

THE WEREWOLF OF PARIS

A Screenplay by

JAMES JEFFREY PAUL

Based on the novel by

GUY ENDORE

(919)272-4642
jfpl@aol.com

Original source material (C) 1933 by Guy Endore.
(The copyright to this source material was never renewed
and is now in the public domain.)
Screenplay (C) 2010 by James Jeffrey Paul.
All rights reserved.

This script, in its current form, was registered with
the Writers Guild of America East on 24 May 2010.

A DARK SCREEN. A title appears: PARIS.

And, below it: 1925.

The titles FADE OUT and we FADE INTO:

INT. LIVING ROOM/STUDY OF NARRATOR'S APARTMENT--EARLY EVENING

A young, rather pretty, and very bored young woman, ELIANE, is lounging on the sofa. A cultured-looking man in his late twenties or early thirties, a nameless FRIEND, is seated in a straight-backed chair. He is most impatient but keeps this feeling well-concealed.

ELIANE

When *is* he going to get here? I'm starving.

FRIEND

You had dinner less than half an hour ago.

ELIANE

I'm bored. And when I get bored, I get hungry.

FRIEND

Haven't I heard that line somewhere before?

ELIANE

You seem very cultured, so I'm sure you have.

FRIEND

Meaning--?

ELIANE

I read it in a story in one of the slick magazines on the boat over here. It was such a wonderful line that I told myself, "I'm going to steal that line and use it at the first opportunity."

FRIEND

(Smiling faintly)
And now you have.

ELIANE

Yes. Aren't I clever?

FRIEND

Extremely.

ELIANE

Thank you.
(Pause)
Where *is* he?

Just then, the front door opens, and the NARRATOR, a serious- and inoffensive-looking young man in his middle twenties, comes into the room, bearing a large portmanteau.

ELIANE (CONT'D)

Speak of the devil!

NARRATOR

Indeed.

The NARRATOR closes the front door and locks it behind him.

ELIANE

What, are we prisoners now?

NARRATOR

(Smiling faintly)
Only until I finish telling you my tale. Well--it's some other people's tale, thank goodness, but I have brought it to life.

FRIEND

(Expectantly)
Then you found everything you were looking for?

NARRATOR

No, not everything, not by any means. But enough to cast some light--I mean, darkness--on this dark story.

ELIANE

What are you two overgrown children talking about?

NARRATOR

Eliane, when I came in just now, you said, "Speak of the devil."

ELIANE

Yes?

NARRATOR

Most original.

ELIANE

Sarcasm does not become you.

NARRATOR

What slick magazine did you get that out of?

ELIANE

None. I got it from a play.

NARRATOR

Ah! An epic Broadway production, huh? Which one of the Barrymores spoke that line?

ELIANE

None of them. It was a cheap melodrama. Put on by a summer-stock company in a provincial town so sleepy that they make Rip Van Winkle look like an insomniac.

(Beat)

I made that line up myself.

NARRATOR

Ah, Eliane, you are not only a fighter for female emancipation--financial, sexual, and otherwise--but a literary immortal as well.

ELIANE

(Smiling sincerely)

Thank you.

The NARRATOR sits down in an upholstered chair facing his guests.

NARRATOR

But to return to "speak of the devil." I was going to answer that remark. And so I say, "Precisely."

ELIANE

What?

NARRATOR

I am going to speak of the devil--or a servant of the devil.

ELIANE

What are you talking about?

NARRATOR

In the last month, Eliane, I've been doing some special research. And tonight, I've brought both of you hear so that I can tell you about it.

ELIANE

What, you're not doing to read from your dreary old doctoral thesis, are you?

NARRATOR

No. I haven't done a lick of work on that in the past month. For which I blame both of you.

The FRIEND smiles. ELIANE looks puzzled.

ELIANE

Listen, if you don't tell me what all this is about within the next thirty seconds, I'll scream rape.

NARRATOR

Again, Eliane, your remark is most appropriate. For that crime is featured prominently in what I have to read to you.

ELIANE

It is?

NARRATOR

Yes. And if the story you're about to hear is just too unbelievable and terrifying, you have only yourself to blame.

ELIANE

I hate to sound like a broken record, but--

NARRATOR

--what am I talking about? Well, I'll tell you.

(Pause)

Eliane, I'm sure you remember when you first came to my apartment here a month ago--the day after you arrived in Paris?

ELIANE

Yes, of course.

NARRATOR

And while I was glad--and surprised--to see you, I wanted to postpone showing you all the sights of Paris. But you were so insistent, so how could I resist your charms?

ELIANE

Stop flattering me and get on with it.

NARRATOR

I am. So you dragged me from one cafe to another, getting drunker and drunker.

(To his FRIEND)

At one of those cafes, we bumped into you. I knew you only slightly, but you came over to our table, and together we watched Eliane make a spectacle of herself.

ELIANE blushes and tries to excuse herself, but all that comes from her throat is a grunting sound.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Do you remember?

FRIEND

Oh yes, I remember.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFE--PARIS--LATE AT NIGHT--A MONTH EARLIER

ELIANE has removed all her clothes except for her silken panties and brassiere. She stumbles back over to the table where the NARRATOR and his FRIEND are seated, having a drink, and puts her arms around the NARRATOR.

ELIANE

Don't be jealous. I'll be yours. Yes, I'll be yours. Take me with you, quick!

NARRATOR

Now come along, Eliane, get your clothes on and let me take you home.

ELIANE

If you won't have me, then anyone can have me!

(To everyone)

Who wants me? I want a man! I'm a virgin and free and white and good-looking, too!

She starts to tug off her brassiere.

NARRATOR

Eliane!

A STRANGER, a mature and well-dressed man, comes up and puts his arms around ELIANE.

STRANGER

You know, darling, you are mine.
You shall come with me. We belong
to each other. All night long, I
shall worship your sweet body.

ELIANE throws her arms around the STRANGER and slumps against him.

ELIANE

Oh, darling!

STRANGER

Come, now, put your clothes back on
and then we can take a taxi to my
home.

ELIANE

You mean *our* home, darling.

STRANGER

Yes. Our home. Now come along,
darling. Where did you throw your
clothes?

ELIANE

Well--my skirt is over there--

The STRANGER leads ELIANE out of the frame. All the while, the two men have been watching this spectacle--the NARRATOR with alternating waves of shock, mortification, disgust, and finally relief at being rid of ELIANE; the FRIEND, with a keen, scholarly interest. With ELIANE gone, the NARRATOR takes a swig of his drink and turns to his FRIEND.

NARRATOR

Now, which insect were you telling
me about?

FRIEND

The pinthea. It imitates bird
excrement, looks just like the
dropping of a bird. There's a
harmless insect that imitates a wasp.
And a beetle that looks like a
dangerous ant.

NARRATOR

So the insect world is filled with
impostors?

FRIEND

Exactly. And unless you taste insects, you can have no clear conception of how far this mimicry goes.

A young and well-dressed PROSTITUTE walks boldly up to their table.

PROSTITUTE

Messieurs, you are alone. Does either one of you want me?

The NARRATOR is about to tell her to get lost, but his FRIEND jumps in.

FRIEND

How much?

PROSTITUTE

Ten francs.

FRIEND

(Shaking his head)
That's too much.

PROSTITUTE

Three francs, then?

Again the FRIEND shakes his head. The PROSTITUTE grows desperate.

PROSTITUTE (CONT'D)

(Wearily, but eagerly)
Come, I don't want any money. I just want you.

The FRIEND takes out his watch and looks at it.

FRIEND

It's too late. Sorry, some other day, if you don't mind.

She grabs his arm.

PROSTITUTE

For nothing. For nothing. I don't want any money.

She opens her purse and takes a wad of bills from it.

PROSTITUTE (CONT'D)

See, I'm rich!

She is trembling as if with fever. The FRIEND pulls his arm away and glares at her. Defeated, she walks away.

NARRATOR

(Disgusted)

Why did you do that?

FRIEND

I wanted to see how far down she would come. I've had them come down to two francs, but never to nothing. But her case can't count because she wasn't after money. She's a pathological case.

NARRATOR

I think that sort of sport is pretty cruel.

FRIEND

It's a disease. They are as if possessed by a beast. Did you know there is a new school of psychology that is returning to the old belief in possession?

NARRATOR

No.

FRIEND

That was the ancient psychology, too. The Romans, for example, thought of insatiable sexual appetite as due to possession by a wolf.

NARRATOR

I thought the billygoat was the symbol of sexual insatiability.

FRIEND

You're wrong. The word "wolf" is to be recognized in the Latin "vulva," and in the word "lupanar," or "brothel," "Lupus" being Latin for wolf. You know the Roman festival of the Lupercales? It would correspond to the French carnival and was characterized by a complete abandonment of morals.

NARRATOR

Wasn't "Lupercus" another name for the god Pan?

FRIEND

So it was, but the name means "the protector against the wolves." It had something to do with the nursing of Romulus and Remus by a she-wolf, but it has sexual significance too, shown by the fact that, at the sacrifice of goats during this festival, the women who wished to be fruitful allowed themselves to be beaten with bloody strips cut out of the goat's hide.

This talk is making the NARRATOR slightly nervous.

NARRATOR

I find those theories are usually built on too shallow a foundation. Besides, there are theories for which I don't care, no matter how good they are.

FRIEND

You mistake me. I have confirmation for all of these theories.

NARRATOR

Oh?

FRIEND

Yes.

NARRATOR

What?

FRIEND

Your friend Eliane, for instance, or that lust-starved prostitute for whom you felt such sympathy.

NARRATOR

How were they proof?

FRIEND

They acted as if possessed by--a beast, let us say. The beast of sexual desire.

NARRATOR

Oh, come now! Eliane was blind stinking drunk, for one thing. The prostitute probably was, too.

FRIEND

Possessed by "spirits," he?

NARRATOR

I suppose.

FRIEND

But what about--A spirit? The spirit
of the wolf, let us say?

NARRATOR

Oh, bosh!

Pause. The NARRATOR downs the rest of his drink. Meanwhile, the FRIEND reaches down and takes up his valise, opens it, and takes out a roll of paper--a decades-old manuscript, obviously--bound with a ribbon and extends it to the NARRATOR.

FRIEND

Here. Read this.

NARRATOR

What is it?

FRIEND

Further confirmation of my theory.

Pause. The NARRATOR takes the manuscript.

FRIEND (CONT'D)

It was written in the early Seventies
of the last century, during the time
of the Commune. It's a voluntary
brief written for the court-martial
of a young man named Bertrand Caillet,
a soldier in the National Guard.

NARRATOR

Who wrote it?

FRIEND

A former revolutionary and radical
pamphleteer, and afterwards a priest.
His name was Aymar Galliez, and he
was the only father that Bertrand
Caillet ever knew.

NARRATOR

An appeal for clemency?

FRIEND

On the contrary. A brief for the
prosecution.

NARRATOR

The prosecution?

FRIEND

Yes.

NARRATOR

This man wanted the full weight of the law to fall upon his son--well, his son for all intents and purposes?

FRIEND

Absolutely.

NARRATOR

Why?

FRIEND

(Smiles)

Read that, and you'll find out. It's not terribly long, only about twenty handwritten pages. Aymar Galliez hadn't much time to write it, and if I'm not mistaken, he planned for the brief to be much shorter, a plain and damning statement of the facts. But he got carried away and poured all of his passion and anger and fear and pity into it.

NARRATOR

And Bertrand Caillet--what was he charged with?

FRIEND

(Smiling again)

He was possessed by the same spirit that possessed that magnanimous prostitute, and your friend Eliane.

NARRATOR

What--desire?

FRIEND

A most terrible kind of desire. All in all, a case that lends much weight to my theory.

Pause. The NARRATOR stares at the manuscript for a long moment, then makes up his mind. He unties the ribbon and unfolds the pages, trying to smooth them out on the table.

FRIEND (CONT'D)

(Smiling ever broader)

I've hooked your interest, haven't I?

NARRATOR

Yes. You have.

FRIEND

I knew I would. But, I must confess, I have an ulterior motive for showing the manuscript to you.

NARRATOR

Oh?

FRIEND

Yes. You see, the basic story is told in that document, but so much else of it is missing. Details about the people involved, where they came from, what became of them, all of the things that could flesh out and confirm the story. I've only been able to find out one thing about the story--that the court-martial of Bertrand Caillet did take place.

NARRATOR

How did you learn about it?

FRIEND

I was doing research in the Bibliotheque Nationale on the subject we've been talking about, and--God bless the unknown librarian of decades ago who did this!--found this manuscript in a collection of documents relating to the Commune. The blessed librarian had cross-indexed the manuscript under the subject heading of--my special interest.

NARRATOR

And this is all you've been able to find out about the story?

FRIEND

Yes. I was able to find out that the court-martial for which that brief was written did take place. But I had the devil's own time finding confirmation of it in the Bibliotheque. Because, you see, the clerk and judges at Bertrand's court-martial misspelled his name--trust the law to be ignorant.

(MORE)

FRIEND (CONT'D)

His actual surname, at least according to Galliez, who should know, was Caillet--C-a-i-l-l-e-t. They spelled his name "Chaillet"--they added an "h" between the "c" and the "a."

NARRATOR

And you're hoping that I'll be so interested in this document that I'll abandon work on my thesis until I've scoured France from one end of the country to the other and found out all the details that I, as a trained historian, will find it easier to sniff out than you, a magazine editor and amateur anthropologist, would?

FRIEND

My friend, you're psychic.

NARRATOR

No.

Pause. He looks at the document.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

I came to Paris to finish my thesis. Not only because there are materials here that I can't find anywhere else, but because I needed to be by myself--with an ocean between me and my family and friends--where I could finally finish my thesis in peace. And hopefully go from being a starving graduate student to a reasonably well-paid professor.

FRIEND

So you'll temporarily abandon work on your thesis, and condemn yourself to a longer spell in penury?

Pause.

NARRATOR

Well--I'll have to read the manuscript first.

CUT TO:

INT. NARRATOR'S LIVING ROOM/STUDY--SAME AS BEFORE

The NARRATOR has removed the manuscript, and a typewritten copy of it, from his valise, and is flourishing the manuscript to his FRIEND and ELIANE.

NARRATOR

And I did read it. Read it? I devoured it--like a hungry wolf. And for the past month, I've done nothing but ferret out additional details of this story, trying to confirm it--flesh it out.

FRIEND

(Eagerly)
And you did find out more?

NARRATOR

(Smiling)
Yes. Much more.

FRIEND

You were able to find out what happened to Galliez? And Bertrand?

NARRATOR

Documents recording their deaths-- and much about what they did in life.

FRIEND

That's wonderful! It was so right of me to show that to you!

NARRATOR

Indeed it was. An additional month of starvation was a small price to pay for it.

ELIANE

What was it about this case that was so wonderful?

NARRATOR

Wonderful? Everything--and nothing.

ELIANE

Stop talking in riddles and give me a straight answer!

The NARRATOR and his FRIEND exchange knowing smiles.

NARRATOR

All right, Eliane. Just let me get all my documents in order.

He hands the manuscript to his FRIEND and lays the typewritten copy of it down on the floor. He then extracts various documents of varying degrees in length--some a simple sheet of paper, others many pages long--at different spots on the floor before them so that all are within easy reach. He speaks as he does this.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Forgive my manners, but I've got to know where everything is--have it within my grasp.

ELIANE

You still haven't told me what this is about.

NARRATOR

A man possessed by the spirit of the wolf.

ELIANE

Talk sense, man!

NARRATOR

I am. This Monsieur Bertrand Caillet was indeed possessed by the same desire that drove you into a stranger's arms last month.

ELIANE

I wasn't driven into his arms! I was driven home!

NARRATOR

We know.

ELIANE

To *my* home. To my hotel. That nice man paid for the ride and then was driven off in the taxi. I spent that night in my hotel room. *Alone.*

NARRATOR

Oh, dear. No victim that night?

FRIEND

(Smiling)

You weren't at least tempted to go prowling the night in search of another victim?

ELIANE rises.

ELIANE

You're all making fun of me. I'm leaving.

The NARRATOR raises his hand.

NARRATOR

Peace, Eliane! This story that I'm about to tell you is incredibly decadent and indecent and shocking.

This interests her, and she pauses.

ELIANE

Really?

NARRATOR

Yes. Go to a party in Greenwich Village and tell this story, and all of your radical Bohemian friends will get the vapors and faint like a bunch of schoolmarms.

ELIANE

(Really interested now)

Really?

NARRATOR

Yes.

Pause. She sits back down.

ELIANE

All right. I'll stay. But please get down to the basics and stop pussyfooting around.

FRIEND

Like a cat?

NARRATOR

More like a wolf, I'd say.

ELIANE rolls her eyes. The NARRATOR extracts the last item from his portmanteau--a thick typewritten manuscript bound in hardcovers.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

This is the fruit of all my labors. I spent three weeks researching this case, and then I came back here and typed this manuscript out in five days. I hardly slept or ate.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

It's only a rough draft, of course--
it'll need some polishing, to say
nothing of correcting all the
typographical errors--but I had it
bound so that I wouldn't lose any of
the pages. This is precious.

ELIANE

You mean you're going to spend all
night reading that thing to us?

NARRATOR

No, Eliane. Just paraphrasing its
contents. I'll read from it, of
course, and from the other documents,
including our friend Aymar Galliez's
brief, when it's appropriate, of
course.

ELIANE

Fair enough.

NARRATOR

Now, then--do either of you want
anything? A drink? Cigarettes? A
snack?

FRIEND

No, I'm fine.

ELIANE

I'm stuffed.

FRIEND

A minute ago, you said you were
starving.

ELIANE

I'm not bored anymore.

FRIEND

Ah. Your appetite's been satisfied,
huh?

The two men grin at her, and she scowls back. The NARRATOR
opens his bound manuscript.

NARRATOR

All right, then--here is the story.
But--where shall I begin my tale?
This one has neither beginning nor
end, but only a perpetual unfolding.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

A multi-petaled blossom of strange botany. I promised Eliane that I'd get right down to the facts. But I'm afraid that I have to begin this story with a digression. But it's absolutely necessary that I do that. The rest of the story won't make sense without it. Is that all right, Eliane?

ELIANE

Of course, as long as it has a juicy payoff.

NARRATOR

Oh, this story is juicy all right. Juicy with--all the vital fluids of life.

ELIANE shivers and giggles.

ELIANE

Sounds positively pornographic.

NARRATOR

If only it were that innocent. Well, then--

CUT TO:

EXT. VALLEY IN GRENOBLE REGION--THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY--DAY

We see a pretty, medieval vista--a valley in the Grenoble region of France with mountains all around, and two modest-sized medieval castles, one on either side of a small stream.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

--in the early seventeenth century, in a mountainous region twenty-five miles southwest of Grenoble, there existed two castles, one on either side of a little stream called "le Pit." The stream bed is now dry, and the castles are now empty--for reasons that will become obvious shortly. One castle was called Pitaval, and the other, Pitamont.

EXT. CLEARING IN THE VALLEY--DAY

Two small groups of armed men--about five or six PITAVALS and an equal number of PITAMONTS--are engaged in armed combat with each other. Some men on both sides are wounded, others killed.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

As far back as history can recall,
the castles of Pitaval and Pitamont,
though the families were offshoots
of one original house, were at
constant war with each other.

EXT. PANORAMIC SHOT OF THE VALLEY--DAY

The camera pans across a lush and fertile valley, with little
pig farms and rows of grape trees.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In the early days, the two houses
had divided between them an extensive
and fertile territory.

EXT. PANORAMIC SHOT--THE SAME--DAY

Now the valley is pretty much a desolate wasteland.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But the constant warfare between the
two houses eventually proved too
much for the local peasantry. They
abandoned their farms and moved on.
There was still free land in Europe
at this time, so why stay where life
was insecure?

MONTAGE--INT. OFFICE IN BANK--AVIGNON--DAY

In a succession of brief shots, we see various male PITAVALS
and PITAMONTS wrangling with the HEAD BANKER and glumly
signing a document, while the BANKER looks on contentedly.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

As the estates began to yield less
and less, the Pitavals and the
Pitamonts, pressed for money to carry
on their feud, began to make trips
to Avignon, where the great banking
firm of the Datinis had its head
office. Bit by bit, they mortgaged
what they had. The interest piled
up.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS ON THE ROAD TO GRENOBLE--NIGHT

Two PITAVALS ambush a wandering PITAMONT, stab him to death,
and take his money.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Once in a while, the Pitavals would rob the Pitamonts and pay up some of what they owed to Datini.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS ON THE ROAD TO GRENOBLE--NIGHT

The action of the previous scene is repeated, but this time to PITAMONTS are the aggressors, and a wandering PITAVAL the victim.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Again, it was the turn of the Pitamonts to stage a clever coup, and find themselves momentarily in cash.

EXT. COURTYARD PITAVAL CASTLE--EVENING

Jacob Pitamont, bearded and wearing the robes of a mendicant friar, walks into the courtyard of the Pitaval Castle and speaks with a MAIDSERVANT.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

One night, a begging friar found hospitality in the Pitaval castle.

INT. DINING HALL PITAVAL CASTLE--EVENING

Jacob Pitamont, in disguise, is seated at the great table in the dining hall with many PITAVALS, both male and female, enjoying a great feast. The PITAVAL WOMEN listen to him attentively, and perhaps a little lustily, as he speaks.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The miserable monk entertained the ladies with tales of the land of Italy, whence he had just come.

INT. BEDROOM PITAVAL CASTLE--NIGHT

Jacob Pitamont, alone in a guest bedroom, takes a fold from a fold of his robe.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But when he was alone in the guest bedroom where he had been placed for the night, the monk drew a long, sharp dagger from the folds of his cowl.

INT. HALLWAY PITAVAL CASTLE--NIGHT

Jacob Pitamont, dagger in hand, creeps silently down a hallway of the castle.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

For he was a Pitamont, disguised by a beard grown in secret, and now was free in the Pitaval castle at night.

INT. ANOTHER BEDROOM PITAVAL CASTLE--NIGHT

Jacob Pitamont gets down on his hands and knees and creeps toward the bed where the FIRST MURDER VICTIM, a man, and the SECOND MURDER VICTIM, a woman, lie sleeping.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

He reached the first bedroom where Pitavals lay sleeping.

The murderer walks up to the bed (the bed curtains have been left open), rises to his feet, raises his dagger over his FIRST MURDER VICTIM, takes careful aim, and brings it down into the man's heart. The FIRST MURDER VICTIM's body jerks, and is still. The only SOUND with hear is a sickening squishy sound. Then the SECOND MURDER VICTIM, the woman, stirs.

SECOND MURDER VICTIM

(Sleepily)

What is it, Robert?

Jacob Pitamont quickly, silently runs over to the other side of the bed and brings down his dagger into the SECOND MURDER VICTIM's throat. She lets out a brief gasp, then a sickening gurgling sound that increases for a moment as the murderer withdraws his dagger. Then she is still, and all is silent.

INT. HALLWAY PITAVAL CASTLE--NIGHT

As Jacob Pitamont creeps down the hall, wiping his bloody dagger on his robe, his foot catches in a crack between two of the stone flags on the floor. He falls to the floor with a loud thud, and his dagger skips noisily across the floor.

INT. ABANDONED WELL--DAY

Jacob Pitamont finds himself sitting naked in an old and abandoned well in almost total darkness. Fifteen or twenty feet above is the well's water hole. Iron bars have been built across the water hole, and a dome constructed over the barred water hole. In the center of the dome is a small circular hole for ventilation.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

For his crime, the murderous friar-- whose real name was Jacob Pitamont-- was sealed up alive in an old, disused well.

INT. THE SAME--DAYS LATER--DAY

Jacob Pitamont watches passively as a MANSERVANT stands on the bars over the water hole--he has entered the dome through a door built in its side--and drops a hunk of meat through the grill.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Three times a week, a servant dropped a heavy chunk of meat through the aperture.

The MANSERVANT passes out of sight. We hear the SOUND of the door in the dome slamming shut. Ravenously, Jacob Pitamont, whose beard is longer than ever and whose condition is filthy and disheveled, springs upon the hunk of meat and begins to wolf it down like an animal.

INT. THE SAME--MUCH LATER--DAY

Jacob Pitamont, several decades older and now looking more like a beast than a man, sits in his own excrement in the well.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In his underground cell, there was never a change of temperature. Outside the winter storms might howl, or summer thunderstorms beat upon a parched earth. Within his prison it was forever cool, moist, and dark. Nothing matter to him now but food. He had grown to be hungry at the same hour three times a week, and if the meat was late in being cast in, he would bark and bay like a dog.

He does just that.

EXT. COURTYARD PITAVAL CASTLE--DAY

A new generation of PITAVALS, both male and female, are clustered in the courtyard of their castle, ordering their SERVANTS about as they move the Pitavals' remaining belongings out of the castle and pack them into bags, or place them on horse carts.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Then, one day, full fifty years after Jacob Pitamont tried to slaughter every last living Pitaval, the Datini banking firm, which had not collected a goat of the money the Pitavals owed it in years, repossessed the

(MORE)

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 castle, and the remnants of the once
 proud and prodigious family were
 forced to leave their ancestral home.

Suddenly, a fierce HOWLING pierces through the air. A
 MAIDSERVANT drops the bundle of clothes she is carrying and
 screams. The NEW PITAVAL MASTER, standing nearby, laughs.

NEW PITAVAL MASTER
 Don't be frightened. It's only a
 wolf that we keep in a pit in the
 courtyard. Why don't you go to the
 kitchen and fetch him a piece of
 meat?

(Pause)

Do we have any rat poison? Then
 smear some on the meat, and we shall
 be rid of a useless pet.

EXT. THE SAME--A SHORT TIME LATER

The MAIDSERVANT walks up to the NEW PITAVAL MASTER.

MAIDSERVANT
 I have done as you asked, my lord.

NEW PITAVAL MASTER
 Is the wolf dead?

MAIDSERVANT
 I would assume so, my lord. It
 stopped howling as soon as I dropped
 the meat through the grate. I
 listened and heard it eating
 vigorously for a moment. Then it
 let out these horrible gagging sounds
 for another moment and then--all was
 still.

The NEW PITAVAL MASTER pinches the MAIDSERVANT's cheeks.

NEW PITAVAL MASTER
 Excellent work, my dear.

The MAIDSERVANT smiles nervously, curtsies, and walks away.

Suddenly the MASTER sees an OLD PITAMONT WOMAN walking quickly
 toward him.

NEW PITAVAL MASTER (CONT'D)
 Well, well! A member of our old
 friends, the Pitamonts! Come to
 gloat at our misfortune, eh?

The OLD PITAMONT WOMAN cries out and drops to her knees, throwing her arms around the MASTER's legs.

OLD PITAMONT WOMAN

Sir, for fifty years we have wondered what your kinfolk did to my brother Jacob. Of all those who fell in the long war between our families, he is the only one whose fate is unknown. He was a good boy, and a dear brother-- I still miss him so. Please, in the name of the Blessed Virgin, you will not be so cruel as to leave this land and not tell me where my poor Jacob lies buried?

The NEW PITAVAL MASTER smiles wickedly. Pause; then he takes a key from his pocket and extends it to the OLD PITAMONT WOMAN.

NEW PITAVAL MASTER

How could I be so cruel? Here is the key to the vault in which he lies buried. No king ever had a more fitting tomb. Nor monk, either. In the rear courtyard you will find a door--a door in the side of a small dome--to which this key fits.

Smiling, the OLD PITAMONT WOMAN takes the key and clutches it to her bosom.

OLD PITAMONT WOMAN

Oh, God bless you, sir! God bless you!

INT. NARRATOR'S LIVING ROOM/STUDY--SAME AS BEFORE

The NARRATOR, his FRIEND, and ELIANE are seated as before. ELIANE shudders.

ELIANE

How horrid! What beastly people!

NARRATOR

Yes--and I wish I could say that their line had passed from the face of the earth. In fact, records of any Pitavals in the following centuries are scarce. But their line endured. We will meet them again in this story--and recognize them, despite their disguises.

(Pause)

And now, on to more modern times.

INT. LIVING ROOM--MADAME DIDIER'S APARTMENT--PARIS--EARLY
1850S--DAY

MADAME DIDIER, a handsome, somewhat wealthy, and rather forceful widow in her early fifties, sits in an armchair in the living room of her apartment, working on her embroidery. On the window sills sits AYMAR GALLIEZ, here a young man in his early twenties.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In the early 1850s, in Paris, there dwelt a widow by the name of Madame Didier. Her late husband had left her well situated, and she had just moved to one of the fine new apartment houses on the Boulevard Beaumarchais, not far from the Boulevard des Filles-du-Calvaire. She dwelt pretty much alone, except for the frequent visits of a nephew, a young man who had been badly wounded in the street fighting in February of 1848 and now walked with a slight limp. Since then, he had devoted himself to pamphleteering in support of Napoleon--not the original Napoleon Bonaparte, of course, but the current example of that line. This man was our old friend and brief-writer, Aymar Galliez. The new Napoleon had turned out to be increasingly conservative and imperialistic, and Aymar wasn't certain whether to continue following his leader or go his own way. Still, he retained his deep hatred of the Church and the aristocracy.

Suddenly the door opens and JOSEPHINE, a young girl around fourteen years of age, enters bearing a tea tray and sets it down on the table before MADAME DIDIER, who sets down her embroidery.

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

Madame Didier had taken into her house a young girl of about thirteen or fourteen named Josephine, an orphan from her own--that is, Madame Didier's--home village.

JOSEPHINE

Your tea, Madame.

MADAME DIDIER

Thank you, Josephine. Would you care for some tea, nephew?

AYMAR

No thank you, auntie.

He looks out the window.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

I say, it's getting overcast. Is it going to rain?

MADAME DIDIER

Do you think so?

Lightning flashes outside. Seconds later comes the SOUND of thunder.

MADAME DIDIER (CONT'D)

My God. And I have not a drop of holy water in the house!

AYMAR

(Laughing)

Holy water? Good heavens, you don't still practice that nonsense, do you?

MADAME DIDIER

You can save your sarcasm for your pamphlets, my friend. I've always sprinkled holy water about when a thunderstorm threatened. Do you wish us all to be struck by lightning? But whom can I send to fetch some? Françoise is out.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I should add that Françoise was the cook, and the only other person of the household.

MADAME DIDIER

Josephine, go to the church in the next street over and fetch some holy water, please.

JOSEPHINE

I will, madame.

MADAME DIDIER

Are you sure you know how to get there?

JOSEPHINE

Yes, madame.

MADAME DIDIER

Very well, then. Go now and fetch some.

JOSEPHINE

Yes, madame.

JOSEPHINE curtsies and exits. There is another round of lightning and thunder.

MADAME DIDIER

And hurry, please!

EXT. ADJOINING STREET--MOMENTS LATER

It has begun to rain--a true downpour--and JOSEPHINE, already soaked to the skin, stumbles down the street, sees the door to a modest-sized church, and hurries inside.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But as soon as Josephine left the house, it began to rain. And she didn't know the way to the church as well as she had claimed, and so it was some time before she got there, and by then, of course, she was soaked to the skin.

INT. CHURCH VESTRY--CONTINUOUS

JOSEPHINE enters the vestry of the church and tries to shake off some of the water drenching her skin.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Her garments clung to her, revealing her slender feminine forms. Her breasts had but begun to grow. They caused her light dress to swell up. The nipples were hard with chill and chafing.

The camera lingers over JOSEPHINE's form, showing us proof of the narrator's words.

FATHER PITAMONT, a vigorous-looking man in his late forties or early fifties, enters the vestry and rubs his hands together eagerly. There is one oddity to his appearance--his eyebrows meet above his nose, giving him one long continuous brow.

FATHER PITAMONT

What is it, my little girl?

JOSEPHINE freezes, and stares nervously at the priest, unable to speak.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Unfortunately for Josephine, the priest who officiated at this church was named Pitamont.

FATHER PITAMONT

Why, you are chilled. Come and warm yourself up with a glass of wine.

INT. SACRISTY--MINUTES LATER

FATHER PITAMONT is kissing and fondling JOSEPHINE, who is dazed with wine, confusion, and chill. On a nearby table sit a nearly-empty body of sacramental wine, and two large, nearly-empty glasses.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Dazed and dizzied, she permitted him to fondle her and press her close to his cassock.

FATHER PITAMONT leads JOSEPHINE to the couch and pulls her down upon it.

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

She permitted him to lead her to the couch and do with her as he pleased.

INT. LIVING ROOM--MADAME DIDIER'S APARTMENT--LATER

MADAME DIDIER sits in her chair embroidering. AYMAR sits in the window reading a book. The storm rages outside. Suddenly the door opens and JOSEPHINE, soaked and disheveled, stumbles into the room and stares round wide-eyed. She pulls down her lower lips with one finger.

MADAME DIDIER

Why, what is the matter with you, Josephine?

AYMAR and MADAME DIDIER rise and lead JOSEPHINE over the couch. She begins to tremble and keeps trying, unsuccessfully, to speak.

MADAME DIDIER (CONT'D)

Josephine, what is the matter?

(Pause)

Come, Josephine, don't be stubborn. Answer me!

AYMAR

Come now, my dear aunt. Give the little girl a chance.

JOSEPHINE
 Father--Father--

MADAME DIDIER
 Who? Father Pitamont?

JOSEPHINE nods.

MADAME DIDIER (CONT'D)
 What about him?

JOSEPHINE
 He--he--

AYMAR
 What? Did he do something to you,
 Josephine?

She nods again.

AYMAR (CONT'D)
 What did he do?

JOSEPHINE
 He--he did--what Françoise said I--
 shouldn't let a man do--to me.

She breaks down and sobs.

MADAME DIDIER is mute with shock. AYMAR takes the news grimly.

AYMAR
 So that's your Father Pitamont. A
 fine Christian, he is.

INT. NARRATOR'S LIVING ROOM--SAME AS BEFORE

NARRATOR
 Soon, it turned out that Josephine was pregnant. Meanwhile, the good Father Pitamont--in whose veins the wolfish blood of his ancestors ran strong--found that he couldn't keep his lust for young female flesh under control. A scandal ensued, and his superiors gave him a choice--he could either quit the priesthood, or go on a long retreat with some Trappist monks and take a vow of silence. He chose instead to disappear, taking with him some valuable articles belonging to his church.

FRIEND

Not much of an improvement on his
ancestors, was he?

NARRATOR

Not at all.

ELIANE

What happened to Josephine?

NARRATOR

Well, when Madame Didier first learned
of Josephine's condition, she
considered dismissing her and sending
her back to their mutual home village.
But Madame Didier had a very good
name in her native village, and she
didn't want it besmirched with
scandal. And besides, she was a
good Christian at heart, and felt
pity for Josephine's plight. So she
allowed Josephine to stay in her
home until she could decide what to
do with the girl and her coming child
on a permanent basis.

INT. JOSEPHINE'S BEDROOM--DAY

JOSEPHINE, now about halfway through her pregnancy, is
lounging in bed. FRANCOISE, the household cook, a no-nonsense
but compassionate woman in her mid- to late sixties, is
serving her breakfast and tea in bed.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She was no longer a servant in Madame
Didier's household, but a full-
fledged, pampered member of the
household.

JOSEPHINE smiles contentedly at the treatment she is
receiving.

JOSEPHINE

Thank you, Françoise.

EXT. ALLEYWAY OFF THE BOULEVARD BEAUMARCHAIS--NIGHT

A YOUNG MAN is lying on the ground of the alleyway, and a
very pregnant JOSEPHINE is straddling him. The two are making
noisy, vigorous love.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But Josephine began to act very
strangely.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 This formerly chaste and timid young girl suddenly began throwing herself at every man who crossed her path.

INT. JOSEPHINE'S BEDROOM--DAY

JOSEPHINE is lying in bed. MADAME DIDIER is seated on the edge of the bed.

MADAME DIDIER
 Oh, child, why do you act this way?

JOSEPHINE
 I like it so, madame. Must I really stop? I've tried very hard not to do it, but I can't stop myself. At home I saw all the animals do it, and no one ever stopped them.

MADAME DIDIER
 But Josephine, my child, we are not animals.
 (Brief pause)
 You are certain that Father Pitamont was the first man to do it to you?

JOSEPHINE
 Yes, madame.

MADAME DIDIER
 What shall we do with you now?

Long pause while MADAME DIDIER thinks this over.

JOSEPHINE
 Francoise says you will send me away because I am bad. Don't send me away!

MADAME DIDIER
 I shall find a nice home for you.

INT. OFFICE--WAYWARD GIRLS' HOME--DAY

MADAME DIDIER and MADAME KARDEC, the proprietress of the establishment, are seated in MADAME KARDEC's office. They rise and shake hands.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 So Madame Didier had Josephine sent to the Duchess of Angouleme's home for wayward girls, which was run by a certain Madame Kardec.

INT. JOSEPHINE'S ROOM IN GIRL'S HOME--DAY

JOSEPHINE, now heavily pregnant, is lying in bed in her room at the establishment, looking bored and anxious.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Josephine waited out her pregnancy there. The establishment wasn't far from Madame Didier's apartment, and every second day or so, Madame Didier and Aymar sent Francoise to see her.

INT. LIVING ROOM--MADAME DIDIER'S APARTMENT--DAY

MADAME DIDIER is sitting in her chair, embroidering. AYMAR sits on the couch, reading a paper. Suddenly, MADAME DIDIER speaks.

MADAME DIDIER

You know, I am beginning to be worried.

AYMAR

What about?

MADAME DIDIER

Of course, you will think me superstitious.

AYMAR

(Smiling)

You? Superstitious? Never!

MADAME DIDIER

Now don't make fun, Aymar. I have seen a good deal more of the world than you have.

(Brief pause)

Do you believe in Christmas?

AYMAR

Of course I do. Everybody believes that Christmas comes on the twenty-fifth of this month, and they are, one and all, absolutely correct.

MADAME DIDIER

If you will stop your silly jesting, I'll go on. Do you believe that the animal world is conscious of the coming of Christmas?

AYMAR

(Smiling again)

Are you going to tell me that the cattle kneel in their stalls on Christmas night?

MADAME DIDIER

That is precisely what I am going to tell you. And more, that I have seen it with my own eyes.

AYMAR

Of course you have seen it. Anyone going into a stable on any night of the year can see some, or all, of the cattle kneeling.

MADAME DIDIER

I knew you were going to say that. But it isn't true.

AYMAR

And that is why you are worried?

MADAME DIDIER

No, of course not. What worries me is that Josephine is about to be delivered, and like as not, it may be at the very hour of Our Lord's birth.

AYMAR

Why should that distress you?

MADAME DIDIER

I knew a man who came to no good end, and it had always been said of him that he was doomed from the beginning, for he had been born on Christmas Eve.

AYMAR

(Bitterly)

And naturally, everybody did his little bit to make it come true.

MADAME DIDIER

And in our village and in other villages where the people are Godfearing, the wives stay away from their husbands during most of the month of March and a week or so of the month of April, in order that

(MORE)

MADAME DIDIER (CONT'D)

they may not have children born on that day.

(Brief pause)

When people believe in a thing, they like to show their respect for it. Those who believe in the gentle and beautiful life of Christ like to honor Him. Now tell me, can they practice any finer act of homage than the renunciation of carnal conception during that period when the Virgin Mary conceived immaculately?

AYMAR

The notion is not lacking in beauty.

MADAME DIDIER

Aymar, my dear nephew, isn't it already evil enough that Josephine should bear the child of a priest? And then to add to this sad birth the characteristic of being a mockery of the birth of Christ?

AYMAR

(Irritable because
he's moved by her
words)

That's a Mother Goose story.

MADAME DIDIER

In my opinion, Josephine was an innocent little girl, but when the devil tempted Father Pitamont, he did not spare her. The devil is in her now. She is dangerous.

AYMAR

Nonsense!

AYMAR throws down his paper and stalks out of the room.
MADAME DIDIER stares into space, worried, and heaves a little sigh.

INT. JOSEPHINE'S ROOM IN GIRL'S HOME--NIGHT

MADAME KARDEC and a MIDWIFE are standing by the bedside as JOSEPHINE, looking tired but happy, suckles BABY BERTRAND.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But, as Fate would have it, Josephine did deliver her baby late on Christmas
(MORE)

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

Eve. It was a scrawny little baby, but healthy and strong. But there was one thing most unusual about it.

AYMAR slowly approaches the bed and looks at the baby. His eyes widen in shock, and he starts back.

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

The healthy baby boy was covered all over with hair. Aymar thought that it looked more like a spider or a monkey than a human child.

We see that this is true.

(This effect can be produced by computer enhancement.)

INT. LIVING ROOM--MADAME DIDIER'S APARTMENT--DAY

MADAME DIDIER and JOSEPHINE are seated next to each other on the couch in her living room.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Soon, Josephine and her tiny, hair son returned to Madame Didier's apartment.

MADAME DIDIER

Josephine, I shall let you have your choice. You may go back to your village, or you may stay here.

JOSEPHINE

I suppose that if I went home, people would laugh at me for having a baby, wouldn't they?

MADAME DIDIER

They needn't know that you have had a baby, because we shall send the child to be taken care of in Brittany.

JOSEPHINE

Then I would rather stay here, because I want to be with my baby.

MADAME DIDIER

But you can't keep your baby here, either. We can't have it here in the house.

JOSEPHINE

Then I shall go back home with the baby.

MADAME DIDIER

But, child, how will you earn a living? What will you say to people when they ask you how you happened to have a baby?

JOSEPHINE

Why, madame, I shall tell them the truth.

Long pause as MADAME DIDIER contemplates this horrifying possibility.

MADAME DIDIER

Well, for the moment, you may stay here.

JOSEPHINE lets out a little squeal of delight and embraces MADAME DIDIER.

INT. JOSEPHINE'S BEDROOM--VARIOUS TIMES--MONTAGE

As the NARRATOR speaks, we see various shots of BABY BERTRAND being fed, changed, fussed over, crawling across the floor, or simply lying in his crib. (Some, but not all, of these brief scenes illustrate the narrator's words.) The camera notes--but does not have to emphasize--that his eyebrows meet above his nose and that he has hair on the palms of his hands. The adults in his life--FRANCOISE, JOSEPHINE, MADAME DIDIER, and AYMAR--interact with him in these brief scenes, or simply stand to one side and watch. MADAME DIDIER often watches him with concern.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Little Bertrand was truly a model baby. He never cried. At night he slept curled up in a most delightful manner. When awake, between his long naps during the day, he responded cheerfully to those who bent over his cradle and talked to him. His whole face would break into a puckered smile. His soft brown eyes would glisten with amusement. His health was equal to his spirits. He filled his belly full at his mother's breast. He grew at a fine rate, and teethed without any trouble. Surely no one could have wished for a better child.

INT. LIVING ROOM--MADAME DIDIER'S APARTMENT--EVENING

MADAME DIDIER and AYMAR are standing throughout this conversation.

MADAME DIDIER

Aymar, I am more than ever certain that Bertrand is an unusual child.

AYMAR

You mean in the fact that he never cries? He might be dumb.

MADAME DIDIER

Yes, he may be dumb. We shan't know until a few months from now, as to that. Personally, I think he will turn out normal in that respect.

AYMAR

Then what are you afraid of?

MADAME DIDIER

Have you ever noticed his eyes?

AYMAR

Yes, of course. They are very fine eyes, I should say.

MADAME DIDIER

Well, I didn't mean his eyes so much as his eyebrows. They are very full, and join together across the nose.

AYMAR

And what do you deduce from that?

MADAME DIDIER

In our part of the country, that was a sign of a low nature.

AYMAR

Another superstition. It might be simply inheritance.

MADAME DIDIER

Now that you remind me of it, Father Pitamont did have the same eyebrows.

AYMAR

Just as I said. Like father, like son.

MADAME DIDIER

That's precisely it.

(Pause; softly)

But I also see--a much more fearful matter.

(MORE)

MADAME DIDIER (CONT'D)

So rare that I myself have never seen it yet, though I have heard old people speak of it as a sign--the most rare and most terrible of all signs that mark a soul belonging to the Devil.

She falls silent.

AYMAR

Well?

MADAME DIDIER

Sometimes, so my grandmother used to say, men come to the village fair who have never been seen before and never will be seen again. They are men from the sea and are looking for prey to drag down into their underwater dwellings. They can be recognized by the fact that the hems of their clothes are always slightly moist and their hands are often webbed. Their teeth are very sharp and pointed. Sometimes they are wolves from the mountains. Then they can be recognized by the hair that grows on the palms of their hands.

(Pause)

Bertrand has hair on the palms of his hands.

INT. THE SAME--SEVERAL MONTHS LATER--DAY

MADAME DIDIER is sitting in a chair near the window. AYMAR sits across from her. It is a fine spring day.

AYMAR

You seem so much better today, auntie.

MADAME DIDIER

Yes, I do think I'm over my illness now.

AYMAR

It was very foolish of you to go walking in the rain like that.

MADAME DIDIER

Yes, it was. I've reproached myself over and over for that.

Suddenly, a bizarre and chilling SOUND fills the apartment-- somewhat like the howling of a dog, but it is mixed with sobs and comes out in a choked manner. AYMAR and his aunt are shocked.

AYMAR

What the deuce is that?

JOSEPHINE comes running in.

JOSEPHINE

Madame, it's Bertrand! He must be dreadfully ill. Oh, do send for a doctor quick!

INT. ENTRANCEWAY OF MADAME DIDIER'S APARTMENT--SHORTLY THEREAFTER

FRANCOISE lets DOCTOR ROBYOT into the apartment. The strange howling continues. DOCTOR ROBYOT scowls.

DOCTOR ROBYOT

I don't approve of dogs in the houses of my patients.

FRANCOISE

Yes, sir.

MADAME DIDIER walks up.

DOCTOR ROBYOT

Ah, the patient is looking exceptionally well today. Then why did you summon me?

MADAME DIDIER

I am not the patient today, but Madame Caillet's baby, who seems to be suffering terribly. Don't you hear him?

DOCTOR ROBYOT is startled that a human child, not a dog, is making the noise.

INT. LIVING ROOM--MADAME DIDIER'S APARTMENT--MINUTES LATER

MADAME DIDIER and AYMAR are waiting in the living room. DOCTOR ROBYOT enters, followed by FRANCOISE.

DOCTOR ROBYOT

I can find nothing wrong with the little lad. On the contrary, he seems fit in every way. A little fright or hysteria, perhaps. Did anyone scare him?

MADAME DIDIER

No, doctor.

DOCTOR ROBYOT

Well, I'll write out a prescription
for a soothing dose that will quiet
him.

MADAME DIDIER

Excellent, doctor.

INT. MADAME DIDIER'S BEDROOM--NIGHT

MADAME DIDIER, wearing a nightgown, is being helped into bed
by AYMAR.

MADAME DIDIER

You've been a good son to me, Aymar.
I may be just your aunt, but I really
look upon you as my own son.

AYMAR

I feel the same way, auntie.

She is tucked in.

MADAME DIDIER

There. I think I'll . . .

Suddenly the strange howling begins again.

MADAME DIDIER (CONT'D)

Oh! Will he never stop?

AYMAR

Well, he did stop for a long while,
auntie, after Françoise gave him the
medicine the doctor prescribed.

MADAME DIDIER

Yes.

(Pause)

I've been thinking about scenes from
the past, Aymar. About you and I.
Do you ever think about that?

AYMAR

Oh, yes.

MADAME DIDIER

What stands out in your mind?

AYMAR

I have a dim recollection of something
about a hedgehog. What was that?

MADAME DIDIER

Oh, that was very funny.

She takes his hand

MADAME DIDIER (CONT'D)

You had always wanted a hedgehog and we would not let you keep one. Then one summer when we came back to our country home, we found the house overrun with cockroaches. That was when we had that lazy caretaker and his drunken wife. Do you remember them?

AYMAR

Not very well. Was I four years old then?

As MADAME DIDIER speaks the following lines, the camera moves in for a CLOSE UP of AYMAR. The howling is growing in intensity and volume, and he is increasingly paying attention to it, not to his aunt's words.

MADAME DIDIER

Within a month or two of five, I think. Oh, yes, I recall now distinctly when you had your fifth birthday. It was that very summer. But let me tell you about the hedgehog. You had been bothering your mother for a pet hedgehog. God only knows where you conceived the notion. Anyhow, when we came out to our house and found the place just crawling with bugs, you claimed the hedgehogs would eat them all up. Of course we didn't believe you, but you were so insistent. But if we hadn't sent it out into the garden again, I think the cockroaches would have eaten it up, for certainly it never touched a single one of them. Yes, I remember, too, that . . .

Her voice trails off, but AYMAR, absorbed in the howling, does not notice for a moment. Suddenly the howling stops. Then he looks again at his aunt, lying still and peaceful on her bed, as though sleeping. Her limp hand falls out of his. He realizes what has happened.

INT. HALLWAY--A MINUTE LATER

AYMAR comes out of his aunt's bedroom and gently closes the door behind him.

JOSEPHINE is in the hallway as well, and walks up to him.

JOSEPHINE

I was just going to give him another dose, when stopped. He's all right now. I don't know what to make of it, sir. I only hope he didn't wake Madame from her sleep.

AYMAR

(Dully)

No. Madame is dead.

INT. LIVING ROOM--MADAME DIDIER'S APARTMENT--DAY

LE PELLETIER, a short and swarthy lawyer with a ruffled, careless appearance, is sitting in a chair across from AYMAR, who is seated on the sofa. As LE PELLETIER speaks, he consults the document he is holding.

LE PELLETIER

And your aunt left all of her property to you, with two provisions. You must continue to take care of Françoise and Josephine and little Bertrand, and you must study to become a priest and take Holy Orders.

(Smiling)

So the great anti-clericalist is going to become a priest, eh?

AYMAR

(Shocked)

How could my aunt have been so cruel? She knew my tastes.

LE PELLETIER

Don't despair. There may be ways around that last provision. There is no time limit on this will. You may, if you like, draw out your studies for the priesthood from now until doomsday. And you don't have me to thank for that. True to my profession, I warned your aunt that it was useless to make out a will that specified no forfeiture for violation of its provisions. She refused to consider the possibility that you might not care to follow her last wishes. "He will do what I want him to do," she answered. The whole thing was most irregular and charming. You are really free to do as you please.

AYMAR thinks this over. Gradually, his attitude becomes more thoughtful.

AYMAR

What do you think of religion? I mean, what, for example, do you think of--an afterlife?

LE PELLETIER smiles and takes out his watch.

LE PELLETIER

Look here. Here's my watch. If I wind it, it marks time. It exists. It is alive. If the spring breaks, it stops. It no longer marks the hour. It is dead. Time doesn't exist for it. Same with you when your mainspring is gone.

AYMAR

And nothing after that?

LE PELLETIER

Nothing, and lucky for us that that's so.

(Pause; sympathetically)

You have allowed your grief to get the better of you.

Pause. AYMAR does some more thinking.

AYMAR

Do you believe that a dog can sense when death is approaching one of the inmates of the house, and that he will then howl--howl fit to break your heart?

LE PELLETIER

What are you driving at?

AYMAR

Frankly, something of the sort happened here at my aunt's death, and has left me shuddering still.

LE PELLETIER

Nerves, just nerves. You will get over it.

EXT. ADJOINING STREET--DAY

AYMAR slowly approaches the modest-sized church that JOSEPHINE went to on that fateful day.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And as a matter of fact, Aymar did get over it. Summer came, and Josephine, Françoise, and the baby went out to Madame Didier's property. Aymar was to follow just as soon as he could dispose of the apartment in the city--and decide upon another important matter, as well.

INT. SANCTUARY--A MINUTE LATER

AYMAR walks down the main aisle of the church. A PRIEST walks toward him.

AYMAR

Father, may I speak to you for a while?

PRIEST

Do you wish to confess?

AYMAR

No, no. Just a few questions I'd like to ask.

INT. THE SAME--MINUTES LATER

AYMAR and the PRIEST are talking, but we cannot hear what they are saying while the NARRATOR is talking.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And so Aymar plied the priest with questions, all of which the priest answered promptly. Aymar quickly grew more and more willing to become a part of this vast organization whose history was greater than that of any country.

AYMAR

So, if I do want to become a priest, what shall I do first?

The PRIEST shakes his head.

PRIEST

Not you.

AYMAR

But I do want to become a priest. Hitherto, I have been hostile to the Church, but you have explained much to me.

The PRIEST shakes his head again.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

You think that my resolution will not last? Perhaps you are right. And still I mean to prepare myself for ordination. In fact, I must.

PRIEST

(Softly)

You don't understand. You limp. You cannot celebrate Mass if you're physically defective.

Silence. AYMAR is devastated.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

Wait a moment. There's a man you can go see--an advocate named Sgambati, Pierre-Paul Sgambati. He can do many things. Secure permission for a bald priest to wear a wig while saying Mass, for a priest to invest his personal fortune for profit, and so forth. It will cost you heavy--business with Rome always does. But you may secure what you want.

AYMAR

Why, that's ridiculous. Shameful!

The PRIEST says something in reply to AYMAR, but we cannot hear it over the NARRATOR's voice.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Aymar decided to drop the matter for the time being. Living and dead, sacred and profane, all were amenable to money and guile. Nevertheless, he managed to dispose of his aunt's apartment, and then joined the two women and the child at his aunt's country home--

EXT. PANORAMIC SHOT OF MONT D'ARCY--DAY

The camera PANS around for a panoramic view of the little village of Mont d'Arcy.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

--in the little village of Mont d'Arcy on the Yonne River. If you go there today, you may perhaps still hear tales of great wolf-hunts.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL JUST OUTSIDE MONT D'ARCY--EARLY EVENING

BRAMOND, the gamekeeper, is examining the bodies of two slain lambs lying beside the forest trail. One has had its throat torn out but is otherwise untouched, while the other has been dismembered and the pieces of it lay scattered around.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It was Bramond, the gamekeeper, who first came upon traces of the wolf.

(Pause)

The last wolf sighted in that region had been slain over twenty years before.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE--THE NEXT DAY

BRAMOND is standing before the MAYOR in his office. The MAYOR is very angry.

MAYOR

Get on the job, Bramond, and have those wolves dead within twenty-four hours.

BRAMOND

Yes, Mr. Mayor, but--

MAYOR

No, not a minute more than twenty-four hours! Is that clear?

BRAMOND

Yes, sir.

EXT. FOREST FEN--NIGHT

BRAMOND, rifle at the ready, is searching through a fen in the forest. The ground is covered with heath and fern and dotted with pools of stagnant water. Near the pools grow masses of flag and bulrushes.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Of course, Bramond did not find and kill the wolf, or wolves, within twenty-four hours, but he did not cease to tramp his district both day and night. Then, one night, he came close to accomplishing his goal.

Suddenly, BRAMOND freezes. About fifty feet away is the wolf. It is larger than normal, but clearly a wolf, and covered with a thick mass of brown and gray fur. It is busy devouring a partridge, and does not notice BRAMOND. We can hear the SOUNDS of bones crunching.

BRAMOND slowly, carefully raises his rifle and takes aim, then fires. The wolf stops feasting and starts to run away, splashing through a pool of water. BRAMOND takes aim and fires again. The wolf disappears into the forest. BRAMOND stands there, puzzled; then an idea occurs to him.

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

Bramond was certain that he had at least wounded the wolf, but could find no one trace of it. How could he have missed it from so close? Then an idea struck him.

INT. BRAMOND'S KITCHEN--DAY

BRAMOND hurries into the kitchen of his home and sits down at the kitchen table. His wife is washing dishes.

BRAMOND

Wife, a piece of wax?

MADAME BRAMOND

What are you up to now?

BRAMOND

Quick, now!

MADAME BRAMOND

Rome wasn't built in a day

BRAMOND

Quick, now--and stop talking! Ever since the day you persuaded me to marry you, your tongue hasn't stopped wagging.

MADAME BRAMOND sighs.

INT. THE SAME--A MINUTE LATER

MADAME BRAMOND hands her husband a piece of wax. BRAMOND takes a knife from his pocket and carves a portion of the wax into the shape of a bullet. He models it on a cartridge that he has laid on the table next to the hunk of wax.

MADAME BRAMOND

I saw that Josephine--I beg your pardon, Madame Caillet--this morning. She told me that Bertrand was giving her a lot of trouble. He had no appetite and she wondered whether she ought to send him away to school.

(MORE)

MADAME BRAMOND (CONT'D)

Of course one day he would have to go away, since he's going to study medicine, but meanwhile, perhaps he could continue to go to the village school. The nerve of her! Well, they can't pull the wool over my eyes. Do you suppose she married this Caillet man, whoever he was, the day she got to Paris? How else did she bring home a baby six months old? And since when are married servants retained along with their children? And why should her boy be going to study medicine? Where is all the money coming from?

BRAMOND

From Mr. Galliez, of course. And stop leaning over my shoulder, I can't work!

MADAME BRAMOND

Well, of course he's handing over the money. And if you think I don't know why, you are mistaken too. I'll bet anything that Josephine hasn't got both legs in one stocking.

BRAMOND

Stop your twaddle! You women always have things figured out.

MADAME BRAMOND

You men are as stupid as geese. You fall for anything. And why do you think Monsieur Galliez came back from the seminary at Langres? Wasn't he going to be a priest? But his little Josephine needed him.

BRAMOND

Stop supposing so many things, and go fetch me your little silver crucifix.

MADAME BRAMOND

What are you going to do with my crucifix? I don't want it spoiled. That was blessed for me by the Archbishop himself, when I went to Avallon.

BRAMOND

All the better. We can't have too much blessing on it.

MADAME BRAMOND

Before I give it to you, I want to know what you're up to.

BRAMOND

You'll find out sooner or later.

INT. THE SAME--A MINUTE LATER

Reluctantly, MADAME BRAMOND hands the small silver crucifix over to her husband. Meanwhile, he has molded a lump of wet clay, and is now pressing his waxen bullet into it.

BRAMOND

Some hairs from your head!

MADAME BRAMOND, stunned, says nothing, but fetches a small pair of scissors and snips a few hairs from her head, then hands them to her husband. He lays the hairs in various positions around the waxen bullet.

BRAMOND (CONT'D)

For the air to escape.

MADAME BRAMOND

What air?

He does not reply, but molds another lump of wet clay and places it atop the first, then mashes down hard. Then he pulls out the hairs one by one. Then he takes his knife and gouges out a small hole out of the clay and down to the bullet.

BRAMOND

There.

INT. THE SAME--A FEW MINUTES LATER

BRAMOND stands before the stove; his wife watches from nearby, sobbing. He has "cooked" the clay on the stove, and melted down the crucifix in a pan. He pours the melted silver into the clay mold.

MADAME BRAMOND

My crucifix!

INT. THE SAME--A SHORT TIME LATER

BRAMOND is seated at the table again, sandpapering the silver bullet he has created. His wife, calmer now, watches him uncomprehendingly.

Finished, he holds the bullet aloft and smiles.

BRAMOND

Try and escape this. A silver bullet,
blessed by the Archbishop, melted
down from a holy crucifix. Beelzebub
himself would fall before this.

EXT. CLEARING IN THE FOREST--WINTER--NIGHT

BRAMOND is stalking through a clearing in the forest. It is a bright moonlit winter night, and snow covers the ground. The clearing is surrounded by low-cut scrub; this section of the forest has recently been cut.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Winter came, and still the wolf had
not come within range of Bramond's
eyes. But one wintry night, he did
come upon it.

BRAMOND freezes. The wolf is less than twenty yards away, eating a lamb. BRAMOND crosses himself and slowly, stealthily approaches to within thirty feet of the wolf. He gets down on one knee and takes careful aim.

Suddenly, the wolf takes note of his presence, and looks up from its kill directly at him. Then it turns and starts to run away. BRAMOND fires. The wolf howls and drops to the ground.

BRAMOND

Got you that time!

But almost immediately the wolf gets back to its feet and runs into the scrub.

The camera TRACKS with BRAMOND as he follows the animal's tracks and drops of its blood into the scrub.

BRAMOND (CONT'D)

(To himself)

I'll get you--I'll find you and get
you--I'll find you--you're mortally
wounded--and limping on the left leg
too, I see. Yes, I got you that
time.

He follows the tracks for a moment. The drops of blood quickly grow thinner, and are spaced at wider intervals. Finally they--and BRAMOND--stop altogether.

BRAMOND (CONT'D)

What in God's name--

He notices that the animal's tracks are still visible, and follows them for a short distance. Suddenly the hillside slopes down to a road, and across the road is an open field. He hurries down to the road, the camera still TRACKING with him. He (and the camera) scan the open field. Nothing is in sight.

Suddenly, BRAMOND (and the audience) become aware of the oppressive SILENCE. He stands there breathing heavily, the cold air frosting his breath. He looks all around and doesn't know what to do. Finally, he shivers and walks down the road. The camera TRACKS with him.

Slowly, and very softly, BRAMOND and the audience hear--or think they hear--the sound of padded footsteps following him. BRAMOND keeps looking back over his shoulder, but keeps on walking. The SOUNDS continue, barely audible at first, then grow just a tad louder. They're still not very loud, but now BRAMOND and the audience know they are real.

Terrified, BRAMOND begins to run. The SOUNDS (and the camera) follow him. He stumbles more than once, and soon begins to sag under the weight of the gun in his hands. He flings it away to the side of the road, then starts to run on, but immediately stops. What he thinks is a wolf (but is actually a dog) is running along the left-hand side of the road, darting in and out of the darkness.

BRAMOND (CONT'D)

Damnit!

He turns and picks up his gun, then looks round again. The animal is nowhere in sight. But then, a few seconds later, the wolf darts back into the light and runs ahead down the road. Immediately, BRAMOND raises his gun and fires. The animal howls, drops to the ground, rolls over, and then is still.

BRAMOND lets out an animal-like growl and runs to the fallen beast, the camera TRACKING with him. He quickly reaches it and, emitting a series of grunts and cries, brings the butt-end of his rifle down upon the animal's head. Gore and fragments of bone and teeth fly in all directions, splattering BRAMOND. Finally, spent and gasping, he stops and wipes the sweat from his forehead.

BRAMOND (CONT'D)

Thank God!

He kicks the animal; it does not move. Suddenly, he notices something.

BRAMOND (CONT'D)

Where is my silver bullet? It doesn't have a bullet hole in its leg.

He bends down and inspects the body closely, and notices something else. The "wolf" is wearing a collar. BRAMOND is startled, then faints next to his kill.

INT. BRAMOND'S BEDROOM--DAY--SEVERAL DAYS LATER

BRAMOND is lying in bed, almost completely recovered from his ordeal. MADAME BRAMOND brings him some tea.

BRAMOND

Thank you, wife.

MADAME BRAMOND

Anything for my brave hero. You are a hero, you know. The mayor says you may even get a medal.

BRAMOND

You do what you have to do.

MADAME BRAMOND

But I want that silver bullet. It belongs to me. And now, it will be doubly dear to me.

BRAMOND

It's strange they didn't find it in the body. It can't be hard to find. So it was Vaubois the shepherd's dog all along. You know, at first I wondered if it might be a dog, but then I was convinced that it must be a wolf. No sign of any wolf since I killed the dog?

MADAME BRAMOND

None. Not even a chick missing.

INT. KITCHEN COUNTRY HOUSE--DAY

FRANCOISE and JOSEPHINE are peeling potatoes, etc., for dinner.

FRANCOISE

So, apparently, it wasn't a wolf after all. It was just Vaubois's dog Cesar.

JOSEPHINE

This wolf-hunt was getting just a little bit too much. Bertrand has been complaining that he dreams about it every night.

INT. BERTRAND'S BEDROOM--A MINUTE LATER

YOUNG BERTRAND, a boy of eleven, is lying in bed, looking quite ill. JOSEPHINE enters.

JOSEPHINE

Get up, lazybones! The wolf has been killed and you've no more nightmares to fear.

YOUNG BERTRAND

I don't want to get up, mama. I don't feel well. And my leg hurts so badly that I can't move it.

JOSEPHINE pulls back the covers. YOUNG BERTRAND indicates his left leg.

YOUNG BERTRAND (CONT'D)

It's that one.

JOSEPHINE

Oh, my!

There is an ugly wound--a bullet hole, of course--on the boy's left calf, surrounded by clotted blood.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

Monsieur Aymar! Monsieur Aymar!

INT. THE SAME--MOMENTS LATER

AYMAR, a decade older than we last saw him but still youthful and vigorous, is examining YOUNG BERTRAND's wound.

AYMAR

Have you been jumping from the hayloft in the barn?

YOUNG BERTRAND

Ow! That hurts! No, I wasn't jumping in the barn.

AYMAR has washed the boy's wound, and now looks on the opposite side of the boy's left calf. There is a smaller wound on that side. Camera MOVES IN CLOSE as he notices something bulging just beneath this smaller wound.

AYMAR

My heavens. There's something--a piece of a pitchfork, I'll wager--imbedded in the flesh.

He pushes down around the small wound with his thumbs. The shiny point of an object protrudes from the wound.

YOUNG BERTRAND yells in pain. But AYMAR only pushes down harder, and more of the object emerges. Finally AYMAR can grab hold of it with his fingers and pull it all the way out. YOUNG BERTRAND kicks and screams all the while, only subsiding when the object has been removed. AYMAR holds it up to the light. The camera MOVES IN for a CLOSE UP. It is BRAMOND's silver bullet--a little dented and flattened, but still recognizable.

INT. THE SAME--THAT EVENING

YOUNG BERTRAND, washed and changed and his wound bandaged, is resting peacefully in bed, although he is not asleep. AYMAR enters and sits down on the edge of the bed. He is extremely troubled and agitated.

AYMAR

Bertrand, you must tell me everything.
Don't conceal a thing. Where were
you last night?

YOUNG BERTRAND

Why, here in bed.

AYMAR

Then how did you get hurt?

YOUNG BERTRAND

I don't know, Uncle Aymar.

AYMAR

Come, come, Bertrand. You don't get
wounds like this lying in bed.

YOUNG BERTRAND

But if I tell you, uncle . . .

AYMAR

Bertrand--look me in the eyes. Look.

He gently takes hold of the boy's hand.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

I shan't punish you. I only want to
know the truth.

Suddenly AYMAR shudders. He looks at the boy's hand, and at its hairy palm. Finally, he forces himself to turn his attention back to the boy.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

Look in my eyes and tell me that you
were in bed all night.

YOUNG BERTRAND

Uncle, why should I have gotten out of bed? I slept here all night. I know because I woke up once during the night and I had had a very bad dream, and I was covered with sweat. And I felt very ill and I wanted to call mama, but then I fell asleep again.

AYMAR

What did you dream of?

YOUNG BERTRAND

I don't recall very well, but it was like every other night. I have had dreams almost every night now.

AYMAR

I know, your mother has told me. Look, Bertrand, tell me. You don't like to have nightmares, do you? Of course not. Now maybe I can help you, but you will have to be very honest with me. Since when have you been having these dreams?

YOUNG BERTRAND

I can tell you that, because I know very well what started it. I went hunting with Old Bramond last summer and he showed me how to shoot. And then he pointed out a squirrel to me and said, "See if you can get him." And I pulled the trigger, and the squirrel squeaked and dropped. And Bramond said, "Well, if you haven't got beginner's luck! How did you do that?" But I was so sick at heart at the thought of having killed the little thing that I picked it up and wept. And then I kissed it and begged it to forgive me. And as I kissed it again and again, I tasted something warm flowing from it. And it burned my tongue like pepper, only it wasn't bitter but sweet, only not sweet like sugar. I kissed it once more and then some more, because I wanted to taste its blood and I didn't want Bramond to know what I was doing. And I am telling you everything just as it happened, because I know that I did wrong.

AYMAR

Well?

YOUNG BERTRAND

Ever since then I dream at night that I am drinking blood, and it scares me to death. And sometimes I think I am a wolf, like in the picture book, and I am killing a partridge or a lamb as it shows there. And sometimes I dream that I am the wolf Bramond is looking for. I can see him shooting at me to kill me, and I can't speak to him and tell him that I'm not a wolf. Oh, it's awful when you want to talk, and can't!

AYMAR

Where do you find these lambs and partridges? Do you think of that in your dreams?

YOUNG BERTRAND

Yes, it seems to me that I am like a dog or a wolf, and I leap out of the window and I run on my four legs and I can run very fast, very fast. And then I jump over hedges and I find a bird of a lamb. It all seems so real, just as if I actually did it.

AYMAR

Bertrand--if there were bars on that window, do you think that you could still dream you were jumping out of it? Shall we try it?

YOUNG BERTRAND

Yes, uncle. Please do that. I'm so afraid to go to bed.

INT. THE SAME--THE NEXT MORNING.

CLOSE UP of the window in Bertrand's room, now protected by iron bars. The camera PULLS BACK to reveal YOUNG BERTRAND yawning and stretching, and looking very refreshed. AYMAR enters.

AYMAR

Well, Bertrand, did you have any nightmares last night?

YOUNG BERTRAND

No, uncle. Not a one.

AYMAR

Excellent! So I'll tell you what we'll do, Bertrand--from now on, when you go to bed, I'll lock your door at night. That way, if your sleeping brain ever wants to dream of escaping and wandering the forest, then it will say to itself, "But I can't escape. The doors are locked and the windows barred." And then it will only dream sensible dreams.

YOUNG BERTRAND

(Beaming)

Thank you, uncle.

(Brief pause)

But what if there's a fire?

AYMAR

I'll hang the key on that nail just outside by the door. If there's a fire, then whoever is nearest can let you out.

YOUNG BERTRAND

All right, uncle.

INT. THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE BERTRAND'S BEDROOM--NIGHT

AYMAR slowly approaches the locked door of Bertrand's bedroom.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

There were queer sounds to be heard in Bertrand's room at times.

AYMAR puts his ear to the door of Bertrand's bedroom and listens. At first, all he--and the audience--can hear is the peaceful SOUND of the boy's breathing. But suddenly his breathing becomes faster and more ragged, until finally it changes into the SOUND of panting. Then comes the SOUND of an animal's clawed feet hitting the floor. We hear the clawed feet walking across the floor, coming closer. Then we hear sniffing and snorting, as if a dog or wolf is sniffing at the crack of the door. For a moment, there is the unmistakable SOUND of paws scratching against the door.

INT. THE SAME--ANOTHER TIME--NIGHT

AYMAR, dressed in different clothes to denote the passage of time, is again listening at Bertrand's door.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Occasionally, Aymar would try entering the room hastily.

We hear the SOUNDS of the animal whining and pawing at the door. Suddenly AYMAR puts his hand on the knob. Immediately, and in the space of two or three seconds, we hear loud and accelerated SOUNDS--a racket, but one we cannot easily define. By the time AYMAR has unlocked and opened the door--

INT. BERTRAND'S BEDROOM--CONTINUOUS

--he (and we) can only hear the SOUND of YOUNG BERTRAND's peaceful breathing and see him sleeping peacefully in bed. AYMAR looks puzzled and defeated.

INT. AYMAR'S STUDY--NIGHT

AYMAR is seated at the desk in his study, looking through various books, both ancient and contemporary (for him), dealing with lycanthropy.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Aymar had gathered together what material he could find on werewolves. Strange malady, that of lycanthropy. All over the world, wherever man has dwelt, people have believed in it. From Ceylon to Iceland, and from Iceland to Ceylon, all the old races have tales to tell of it. From the berserkir or bearskins of Scandinavia, the hyena-men of Africa, the werewolf of the North American Indians, the cat-women of Constantinople who eat rice with a hairpin, knowing that they will fill their bellies at the banquet of ghouls in the cemetery, to the tiger-men of India, the dread superstition is known and believed. Aymar read of the terrible outbreaks of werewolfism in France during the year 1598, when the disease seemed to become epidemic and whole families were stricken. By the hundreds are the cases counted in France, England, and Germany, to mention only three countries.

AYMAR takes the used silver bullet from his desk drawer and looks at it closely.

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

Aymar wondered--could it be that these gory tales of medieval days were not mere delusions?

(MORE)

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

Were there phenomena in the realm of nature, phenomena that perished like animals that became extinct? Could it be that a curious concatenation of causes, a rare and strange plexus of events to be encountered only once in centuries, might produce a monstrous exception to the ordinary course of nature?

AYMAR sweeps some of the books off his desk.

AYMAR

Rubbish!

INT. HALLWAY BEFORE BERTRAND'S BEDROOM--NIGHT

AYMAR, dressed differently than in the previous scene, takes the key hanging from the nail beside Bertrand's bedroom door and puts it in his pocket. He gently opens the door and looks in. He--and the audience--see YOUNG BERTRAND sleeping peacefully.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Aymar tried to put the whole nonsensical affair from his mind. At Josephine's repeated urging, he even stopped locking Bertrand up in his room at night.

INT. AYMAR'S STUDY--DAY

AYMAR is seated at his desk, writing a letter. There is a knocking at the door.

AYMAR

Come in!

FRANCOISE enters and quietly, somberly approaches.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

What's the trouble, Françoise, you look worried?

FRANCOISE

I think, monsieur, that you ought to lock Bertrand's door again.

AYMAR is astonished.

AYMAR

Has he had bad dreams again?

FRANCOISE

You and I, monsieur, needn't speak of bad dreams. I'm not Josephine, whose mother-love blinds her. I can put two and two together as well as you.

AYMAR

What do you know?

FRANCOISE

I've heard that people can keep tiger cubs and make pets of them. But when they reach a certain age, you have to put them in a cage.

AYMAR

But what do you know?

FRANCOISE

I know. Haven't I watched him grow since childhood? He was cute and playful. So are puppies. So, perhaps, are tiger cubs.

AYMAR

But why have you come to me with this now?

FRANCOISE

Because a man said to me this morning, "That fox is back again." His son found a duck's head, chewed off.

AYMAR wipes his forehead wearily.

AYMAR

When will this end?

INT. BERTRAND'S BEDROOM--EVENING

AYMAR and YOUNG BERTRAND are sitting on Bertrand's bed.

AYMAR

Aymar, Françoise and your mother tell me that you've lost your appetite again.

YOUNG BERTRAND

It's true, Uncle Aymar.

AYMAR

Do you mind if I examine you for just a moment?

YOUNG BERTRAND

No, uncle.

AYMAR

Tilt your head back, please.

YOUNG BERTRAND does so. AYMAR examines the boy's face, then pulls open his eyelids.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

No wonder. You have anemia, Bertrand.
So, we'll start giving you a little
raw meat every day. That makes blood.

YOUNG BERTRAND

All right, uncle.

ZOOM IN for a CLOSE UP on AYMAR, as he smiles to himself.

EXT. FRONT YARD OF THE COUNTRY HOUSE--FIVE YEARS LATER--DAY

BERTRAND--now a young man of sixteen being portrayed by the actor who will portray him for the remainder of the film--opens the front door of his uncle's country house and walks down the path toward the street. JOSEPHINE stands in the doorway and waves goodbye to him. He returns her greetings. She steps back inside and closes the door.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Aymar's plan worked for a good long while. Five years passed, during which Bertrand grew into a fine, strong young man of whom no one could believe any ill tidings. The only problem was that he was frequently ill. Thanks to Aymar's patient tutelage, he also grew very proficient at his studies. He and the adults in his life decided that he should take the examinations for his baccalaureate, then go to Paris and study medicine.

INT. KITCHEN BRAMOND'S HOME--DAY

BRAMOND and MADAME BRAMOND--several years older but basically unchanged--and their sixteen-year-old son JACQUES are finishing their lunch.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Bertrand's best friend--really, his only friend--was Jacques Bramond, the son of Bramond the gamekeeper, who still wondered why his silver

(MORE)

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
bullet had not found its place in
the killer dog's left leg.

EXT. STREET BEFORE COUNTRY HOME--DAY

BERTRAND and JACQUES are walking down the road, the bags containing their belongings slung over their shoulders.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Jacques was to take his baccalaureate exams as well, and so he and Bertrand traveled together to Auxerre to take the exams.

EXT. CONTINUOUS--CLOSE UP OF THE FRONT DOOR OF THE COUNTRY HOME--CONTINUOUS

AYMAR, FRANCOISE, and JOSEPHINE are standing together in the doorway, waving goodbye. The two women are smiling and in tears, while AYMAR looks worried.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Aymar had at first proposed to go along with Bertrand, whom he hated to trust out of his sight. But he relented, for thanks to his trick of feeding Bertrand copious amounts of raw meet, the boy had been on his best behavior.

EXT. STREET IN AUXERRE--EVENING

BERTRAND and JACQUES are walking down the main street of the town of Auxerre.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The boys took their examinations--and passed them, as it would turn out. Afterward, they went out to celebrate.

JACQUES
Say, Bertrand, I know a house we could visit.

BERTRAND
Oh, that's fine.

JACQUES
It is? Mr. Purity himself doesn't mind visiting a house of ill repute?

BERTRAND

(Comprehending at
last)

Oh. Then, no thank you, I can't go.

JACQUES

(A taunt)

Are you afraid?

BERTRAND

No, it isn't that. I'm not feeling
well. I didn't sleep well last night.

JACQUES

Who did? None of us could sleep.

BERTRAND

And then I think my migraine is coming
on again.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Bertrand still occasionally had
nightmares, and when he did, he would
always have a migraine.

JACQUES

(Laughing)

Well, here's your cure! This is
what you've been needing all along.
A little lady.

BERTRAND

(Weakening)

No . . . no, I don't think so.

JACQUES

Well then, goodbye, Bertrand. Don't
forget your muffler or you'll catch
cold!

JACQUES begins to hurry off. BERTRAND calls out, stopping
him.

BERTRAND

All right! All right. I'm coming
with you.

INT. SITTING ROOM AUXERRE BROTHEL--A LITTLE LATER

JACQUES and BERTRAND are seated in gilt-edged chairs in the
parlor of the brothel in Auxerre. A small gilt piano is in
one corner; on the wall hang portraits of naked women, and a
picture of the Woman Who Was a Sinner washing Christ's feet.
Gas jets light the room.

A YOUNG PROSTITUTE comes over to JACQUES, smiles at him, and takes his hand. He smiles, rises, and goes off with her. BERTRAND is left alone in the room with another young prostitute, THERESE, a pretty young girl wearing eyeglasses, who is seated next to him. Pause.

THERESE

You are very shy, monsieur.

BERTRAND

It's--it's nothing--

THERESE

You needn't be embarrassed, monsieur.

BERTRAND

(Smiling weakly)

Thank you.

Pause.

THERESE

Might I suggest--a way to help monsieur overcome his shyness?

BERTRAND

Please--Bertrand. Call me Bertrand. That's my name--Bertrand Caillet, from Mont d'Arcy.

THERESE

All right, Bertrand. My name is Therese.

BERTRAND

All right--Therese.

INT. THERESE'S ROOM--MINUTES LATER

BERTRAND and THERESE stand facing one another.

THERESE

You can overcome your shyness--by playing a game.

BERTRAND

A game?

THERESE

Yes, Bertrand. I'll take off two pieces of my own clothing for every piece of yours that you take off.

(MORE)

THERESE (CONT'D)

The one who's still wearing even one piece of clothing while the other's totally naked wins. And the winner must think up a punishment for the loser. What do you think about that?

Pause.

BERTRAND

All--all right, Therese.

THERESE

You start.

Brief pause. Then BERTRAND takes off his cap.

THERESE (CONT'D)

That doesn't count!

BERTRAND

It doesn't?

THERESE

No. If you include your outdoor clothes, then I get to include mine, too.

BERTRAND

All--all right, then.

He takes off his outer jacket, folds it up neatly, and drapes it over a chair. Smiling, THERESE takes off her jabot and lace bolero. Then BERTRAND takes off his vest and cravat. She takes off two of her petticoats.

INT. THE SAME--MOMENTS LATER

The two young people's clothes litter the floor, chairs, and tables. BERTRAND takes off his skivvies, leaving him totally naked. THERESE is now dressed only in her stockings and a shift. They smile at one another.

BERTRAND

It's a tie!

THERESE

No, it's not.

She takes off her stockings and then, giggling mischievously, her eyeglasses. Then she points to her shift, which she is still wearing.

THERESE (CONT'D)

I win!

BERTRAND

But your spectacles--that isn't fair!

THERESE

Yes, it is. I've won, and for punishment, you must take off this last piece yourself, only you are not allowed to use your hands.

BERTRAND

Fine--fine.

Embarrassed by his nudity, he hurries into bed and pulls the covers up over him. He laughs nervously.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)

What shall I do? How can I take it off without using my hands?

THERESE

You have teeth and toes left, haven't you?

BERTRAND

Well--yes.

She laughs and gets into bed with him.

THERESE

Well, then--

Slowly, nervously, he takes a portion of her shift into his mouth.

BERTRAND

It'll rip.

THERESE

Then you'll buy me another.

(Laughs)

But it's very cheap.

BERTRAND tries a little harder, and accidentally bites THERESE.

THERESE (CONT'D)

Ow! Oh, you're biting me!

BERTRAND suddenly realizes--or remembers--the primal joy of sinking his teeth into living flesh and tearing it apart. He begins to bite and tear the girl's shift--and the girl herself--with great relish.

THERESE (CONT'D)
 OW! AH! AH! JESUS, MARY, AND
 JOSEPH!

INT. ENTRANCE HALL OF THE BROTHEL--NEXT MORNING

JACQUES, his pack at his feet, and the BROTHEL KEEPER--an elegantly-dressed and formidable lady in her middle years--are settling accounts. The BROTHEL KEEPER hands JACQUES a bill.

BROTHEL KEEPER
 Your bill, monsieur.

JACQUES
 Where's Bertrand?

BROTHEL KEEPER
 He is still with Therese, monsieur.

JACQUES
 Oh, really?

He looks at the bill, is startled by its size, but for the most part stifles his emotions. Then an idea comes to him, and he gives a little smile.

JACQUES (CONT'D)
 Actually, madame, I only have a little cash on me. I had hoped that Bertrand, my friend, would be up by now, so that he could settle accounts with you.

BROTHEL KEEPER
 (Suspiciously)
 And he will be able to pay the bill in full?

JACQUES
 Absolutely. He's rich.

BROTHEL KEEPER
 (Pleased)
 In that case, if monsieur will pay for the champagne, then I'll let you go, and Monsieur Bertrand will settle the bill when he wakes up.

JACQUES
 (Pleased as well)
 Of course I'll pay for the champagne.

INT. BROTHEL KEEPER'S OFFICE--A WHILE LATER

The BROTHEL KEEPER is going over her books. She consults the small clock on her desk.

BROTHEL KEEPER
 What on earth could be keeping
 Monsieur Bertrand and Therese? It's
 ten o'clock!

She rises from her desk and heads for the door.

BROTHEL KEEPER (CONT'D)
 These rich people . . .

INT. HALLWAY--UPPER LEVEL OF BROTHEL--SECONDS LATER

The camera is pointed down the staircase, which the BROTHEL KEEPER is climbing. When she reaches the landing, the camera turns and TRACKS with her down the hall to the door of Therese's room. She raps on the door. Pause. No answer. She frowns and raps on the door again. Still no answer. She puts her ear to the door and (along with audience) hears a groan coming from inside the room. She opens the unlocked door and enters.

INT. THERESE'S ROOM--CONTINUOUS

The BROTHEL KEEPER enters the room. Only THERESE is in there. She lies naked in bed, covered in blood and bite marks. The sheets are also covered with blood. The BROTHEL KEEPER's eyes go wide with shock.

INT. THE SAME--TWO HOURS LATER

THERESE has been washed and bandaged. Dressed in a clean nightgown, she lies in her freshly-made bed. The BROTHEL KEEPER approaches her bed and sits down beside her.

BROTHEL KEEPER
 Therese!

THERESE
 (Weakly)
 Yes, Madame?

BROTHEL KEEPER
 How could you let him do such things
 to you?

THERESE
 Well, I guess I must have fainted.

BROTHEL KEEPER

And for all this, you didn't get a centime?

THERESE

How did I know he was going to do this?

BROTHEL KEEPER

Men that want that kind of thing pay heavily for it in Paris.

THERESE

He didn't seem that sort.

BROTHEL KEEPER

Now, if only I had his name!

THERESE

Oh, he told me his name, and where he's from. Bertrand Caillet, from Mont d'Arcy.

BROTHEL KEEPER

Bertrand Caillet, from Mont d'Arcy?

THERESE

Yes, Madame.

The BROTHEL KEEPER gives a combination of a scowl and a smile.

INT. AYMAR'S STUDY--SEVERAL DAYS LATER--DAY

AYMAR is working on his books. There is a knocking on the door.

AYMAR

Come in!

FRANCOISE enters, looking very troubled.

FRANCOISE

Monsieur--there is a lady here to see you--

AYMAR

Oh? Show her in.

Nervously, FRANCOISE motions for the BROTHEL KEEPER to enter, which she does, imperiously, as if she were royalty. Casting a nervous glance back at the BROTHEL KEEPER, FRANCOISE leaves, closing the door behind her.

AYMAR rises to his feet and extends his hand as she marches toward him.

She starts speaking immediately, and he lowers his hand.

BROTHEL KEEPER
I've come to tell you about your son
Bertrand.

Pause; AYMAR is a little startled, and very frightened, though he tries not to let his feelings show.

AYMAR
Well?

INT. THE SAME--A FEW MINUTES LATER

Both AYMAR and the BROTHEL KEEPER are seated now. AYMAR is mad and frightened, but manages to hide his feelings.

BROTHEL KEEPER
And that's the story, monsieur.

AYMAR
And what do you want me to do?

BROTHEL KEEPER
Why, monsieur, I wish to be reimbursed
for damages and expenses. Who would
have thought that such a nice, refined
boy--

AYMAR
It seems to me that this is a matter
for the police.

Pause. The BROTHEL KEEPER gapes in horror; she wants nothing to do with the police. She manages to compose herself.

BROTHEL KEEPER
I'm sorry, monsieur, but I would
rather handle it this way.

AYMAR
(Sighing)
How much do you want?

She compresses her lips.

BROTHEL KEEPER
Five thousands francs.

AYMAR
(Sighs again)
Very well.

INT. HALLWAY BEFORE BERTRAND'S BEDROOM--MINUTES LATER

In a rage, AYMAR storms down the hall toward Bertrand's room.

AYMAR
Bertrand? Bertrand!

He reaches Bertrand's room and opens the door.

INT. BERTRAND'S BEDROOM--CONTINUOUS

BERTRAND is lying across his bed, breathing heavily, his face flushed, his hair mussed, his clothes disheveled. AYMAR is startled by this sight. BERTRAND looks at AYMAR and then, ashamed, looks away.

AYMAR
What's the matter with you?

Pause.

BERTRAND
I had another one of my terrible dreams. I don't know how I got back here. Let me think, my head is so dull--my body feels as if it's been running all night. I wonder--

AYMAR
What do you wonder?

BERTRAND
I wonder--I wonder if it was only a dream this time? I was in the city taking my examinations. How did I get home? Did I really run home, as I dreamed? And what happened before--was that a dream, too?

AYMAR
(In a fury)
Not this time! Not this time!

BERTRAND is startled at this, and cowers back like a dog.

AYMAR (CONT'D)
Wait for me!

INT. THE BARN--A MINUTE LATER

AYMAR takes a heavy horsewhip down from the large nail it is hanging from.

AYMAR
I'll tame the wolf in him.

INT. BERTRAND'S BEDROOM--A MINUTE LATER

AYMAR, whip in hand, storms back into the room and locks the door behind him. BERTRAND cowers on his bed.

AYMAR
I'll tame you!

He goes over to BERTRAND and brings the whip down upon the lad again and again. BERTRAND yelps; he is in agony.

AYMAR (CONT'D)
I'll tame you! I'll tame you!

This scene goes on for nearly a full minute of "real" screen time. AYMAR keeps yelling his vow and bringing the whip down upon BERTRAND, who continues to scream and scream. Finally his cries grow hoarse, and then rise into a falsetto. Finally he is silent, nearly unconscious. AYMAR stops and wipes the sweat from his face.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY--THE NEXT DAY

AYMAR is walking down the hall. A furious JOSEPHINE comes through an open door, blocking his way. She raises her fists as if to strike him, and just manages to stop herself.

JOSEPHINE
You've killed him!

AYMAR
Shut up!

JOSEPHINE
(Menacingly)
What did he ever do to you?

AYMAR
That's none of your business.

JOSEPHINE
And you're almost his father!

AYMAR snorts.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
Yes, and if he dies, I'll kill you,
too!

AYMAR begins to crumble inwardly at her words.

INT. BERTRAND'S BEDROOM--TWO DAYS LATER

AYMAR softly, gently comes into BERTRAND's room. He approaches the bed, where BERTRAND is sleeping.

Suddenly, like an animal sensing danger, he snaps awake, sees AYMAR, and cowers.

BERTRAND

Don't--!

AYMAR

Let me see your back.

AYMAR sits up and raises his nightshirt. His back is covered with red, purple, yellow, and green welts. AYMAR is terrified by the sight.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

How do you feel?

BERTRAND

I'm better now.

AYMAR

And you'll take care not to repeat your--shall we call it "escapade"?

BERTRAND

I'll take care, uncle.

(Pause)

Uncle, did I really do what I only dreamt?

AYMAR

What did you dream?

Pause; BERTRAND is ashamed at his memories.

BERTRAND

I mean, did I bite and scratch--her?

AYMAR

Yes, I guess you did--and I had to pay for it. But forget it now, and don't talk about it anymore.

Pause.

BERTRAND

You told mother you wouldn't send me to Paris.

AYMAR

I don't think you can be trusted alone, for a little while.

EXT. CEMETERY--DAY

A group of people--including a PRIEST and a large group of VILLAGERS, including BERTRAND (now seventeen years old) and his family--are grouped around an open grave as the PRIEST (unheard by us) recites the Burial Service, then stops and makes the sign of the Cross. The others follow suit.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

A year passed, and Aymar resumed his practice of locking Bertrand into his room at night. Then one day, a prominent citizen of Mont d'Arcy, the old skinflint Vaubois, died, and Bertrand's family--and Bertrand himself--were required to attend.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE CEMETERY--A FEW MINUTES LATER

The crowd is dispersing. MADAME BRAMOND spies BERTRAND and motions him to come over to her.

MADAME BRAMOND

Bertrand! Bertrand!

He looks at AYMAR, then back at MADAME BRAMOND and comes over to her. As he reaches her, he tips his hat.

BERTRAND

Madame Bramond. It's good to see you.

MADAME BRAMOND

And it's so good to see you, Bertrand. I haven't seen you in ages. You've been ill?

BERTRAND

Yes.

MADAME BRAMOND

I'm glad you're better. Well, then, when are you going to Paris?

BERTRAND

Uncle hasn't said yet.

MADAME BRAMOND

You know that Jacques is leaving on foot for Paris on the thirteenth of next month, that is, August. You must come to his farewell party on the evening before, that is, the twelfth.

BERTRAND

Perhaps I can come. I'll ask uncle.

MADAME BRAMOND

Why don't you two boys tramp it to Paris together?

BERTRAND

I'll ask uncle.

(Tipping his hat again)

You must excuse me, Madame Bramond.

It was wonderful talking to you.

Please give my regards to Jacques.

He walks away. MADAME BRAMOND fumes. At that moment, her husband walks up.

MADAME BRAMOND

The nerve of that boy! Some people think that just because they have a little money, they've got to be cold and hoity-toity. Well, his mother must earn her money, and I'll bet Galliez doesn't make it any too easy for her!

INT. AYMAR'S STUDY--THE NEXT MORNING

AYMAR is reading a book intently. There is a knocking on the door.

AYMAR

Come in!

A very agitated FRANCOISE enters.

FRANCOISE

Monsieur, I can't believe it! Just yesterday we buried old Vaubois, and this morning his grave was found opened up, and his body mutilated. The whole village is talking about it. They've arrested Crotez, the shepherd. They said he did it to get Vaubois's gold teeth. They found the teeth in Vaubois's room, but he claims that Vaubois, miser that he was, when he was about to die and unable to eat, gave the teeth to Crotez in lieu of wages he owed him.

AYMAR is troubled at this news, but ponders it thoughtfully.

AYMAR

Hmmm. I can believe it of that man.

Pause. FRANCOISE cannot get out the words she needs to say next.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

Well, Francoise?

FRANCOISE

I thought monsieur would want to know that Bertrand was not in his room last night.

AYMAR

Nonsense! How could he have gotten out?

FRANCOISE shrugs.

FRANCOISE

Maybe he's made himself a passkey. At any rate, I saw him slinking down the allee early this morning, when it was barely dawn. I'm sure I wasn't mistaken.

AYMAR

Well, I'm tired of all this.

EXT. HALLWAY BEFORE BERTRAND'S BEDROOM--A FEW MINUTES LATER

AYMAR tries the door to BERTRAND's room. The key is once again hanging from its nail beside the door. He finds the door unlocked and opens it. He sees BERTRAND lying asleep on his bed, his clothes disheveled, his face ruddy, his breathing heavy. AYMAR is shocked and disgusted.

AYMAR

(Muttering)

He's sleeping off his orgy.

Just then, JOSEPHINE comes up the stairs, bearing an armful of folded linen. AYMAR hurries over to her.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

You've opened the door for your son! I've wished to spare your feelings heretofore, Josephine, but you must understand that your son is a very dangerous character. And henceforth, I shall carry the key to his room on my person, fire or no fire. And if that doesn't suit you, you may go to the police.

JOSEPHINE

I certainly shall!

INT. KITCHEN COUNTRY HOUSE--A SHORT TIME LATER

JOSEPHINE is complaining to FRANCOISE

JOSEPHINE

I will go to the police and report
that man, Francoise--I will!

FRANCOISE

You do what Monsieur Aymar says, or
you'll find yourself in worse trouble.
Monsieur is doing his best to help
Bertrand, and if you leave him alone,
he'll get him to Paris for you.

EXT. MAIN STREET OF MONT D'ARCY--A MONTH LATER--DAY

JOSEPHINE is walking down the main street of the village,
counting a large wad of bills in her hands. When she is
finished, she puts them in her pocket. Just then, MADAME
BRAMOND passes by.

MADAME BRAMOND

Josephine!

JOSEPHINE stops, turns around, and then extends her hand to
MADAME BRAMOND, who takes it.

JOSEPHINE

Madame Bramond. So nice to see you.

MADAME BRAMOND

I'm so glad we met. Tonight we're
having a farewell for dinner for
Jacques. He's leaving on foot for
Paris in the morning. I hope that
all of you can come, especially
Bertrand.

JOSEPHINE quickly thinks up a lie.

JOSEPHINE

No, I don't think we'll be able to
come over. Bertrand is leaving
tomorrow to take the train from Racy.
No doubt he will see Jacques in Paris.

Pause. MADAME BRAMOND is furious at what she presumes to be
JOSEPHINE's airs.

MADAME BRAMOND

That's so sad. By the way, did you
know that Jacques's name was ahead
of Bertrand's on the list of those
who passed the examination?

JOSEPHINE is too preoccupied to notice the insult.

JOSEPHINE

How nice. Please excuse me, Madame
Bramond. I must be getting home.
Good day.

MADAME BRAMOND

Good day, Josephine.

JOSEPHINE walks away. Now alone, MADAME BRAMOND snorts with joy.

MADAME BRAMOND (CONT'D)

Hah! She may put on airs and send
her son to Paris on the train like
she's a great lady. But she's so
stupid that she doesn't even know
that Jacques's name came before
Bramond's because the results were
listed alphabetically, and Bramond
comes before Caillet! Hah! Got her
that time!

INT. BERTRAND'S BEDROOM--THAT NIGHT

JOSEPHINE gently unlocks the bedroom door and creeps in. She walks up to BERTRAND, who is asleep in bed, and begins to kiss him.

JOSEPHINE

(Whispers)

My darling boy. Get up, and leave
quickly, before your uncle discovers
that I stole the key.

BERTRAND murmurs in his sleep and unthinkingly begins to return her kisses.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

Wake up, child. I've got a bag packed
with everything you need. Money,
too. Quick! You must put a safe
distance between you and this prison.
Oh, my darling baby. How long will
it be before I see you again? I've
a mind to go with you.

As she speaks, she has raised BERTRAND's mostly-sleeping body and clasped it to her bosom. In a trance, he clasps his mother in his arms.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

Oh, my poor, darling baby.

BERTRAND takes some of his mother's nightgown in his teeth and tears it open, exposing her breasts.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
Bertrand! Stop it, Bertrand! Stop it!

He begins to nuzzle and fondle her breasts. He is awake now, but still under the influence of his trance.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
Bertrand, stop it, I tell you!

He begins to kiss and fondle and (gently) bite her. It begins to have an effect on her.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
Bertrand--stop--please--stop--

She throws herself into his arms and begins to kiss him greedily.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
Oh, Bertrand!

They fall back together on the bed, ripping and biting off each other's night-clothes.

INT. THE SAME--SEVERAL HOURS LATER--NIGHT

BERTRAND awakes to find JOSEPHINE sleeping naked beside him, arms akimbo. He is puzzled, and somewhat ashamed. He thinks for a moment, then gets out of bed, quickly gets dressed, and combs his hair. Then he opens the door and goes out.

INT. THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE BERTRAND'S ROOM--CONTINUOUS

BERTRAND gently closes the door and starts down the hall. Suddenly, a door opens and AYMAR, dressed in a nightgown, hurries out and blocks his way.

AYMAR
What are you doing out here? How did you get out? Get back to your room!

BERTRAND, enraged, bares his teeth like an animal.

BERTRAND
You can't hold me a prisoner forever! I'm going to Paris! I want to get out! I'm dying!

AYMAR
Get back to your room! Get back--

With an animal-like cry, BERTRAND lowers his head and crashes into AYMAR, knocking him over. AYMAR moans, then is still. BERTRAND runs for the stairs and hurries down.

EXT. FRONT YARD OF THE COUNTRY HOUSE--A MOMENT LATER

Someone or something bangs against the front door. Finally it smashes open. Breathless but running on adrenaline, BERTRAND stumbles out into the night. The camera TRACKS with him as he runs to the road and down it.

As he runs, BERTRAND's stride changes. He begins to lope rather than run and to do so while stooped over, not standing erect. Finally, he stops (and the camera with him) and flings himself into the gravel border beside the road. He lies there, panting. Suddenly he becomes aware of blades of grass pressing against his face. Absent-mindedly, he begins to nibble on them.

Suddenly BERTRAND tenses. Someone is coming. He hides himself behind a hedge bordering a field.

A figure--it is JACQUES, but BERTRAND doesn't realize it yet--comes into view. We can only see his silhouette as he walks down the road, his pack slung over his shoulder.

Every part of BERTRAND's body begins to writhe. He is in agony. After a moment, he begins to tear off all his clothes, snapping the buttons and hooks as he does so. Soon he is completely naked. He gasps, feeling much better. He seems somewhat hairier than usual. He gets down on all fours and then winces with a new pain. He squats down on his haunches, and suddenly we can hear the SOUND of his urine hitting the gravel and soil.

He looks down the road and sees JACQUES walking off into the distance. He springs out on all fours and silently, swiftly begins to follow him.

(Note: It would be best if the audience DOES NOT see Bertrand transform into a wolf.)

EXT. P.O.V. SHOT--BERTRAND'S VIEW--CONTINUOUS

The camera TRACKS rapidly along the road, quickly and stealthily advancing upon JACQUES, keeping close to the ground. When it reaches JACQUES, the camera "springs" upon him.

EXT. THE ROAD--CONTINUOUS

JACQUES screams as the large brown-gray wolf--that is, BERTRAND--springs upon him and knocks him to the ground. JACQUES struggles to fight with the wolf, but it is too strong and frenzied for him.

It claws and bites at him, tearing his clothes. Blood begins to flow and spurt from him. In a last adrenaline-fueled effort to save himself, JACQUES grabs the wolf's neck and simultaneously tries to choke it and push it away. But the wolf overpowers him and sinks its teeth into his (JACQUES'S) neck. A great fountain of blood gushes forth. JACQUES goes limp; he is dead. For a long moment, the wolf greedily laps and gulps at the fountain of blood flowing from the corpse's neck.

Then the wolf takes BERTRAND'S corpse in its teeth and drags it onto the hedge bordering the road. It eats some chunks of flesh from the body's chest and throat. Then the wolf yawns, stretches itself beside the body with its head resting on the body, and goes to sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE FOREST--THE NEXT MORNING

BERTRAND, naked and covered with dried blood, is lying beside the torn and bloodied body of JACQUES, with his head resting on JACQUES'S torn chest.

BERTRAND thinks he is awakening in his own bed. He shudders and reaches down to pull a non-existent blanket over him. He can't find it. His eyes open, and he finds himself staring into JACQUES'S dead face. He starts, but then recovers himself, thinking this is only a dream.

BERTRAND

Will these nightmares never end?
Decidedly, this is too real. Now
how can I wake myself up? I know,
I'll get out of bed.

He tries to do so, and in the process realizes that he is not dreaming. He sits up.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)

God, is it real? Or will I wake up?
God, this nightmare is more horrible
than any I have ever had.

He faces the fact that this is real. He breaks into tears and keens over his friend's body.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)

Oh, Jacques! Jacques! I knew it
was real. I knew it was real! I
knew that I was kept locked up for a
better reason than uncle would tell
me.

He weeps, gnashes his teeth, and tears at his hair. Then he remembers something.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
 Mother! Did I--did I do that with
 her? Was that reality, too? No,
 no! Never! And yet--

He begins to weep again. Then, exhausted, panting, he thinks things over.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
 I--I can't stay here. I must go
 somewhere. If the villagers should
 find me here--or old Bramond himself!
 Good God!

INT. MONTAGE--THE SAME GENERAL AREA--MOMENTS LATER

We watch BERTRAND as he drags JACQUES'S body into the forest several hundred feet away; as he digs a grave for it with his hands inside the forest; as he pats the last of the earth over it; as he runs back down the road to the hedge behind which he concealed himself the previous night, the camera TRACKING with him; as he finds his clothes and puts them on as best as the popped buttons and torn hooks will allow; and finally, as he opens the pack that JACQUES had dropped in the middle of the road and goes through it. It has food, linen, and a billfold containing money.

BERTRAND
 Paris. I'll go on to Paris--and
 study medicine, like I wanted to--
 like we planned.

He ties the pack back together, slings it over his shoulder, and heads down the road. The camera TRACKS with him.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
 What if I get hungry? Perhaps I
 should go back and dig Jacques up
 and take a few chunks of meat from
 his body, just in case . . . No!
 No! Where do such ideas come to me
 from?

INT. AYMAR'S STUDY--NIGHT

AYMAR is seated at his desk, deep in agonized thought.

AYMAR
 Bertrand was gone, and for one year
 and one month, Aymar could not learn
 what had become of him, or where he
 (MORE)

AYMAR (CONT'D)

had gone. Finally, he concluded what he had suspected from the beginning--that Bertrand had gone to Paris, and that despite the war now raging between France and Germany, he must go to Paris and find the boy. Oh, the terrible disgrace, the ignominy of it--possessing a mythical monster in one's own family, in this age of science and enlightenment!

EXT. PANORAMIC VIEW OF PARIS--A FEW DAYS LATER--DAY

The skyline of Paris as it appeared in 1870 (minus the Eiffel Tower, of course) is overhung by a smoky gray-red sky. Fires burn all over the place; explosions shoot up.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Aymar slipped into Paris on September the third, 1870, a day before its investment by the Germans was complete.

EXT. PARIS STREET--MINUTES LATER

AYMAR, portmanteau in hand, makes his way round a barricade manned by several SOLDIERS. Except for a few CIVILIANS, the street is otherwise deserted. The glass in some of the windows lining the street has been blown out; one can't go far without encountering a shell hole, or a clump of debris. Throughout, they hear the SOUNDS, both far and distant, of war--shooting, cannon fire, shouts, shells bursting.

Suddenly, a shell explodes not far ahead of AYMAR and off to his right. He and the several other CIVILIANS throw themselves onto the ground, and wait a moment before getting back to their feet. AYMAR hurries on to a small cafe that is still intact and open.

INT. CAFE--CONTINUOUS

Only the CAFE PROPRIETOR is in the cafe. He hurries over to AYMAR.

CAFE PROPRIETOR

Yes, monsieur?

AYMAR

Could I have some coffee, please--and some pastries?

CAFE PROPRIETOR

Certainly, monsieur.

(MORE)

CAFE PROPRIETOR (CONT'D)
 (Indicating a table)
 Please be seated.

AYMAR
 Thank you.

AYMAR sits down as the CAFE PROPRIETOR hurries away.

AYMAR (CONT'D)
 Oh, by the way--

The PROPRIETOR stops.

CAFE PROPRIETOR
 Yes, monsieur?

AYMAR
 Could you please bring me the latest editions of all the local papers--if they're still being printed?

CAFE PROPRIETOR
 Some are still being printed, but sporadically. I'll bring you all the latest ones right away, monsieur.

AYMAR
 Thank you.

INT. THE SAME-A FEW MINUTES LATER

AYMAR is seated at the table, sipping his coffee and munching on his pastries and leafing through a newspaper. He folds it up and puts it down onto the table, then takes another paper from the "unread" stack. He opens it and quickly scans its contents, then turns another page or two. Then something catches his attention.

AYMAR (V.O.)
 "Three days ago, the five-year-old daughter of retired General Maurice Saint-Loup died after a short illness, having lost her battle with scarlet fever. The following day, she was interred in Pere-Lachaise Cemetery. The next morning--that is, yesterday--the grave was discovered to have been opened, her small white coffin removed, and her mangled remains scattered all over the ground. The body was discovered by the general and by a coachman whom he had bribed to take him to Pere-Lachaise and let
 (MORE)

AYMAR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 him into its grounds before dawn,
 contrary to law. The general
 collapsed with shock and is now being
 treated at home. The coachman, one
 Jean Robert, was arrested on
 suspicion. A hearing on the matter
 will be held later today, or tomorrow
 morning at the latest, before Gustave
 Le Verrier, juge d'instruction."

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS--NEXT DAY

AYMAR is seated before the desk Judge LE VERRIER, a large
 and florid man with a vivacious and mercurial temperament.

AYMAR
 Thank you for agreeing to see me,
 Your Honor.

LE VERRIER
 And to what do I owe the honor of
 your presence, Monsieur Galliez?

AYMAR
 Well--I--I think I know the criminal
 of Pere-Lachaise. I mean, I think I
 know who is responsible for the
 mutilation of the child's body.

LE VERRIER smiles broadly but coldly.

LE VERRIER
 Really?

AYMAR
 A young man with whom I lived for
 many years, and who has shown that
 propensity on previous occasions.

LE VERRIER
 What is his name?

AYMAR
 Bertrand Caillet.

LE VERRIER
 Of Paris?

AYMAR
 I think he is living in Paris now.
 He ran away from home.

LE VERRIER

So? . . . But you know that we have apprehended the criminal already?

AYMAR

I know, but the man you have may not be guilty of that act.

LE VERRIER

We had a hearing this morning, and bound him over for trial.

AYMAR

Yes, Your Honor, I know.

LE VERRIER

So then it will be a matter for the jury and the judges to decide.

AYMAR

Bertrand Caillet is the man who should be behind bars. Once he begins to commit crimes, you will not hear the end of him. There will be a whole series.

LE VERRIER leans across his desk at AYMAR; his head bobs up and down as he speaks.

LE VERRIER

And if I held you, would there be any further crimes?

AYMAR

Me? Why, what have I to do with the matter?

The judge leans back in his chair.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

Contradictions! Decidedly, the world of men--of men, that is, untrained in law--is full of contradictions. First they know, then they don't know. First they know one thing, then its opposite.

(Brief pause; then,
booming)

I thought you had something to do with this case! But if you have nothing to do with the matter, then what are you putting your nose in here for?

AYMAR shrinks back. Silence; then he recovers his composure and stands up.

AYMAR (CONT'D)
 Forgive me, Your Honor. Good day.

EXT. MONTMARTRE CEMETERY--DAY

AYMAR is walking through Montmartre Cemetery, toward the caretaker's house.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 Aymar remained in Paris and continued to watch the papers. Soon he learned of other graves that had been plundered and corpses mutilated, but not only in Pere-Lachaise Cemetery. Now they were taking place in Montmartre Cemetery as well.

INT. MONTMARTRE CARETAKER'S COTTAGE--CONTINUOUS

The MONTMARTRE CARETAKER, a middle-aged man, escorts AYMAR into the small living room of his cottage. Seated on the sofa is another middle-aged man--the PERE-LACHAISE CARETAKER.

MONTMARTRE CARETAKER
 It's good you came at this precise moment, Monsieur Galliez. My good friend, the caretaker of Pere-Lachaise, where, as you know, similar outrages have occurred, is here.

AYMAR
 It's good to meet you, monsieur.

The PERE-LACHAISE CARETAKER rises and shakes AYMAR's hand.

PERE-LACHAISE CARETAKER
 A pleasure, Monsieur Galliez.

MONTMARTRE CARETAKER
 Please be seated.

AYMAR sits in a chair. The other men sit down on the sofa.

PERE-LACHAISE CARETAKER
 We'll be interested in hearing what you have to say, for we've just come to an astounding conclusion.

AYMAR
 What is that?

PERE-LACHAISE CARETAKER
Tell us first what you have to say.

AYMAR
There is a young man, a distant
relative, who back in our province
showed a similar penchant.

MONTMARTRE CARETAKER
Oh?

AYMAR
He has lately come to Paris, and I
am looking for him, since I know,
somewhat, how to restrain him.

PERE-LACHAISE CARETAKER
I see.

AYMAR
Well, and I imagine that all this is
his work.

MONTMARTRE CARETAKER
I'm afraid that your case has little
to do with ours?

AYMAR
Why?

PERE-LACHAISE CARETAKER
A very careful examination of
footprints around the desecrated
graves shows that, both here and at
Lachaise, the matter involves, not a
young man, but--

AYMAR
--but a wolf--or a dog.

MONTMARTRE CARETAKER
How did you know? We hadn't thought
of a wolf. What makes you say that?

AYMAR
Well--ah--you see, he--ah--well--he
has a trained dog--part wolf, you
understand--and that dog helps him.

PERE-LACHAISE CARETAKER
I see.

(Pause)
We appreciate your sharing this
information with us, monsieur, but
(MORE)

PERE-LACHAISE CARETAKER (CONT'D)

we expect to see the end of this soon. We are placing, every night, heavy spring traps near every newly dug grave, and the marauder--man or dog or wolf, or all three--will soon find himself within a pair of uncomfortably powerful nippers.

Smiling, he dramatizes this using his hands and fingers.

MONTMARTRE CARETAKER

The only trouble is that the war will soon move into our cemeteries. Both here and at Lachaise, cannon are to be mounted, so that Paris will be in a position to resist, if the outer fortifications should fall, which God forbid!

PERE-LACHAISE CARETAKER

You would think that people are in great haste to die, the way there's one war after another in this world. Do they imagine that if they don't kill each other, they are likely never to die? I assure you they are under a mistaken notion, if they do.

AYMAR rises and shakes hands with the two CARETAKERS, and they wish each other goodbye. We cannot hear them, though, for the NARRATOR is speaking.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Time passed, but no further graves were despoiled at any cemetery in Paris. Aymar wondered why this was so, and continued searching for Bertrand.

INT. CANTEEN--SOMETIME LATER--DAY

BERTRAND, wearing the uniform of a National Guardsman, is sitting by himself in a soldiers' canteen. The place is filled with SOLDIERS, GUARDSMEN, and the canteen STAFF, both male and female.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In fact, Bertrand was in the National Guard. How could it have been otherwise? Every young man was in the National Guard.

SOPHIE, a beautiful and dark-featured young woman with dark curly hair--obviously a child of wealth and privilege who is

volunteering as a server at the canteen--is walking among the tables, taking SOLDIERS' orders.

BERTRAND notices her, and is entranced. He stares at her; it is as if he is undergoing a religious experience.

SOPHIE, making her rounds, moves closer to his table. BERTRAND snaps out of his trance and looks away.

SOPHIE notices BERTRAND for the first time. She, too, is entranced. She goes about her duties, but keeps stealing clandestine glances at BERTRAND.

BERTRAND looks up nervously, then when he sees that SOPHIE is not looking at him, starts staring at her meditatively again.

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

The girl who so enraptured Bertrand was a most socially prominent young lady named Sophie de Blumenberg, daughter of the famous banker, Baron de Blumenberg. He was ruthless in his business affairs--more savage than any wild beast--but he could deny his daughter nothing.

Finally, SOPHIE and BERTRAND stare at each other at the same instant. Both are captivated, but their stare is not one of wide-eyed infatuation. Rather, they look at each other as if they have recognized something hidden and vital in the other's soul. This goes on for a long moment.

INT. CARRIAGE--THAT EVENING

SOPHIE is riding home in a carriage. Seated next to her is an intelligent, vigorous, forceful, and charming young military man, CAPTAIN BARRAL DE MONTFORT.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Sophie had a suitor--a young and rising military man of good family, Captain Barral de Montfort. Sophie's family, although they were Jewish, quite approved of him. He loved Sophie madly, but their relationship was as chaste as could be. In many ways, it was as if he loved her from afar.

BARRAL

Ah, my dear Sophie--

SOPHIE
(Preoccupied)
Yes?

BARRAL
I was wondering--

SOPHIE
Yes?

BARRAL
My conduct towards you has been above
reproach, hasn't it?

SOPHIE
Oh, yes, Barral, you've been a perfect
gentleman.

BARRAL
And yet--I love you madly. You know
that, don't you?

SOPHIE
Yes, Barral.

BARRAL
And yet--my life would be complete
if only--if only I could--well--

SOPHIE
(Annoyed)
What?

BARRAL
Oh, I've made you angry. Never mind,
Sophie dear, never mind.

SOPHIE
Barral, you know how I hate it when
you act coy!

BARRAL
Oh, I've made you angry! A thousand
pardons, dear Sophie, a thousand
pardons.

SOPHIE
What is it you want?

BARRAL
I--I was hoping if we could--but
lower the status of our relationship
a notch or two--make it a tad less
spiritual--

SOPHIE

Why, Barral, whatever do you mean?

BARRAL

I was wondering if--you could grant a poor starving suitor--a single kiss.

SOPHIE

Oh, is that all? Barral, you made it sound as if you wanted us to commit suicide together!

BARRAL

Oh, no, Sophie, no! I only meant--if it wouldn't make you feel as if you were compromising your purity--if you would bestow upon a poor, starving suitor a single kiss.

SOPHIE

Of course I can, Barral. Of course I can.

She leans forward, closing her eyes and puckering her lips. Nervously, slowly, BARRAL brings his lips to hers. They join in a brief, sweet kiss, then part. BARRAL is overcome with rapture, but puts so much energy into suppressing the feelings that have surged up within him that he can barely speak.

BARRAL

Oh, Sophie! Oh, Sophie!

SOPHIE

Was the kiss memorable, dear Barral?

BARRAL

Oh, Sophie, Sophie, it--it was like a canteen of water to a man dying of thirst.

SOPHIE

(With a little smile)
I'm glad.

SOPHIE retreats back into her thoughts. Throughout this scene, she has seemed preoccupied, thinking, of course, of BERTRAND.

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM--NIGHT

SOPHIE is lying in bed in her ornately-furnished bedroom. She is wide awake, staring wide-eyed at the strange shadows surrounding her.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

As I learned from reading Sophie's diary, which, mirabile dictu, still exists, and which I was able to locate without too much trouble, we learn that she was terrified of night and the darkness. Many other people shared her fear, of course, but hers was a much more profound, much more enveloping fear.

SOPHIE sits up in bed, carefully studying first one cluster of shadows, then another.

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

She felt as if the darkness of night had engulfed her. The present vanished. Even the Middle Ages vanished. She had retreated to the pitch-black of prehistoric times. The darkness of the room seemed to be alive with swirling shadowy figures. Each new shape appeared more real than the last. They were but waiting for her to close her eyes, and then would come plunging down upon her.

Slowly, by degrees, SOPHIE forces herself to lie back down.

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

In the same manner in which darkness concluded the day, death concluded life. She exhausted herself in sterile attempts to pierce the mystery of the tomb. What was it like to be dead? It was like this--darkness. No, it wasn't like that at all. It was like complete nothingness. Absolute blankness. But within this nothingness, something more horrible than the mind can imagine.

EXT. JEWISH SECTION OF PERE-LACHAISE CEMETERY--OVERCAST DAY

The BARON DE BLUMENBERG and his wife, the BARONESS DE BLUMENBERG, are standing round SOPHIE's open grave. BARRAL, his fury mounting, stands round it as well.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Sophie had imagined her own death a thousand times.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 She had imagined being buried in the Jewish section of Pere-Lachaise, with her grieving parents and Barral standing above her.

BARON DE BLUMENBERG
 (Struggling to maintain his composure)
 My dear child--my own, dear child--

BARONESS DE BLUMENBERG
 (Weeping piteously)
 So young! And just married! My baby Sophie!

BARRAL
 He killed you. I'll find him and kill him if it's the last thing I ever do! I swear I'll kill him, Sophie! You'll be avenged! And so will I. I'll kill him. I'll kill him.

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM--AS BEFORE

SOPHIE is lying back in her bed, and her expression is now calmer, and more reflective.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 But on this night, Sophie no longer felt entirely alone in the darkness. When she had looked into Bertrand's eyes, she had sensed--known--that he shared her nightmares, her dreams of death. She had found someone who understood.

INT. BERTRAND'S ONE-ROOM FLAT--THE SAME NIGHT

BERTRAND is lying in bed, thrashing about in the grip of his hungers and obsessions.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 Bertrand too, of course, had his nightly fears--and hungers, as well.

EXT. PARIS BACK STREET--SOMETIME EARLIER--NIGHT

BERTRAND is lurking in an alley, quickly taking off his clothes. A MIDDLE-AGED PROSTITUTE is walking down the deserted back street. Soon BERTRAND is naked, and gets down on all fours. The PROSTITUTE approaches the alley in which Bertrand is hiding. As she passes by, the wolf springs out, knocks her to the ground, and rips out her throat.

Her screams last barely a few seconds. The wolf greedily gulps down the blood flowing from her throat, then raises its head and howls in victory

EXT. THE SAME--A MOMENT LATER

The wolf drags the MIDDLE-AGED PROSTITUTE's body back into the alley. Then he begins to chew and pull at the woman's left arm at its socket.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Bertrand still slaked his lupine hunger occasionally with prostitutes or vagrants--people whose absence would hardly be noticed. He no longer needed to plunder graves, or even to kill very often, because he had devised a cunning plan.

EXT. THE SAME--A WHILE LATER

BERTRAND is himself again, and is finishing putting his clothes back on. The PROSTITUTE's body, stripped of its clothes and missing its arms and legs, lies beside him. The woman's limbs are piled together nearby.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Once he had glugged himself on a fresh corpse's body and blood, he would not leave the body behind. He would chew and tear off its limbs and take them back to his flat with him.

As the NARRATOR speaks, BERTRAND picks up a large canvas bag from the ground and begins putting the limbs inside it.

INT. BERTRAND'S ONE-ROOM FLAT--AS BEFORE

BERTRAND is thrashing about and growling. It seems as if he is about to transform.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And then, whenever the hunger and the urge to become a wolf came upon him, he would satisfy the hunger and remain a man--at least for the time being.

As the NARRATOR speaks, BERTRAND hops out of bed and hurries across the room on all fours. He pokes his head under a piece of cloth in a corner and drags out a female human arm. He munches on it, growling and grunting like a wolf--but though his countenance looks dreadful, he remains in human form.

INT. THE SAME--LATER

BERTRAND is lying naked in bed, covered with saliva and bits of meat from the corpse's arm. He looks drugged, but slowly, comprehension begins to dawn in his eyes.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Later, a sated and stuporous Bertrand thought of Sophie, the high-born beauty who volunteered at the canteen. Somehow, he knew not exactly how, she understood him--and could help him.

INT. THE CANTEEN--THE NEXT DAY

BERTRAND is seated by himself. SOPHIE is moving about the canteen, and steals a surreptitious glance at BERTRAND. He returns it, and their eyes meet. With his glance, he invites her to join him. Hurriedly, under his spell, SOPHIE hurries over and sits down with BERTRAND.

SOPHIE

Monsieur.

BERTRAND

Mademoiselle.

Pause.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)

You have rescued me from my nightmares.

SOPHIE is stunned, and cannot speak for a long moment.

SOPHIE

How--how did you know?

BERTRAND

Know what, mademoiselle?

SOPHIE

About my nightmares--my fear of the darkness--my fear of death.

BERTRAND

I--I cannot exactly say. I can only say that--I knew you could understand me--and help me.

SOPHIE

I felt the exact same way about you.

Brief pause.

BERTRAND

Mademoiselle--may I impose upon you--
and ask you to come see me tonight?

SOPHIE

Oh, monsieur, nothing would make me
happier.

He extends his hand. She takes it.

BERTRAND

My name is Bertrand. Bertrand
Caillet.

SOPHIE

Mine is Sophie. Sophie de Blumenberg.

INT. BERTRAND'S ONE-ROOM FLAT--THAT NIGHT

BERTRAND and SOPHIE are seated together on the tiny sofa.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Bertrand cleaned all of the gore,
all of the evidence of his secret
other side, from his flat, and Sophie
came over that night.

BERTRAND sits stiff and anxiously. SOPHIE reaches over to
embrace him. He pulls away.

SOPHIE

Oh, Bertrand, don't you love me?

BERTRAND

I love you so madly it were better
if I . . .

SOPHIE

Then quick, put your arms around me!

Pause. He cannot keep it from her any longer.

BERTRAND

Sophie, I--I have a disease.

SOPHIE

A disease?

BERTRAND

Yes.

SOPHIE

What kind of a disease?

BERTRAND
A most rare and terrible disease.

SOPHIE
Is it contagious?

BERTRAND
Oh, no! But it--it cannot be cured--
exactly--but it can be treated--it
can be contained--for a while, anyway.

SOPHIE
How, then?

Pause. BERTRAND lowers his head.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Bertrand, how can it be treated? Is
there anything I can do?

BERTRAND looks at her in silence.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
There is, isn't there? Please tell
me.

BERTRAND
Sophie--you're a beautiful and pure
young woman--but you have--feelings
for me, don't you?

SOPHIE
Yes, Bertrand. Yes.

BERTRAND
You would much rather give in to
your feelings for me than remain a
pure, proper young lady--wouldn't
you?

SOPHIE
Oh, yes, Bertrand, yes!

BERTRAND
Very well, then, I--I'll explain.

INT. THE SAME--SOMETIME LATER

BERTRAND and SOPHIE lie naked and asleep on the bed. The
crook of SOPHIE's right arm has a gash in it, and the arm is
coated with small patches of dried blood. Suddenly, BERTRAND
shoots up in bed, gasping. SOPHIE awakes; she yearns to return
to sleep.

SOPHIE
Can't you keep quiet?

Suddenly she realizes the condition BERTRAND is in.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Oh, you poor child.

She takes him in her arms, and he snuggles up to her like a baby.

BERTRAND
Please . . .

SOPHIE
(Resignedly)
If you must. It's on the table.

Anxious and more than a little angry at the entire situation, BERTRAND gets out of bed, strikes a match, and lights a candle, which is stuck into the neck of an empty wine bottle. He picks up the small knife and wield it. It shines menacingly in the candle light.

BERTRAND pulls the cover down, exposing all of SOPHIE's naked body. He runs his fingers over her right shoulder and pauses. Then, with a slash of the knife, he cuts a wound into her shoulder. Thick drops of blood seep from the wound and run from it. BERTRAND sets the knife down on the table and climbs back into bed, atop SOPHIE. His puts his lips to her wound and, making obscene smacking and sucking SOUNDS, starts to lap up her flowing blood. SOPHIE, in a kind of trance, holds and caresses him.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Oh, my poor baby--

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE SAME--MONTHS LATER--NIGHT

The previous scene replays itself, only without either BERTRAND or SOPHIE uttering a word. It also plays itself out more rapidly; clearly it is now a familiar procedure. The only additional differences are that SOPHIE looks much weaker and more emaciated than before, and her naked body is now covered with knife-wounds, some old and partially faded, some fresher and livid. As this scene unfolds, the NARRATOR speaks.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Months passed.
(MORE)

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

Thanks to Sophie's ministrations and sacrifice, Bertrand no longer underwent the transformation. The Germans were beaten back and defeated, but while the French government was in exile in Versailles, a new government--the famous Commune of 1871--was proclaimed in Paris. Bertrand remained with the National Guard, but discipline was so lax that, just like during the war, he had little to do--and certainly no hazardous duties to perform. Sophie's parents had fled the city with their valuables long before, but Sophie had elected to stay behind with Bertrand. Aymar Galliez remained in the city and continued his search for the young man he called his nephew--

EXT. A STREET--PIEPUS SECTION OF PARIS--DAY

AYMAR is walking down a city street in the Piepus section of Paris. The street and the buildings lining it show marks of the damage caused by the war. AYMAR passes a barricade, manned by several VOLUNTEERS.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

--and one day, he found him.

AYMAR approaches the Church of the Fathers and Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Piepus. Nearby stand two adjoining buildings--a monastery and a convent.

INT. SACRISTY OF PIEPUS CHURCH--A MOMENT LATER

RAOUL RIGAULT, the Prefect de Police, a witty and wily man of middle years, is interrogating a JESUIT as a NATIONAL GUARDSMAN stands watch. As the scene ensues, AYMAR enters and remains in the doorway, watching.

RIGAULT

Hat is your profession?

JESUIT

Servant of God.

RIGAULT

God? What is your master's address?

JESUIT

He is everywhere.

RIGAULT

I must make a note of that. So-and-so, styling himself a servant of God. Citizen God, a vagabond without fixed address.

JESUIT

My son--

RIGAULT

There are no sons or fathers here. Or children either. Only citizens.

(To the NATIONAL
GUARDSMAN)

Take him away.

The GUARDSMAN does so. Then AYMAR enters, and RIGAULT greets him vivaciously.

RIGAULT (CONT'D)

Ah, Monsieur Galliez! How the wheel turns and always comes back again! You took part in the Commune of '48 and still bear the scars of that struggle. And now, a new Commune has been declared--one that, hopefully, will last.

AYMAR

We shall see.

RIGAULT

But why are you still in Paris? Still searching for this mysterious murderer--or beast--or both--that you claim threatens all of Paris?

AYMAR

Yes.

RIGAULT

But what brings you here?

AYMAR

Stories in the papers about digging being done in the vaults here beneath the church--and of bodies being discovered.

RIGAULT

Yes, Monsieur Galliez. Bodies of poor monks and nuns who could not keep their unnatural vows of celibacy, and were tortured to death by their

(MORE)

RIGAULT (CONT'D)

evil and repressed brothers and sisters.

AYMAR

Oh, come now, that's just anti-clericalist nonsense.

RIGAULT

What! Has the old pamphleteer against the Church and its abuses suddenly become a defender of it?

AYMAR

Well, I did once study for the priesthood. I abandoned my studies, but I plan on resuming them shortly.

RIGAULT

Ah, but you must not let your newfound enthusiasm for the Church blind you to its abuses and perversions.

AYMAR

I haven't. It's just that they've been saying these same old wives' tales since the Revolution--monks and nuns having affairs and being murdered for it, the children of those illicit unions being murdered and buried beneath monasteries and convents, secret torture rooms, and all that rubbish. Every time one of those stories has been checked out, it's been proven false.

RIGAULT

Perhaps not this time, monsieur. It's true, many of the corpses we discovered beneath this church are very old, and are probably the bodies of monks and nuns from the monastery and the convent next door.

AYMAR

And don't forget, during the Reign of Terror, the bodies of many executed victims were secretly buried in cemeteries and churches.

RIGAULT

I haven't forgotten that. But a few of the corpses we have found are-- more recent, shall we say.

(MORE)

RIGAULT (CONT'D)

The newspapers have inflated this story out of all proportion, it's true, but the fact remains. And, like a beast sensing blood, you have come here to investigate.

AYMAR

I have.

RIGAULT

Very well, then, you may go down to the crypt and have a look.

INT. CRYPT OF CHURCH--A MOMENT LATER

AYMAR enters the dark catacomb, which is lit with torches and lanterns. Much of the ground has been dug up, and several disarticulated skeletons and one complete rotting corpse lay strewn about, both on the ground and in the pits. A few empty coffins also lie scattered about. One unopened coffin sits apart from the debris, and a National Guardsman--BERTRAND-- is seated upon it.

AYMAR is silent for a moment as a mass of conflicting emotions lays hold of him. BERTRAND looks at him and gapes, startled. Neither speaks for a moment.

AYMAR

Working with corpses, Bertrand?
Appropriate.

BERTRAND

Uncle . . .

AYMAR

Your specialty, isn't it?

AYMAR sits down on the coffin beside BERTRAND.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

Do you think that I've forgotten you and your tastes?

BERTRAND

You are cruel.

AYMAR

(Laughing bitterly)
And you are evidently nothing but kind-hearted.

BERTRAND

I have suffered.

AYMAR

And those whom you slew? They did not suffer, I suppose. There was, let me see--Jacques, first of all. What, have you forgotten him? Well, I suppose when one is so terribly busy--

BERTRAND lowers his head.

BERTRAND

Uncle.

AYMAR

To think that I ever cared for a monster such as you.

BERTRAND

Uncle . . .

AYMAR

(Growing angry)

Yes, a monster. All those people you killed--all those graves that you desecrated. You beast. You--you werewolf!

BERTRAND begins to let out an anguished cry, but shoves his knuckles into his mouth, stifling it. He calms down and removes his knuckles from his mouth. He starts to sob.

BERTRAND

Oh, isn't it bad enough to know oneself a werewolf, without having it thrown at one as a reproach?

AYMAR's anger cools. Sympathy for BERTRAND overcomes him.

AYMAR

I'm sorry, Bertrand. For years I tried to spare you from knowing. I tried to help you. I wouldn't even tell your mother what was wrong. It was hard, at times.

BERTRAND

Mother never knew?

AYMAR

I don't think so.

BERTRAND

How is she?

AYMAR

Well--I guess she's all right.

BERTRAND

What do you mean?

No response.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)

Tell me! I want to know.

AYMAR

(Sighs)

Your mother became pregnant shortly after you disappeared, and it made much scandal in the village. Jacques's mother especially talked a lot and accused me of sinful relations with your mother, which of course wasn't true. But Francoise had seen a neighbor--young Guillemin--sneaking around the house, and she took a wild guess and accused him of having an affair with your mother, and of fathering her unborn child. Your mother admitted this was so. Then, one day, she and Guillemin ran off together.

BERTRAND

Where to?

AYMAR

(Sighs again)

No one knows.

BERTRAND

Another of my secret sins--bearing fruit.

AYMAR

What?

Pause; then AYMAR realizes, to his horror, what BERTRAND means.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

What? That, too? Good God!

BERTRAND

Yes. That, too. But it is all past. All over now. Thank God for that.

AYMAR

What do you mean, it's all past.

BERTRAND
It's over. I'm cured.

The two men continue their conversation, but we cannot hear them, for the NARRATOR speaks.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And so Bertrand told the man he called his uncle, and who was the only father he had ever known, all about his life in Paris, about his secret life as a werewolf, and about Sophie, and how she had evidently cured him of his affliction. It was just like the old fairy tales, Aymar thought-- the beast was cured of its spell and became a man again through the love of a beautiful young woman.

INT. THE SAME--A WHILE LATER

Their conversation is over. AYMAR rises, pauses, and puts his hand on BERTRAND's shoulder. The two men regard each other silently, then AYMAR breaks away and walks toward the steps. Sad and a little hopeful, BERTRAND watches. AYMAR pauses and looks back at BERTRAND. The camera ZOOMS IN for a CLOSE UP of AYMAR.

AYMAR (V.O.)
And the sheep shall lie down with the wolf, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares. I wonder--

INT. BERTRAND'S ONE-ROOM FLAT--NIGHT

BERTRAND, looking agitated, and SOPHIE, looking weak and as pale as death, lie side by side, naked, in bed.

BERTRAND
I can smell death in the air.

SOPHIE
Don't, Bertrand.

BERTRAND
Death--and rotting flesh.

SOPHIE
Stop it.

BERTRAND
Don't worry, Sophie, I am--I am cured of my affliction.

SOPHIE

Yes.

Pause.

BERTRAND

Sophie--the Communards are turnings on each other--on the people. The government in Versailles is arming itself to retake Paris. They'll kill us all--if the Communards don't kill us first.

SOPHIE

Yes.

(Pause)

Bertrand--remember how we sometimes talked about committing suicide together? By jumping off a roof? Perhaps we should do that? It won't be dying, not really--just another, wilder form of pleasure.

BERTRAND

Perhaps it would.

(Pause)

But there's no need for that, darling. I'm cured. I'm cured.

SOPHIE

Yes--

Almost imperceptibly, she falls asleep. BERTRAND lies back in bed.

BERTRAND (V.O.)

I'm cured. I'm cured.

(Pause)

I'm cured, I'm cured!

He is growing very agitated. He looks hungrily at the sleeping SOPHIE.

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

Don't let me weaken! God! Don't let me weaken!

He turns away. Pause. He looks back at her and begins to weaken. Involuntarily, his mouth opens, and his moves it--and his bared teeth--closer to SOPHIE's jugular vein. Suddenly he stops himself and recoils.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)

(Aloud)

No, no! Oh God! Keep me from that!

Pause. He calms down a little.

BERTRAND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'm killing her slowly anyhow. Why
not have done with it?

Pause. He gets out of bed.

BERTRAND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
If I must, at least let it be someone
besides her.

EXT. STREET A FEW BLOCKS AWAY--MOMENTS LATER

BERTRAND, naked, his clothes piled beside him, is lurking in an alley. A GUARDSMAN walks by. BERTRAND crouches, ready to spring. In an instant, he metamorphoses into the wolf. Then, with a howl, the wolf springs.

The wolf leaps upon the GUARDSMAN, but misses its intended mark--sinking its teeth into the man's flesh--and the GUARDSMAN, while startled and emitting a cry, has the split-second of freedom and clarity he needs to fling the wolf--which he cannot see--away from him. It crashes into a wall and falls dazed to the floor. In the process, it metamorphoses back into BERTRAND. The GUARDSMAN turns and sees a man, not a wolf. He leaps upon BERTRAND, pinning him to the pavement with his knee, and punching him in the face over and over.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM OF PRISON--NEXT DAY--DAY

BERTRAND is seated across the table from AYMAR.

AYMAR
Bertrand, what happened?

BERTRAND
Nothing. Leave me here. I want to die.

AYMAR
Where is Sophie?

BERTRAND
I don't know. I don't want to know.
I must never see her again. I've
done enough harm in my life.

AYMAR
Bertrand--

BERTRAND
Don't try and save me anymore, and
don't let Sophie know I'm here.

AYMAR

I have long had no intention of saving you. On the contrary, if you hadn't assured me at our reunion that you were cured, I can tell you that I would have had you then where you are now. And I shall do my best to see that you do not escape this time.

(Rising)

Goodbye, Bertrand.

BERTRAND

(Avoiding AYMAR's
gaze)

Goodbye, uncle.

INT. LIVING ROOM/STUDY OF AYMAR'S FLAT--NIGHT

AYMAR is writing furiously at his brief by the light of gas-jets.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And so Bertrand gained the Court's permission to write an unsolicited brief for the prosecution against Bertrand, the boy whom he had struggled to help for so long. In one long feverish burst of energy, he wrote the brief we have here with us now--the primary document dealing with this case, but as we have seen, by no means the only one. In it he put forth the bare facts of the case, together with his thoughts on lycanthropy, and his firm belief that Bertrand must never see the light of day again. But at Bertrand's court-martial, all did not go according to Aymar's plan.

INT. COURTROOM--TWO DAYS LATER--EVENING

The courtroom is filled with only a few people--a couple of SPECTATORS, a CLERK, two GUARDS, BERTRAND, and AYMAR. The president of the court, GOIS, presides from the bench. BERTRAND stands before him.

GOIS

Here is a case that would have led the accused to the stake in former days. But we deal with such matters differently than the Holy Catholic Church did.

(MORE)

GOIS (CONT'D)

Here is no self-interest seeking to oppress a people and hold it in subjugation by means of enforced ignorance and superstition. Here is progress, freedom, and intelligence.

GOIS takes up AYMAR's brief.

GOIS (CONT'D)

According to this unsolicited brief presented to the court, we have here a young man deluded by I know not what disease into thinking himself a mad dog.

AYMAR scowls and fumes at this misinterpretation of his argument.

GOIS (CONT'D)

This court therefore agrees that, inasmuch as the accused is suffering from an illness which leads him to go mad at times; that inasmuch as he shows by his present demeanor that his violence is only temporary; that inasmuch as this court tries only crimes, and does not propose to cure disease by jail or execution, that this court decrees that the accused be turned over to the infirmary at the prison of La Sante for treatment, and there be guarded until cure.

AYMAR buries his head in his hands in despair.

Suddenly, a MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE of the Commune government barges into the room, out of breath. He flourishes a telegram.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER

Excuse me--forgive me--but I have here a telegram--a most important telegram--

GOIS

Make it quick!

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER

The telegram says that--the Versailles troops have forced an entrance into the city--they're pouring in. The new government is doomed.

General consternation as everyone--except for AYMAR and BERTRAND--prepares to leave the courtroom.

EXT. PANORAMIC VIEW OF PARIS--A FEW DAYS LATER--DAY

Once again, as in the days of the Franco-Prussian war, parts of the city are in flames. Barricades and explosions are everywhere; we hear the SOUNDS of gunfire and shells bursting.

INT. MINISTRY ON THE RUE ST. DOMINIQUE--DAY

BARRAL, dressed in his fine uniform, slightly drunk and in an ugly mood, paces about a hallway of the Ministry, fuming.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And what of Captain Barral de Montfort, Sophie's former suitor, who for months had not seen his beloved, and who had vowed revenge on the Guardsman whom he knew, by diligent inquiry and spying, had taken Sophie away from him?

BARRAL

(Muttering)

I'll kill that bastard--I'll kill that bastard if it's the last thing I ever do--

A GUARDSMAN enters the hallway and, seeing how oddly BARRAL is acting, raises his bayonet and challenges BARRAL.

GUARDSMAN

Halt! Who goes there?

BARRAL

Captain Barral de Montfort--if it's any concern of yours.

GUARDSMAN

Captain, I was just looking for you. Your orders are to ride out to the barricade on the Place Voltaire and see what is happening there. Then report back to the Ministry.

BARRAL

All right, all right. Say--you're a guardsman with the 204th battalion, aren't you?

GUARDSMAN

Yes, captain.

BARRAL

You fellows seem to be a rare pack
of scoundrels. One of you in
particular. That's a battalion that
needs a good purging!

EXT. MAIRIE AT THE PLACE VOLTAIRE--SOON AFTER

A barricade has been erected, and GUARDSMEN and CIVILIANS
are gathered round it, but no one seems to know what to do,
or to have any idea about what is going on. Several WOMEN
are sewing sacks to make sandbags.

Wandering among the crowd is SOPHIE, who is thinner and
frailer than ever, although now a normal supply of blood is
flowing through her veins. She is quite mad.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Why, when it was clear that the
Commune was doomed, and that the
Commune was even more repressive
than the government it sought to
replace, did people volunteer to
defend the city against the
encroaching Versailles government?
Some joined because they had been
starving for months, and yearned for
free and regular meals. Others joined
because they were outraged at
Versailles. And Sophie? She joined
because she wanted to die. She joined
because she itched to go mad. She
was convinced that Bertrand was dead,
and if she could only see his body,
then she would gladly kill herself.

BARRAL comes riding up on his horse. SOPHIE recognizes him.
As he brings his horse to a halt, he recognizes her as well.
Silence as they stare at one another--SOPHIE with virulent
madness, BARRAL with shock. Suddenly SOPHIE points at him.

SOPHIE

There he is! There's the dirty
traitor!

General ad lib--on the order of "Kill him! Kill the traitor!"--
as the crowd surrounds BARRAL, pulls him off his horse, and
begins to beat him mercilessly. SOPHIE watches, smiling
malevolently.

EXT. A PARIS BOULEVARD--DAYS LATER--DAY

The camera TRACKS and PANS down the boulevard. All is deathly
still. Evidence of destruction is everywhere; dead bodies
line the streets.

Some WOUNDED stumble about, searching for help.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Soon the fighting was over. The Commune fell, as everyone had known it would. The Versailles government, once again, in power, began a series of savage reprisals--just as the government of the Commune had.

BARRAL, badly wounded and bruised, limping and bandaged (especially his right arm), his right eye missing, but still alive and functional, stumbles along.

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

Barral recovered from the wounds that his beloved Sophie had, for all intents and purposes, inflicted upon him--although the beating he received had badly damaged his right arm and caused his right eye to pop out of its socket.

SOPHIE wanders by. She and BARRAL see each other. BARRAL walks over to her.

BARRAL

Oh, Sophie--oh, Sophie--

SOPHIE

(Laughing)

Oh, poor Barral--you poor fool!

Laughing, she gets down on her knees and tries to undo his pants. Horrified, he makes her get back to her feet with as much energy as his weakened condition will allow.

BARRAL

Sophie--oh, poor Sophie--

(Pause)

Sophie, will you marry me?

SOPHIE begins to cry.

SOPHIE

What? Faithful, loyal Barral. After all I've one to you!

INT. BERTRAND'S ONE-ROOM FLAT--NIGHT

Scene begins with a CLOSE UP of one of the gas jets in BERTRAND's one-room flat. The jet is open and hissing. The camera PULLS BACK from the gas jet and PANS slowly across the room to SOPHIE, who is lying on the bed, still, open-mouthed, and dead.

EXT. ANOTHER PARIS BOULEVARD--DAY

Much the same setting and situation as the last scene but one. AYMAR, looking none the worse for wear, is walking along. He takes in the scene with a grim rage and amusement.

AYMAR

(Aloud)

I was not so wrong. Why stop at Paris? Why not destroy the entire world? It doesn't deserve to exist, anyhow. Rise up! Danton! Marat! Robespierre! Why aren't you here to see that the job is done right?

He walks on.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

Minor werewolves, all of you! I know a true werewolf!

EXT. LE SANTE SANITARIUM--DAY

AYMAR walks up the path towards the sanitarium's front door.

INT. SANITARIUM DIRECTOR'S OFFICE--MINUTES LATER

AYMAR is seated across a desk from the SANITARIUM DIRECTOR.

SANITARIUM DIRECTOR

He is in good health, but he has moments of rage. Then he smashes the furniture or attacks the guards.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM OF SANITARIUM--MINUTES LATER

AYMAR and BERTRAND are seated at a table in the small conference room.

BERTRAND

Moments of rage? Why not? Who wouldn't have them in this awful hole?

AYMAR

You don't seem so anxious to die anymore, do you?

BERTRAND hangs his head.

BERTRAND

Please, uncle, get me out of here. They treat me so miserably.

AYMAR

Get you out? How can I? And do you think that you ought to be out? Wolves belong in a cage in the zoological garden.

(Thoughtful pause)

But, why not? Why should you, a lone wolf, be shut for an individual crime, when mass crimes go unpunished? When all society can turn into a wolf and be celebrated with fife and drums, and with flags curling in the wind? Why then shouldn't this dog have his day too?

(Brief pause)

Do you ever think of Sophie?

BERTRAND winces. Pause; then he shrugs.

BERTRAND

Sophie. Yes, I think of Sophie.

(Fiercely)

Or any woman!

AYMAR

Well, I shall see what can be done, but first tell me: Do you ever--well--change?

BERTRAND hangs his head again.

AYMAR (CONT'D)

An indelicate question, huh? Like asking a girl if she--yes, I quite understand.

EXT. DUMAS SANITARIUM--SAINT-NAZARE--DAY

Establishing shot of the Dumas Sanitarium, a very pleasant-looking place surrounded by gardens and, at its outer perimeter, a brick wall.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And so Aymar managed to get Bertrand transferred to a sanitarium in Saint-Nazare run by a Doctor Dumas--one of the pay asylums, licensed by the State.

INT. BERTRAND'S CELL--DAY

PAUL, a large, beefy attendant, enters BERTRAND's cell in the asylum. BERTRAND is seated at a table, smiling and looking very peaceful.

Suddenly he howls and springs upon PAUL, wrestling him to the ground and biting and scratching him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But even in this new and supposedly modern establishment, Bertrand's behavior did not improve. One day soon after his arrival, he assaulted an attendant named Paul.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE IN SANITARIUM--DAY

A DOCTOR is bandaging up PAUL, who is alive and functional but looks terrible.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Paul swore revenge.

INT. BERTRAND'S CELL--DAY

BERTRAND sits alone in his cell, which has been stripped of every piece of furniture and every item.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Because of this assault, all the furniture was taken from Bertrand's cell. He was totally alone--but not quite.

INT. DWARF WOMAN'S CELL--ADJOINING BERTRAND'S--CONTINUOUS

A small DWARF WOMAN with somewhat Oriental features walks around her cell, smiling to herself. She is dressed in tattered, soiled clothes. Smearred lumps of feces stain the floor and walls of her cell.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In the cell next to Bertrand's was a French nobleman's daughter--a dwarf who resembled a small Chinese woman. She was over forty years old and had been in various asylums all her life. And she loved to sing.

The DWARF WOMAN begins to sing "Au Clair de la Lune."

INT. BERTRAND'S CELL--CONTINUOUS

BERTRAND listens to the DWARF WOMAN sing. He is enraptured.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And Bertrand loved to listen to her sing.

(MORE)

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

In his depleted mental and physical condition, he began to imagine that it was Sophie singing from the next room.

BERTRAND

Sophie . . . Sophie . . .

INT. THE SAME--SOME WEEKS LATER--NIGHT

BERTRAND has shimmied up to the oval-shaped and barred window situated high up on the wall of his cell. He has reached his hands through the permanent opening for ventilation above the window and is pulling on the window's stone framework, which is loose. He strains and pulls, and the bars, window, and their framework quickly come loose.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

One night, Bertrand realized that listening to the woman sing was not enough.

The bars, window, and their stone framework break loose. With the dexterity of a ballet dancer, BERTRAND lands on his feet, then gently lays the framework and its contents on the floor. Then he rolls up his cot--the one remaining item in his cell--shimmies back up to the hole in the wall, and shoves the cot through.

EXT. SANITARIUM WALL--CONTINUOUS

The cot falls three stories to the ground and flops open. BERTRAND crawls out of the window, sets his bare feet firmly on the ledge, and begins to edge his way to the left, toward the window of the DWARF WOMAN'S cell.

INT. DWARF WOMAN'S CELL--CONTINUOUS

PAUL stands before the DWARF WOMAN, extending a stick of barley sugar to her.

PAUL

And if I give you this, little Chink,
you'll do whatever I want you to do?

The DWARF WOMAN giggles in response.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Good.

He hands her the barley sugar. She greedily begins to lick it.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Will you lick me like that? And let
me put my fingers up you? And--

As this scene has been unfolding, BERTRAND has shuffled into view in the cell window. Suddenly PAUL notices him and starts.

The window crashes, and the wolf leaps into the cell. Fragments of BERTRAND's torn clothing cling to the wolf's body, and some fall off it. In virtually the same motion, the wolf springs up and tears open PAUL's carotid artery with its teeth. The blood spurts in a high arc from the wound as PAUL collapses dead on the floor. The arc diminishes, and the blood flow dwindles to a steady trickle.

The wolf had moved out of the frame, and now BERTRAND steps into it. He shuffles out of the remaining fragments of his clothes and then stares at the DWARF WOMAN. Long pause as he takes the reality in; she does not at all look like SOPHIE, as he had imagined.

BERTRAND

Sophie? What have they done to you?

There is the SOUND of a tumult in the hall outside--running feet, shouts. BERTRAND scoops the DWARF WOMAN up in his arms and hops with her to the smashed window.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)

Come, Sophie, let us die together.

He hops up onto the window sill, still carrying the woman in his arms, and leaps out the window.

EXT. OUTSIDE--CONTINUOUS

BERTRAND and the DWARF WOMAN he still holds in his arms fall three stories to the ground below, missing BERTRAND's cot by a wide margin. There is a sickening thud as they strike the ground. Then their dead bodies separate and roll away from each other, then lie sprawled out on the lawn.

EXT. SAINT-NAZARE CEMETERY--A FEW DAYS LATER--DAY

BARRAL, now wearing an eye patch over his right eye, and an ORDERLY walk through the cemetery.

ORDERLY

You come a week too late, monsieur.
I'm sorry--you seemed so eager to
meet Monsieur Bertrand Caillet.

BARRAL

Yes.

(Grimly)

Death robs me of both my love and my hate.

The ORDERLY comes to a stop, and BARRAL follows suit. The ORDERLY points out a freshly-covered grave.

ORDERLY

There is Monsieur Caillet's grave.

BARRAL

Thank you. Please, leave me now.

ORDERLY

Yes, monsieur.

The ORDERLY turns and walks away. BARRAL hurries over to Bertrand's grave, gets down on his hands and knees, and moves his face to within inches of the earth.

BARRAL

(A snarl)

I'd like to dig you up, you dog, and spit in your face.

CUT TO:

INT. NARRATOR'S LIVING ROOM/STUDY--SEVERAL HOURS AFTER THE LAST SCENE THAT TOOK PLACE THERE

The NARRATOR closes his bound manuscript and smiles at ELIANE and his FRIEND. Both of them are shocked and stunned by what they have heard, especially ELIANE. Silence for a moment.

FRIEND

And is that the end?

NARRATOR

Perhaps. I mean, where shall I end my tale? Like I said, this has neither beginning nor end, but only a perpetual unfolding. A multi-petaled blossom of strange botany.

Pause. The NARRATOR reaches down and takes up a file folder.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

However--several years after Bertrand's death, ten graves at the cemetery in Saint-Nazare were exhumed as part of a sanitary research

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
project. The report on this contains
ten autopsy reports on the remains
exhumed, including one that might
interest you.

He takes a piece of paper from the file and reads from it.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
"Monsieur C, Bertrand. Cause of
death: Cerebral hemorrhage. Died
August 9th, 1873. Buried August
10th, 1873. Exhumed June 10th, 1881.
Length of inhumation, seven years,
ten months. The following case was
reported to the conservator of the
cemetery, and by him forwarded to
the department of criminal justice.
Evidently a case of grave robbery,
or a grim prank of the gravediggers."

As the NARRATOR speaks the lines below, we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM

The camera PANS around the partially-decomposed body of the
wolf lying on the autopsy table, looking exactly like the
autopsy report describes it. The camera finally comes to a
stop on the wolf's open-mouthed, strangely pathetic face.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
"The boy of Monsieur C was not found
in the coffin, instead that of a
dog, which despite having been nearly
eight years in the ground was still
incompletely destroyed. The fleshy
parts and the furry hide are found
"mingled in a fatty mass of
indistinguishable composition"--that
is, adipocere. "A nauseous odor
spreads from the body. No insects."

FADE OUT

THE END