not?

JACK The woman Greta, you mean?

# WARE

She's not human.

JACK

What difference does that make?

Jack has Ware's attention.

# JACK (CONT'D)

I love women. I have special - uses for them. Of the sort I don't find easily indulged.

### WARE

Denied even to a man of your resources.

JACK Imagine my frustration.

### WARE

Well done, yet unnecessary in this instance. Neither extortion nor additional income interest me.

JACK I'd be stupid to acquire any new tastes that only you could keep supplied. WARE 'Pander to,' is the expression. JACK I want to learn the Art. WARE Well, then. That is a reversal. JACK I know you said you don't take on apprentices, but I wouldn't be trying to stab you in the back, or take over your clients. I'd only be using the Art for my specialized purposes. (Beat:) I'm not rich like Baines, I couldn't pay a fortune, but I do have money. If I make some moves I think I could come up with two million dollars. (Beat:) Perhaps close to three. I know that's not significant to you, but it's not nothing. (Beat:) If nothing else you could have this place painted. WARE As my apprentice you would be the one painting it. JACK Fair enough. WARE Nothing is fair in the Art. JACK My first lesson? WARE

I haven't decided that yet.

JACK

I could do the reading in my spare time, and come back after a year or so for the actual instruction. I think Baines would give me a sabbatical for that. He wants some one on his staff to know the Art, only he thinks it's going to be Hess.

(Beat:) Hess will be too busy and will bullshit her way out of the assignment until it doesn't matter any more.

WARE

You really hate Dr. Hess, do you not?

JACK

I have yet to enjoy her. (Beat:) Anyhow, what I say is true. And I could be a lot better expert from Baines's point of view than Hess.

WARE

Do you have a sense of humor, Mr. Ginsberg?

JACK

Doesn't everybody?

WARE

Every one claims to have, that's all. I ask because the first thing to be sacrificed to the Art is the gift of laughter. Some miss it more than others.

JACK

You haven't lost yours.

#### WARE

You confuse humor with wit, and the two remain as different as creativity and scholarship. Your sense of humor seems residual at best. Losing it a minor operation, less intrusive than an appendectomy. There may be more substantial costs. JACK

Examples?

WARE

What tradition would I be training you in? I could make a kabbalistic magician of you, which would give you a substantial grounding in white magic. For the black, I could teach you most of what's in the Clavicle and the Lemegeton, cutting out the specifically Christian accretions. Would that content you, do you think?

JACK

Possibly, if it met my primary requirements.

(Beat:)

If it was necessary to proceed from there I wouldn't care. These days I'm a Jew only by birth, and prior to Christmas Eve I was an atheist. Now I don't know what I am. All I know is I believe what I see.

#### WARE

Not in this Art. Before I decide, I think you ought to explore further your insight about special tastes becoming satiable only through magic. Remember Oscar Wilde's epigram on the subject, that fulfilled desire isn't a delight, but a cross.

JACK I'll take the chance.

### WARE

You have no real idea of the risks. Suppose you should find that no human woman could please you anymore, and you had become dependent upon succubi? I don't know how much you know of the theory of such a relationship.

# JACK

None.

WARE

The revolt in Heaven involved angels from every order of the hierarchy.

JACK

So?

# WARE

Of the Fallen, only those who fell from the lowest ranks are assigned to this sort of duty. By comparison, Marchosias is a paragon of nobility. These creatures have lost even their names, and there's nothing in the least grand about their malignancy. They are pure essences of narrow meanness and petty spite.

JACK

That doesn't sound any different than an ordinary woman. So long as they deliver the goods, who cares? Presumably as a magician I'd have some control over them.

### WARE

Yes. Nevertheless, why be persuaded out of desire and ignorance when an experiment is available to you? I would never trust any resolution you made from the state of simple fantasy you're in now.

JACK What sort of purient advantage do you get out of this?

WARE

A Tanist in Dr. Baines's major enterprise whom I can trust to stand fast owing to a degree of commitment.

JACK What do I need to do?

INT. JACK'S SUITE - NIGHT

IN A SHADOWY CORNER - HESITANT - JACK TREMBLES. The door KNOCKS! KNOCKS! KNOCKS!

A moment, then:

JACK Come in. Come in. Come in.

She does not hesitate. Movement becomes mirage becoming miraculous. Then mandatory.

GRETA Good evening. I am here, as you invited me. What are your thoughts?

Jack begins to speak, she reaches quickly:

GRETA (CONT'D) No. Demonstrate.

He does, she exceeds. Roaring back on her haunches:

GRETA (CONT'D) You make up your mind too soon. Perhaps you are wrong.

Jack imagines and experiences Greta as every one and every possibility, thru threesomes, orgies, historical people, loved ones, control, ecstasy.

Greta is all women, and not a woman. With ladies never necessarily present.

CLOSE UP:

Jack demands in a nocturnal emission of passion:

JACK What the FUCK do I call you?!

GRETA Oh, I do not come when you call. (Beat:) You shall have to do better than that, you son of a bitch.

And as they ROLL OUT OF THE BED some light catches a tooth wrong in the shade of a lie, and

Jack tenses, Jack and Greta kiss.

GRETA (CONT'D) You are very distant. (Beat.) Perhaps you worry. Perhaps you worry that I am only pretty on the outside. (MORE) GRETA (CONT'D) (Beat.) That would be unfair. JACK Why is that? GRETA Come to me.

JACK You shall have to do better than that.

GRETA You son of a bitch.

# AFTERWARDS:

Jack malingers there in a sweat stained bed of torn sheets. He glances over at a tray containing a burning candle, a rag and a straight razor. Afraid to show or express his fear that it may have been for the last - only - time.

A LONG STOCKING is rolled up a thigh.

JACK So what's the spell to get you to stay?

GRETA (Teasing.) It hides within these fires. You will learn it soon enough.

JACK

Please.

GRETA I have other business.

JACK But - I thought - wasn't this different? More of a good time? Money isn't an issue.

GRETA I am thy servant, and thy lamia, Eve fruit. But thou must NOT mock.

JACK I don't understand.

GRETA Then keep silent. Greta dresses.

GRETA (CONT'D) I gave thee pleasure. Congratulate thyself. That is enough. Thou knowest what well I am.

JACK I...why would I care? About... (Beat.) Angels and demons? Wasn't my war.

GRETA I take no pleasure in anything. It is forbidden.

FROM ACROSS THE WAY -

GRETA (CONT'D) Be grateful, and I shall come again. Mock me, and I shall send thee instead a hag with an ass's tail.

JACK I meant no offense.

GRETA

See that thou does not. Thou hadst taken pleasure from me, that sufficeth. Thou must now prove thy virility with mortal flesh. Thy potency, that I go to try even now.

ACROSS THE WORLD

In Asia or Eurindia or somewhere, a man way more than Jack, pretends to enjoying itself with a woman, some cheating maiden and--

GRETA (CONT'D)

I become an incubus now, I must change suit. This woman, diverted from her husband by the two-fold way. Three-fold. Five-fold. Reach I her in time, THOU shalt father a child.

JACK A child? What are you talking about?

GRETA A fearsome child. (Beat.) Somewhere in the Middle East, a future terrorist is born.

GRETA (CONT'D) Oh, such a fearsome child it shall be.

As Greta rises, all light trembles, including that clinging in Jack's eyes.

GRETA (CONT'D) Shall I return tomorrow?

JACK Oh - God - yes.

INT. WARE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Ware awakens from nightmares.

Across the great room, never in his bed, stands Greta. On display. Naked. Already smug at a success she presumes.

GRETA You were dreaming.

CLOSE-UP:

Ware. In his bed, pushing away a globby, sweaty cat.

WARE Fantasies.

GRETA

Ahh.

WARE Mind yourself, minder.

GRETA I meant no offense.

### WARE

Certainly you did. You expected my inferior mind to not notice; it did. See that thou dost not so offend again, else thou shalt be chastised.

GRETA

I apologize.

Ware glares, waits. Finally:

GRETA (CONT'D)

Lord Ware.

WARE My bath is ready?

GRETA Yes, Lord Ware.

INT. WARE'S BATH - MORNING

A Roman-esque tub. Naked, seated behind, cradling Ware is Greta, using sponges to clean, tempt, and bathe him.

WARE You enjoy your role.

GRETA Now YOU mock.

WARE

I do.

EXT. WARE'S ESTATE - ITALY - DAWN

A new sun rises.

INT. WARE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Ware's eyes closed in contemplation.

Ware pronounces as his eyes open to see Baines, Jack, and Father Dominico before him.

WARE Those concerned now gathered; I grant the commission has been fulfilled.

All react in their own way.

BAINES

Very good.

JACK Not as devout a fellow as we feared?

WARE Disrespect not the damned. My patience is at an end, I insist now on answers.

### BAINES

I'm ready to discuss my final commission, if the planets and so on don't make this a bad time.

WARE

The planetary influences exert almost no effect upon simple discussion, only specific preparations. Go ahead.

CLOSE UP:

Baines's entire life has been leading up to this request:

#### BAINES

I would like to let all the major demons out of Hell for one night, turn them loose on the world with no restrictions nor instructions, and see what they might do.

A moment.

DOMINICO Is this an act of possession?

### WARE

Forbidden by Covenant. This seems entirely in keeping with Dr. Baines's character. (Beat.) What do you hope to accomplish through an experiment so colossal?

DOMINICO

This event you're minimizing by calling it an 'experiment' might well end in the dawn of Armageddon.

# WARE

Then you should welcome it, convinced your side must win. (beat) No such risk. The results may well be rather Apocalyptic, but Armageddon requires an Antichrist. I assure you I am not he. (beat) Dr. Baines, what do you hope to accomplish?

## BAINES

(Blinks.) Accomplish? I've had my life. It's almost over, which leaves me thinking of all those who couldn't be me - what of them? (Beat.) Creatively, they leave much to consider. Disposition.

### WARE

I had thought that this was the art you practiced already, and in effect sold the resulting canvasses, too.

# BAINES

Three kinds in arms sales - those with no consciences, and those who don't listen to their consciences.

Nobody reflects on Jack, not even Jack.

Eyes on her, Dr. Hess turns away.

### BAINES (CONT'D)

The other are artists such as myself - who understand chaos enough to take pleasure in the necessity of creative suffering.

### WARE

The saintly Robert Frost said a painting by Whistler was worth any number of old ladies.

# BAINES

Terrorist with a bomb isn't half as dangerous as an engineer with a permit.

#### WARE

Skills are always to be applied, lest what is the world for? What do you envision?

#### BAINES

It won't be an obliteration, but a whole set of individual actions, each in itself small scale. Each one interesting in itself. (MORE)

# BAINES (CONT'D)

It won't be total because it will also be self-limiting to some period of time, twelve hours, whatever's left from kick off til dawn.

### DOMINICO

'Kick off?' No human being could elaborate anything so monstrous without the direct intervention of Hell.

### WARE

I am somewhat privy to the affairs of Hell, thank you. Dr. Baines you may be resorting to too big a brush for your morning after regrets. Won't the forthcoming Sino-Russian War be enough for you?

### BAINES

(Stunned.) So that's really going to happen?

WARE

It's written down to happen. It still might not, but I wouldn't bet against it.

HESS Oh my God.

WARE Do not blaspheme. (Beat.) Very likely it won't be a major nuclear war - The Book of Answers says around fifteen million humans perish the first day, more follow from disease and anarchy. This is funny - second biggest cause of death in the war next week? Suicides world wide, after "kickoff." Go figure.

Baines reflects, thoughtful.

HESS I should think you'd be pleased.

BAINES You think too goddamn much. (Beat, Smiles.) (MORE)
## BAINES (CONT'D)

It isn't often you plan something that big and have it come off. But no, Dr. Ware, it won't be enough, because it's still too general. It won't be sufficiently attributable to me. This experiment will be my initiative alone. I've had enough of the predictability of war - so many crutches. Every death noble, heroic, to be avenged perhaps envied. Envy of the dead's choices, when no choice was made. I want those who must suffer and die to God's ends to be caught unaware, reminded of their insignificance. Their value to us; their role in this creation.

#### WARE

To die humiliated in education and admiration of their betters.

### BAINES

You suffer the lesson - I'll learn from your loss. People complain, 'why did this have to happen to me?' As though they'd never heard of Job.

#### WARE

Rewriting Job is the humanist's favorite pastime.

#### BAINES

If I may speak for the entire one percent of humanity against these others - They're better off dead, anyway. All suffering is fleeting. Launch the fleet.

#### WARE

How might you propose to pay for all this?

# BAINES

Take all my money - most of it anyway. We must create this.

## WARE

It's hardly enough, considering the risks.

### DOMINICO

Am I to conclude that you are going to undertake this fearful insanity?

#### WARE

It isn't the money that attracts me, but such an opportunity will never come up again. If the whole thing doesn't blow up in our faces, much would be learned from such a trial.

Ware looks to Hess. She picks a side.

#### HESS

I think that's right. I'd be greatly interested in playing a role myself.

Ware smiles. Dominico does not.

#### DOMINICO

You'll learn nothing but the shortest of all shortcuts to Hell, probably in the body.

#### WARE

A negative Assumption? But now you're tempting my pride, Father. There've been only two previous ones in Western history - Johannes Faustus and Don Juan Tenorio. Neither properly safeguarded. Well, now certainly I must undertake so great a work - provided that Dr. Baines is satisfied he'll get what he's paying for.

#### BAINES

Of course I'm satisfied.

## WARE

Not so fast. You've asked me to let all the major demons out of Hell. I can't begin to do that. I can call up only those subordinate to the spirit with whom I have pacts. The three superior spirits - Sathanas, Beelzebuth, and Sananachia cannot be invoked at all. Under each are two ministers, with one of which it is possible to make pacts - one per magician, that is. I control Lucifuge Rofocale, and he me. (MORE)

# WARE (CONT'D)

Under him in turn, I have pacts with some eighty-nine other spirits, not all of which would be of any use to us here - poets, and teachers. With the utmost in careful preparations, we might involve as many as fifty of the rest. Frankly, I think that will prove to be more than enough.

BAINES Will you take it on?

WARE

Yes.

Dominico rises.

# WARE (CONT'D)

Hold - your commission is NOT discharged. You must observe this sending. You have said yourself that it is going to be difficult to keep under control. It is all in your mission by stipulation, and in the Covenant by implication. (Beat.) I do not compel. I but remind you of your positive duty to your Lord.

DOMINICO (whispering) That... is... true.

A moment.

WARE

Nobly faced.

# DOMINICO

In advance of your preparations I demand time to visit Monte Albano and gather together a convocation of all white magicians.

# WARE

You can demand no such thing.

# DOMINICO

Not to interfere, but to stand by, in case of disaster. It would be too late to call for them once you knew you were losing control.

### WARE

Hmmm... probably a wise precaution, and one I couldn't justly prevent. Very well. About the day, what would you suggest? May Eve is an obvious choice, and we may well need that much time in preparation.

## DOMINICO

It's too good a time for any sort of control. I definitely do not recommend piling a real Walpurgis Night on top of the formal one. It would be wiser to choose a unfavorable night, the more unfavorable the better.

WARE Excellent good sense. Very well -Inform your friends. (Beat.) The experiment is hereby scheduled for Easter.

Dominico pushes out of the office, out of the palazzo, out of the estate through more than he might describe.

INT. WARE'S LABORATORY - LATER

Ware enters to discover that - some how - Hess has let herself inside to explore unaccompanied.

Ware is horrified.

WARE You fool - do you want to ruin us all?

Hess turns to face him, eyes blood-shot, sleep deprived.

HESS I'm sorry.

WARE Tell me what you've touched.

HESS

Nothing.

WARE You were drawn here? How did you get in? Hess retrieves a pure white pigeon and pocket mirror. Ware takes them from her hand and sets them carefully on a stool.

HESS Should I sit?

WARE You should not. Why are you here?

HESS I wanted answers.

WARE

What are your questions?

HESS You know who's going to be in Hell?

WARE There is an accounting, always has been, of course.

HESS Even before we were born.

WARE Depends upon whom you ask.

Is that the only thing we should bother to ask?

WARE You needn't bother to ask.

INT. WHITE MONK'S CONFERENCE ROOM - MONTE ALBANO - DAY

Many high ranking clerics of Dominico's order sit gathered in conference, Dominico and Umberto among them. Joannes is also present, and the most apprehensive.

## UMBERTO

Father Bongiglioni was stricken by the rigors of travelling to this conference and has been transported to a Rome Hospital.

DOMINICO

Heart attack?

UMBERTO Nervous collapse. He was unable to stop...weeping. Umberto addresses the entire conference.

UMBERTO (CONT'D) Take your places as I make all the appropriate introductions.

He does, they do.

UMBERTO (CONT'D) We've nearly half of the world's white magicians here today. I am informed it is the largest convocation of its kind ever. (Beat.) This is less than a third of the invitations. Here is what we have.

We see each Father as they are introduced.

UMBERTO (CONT'D) Father MONTIETH, a venerable master of a great hoard of creative although often ineffectual spirits of the cislunar sphere.

Father Montieth nods.

UMBERTO (CONT'D) Father BOUCHER, who as we know has enjoyed commerce with some intellect of the recent past that was neither a mortal, nor a power. (Beat.) Father VANCE, in whose mind floats visions of magics that shall not be comprehensible, let alone practicable, for a thousand years. (Beat.) Father ANSON, whose specialty is unclouding the minds of politicians. (Beat.) Father SELAHNY, a terrifying kabbalist who speaks in parables and of whom it is said no once since Leviathan has understood his counsel.

A CHUCKLE of LAUGHTER; it does not last.

As Umberto speaks, a LARGE TELEVISION SCREEN replay of certain ceremonies is repeated, as narrated in nervous stammer:

UMBERTO (CONT'D) With great reluctance it was decided to reach out to the Heavenly Hosts for aid and comfort. (Beat.) As always these images are recreations.

WE SEE animated illustrations of the scenes being described by Umberto.

UMBERTO (CONT'D) (Narrating:) We worried that merely putting the Great Princes on notice might provoke action against Ware, and thus violate the terms of the Covenant, however we decided that the Princes must know about the matter already. How shaky was that presumption became clear when the bright angels were summoned one after another before the convocation as a counsel of war.

As animated and explained:

UMBERTO (CONT'D) Bright, terrible, and enigmatic they were - as at any time. (Beat.) At this calling They were in a state of spirit beyond the comprehension of anyone present.

CLOSE UP:

UMBERTO (CONT'D) PHALEG, that most military of spirits seemed to know of Ware's plans, but would not discuss them. OPHEIL was preoccupied as well and ARANTON, chiefest of all disappeared in a roar when the matter was mentioned. We would describe their overall moods as panic.

FATHER ATHERLING. Pulling himself together.

ATHERLING These are not good omens. INT. HESS'S CHAMBERS - EVENING

All pieces of furniture are littered with old tomes. Hess holds open a text, unfocused.

In the distance a bell tolls, jolting her into awareness. She returns to her reading.

INT. UMBERTO'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Umberto gestures for Dominico and TWO OTHER MONKS to look at the screen of his computer.

UMBERTO Brothers, how is this possible? How could we not be aware of this around us? What is happening?

MONK Father Dominico! Come quickly!

Dominico rushes out, followed by others.

INT. MONTE ALBANO CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON

Dominico and the other's race the corridor.

MONK Is this one of the proper hours?

MONK #2 He can't possibly be prepared. Has the boy even shaved?

UMBERTO He puts all of our souls at risk!

DOMINICO He's risking his soul for all of ours.

INT. THE GREAT ROOM - MONTE ALBANO - AFTERNOON

A misguided and unprepared Joannes operates from within incomplete circles, too little prep, and far too much confidence.

JOANNES (Incantation) Continue! Continue! Continue! DOMINICO JOANNES! Stop speaking now!

JOANNES It's okay - it's okay! This is an ANGEL!

As Joannes says this, the Angel SLICES JOANNES straight DOWN THE MIDDLE with a fiery sword, and two flaming halves of Joannes slip in twain, caught up in a roar of a tornado of fire and smoke and then there is nothing but ash, and shame.

EXT. VATICAN CITY - NIGHT

Good Friday Midnight Mass is being held, cardinals and Pope officiating.

INT. BAINES'S SUITE - NIGHT

Baines's television runs muted coverage of Holy Week in Rome. He ignores it, idly scanning expense reports.

The bell continues to toll.

INT. JACK'S SUITE - NIGHT

Greta enters. They ravish each other as before, and as they fly and ring about with the bells

GRETA Take from me LESS than you need--!

JACK

No.

GRETA Take from me LESS THAN YOUR NEED!

JACK

NO.

GRETA Then TAKE MORE THAN YOU MUST--!

As Greta exclaims this she PUSHES into his hands a long DAGGER from Ware's sword rack and INSTINCTIVELY Jack ENVELOPS it in his FISTS and pushes passionately back against Greta

Seeing her now naked and laying back across an Altar, innocent and decadent and lusting for the thrust

# GRETA (CONT'D) Take this from me, or I'll let some one else have it while you watch.

Without hesitation Jack PUSHES the dagger down through Greta's heart, killing - blood addresses itself.

# INT. WARE'S LABORATORY - NIGHT

The bell rings twelve as Ware completes a ritual in his work room. He rises from his knees to depart the laboratory, pausing as he leaves to

Reach under his jacket, and pull out a long needle - which he slowly awfully sticks into the eye of the Guardian on the door. Again. And again. And again.

### THE LAST CONJURATION

EXT. THE CHAPEL - AFTERNOON

The principles gather; ambitious anxiety, with a wee bit of Hell - each distract themselves.

WARE

Mr. Ginsberg. Account yourself today as well as last evening, and we may proceed with your education.

JACK

Last evening?

WARE

Bad dreams?

Father Dominico takes his position as an observer.

Ware, Baines, Hess, and Jack take their stations.

Greta's body lays slain upon the altar. Impossible blood, from a still infatuating mouth.

Ware lights the necessary candles.

WARE (CONT'D)

I conjure and command thee, LUCIFUGE ROFACLE, by all the names wherewith thou mayest be constrained and bound - SATAN, RANTAN, PALLANTRE, LUTIAS...Thou who imposeth hatred and propogandeth enemities, I conjure thee by Him who hate created thee...

The ASSEMBLY begins, CREATURES appearing and taking form, taking order, taking mass, awaiting orders.

A LEADER appears at the head of this mass, taking its own FORM, speaking:

# FORM

What now? (Beat.) I have not seen my son in many moons.

WARE I adjure thee, speak more clearly. And what I wish, thou knowest full well.

FORM Nothing may be known until it is spoken.

### WARE

I desire thee to release, as did the Babylonian from under the seal of the King of Israel all those demons of the False Monarchy who names I shall call, and whose characters and signs I shall exhibit in my book, providing only that they harm not me or mine, and that they shall return whence they come at dawn, as it is always decreed.

FORM Providing no more than that? (Beat.) You were not always so easily satisfied.

WARE They shall do as they will for this their period of freedom. (MORE) WARE (CONT'D) Except that they harm none here in my circles, and obey me when recalled, by rod and by pact.

FORM So interesting a commission is new to me. (Beat.) What have you for my hostage? To fulfil the forms?

Ware reaches under his garments and pulls out - a startled MOUSE. He TOSSES it.

The mouse lands and starts yapping and running about the demon figure, growing more mad from fear each second, unable to pull away.

We see this world for a moment through MOUSE EYES.

It looks the same as it does to us.

FORM (CONT'D) You are skilled and punctilious, my son. Call then when I have left and I will send my ministers. Let nothing remain undone, and much will be done before the black cock crows.

WARE It is well. By and under this promise I discharge you.

Hess throws brandy into the brazier:

WARE (CONT'D) I, Theron ware, Karcist of Karcists, hereby undertake to open the book, and the seals thereof, which were forbidden to be broken until the breaking of the Seven Seals before the Seven Throne. (Beat.) I have beheld Satan as a bolt falling from Heaven. (Beat.) I have crushed the dragons of the pit beneath my heel - commanded angels and devils. (MORE)

## WARE (CONT'D)

I undertake and command that all shall be accomplished - that from beginning to end, alpha to omega, world without end, none shall harm us whom abide here in this temple of the Art of Acts.

Then comes the procession:

As each demon is summoned, they take many appearances in this great parade exiting from Hellmouth.

WARE (CONT'D) BAAL, great king and commander in the East, of the Order of the Fly, obey me! (Beat.)

Something begins to form behind the altar, behind the curtained door, indeed outside the palazzo altogether, but seen nevertheless.

It comes forward, growing, a thing like a man, in a neat surcoat and snow-white linen, but with two supernumerary heads, the one on the left like a toad's, the other like a cat's.

It swells soundlessly until it is inarguably in the refectory; and then, still silently, grows past them and is gone.

WARE (CONT'D) Agares, duke in the East, of the Order of the Virtues, obey me!

Again, a distant transparency, and silent. It comes on very slowly, manifesting as a comely old man carrying a goshawk upon his wrist.

Its slowness is necessitous, for it is riding astride an ambling crocodile. Its eyes are closed and its lips move incessantly.

WARE (CONT'D) Gamygyn, marquis and president in Cartagra, obey me!

This grows to be something like a small horse, modest and unassuming. It drags behind it ten naked men in chains.

WARE (CONT'D) Valefor, powerful duke, obey me! A black-maned lion, again with three heads, the other two human, one wearing the cap of a hunter, the other the wary smile of a thief.

It passes in a rush.

WARE (CONT'D) Barbatos, great count and minister of Satanachia, obey me!

But this is not one figure; it is four, like four crowned kings. With it and past it pours three companies of soldiers, their heads bowed and their expressions shuttered and still under steel caps.

It is impossible to guess which among these troops had been the demon, or if the demon had ever appeared.

WARE (CONT'D) Paimon, great king, of the Order of the Dominions, obey me!

Suddenly after all the hissing silence there is blast of sound, and the room is full of capering things carrying contorted tubes and bladders, intended as musical instruments.

The noise resembles most closely a drove of pigs being driven down the chute of a slaughterhouse.

Among the bawling, squealing dancers a crowned man rides upon a dromedary, bawling wordlessly in a great hoarse voice.

The beast it rides on chews grimly on some bitter cud, its eyes squeezed shut as if in pain.

WARE (CONT'D)

Sytry!

Instantly there is darkness and quiet, except for the hissing, which now has a faint overtone as of children's voices.

WARE (CONT'D) Jussus secreta libenter detegit feminarum, eas ridens ludificansque ut se loxurise nudent, great prince, obey me!

This sweet and lissome thing is no less monstrous than the rest; it has a glowing human body, but is winged, and has the ridiculously small, smirking head of a leopard.

It is beautiful, and sick.

As it passes, Ware presses a ring against his lips.

WARE (CONT'D) Lerajie, powerful marquis, Eligor, Zepar, great dukes, obey me!

These three appear together: the first an archer clad in green, with quiver and a cocked bow whose arrow drips venom; the second, a knight with a scepter and a pennant-bearing lance; the third, an armed soldier clad in red.

In contrast to their predecessor, there is nothing in the least monstrous about their appearance, nor any clues as to their spheres and offices.

WARE (CONT'D) Ayporos, mighty earl and prince, obey me!

Grotesque as to comic: it has the body of an angel, with a lion's head, the webbed feet of a goose and the scut of a deer.

Ware thrusts his wand into the brazier.

WARE (CONT'D) Transform, transform!

The visitant promptly takes on the total appearance of an angel, crown to toe, but the effect of the presence of something filthy and obscene lingers.

WARE (CONT'D) Haborym, strong duke, obey me!

This is another man-thing of the three-headed race - the human one bears two stars on its forehead; the others are of a serpent and a cat.

In its right hand it carries a blazing firebrand, which it shakes at them as it passes.

WARE (CONT'D) Glasyalabolas, mighty president, obey me!

This appears to be simply a winged man until it smiles, when it can be seen to have teeth of a dog.

There are flecks of foam at the corners of its mouth. It passes soundlessly.

Jack looks to Hess; Hess casts brandy into the brazier.

Greta's body on the altar has been consumed.

# WARE (CONT'D) Bune, thou strong duke, obey me!

This apparition is the most marvelous yet, for it approaches them borne on a galleon, which sinks into the floor as it comes nearer until they are able to look down through the floor onto its deck.

Coiled there is a dragon with the familiar three heads, these being of dog, griffin and man. Shadowy figures, vaguely human, toil around it.

Baines trembles from ecstasy.

WARE (CONT'D) Silence. And let nobody weaken or falter at this point. We are but half done with our calling - and of those remaining to be invoked, many are far more powerful than any we've yet seen. I warned you before, this Art takes physical strength as well as courage.

Ware turns another page.

WARE (CONT'D) Astaroth, grand treasurer, great and powerful duke, obey me!

An angelic figure, at once beautiful and foul, seated astride a dragon; it carries a viper in its right hand.

As the creature passes Jack, it smiles into his face, and the stench of its breath nearly knocks him down.

WARE (CONT'D) Asmoday, strong and powerful king, chief of the power of Amaymon, angel of chance, obey me!

Ware sweeps off his hat with his left hand, taking care, not to drop the lodestone as he does so.

This king also rides a dragon, and also has three heads - bull, man and ram.

All three heads breathe fire.

The creature's feet are webbed, as are its hands, in which it carries a lance and pennants - it has a serpent's tail.

WARE (CONT'D) Furfur, great earl, obey me! This angel appears as a hart and is past them in a single bound, its tail streaming fire.

WARE (CONT'D) Halpas, great earl, obey me!

There is nothing to this apparition but a stock dove, also quickly gone.

Ware calls names as rapidly as he can manage to turn the pages, in recognition of the growing weariness of his Tanists:

Raym, earl of the Order of the Thrones, a man with a crow's head.

Separ, a mermaid wearing a ducal crown.

Saburac, a lion-headed soldier upon a pale horse.

Bifrons, a great earl in the shape of a gigantic flea.

Zagan, a griffin-winged bull.

Andras, a raven-headed angel with a bright sword, astride a black wolf.

Andrealphus, a peacock appearing amid the noise of many unseen birds.

Amduscias, a unicorn among many musicians.

Danntalian, a mighty duke in the form of a man but showing many faces both of men and women, with a book in his right hand.

WARE (CONT'D) The last we call is that mighty king created next after Lucifer and first to fall in battle before Michael. Formerly of the Order of the Virtues. BELIAL himself. Worshipped in Babylon, envied by God. (Beat.) Belial! Mighty King of All - Obey me!

BELIAL - beautiful and deadly in a chariot of fire, the fire fueled by all the lost love in the world.

## WARE (CONT'D)

Now, great spirits, because ye have diligently answered and shown yourselves, I do hereby license ye to depart, without injury to any here. Depart, be ye willing and ready to come at the appointed hour, when I shall duly exorcise and conjure you by your rites and seals. Until then, ye abide free. Amen.

Ware snuffs out the fire in the brazier. The murk in the refectory lifts.

WARE (CONT'D) It's over - or rather, it's begun. Mr. Ginsberg, you can leave your circle, turn on the lights.

Ware also snuffs the candles.

In the light of the shaded lamps the hall seems in the throes of a cheerless dawn -

Jack sees nothing on the altar now of Greta save fine gray ash. He touches it, moves a grain between his fingertips.

> BAINES Do we really have to wait here? I should think we'd be more comfortable upstairs.

> > WARE

We must remain here. That is why I asked each of you to bring in your devices. From now until dawn the area inside these walls is the only safe place on Earth.

Hess sits beside Jack as from Jack's iPad we hear:

IPAD (V.O.) "Bison, bison! Rattus! Rattus! Cardinalis! Cardinalis!

HESS Smells like college. Booze, perfume, vomit and... what's that last?

JACK Your eternal damnation. This seems like one of Baines's games to me - what am I supposed to be thinking? Years ago he killed a man in my office, closer to me than you are now, and afterwards he told me it was a <u>game</u>. Hired a man so I'd see him die. Didn't matter to anybody but the dead guy, and his family. Jack, least you might do is help me play as far along as you have.

JACK There was a time I would have enjoyed playing with you.

Jack squeezes a handful of ash through his fingers.

Dominico urges Baines to move forward, closer to the small venting window.

BAINES What's the matter?

# DOMINICO Look out there, Mr. Baines.

POV thru the window - snowflakes, and IN THE DISTANCE, hanging ugly and low in the sky, ulcerous boils of purple in the sky, ready to ooze from this infection and fester upon the earth.

Baines recognizes something bad, but refuses to give any advantage to any competitor.

BAINES

Well?

DOMINICO You don't see anything?

BAINES Don't try and panic me, <u>father</u>. We're waiting it out. You may leave this place at any time it suits you.

CLOSE-UP:

The unfolded LAP TOP COMPUTER plugged into speakers:

COMPUTER VOICES (live streaming:) Now established that the terrorist cell's decision to behead the children in real time on the live feed--

The Big Screen Television cuts and streams through different images from around the world:

HESS Jesus Christ. Did I hear that?

BAINES Yes. Sit down and shut up. Something's coming to a head. And it's nothing we - any of us expected. (Beat:) Not even Ware.

HESS Hadn't we best call a halt to whatever it is, then?

BAINES I refuse to give our clerical friend the satisfaction.

They look to where Dominico pouts, frustrated.

HESS You'd rather risk the end of the world?

BAINES Either Ware remains in control, or he isn't.

ON THE LAP TOP STREAMING:

A very serious, very sophisticated classy British demonic spokesman for a BBC Program - low key and crazy quiet, hushed tones of a librarian speaking of books:

> DEMON Welcome to - Stripping corpses. I'll be stripping corpses.

DEMON #2 (Knowingly.) I'll be stripping corpses.

# DEMON #3 I'll be stripping--

SMASH CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE UP - VOLUME CRAZY LOUD:

Demon #4, eyes fill screen, right the fuck at

DEMON #4

YOU THERE!

The audience jumps, a few die - back to the rectory.

FROM THE TELEVISIONS:

AGGRESSIVE PUNDIT I...ladies and gentlemen, I...I myself, personally, ME, have just been informed of something -EXTRAORDINARY. It is my responsibility as a journalist, as an American, as a human to be the one to tell you - HEY! GONE DIG-DIGdiggity-DIG now! Let's all pull our cocks out--

CHANNELS ALL CLICK AWAY TO -

EXT. HUGE BURNING MUSEUM - LIVE ON CNN - STREAMING

# Caption: British Museum, Smithsonian, Louvre All Burn In KZNY Claimed Arson Assault.

CNN ANCHOR (O.S.) In response, Senator Norse took to the floor and declared his intention to - this is his office's statement - read into the record all seven Harry Potter novels, and... and that's what the Senator is doing at this hour - oh my God, Sarah - what are you doing to it? LET THAT THING GO! WAIT, NO---!

GUNSHOTS! In the studio!

CNN ANCHOR (O.S.) (CONT'D) Please - PLEASE - please, don't - I have a little girl--

More shots, then

Across the room.

JACK

Baines?

BAINES

What?

JACK What kind of a thing do you think this is?

BAINES How would I know?

JACK

Didn't ask what you know, I wondered what you think. How far could this go?

BAINES Dark Ages. At best.

JACK Dark Ages? What does that even mean?

### HESS

Human history is a vessel, sailing a sea of knowledge. Every now and again that knowledge becomes too much, a WAVE which wipes it all away in a cycle of fear. The last time was around the year 1000, when every one expected the Second Coming of Christ and realized they did not dare face up to Him. The human mind, I suspect, can only take so much accumulated knowledge, and then it panics and starts inventing reasons to throw it all away and start over again.

#### BAINES

I don't give a god damn what any of this means. I made this, it's MINE. I did it. Every other possible fact about it, minor or important, is technicality. Something I pay fanatics to attend to on my behalf, at my whim. (MORE) BAINES (CONT'D) (Beat.) Thanks for playing.

HESS The thought occurs that we may all be insane. Occam's razor.

BAINES Occam may be right: There goes Rome.

Outside of the small dark window - A BRIGHT NUCLEAR FLASH, followed by a rumbling shock wave, and a rising wind.

DOMINICO Wake up, THERON WARE. (Beat:) I charge you AWAKE - your experiment - your - the COVENANT is satisfied - RISE DAMN YOU!

Ware rises from where he had been napping, instantly alert.

WARE

No one move.

HESS Dr. Ware, please - what can I do?

WARE SILENCE - NO ONE MOVE, no one speak - try not to think.

Ware puts on his PAPER HAT.

Baines rushes to his spot in the circles, fumbling for the wine sack.

All rush to position, even THE CAT scrambles.

Ware lites the brazier, speaking:

WARE (CONT'D) I invoke and CONJURE thee, Lucifuge Rofacle, fortified with the Power and the Supreme Majesty - I strongly command thee by BARALMENESIS, BALDACHIENSTS, APOLORSEDES--

A DISTANT thunder ROLLS up on them and BANKS, again and again. Echoes.

Jack looks over at Baines.

Baines shrugs.

Hess trembles, trying to keep her terrified eyes open despite the TEARS already flowing.

Dominico - without a word - judges all, including himself. The look on his face excuses no one.

Sneaking in behind the thunder, a sound of laughter from something incapable of joy. A sick and sweet loss felt by whoever the sound bleeds.

The Altar. SOMETHING begins to form there - in none of the circles, but on the Altar itself, cloven feet swinging negligently.

A GOAT'S HEAD - immense horns - wearing a crown which flames from each of its own horns.

The Goat smiles.

Baphomet reveals Himself.

Human eyes, a Star of David on Its forehead. Haunches, hairy, masturbating.

Ware drops slowly to one knee:

WARE (CONT'D) ADORAMUS TE, PUT SATANCHIA. And again, Ave, Ave.

BAPHOMET Ave, but why do you hail me? It was not I you called.

WARE

No, Baphomet, master and guest. Never for an instant. It is everywhere said that you can never be called, and would never appear.

BAPHOMET You called on the God, who doth not appear. (Beat.) I am not mocked.

WARE

I was wrong.

BAPHOMET

There is a last time for every thing, as the first. Worm, we thank thee - Agent of Armageddon. (MORE)

## BAPHOMET (CONT'D)

Let that be written before all writings, like all else, go into the everlasting fire.

#### WARE

No. Oh living God, no - this can not be the time. YOU BREAK THE LAW where is the Antichrist--?

## BAPHOMET

We will do without. He was never necessary. Men have always led themselves to us.

### WARE

But - master and guest - the law--

### BAPHOMET

We shall also do without the law. Have you not heard? Those tablets have been broken.

## HESS

You're right - you're both right - you all have a point.

JACK Another crazy bitch.

WARE SILENCE YOU FOOL!

## HESS

No, no, this is worth discussing. What's been constructed here is amazing - we're building our own hell. I get that, I can see that.

### BAPHOMET

How gracious of you to speak with me, against the rules. We understand, you and I, that rules were made to be broken. However your form of address displeases let us prolong the conversation and I shall educate you on protocol eternally, for a beginning.

### HESS

Lucky for me, I I don't see you, Goat.

WARE

SHUT UP!

HESS I DON'T SEE YOU, GOAT! You're nothing but a nightmare, some chemical induced dream, unreal - GO - GO AWAY!

Baphomet smiles. Baines is interested, Jack confused.

Hess also smiles - and steps from her circle and is IMMEDIATELY CONSUMED - taken IN THE BODY

She does not die - she becomes ONE TORTURED BIT OF THE DEMON'S OWN SOUL in that moment, as abandoned by all as any, for nothing.

The world shudders.

BAPHOMET Thank you for the sacrifice. Anyone else? (Beat.) I leave you to wonder and want for a small time.

DOMINICO STAND TO! Stupid and disobedient! Behold thy confusion, the Pentacle of Solomon!

BAPHOMET Funny monk - I was never in that bottle.

Dominico holds out his crucifix:

DOMINICO Hush! Be still, fallen star! Behold in me the person of the Exorcist, who is called OCTINIMOES, in the midst of a delusion armed by the Lord God and fearless - I AM THY MASTER! In the name of the Lord Bathal, rushing upon ABRAG, ABEOR, coming upon BEROR! (Beat.) Back to HELL, Devil! In the name of Christ, our Lord!

The crucifix in Dominico's hand smokes and catches fire. As the fire burns, Dominico holds on - even as his hand is burned, second and third degree.

Even as the cross burns itself to splintered black wood, then ashes. Even as nothing is left but

CLOSE-UP:

Baphomet rising.

BAPHOMET Too late, Magician. Your White College also fails - as the Heavenly Hosts fail. We are abroad, and loose, and None shall be put back. (To Ware:) And YOU are my dearly beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. (Beat.) I go to join my Others and Lovers in the Great Work, but shall return for you at Dawn. Prepare.

DOMINICO How can this be possible? It was written.

# BAPHOMET

Propaganda. You presumed world without end, or was it end without world? All of Hell's last tear was shed for the suffering RESERVED as the punishment for three last souls. Before you were even born. I am sorry for each of you. Sorry without pity. How shall you divvy the pain? Ninety-nine to one? Equal shares? Decide for me as we shall play soon. Season yourselves.

BAINES

Whatever's fair.

# DOMINICO

(Desperate:) How - how - where - please - please - we must know -

### BAPHOMET

We?

DOMINICO What was our failure?

# BAPHOMET (Speaks Three Words, Unheard Yet:) (Sound of a ram horn--)

BLACK SCREEN. Three words appear on screen in an unintelligible scrawl of Angelic script.

Baines, Jack - in horror.

Dominico - shattered.

Ware on his knees, eyes welling with tears, resigned, looking away.

The THREE WORDS on screen in Angelic script begin to morph to English:

Baphomet smiles, opens his mouth - no further sound.

AND AS THE LIGHTS FLASH ON and OFF from every computer, television, monitor screen, every device, every angle, some one looks up and THE SKY goes away.

Then THREE three THREE words in desperate English, one at a time. Way too fast, then way too slow, then way too much:

GOD. IS. DEAD.

Repeats as necessary, until interrupted.

CREDITS.

FADE OUT.