BLACK EASTER

Screenplay by

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Based On The Novel By

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For the experimentally minded, be forewarned:

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

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

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JAMES BLISH

OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE, FOLLOWED BY:

Preparation of the Operator

INT. THE MAGICIAN’S OFFICE – MORNING

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

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

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

At his ease behind the desk:

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

WARE

--No, I can not help you ‘persuade’ a woman.

(Beat.)

Should you desire her raped, I can arrange that. Should you desire to rape her yourself, that is also manageable. With difficulty – more possibly than if one simply accepted one’s notions and with obvious discretion acted accordingly.

(Beat.)

Is that your purpose here today? To hide your nature? You contemplate a dangerous cloak.

CLOSE UP:
Jack watches Baines watch Ware.

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

BAINES
You’re very frank.

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

BAINES
No trade secrets? Arcane lore?

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

BAINES
I enjoy secrets.

WARE
The main schoolism of magic is ‘arcane’ only because most people don’t know what books to read, or where to find them. Given those books you could learn everything I know in a year.
(Beat.)
To make something of the material, of course, you’d require talent, as magic is also an art.
(Beat.)
With books and the gift, even you could become a magician – as in becoming with child, either you are or you aren’t.
(Beat.)
(MORE)
WARE (CONT'D)
Presuming you weren’t devoured in some equivalent of a laboratory accident.

BAINES
That simple?

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

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

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

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

WARE (CONT’D)
Thank you, Greta.

Greta leaves only the room.

WARE (CONT’D)
Pardon me, gentlemen. We would not have been disturbed had this not been of some urgency.

(Glances at envelope, discards without reaction:)
Of course it’s also faster if the client is equally frank.

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

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

(MORE)
WARE (CONT'D)
I’ll still need to ask some questions.

BAINES
Why not read my mind?

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

BAINES
You’ve lost me.

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

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

BAINES
Not exactly.

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

BAINES
Ask your questions.

WARE
Who sent you to me?

BAINES
A medium in Bel Aire - Los Angeles. She attempted to blackmail me, so nearly successfully that I concluded that she must have some real talent, and would likely know some one with more.
I had several of her fingers chopped off until she--

WARE
Sent you to the Rosicrucians?

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

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

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

WARE
You mentioned me by name?

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

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

BAINES
I’m not a religious man.

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

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

CLOSE UP:

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

Hypnotism.

(Beat.)

I’d anticipated better.

WARE

Wipe them off.

Baines does so with a monogrammed handkerchief.

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

WARE (CONT’D)

Have those analyzed, where you wish. I could hardly have hypnotized every lab technician within your reach.

BAINES

I thought you said--

WARE

That even the simplest trick requires a demon? One sits at your back now, Mr. Baines, and will be there until the day after tomorrow at this hour.

(Beat.)

It will cost me dearly to have indulged in this silliness, and it will be included in my bill.

BAINES

Any scruples?

WARE

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

BAINES

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

WARE

Are there children involved?

BAINES

None.
WARE
Then there’s little concern to me, for that sort of errand my fee is five hundred thousand dollars.

BAINES
That’s ALL?

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

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

WARE
I don’t charge extra for that.

BAINES
I’m sorry?

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

(MORE)
WARE (CONT'D)
(Beat.)
That would be wrong.

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

Ware nods. Baines asks:

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

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

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

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

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

WARE
Doctor Ware, please.

BAINES
Sorry. I only meant to say that
someday I’ll ask you why you want
so much money.
(MORE)
BAINES (CONT'D)
You aesthetics seldom can think of any good use for it. In the meantime, however, you're hired. Is it all payable in advance?

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

BAINES
Doctor Baines. I am an LL.D.

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

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

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

WARE
Terms for what?

BAINES
Three commissions. Second and third contingent upon success of the prior.

(beat)
See if you can kill the president. Manage that and the rest we’ll sort out. Points for style.

WARE
I’ll do my best.

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

WARE
It isn’t on your back, and it will go by itself. Marlowe to the contrary, misery does not love company.
We’ll see what we can do about that.

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

Further questions? Concerns?

You mentioned expenses?

Chiefly travel. I’ll need to see the president – our patient – personally.

(curious)

Will you need to touch her?

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

Is that irony?

Irony-ish.

We can arrange a private handshake.

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

I like your style.

Is that what you like?

Thrown off his game, Jack recovers.
JACK
We understand you’d rather not ride a demon when you can fly first class with less effort.

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

JACK
I beg your pardon?

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

JACK
You lied about reading minds.

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

JACK
That’s disgusting.

WARE
Disgusting would be if I asked if you carried your own knives or would need to be borrowing mine?

(Beat.)
I do so enjoy discomfort in others - as strong as you are, shame before me has just become possible.

(Beat.)
Life’s last horror - we are all, in the end, so embarrassed to die. Humiliated at how we lived. So hopeful of redemption - until that place be reached where on orders of the gate keepers, all hope must be abandoned.

Jack gives the notion some consideration.

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

Greta, between Jack and Ware.

Greta smiles provocatively, seductively.
Cannibalistically.

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

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

JACK
(Trembles.)
No.

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

Jack is frustrated for the first time ever.

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

WARE
Because I’m not a common gunman – I’m a Doctor of Theology.

BLACK SCREEN.

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

EXT. MONTE ALBANO, ITALY - NIGHT

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

INT. MONTE ALBANO CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Illuminated by florescent lighting – there is ALSO the occasional burning torch in a wall rack as two ROBED MONKS walk and confide – JOANNES, late 20’s, and the Middle Aged Man who’s voice we heard, FATHER BRUNO DOMINICO, mid-40’s.
Each man is relieved to not yet, or no longer, see themselves as trapped as the other.

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

DOMINICO
That or the invention of the metal detector.
(Beat.)
Harder living is the cost of survival. Black magicians have made the better of it.

JOANNES
How can you even?

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

JOANNES
(Shocked.)
Baines and OUR Director?

DOMINICO
Baines and Ware.

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

DOMINICO
As well as how easily such pacts may be voided.
JOANNES
That God would allow so much
demonic malice to be vented through
sorcery upon the innocent--

DOMINICO
No one is innocent.

JOANNES
Even if no one is to be spared.

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

JOANNES
White magic too is a mortal sin.

DOMINICO
His Holy Father grants us continued
dispensation.

JOANNES
Until all the treasure runs out.

DOMINICO
You fear you will never be allowed
to practice?

JOANNES
The great room stinks of demons.

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

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

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

JOANNES
It’s worse than that.
DOMINICO
Something is abroad. In the secular world, the world at large. The American arms dealer did not visit us for penance, nor needed us to find Ware — what is occurring? What role are we playing even now?

JOANNES
Shall we call upon a Power--?

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

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

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

Ruffles Joannes hair.

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

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

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

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

BLACK SCREEN.

The First Commission

EXT. MONTE ALBANO, ITALY - NIGHT

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

INT. FATHER UMBERTO’S OFFICE - BETTER LIT

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

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

DOMINICO
In the matter of Theron Ware?

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

DOMINICO
We’re in no position.

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

DOMINICO
(Dryly.)
I’d heard earlier.
(Beat.)
Perhaps the principal was a demon, slipping one by?
UMBERTO
Ucello is out of practice. Of course there’s no answer to that.

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

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

DOMINICO
Quite so.

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

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

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

DOMINICO
Me? To Ware’s cathedral?

UMBERTO
Dominico you are the strongest here.

DOMINICO
Ware even stronger.
UMBERTO
Baines perhaps the strongest. Might we hope Ware and Baines devour one another?

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

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

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

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

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

EXT. LOS ALAMOS NEW MEXICO BLACK GLASS BUILDING — AFTERNOON

Baines’s corporate offices **CWS — DEFENSE GUIDE PATHS INTERNATIONAL — A Partnership For Peace.**

INT. BAINES’ LOS ALAMOS NEW MEXICO OFFICE — DAY

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

Baines instead reads a metallurgy report:
“...24-karat gold, worth about a dollar and twenty-three cents.”

Near but not close beside the figurative throne, Jack Ginsberg entertains Baines’s melancholy.

BAINES
My father wasn’t twenty miles from here, of influence, when nuclear weapons ruined the arms business.

JACK
You have influence.

BAINES
Wrong currency.

JACK
Hess rang – twice.

BAINES
She was instructed never to ring more than once.

JACK
Which is why I mentioned.

BAINES
(Grimaces.)
Apologize and have me return Cynthia’s call before I leave this room.

JACK
And, the President of the United States has committed suicide.

BAINES
Say that again.

JACK
It happened.

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - CORRIDOR - DAY

From behind we follow MADAM PRESIDENT as she turns to the OVAL OFFICE and enters
INT. ANTEROOM - BETWEEN OVAL AND OTHER OFFICE - MORNING

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

INT. BAINÉ’S OFFICE - EVENING

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

BAINÉS
Jesus Christ, are they SURE?

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

BAINÉS
How did she die?

JACK
Listened to icky sticky voices.

BAINÉS
Is there any doubt?

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

A moment.

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

Baines gives a glance, Jack nods.

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

BAINÉS
You want to leave Ware waiting?
(Beat.)
(MORE)
I’ll take my chances with the NSA.
(Beat.)
Pay the magician.

INT. BAINES’S OFFICE - DAY

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

AGGRESSIVE PUNDIT

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

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

HESS
(Looking about.)
Baines? I don’t see you.

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

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

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

Baines tucks the metallurgy report away.

BAINES
I’m talking about black magic.
HESS
Then no, I wouldn’t have bothered to know much about it.

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

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

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

HESS
Relationship?

BAINES
We’re having the man manipulate the universe a bit.

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

HESS
Truly?

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

HESS
Other than my patience.

BAINES
Expedite.

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

BAINES (CONT’D)
Get rid of this. I don’t want anyone asking what it means.
JACK
Remember how Ware said the demon would leave after two days?

BAINES
Yes, why?

JACK
Look at this.

CLOSE UP:

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

EXT. ARLINGTON CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

INT. BAINES’S PERSONAL JET - NIGHT

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

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

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

EXT. ARLINGTON CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

Among the more distinguished of the more distinguished of the mourners: Baines and Jack Ginsberg. Also among the elite, hiding perhaps behind sunglasses - Greta. Who Jack damn near recognizes recognizing him in the clip only its way gone now.
BAINES
Turn that shit off, I’m sick of it. Throw on A Christmas Carol. Let’s get drunk and watch a weepy old man run from ghosts, rather than think to offer them better jobs.

JACK
Somewhat surprised Ware wants to do this over Christmas.

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

JACK
Our magician made no objection?

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

JACK
Maybe that was autocorrect.

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

BAINES
Facts mean what we say they mean.

JACK
Same as in the real world.

BAINES
Call it an ‘observer effect.’

INT. MONTE ALBANO, ITALY

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

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

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

EXT. MONTE ALBANO, ITALY
A vehicle, a TAXI - unusual for the monastery - waits outside.

CLOSE-UP:
Dominico approaches the vehicle carrying luggage, including a book bag, as Joannes follows with another bag.
They load him in as a nervous taxi DRIVER watches, waits.

INT. WARE’S ESTATE - NIGHT
A long hallway, as a very sexy Greta walks the tile, methodically. Click, click, click.
She checks the lines on a carpet, her skirt, her stockings.

EXT. ITALIAN MOTORWAY - NIGHT
The taxi drives to, from, while transporting despair.

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

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

DOMINICO
Yes.

TAXI DRIVER
What do you mean, yes?

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

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

BAINES
A priest?

JACK
Disconcerting.

INT. TAXI - DAWN

Dominico stares across towards the limo. Disgusted.

DRIVER
Shall I wait?

DOMINICO
No. Graze.

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

INT. BACK OF LIMO - DAWN

Jack frowns, ready to assert himself and impress.

JACK
You want me to confront him?

BAINES
How? To what purpose?

HESS
Vatican influence?

BAINES
Troubled?

HESS
If the Vatican believes in this...

BAINES
Yes.

EXT. WARE’S ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

The Great Doors Open. Greta stands there, awesome and insignificant.
EXT. LIMO - DAWN

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

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

INT. WARE’S ESTATE - DAY

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

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

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

DOMINICO
Your Latin is excellent.

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

DOMINICO
(Wryly.)
Concedo.

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

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

WARE
I was sure you understood that, but your very presence here is an embarrassment. I’ll be forced to tell them some sort of story.
DOMINICO
The truth?

WARE
The ‘Good News,’ perhaps? As necessary. In the meanwhile your presence changes the atmosphere unfavorably, makes my operations more difficult than necessary.
(Beat.)
The increased effort draws years from my life, you might consider the personal ill will you acquire with each moment.

DOMINICO
Retribution?

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

DOMINICO
On that we agree.

WARE
A prime nuisance.

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

WARE
Your Lord.

DOMINICO
(Smiles.)
Interesting concession.

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

DOMINICO
It will be an immense disaster.
WARE
From your point of view - I don’t suppose you’re prepared to offer further counsel? On chance of, perhaps, dissuading me?

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

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

DOMINICO
I’m a Jesuit.

WARE
Ahh, of course.

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

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

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

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

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

Three Sleeps

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

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

BAINES
Just a nuisance, you say?

WARE
Surely.

BAINES
I have my own resources.

WARE
No action may be taken.

JACK
Why is that?

WARE
Terms of the Covenant.

JACK
What Covenant?

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

Ware is not buying:

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

BAINES
Go ahead, Cynthia.

HESS
The distance between God and his creations being so — once created, none can be enlightened.

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

(Beat.)

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

JACK
What was the second?

HESS
The rainbow.

BAINES
What are the terms of this Covenant?

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

A moment.

JACK
Thus explains our Holier than Thou friend.

WARE
Dominico’s not significantly holier.

(Smiles.)

He’s in for a surprise in the next world.

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

BAINES

The death of Everett Knighthawk.

Even Hess seems shocked. The magician hesitates.

WARE

Pity.

BAINES

You decline?

WARE

Not immediately. I do have questions.

BAINES

Certainly.

WARE

What are you aiming towards?

BAINES

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

WARE

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

BAINES

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

WARE

Fair enough.
BAINES
And no dramatic accidents, either -
that itself could be--

WARE
Suicide, then.

BAINES
If possible.

WARE
It will be an expensive
undertaking.

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

BAINES
Shut up, Jack.

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

BAINES
You’ve met?

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

JACK
Fair enough.

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

(Beat.)

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

BAINES
Successfully?

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

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

WARE
Another suicide.

BAINES
Man’s best weapon against himself...

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

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

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

JACK
How decent.

BAINES
Jack.
(Beat:)
(MORE)
BAINES (CONT'D)
Fair enough. I appreciate
consistency in an intellectual. We
need more, not less - right?

JACK
Without question.

BAINES
I do remind you, Dr. Ware that--

WARE
Dr. Hess be allowed to observe?
Gladly.
(Beat:)
I’m sure she shall enjoy its
proximity to reality. You may all
observe, if you like.
(Very false smile.)
I may even invite Father Dominico.

EXT. WARE’S LAB - AFTERNOON

Hess shakes Ware’s hand outside of the LABORATORY.

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

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

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

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

WARE
There’s nothing in here really
worth stealing, however if taken
would cost me tremendously. There’s
the problem of contamination above
all.
HESS
One ignorant touch might destroy
months of preparation.

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

The GUARDIAN recognizes Ware and allows entry.

INT. WARE'S LAB - AFTERNOON

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

HESS
No standard supply source for your
tools.

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

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

Hess recognizes this.

HESS
A Book of Answers?

WARE
Very expensive.

HESS
Are all the answers really in
there?

WARE
For me? So far.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HESS
The Grimorium Vernum says mole’s blood and pimpernel juice.
WARE
Ah, good, you’ve been doing some reading. I’ve tried that, and it just doesn’t seem to give quite as good an edge.

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

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

HESS
I suppose there’s also some symbolic function.

WARE
In goetic art, everything must.

They walk.

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

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

HESS
All right. Go on.

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

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

HESS
What do these words mean?

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

HESS
Superstition.

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

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

WARE (CONT’D)
I suppose a modern translation of Paracelsus would be ‘You just can’t get good servants anymore.’ Not to ply mops, anyway.

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

HESS
Most illuminating, thank you.

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

HESS
Are you unwell?

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

HESS
No offense taken. Perhaps you should rest...

WARE
No, I’ll have ample rest in the next three days, and be incommunicado, preparing for Dr. Baines’s commission. If you’ve further questions, now’s the time.
HESS
I am curious about a question
Baines raised during your initial
meeting - I won’t insult your
intelligence by pretending there
was no recording made or made
available to me - but...

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

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

WARE
Thank you - go on.

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

Ware smiles.

WARE
I could easily duck the question. I
could point out how I’m in a
position to prolong my life to as
much as seven hundred years, and
might not yet be concerning myself
over the next world.
(MORE)
WARE (CONT'D)
I could point out - as you’ve already learned from the texts - that every magician plans to cheat Hell in the end - as did several who are now nicely ensconced on the calendar as authentic saints. But the real fact of the matter is I think what I’m after is worth the risk. What I’m after is something you understand perfectly, something for which you’ve already sold your own soul - or your integrity, to Dr. Baines for - knowledge.

HESS
There are easier ways.

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

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

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

(Smiles.)
In the meanwhile, just another of Dr. Baines’ fanatics.

Ware raises in toast, Hess as well.
HESS
Yes, yes of course. So am I.

They drink.

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

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

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

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

INT. THE CHAPEL - NIGHT

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

They look ridiculous. And terrified.

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

In his hand he holds the Wand of Power.

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

Baines goes to the table.

Baines hands out the robes to each.
WARE (CONT’D)
Take up your vestments and lift them in your hands above your heads. At the amen, let them fall.
(Beat:)
(Beat:)
By the virtue of these most holy angelic names do I clothe myself, O Lord of Lords, in my Vestments of Power.
(Beat:)
Thy Kingdom and rule endureth forever and ever, Amen.

Every one drops their garment down over themselves.

Ware opens the door to the INNER ROOM.

INT. INNER CHAPEL - NIGHT

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

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

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

WARE
Tanists, take your places.

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

Ware turns about now, holding forth a sword.

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

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

CLOSE-UP:
The flames in the bowl rise.

Ware makes a final explanation to those assembled.

WARE (CONT’D)
We are to call upon “Marchosias,” a great Marquis of the Descending Hierarchy.
(Beat:)
You may be curious to know that before he fell, Marchosias belonged to the Order of Dominions among the angels.
(Beat:)
He thinks to return to the Seven Thrones after twelve hundred years.
(Beat:)
He deceives himself.

Baines smirks in response.

BAINES
The sort that might fool you? Any of us?

WARE
(Cold.)
Speak out of turn again, and I shall be rid of you.

Baines is embarrassed, furious, yet terrified.

Jack takes notice.

Hess is very skeptical, however deferential to her embarrassed boss.

Ware proceeds – raises his rod in readiness to strike, concluding:

WARE (CONT’D)
Marchosias’s virtue is that he gives true answers. Stand fast.

In sudden motion, Ware thrusts the rod into the bowl of soft flame.

The flames RISE and DISTANT AND STRANGE BELLS “CLANG” IN COLLAPSE AND ECHO.
As the BELLS CLANG LOUD nearly drowning out all sound, Ware begins to incant, raising his voice as necessary.

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

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

Ware makes a gesture with the wand, continuing:

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

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

- LOOKING BACK -

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

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

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

Ware plunges the ROD into the FIRE again!

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

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

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

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

AN EARTHQUAKE LEVEL RUMBLE rocks the chapel and the world.

As the Chapel rumbles:

WARE (CONT’D)
STAND FAST!

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

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

Baines, listening in quiet horror.

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

Ware stands firm.

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

MARCHOSIAS
Think. And see.

The Chapel and castle SHUDDER once more.

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

The cloud dissipates, becoming a SHE-WOLFISH creature – with
BRIGHT GREEN WET EYES.
The demon COUGHS through bared wet teeth - the cough is FLAME.

Ware asserts himself.

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

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

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

Ware nearly shows fear - this is dangerous:

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

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

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

Ware gestures forward, asserting:

WARE (CONT’D)
That’s better.
(Beat:)
Now I charge thee - by those Names I have named and on pain of those torments thou hast known, to regard the likeness and demesne of that mortal whose eidolon I hold in my mind.
(Beat:)
(MORE)
WARE (CONT’D)
When I release thee, thou shalt straightway go unto him - NOT making thyself known to him - but revealing AS IF it were to come from his own intellectual soul, a vision and understanding of that great and ULTIMATE NOTHINGNESS which lurks behind those signs he calls matter and ENERGY.
(Beat:)
See to that he see thine damage in his private forebodings. And that thou remainest with him.
(Beat:)
Deepen his despair.
(Beat:)
Allow him no respite.
(Beat:)
Allow him to despise his own soul, for its own endeavours - and destroy the life of his own body.

MARCHOSIAS
I cannot give thee what thou requirest.

WARE
Refusal will not avail thee. For either shalt thou go incontinently and perform what I command, or I shall in no way dismiss thee, but shall keep thee here unto my life’s end.
(Beat:)
And in these days torment thee on each day, as thy father permitteth.

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

Sparks fly from the beasts’s crown.

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

CLOSE UP:
Jack mouths the word ‘Invented,’ Baines glares, Ware does not see.
In answer, Ware again STABS the fire with the rod, and the crowned figure of Marchosias throws back his head in dignified agony - a ROAR of ANGER!

A moment’s pause.

MARCHOSIAS (CONT’D)
I shall do as thou commandest.

The Demon oozes HATRED like lava.

Ware instructs on details to attending.

WARE
BE it not performed exactly, I shall summon thee up again.
(Beat:)
But be it executed, for thy pay thou shalt carry off the immortal part of the subject thou shalt tempt.
(Beat:)
It is as yet spotless in the sight of Heaven.
(Beat:)
A great prize.

MARCHOSIAS
But not yet enough.

Marchosias makes his claim on Ware.

MARCHOSIAS (CONT’D)
For thou must give me also somewhat of thine hoard. A tear of loss. Pain from you.
(Beat:)
As it is written in the pact.

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

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

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

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

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

The Altar, where the fat cat sits, PURRING.

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

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

WARE (CONT’D)
(Hoarse:)
It is over. Now we must wait. I shall be in seclusion for the next two weeks, then we will consult further. The circle is open. You may leave.

Baines is pissed and feels safe about it.

BAINES
Doctor Ware. You may be the finest sorcerer on the planet, or the world has ever seen, but as you say you are not a power yourself, merely an instrument. I aim higher. You may feel I have no recourse to defy or admonish, however I remind that one thing you educated us on is that as inexorable your powers, preparation remains unavoidable.
(Beat.)
You might pack me off to Hell, but it’ll take a week for you to get ready.
(Beat:)
All I have to do is make a phone call.
WARE
Pity it would never occur to a man in my position that such preparations be completed prior to our meeting, Dr. Baines.

(Beat.)
As Dr. Hess shall recall from her reading you need be real to ME, not simply an article of belief or faith - not just some one I’ve heard of, read or been told about - some one I KNOW inside of me shares this fate with me.

(Beat.)
How real do I seem to you?

There is at that moment a DISTANT CLAP OF THUNDER.

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

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

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

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

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

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

From a capped vial of Holy Water he sprinkles.

DOMINICO
God sees all, all must wait.

(Beat:)
My Lord Christ, I do not question your will, or your plan. Or your indulgences. I ask only that question permitted by Covenant in this moment, and I do ask. I do ask.

(Beat:)
Why?

(Beat:)

(MORE)
Please, if any may know the source of thy will - why?

The thunder rolls again.

(An incantation:)

I conjure thee, O form of these instruments, by the authority of God the Father Almighty, by the virtue of Heaven and the stars, by that of the elements.

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

Thou receive all power unto the performance of those things in the perfection of which we are concerned, the whole without trickery, falsehood, or deception.

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

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

God, Creator of the Angels, Emperor of the Ages, most holy Damahi, Luchmeh, Gadal, Pancia, Veloras, Melorid, Lamidoch, Baldach, Mitraton, be ye wardens of this instrument - AMEN.

The papers: PATIENCE/BECOMING/REALITY.

Good things come, to those who wait.

(Grim.)

What answer was to be expected on Christmas Eve?

EXT. WARE’S ESTATE - NIGHT

It is snowing. The sun comes up. The snow melts away and
EXT. WARE’S ESTATE - DAY

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

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

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

Baines walks the grounds, chatting into his iPhone.

Jack approaches, Baines looks to him.

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

BAINES
That you’re the sort who notices.

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

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

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

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

JACK
You mean that since we’ve seen and felt magic at work, this means angels and demons are real? Which means at some juncture we will be prompted to account for ourselves.

(MORE)
JACK (CONT’D)
Just like Mom and the book always warned. Yeah. Still unmoved, and that’s scarier than anything, isn’t it?
(Beat.)
Now that we know, we still don’t want to know.

BAINES
What do we know?
(Beat:)
And as for Ware?

JACK
He’s walking about, I waved at him down the hall and the son of a bitch pretended not to see me.

BAINES
Maybe he didn’t.

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

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

JACK (CONT’D)
What do you think?

BAINES
Go see him. See me after.

JACK
Roger that.

INT. WARE’S OFFICE – AFTERNOON

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

JACK
Is there news?

WARE
None at all. Sit down, please.

Jack does, assessing the room for light, shadows, exits and other such.
WARE (CONT’D)
Dr. Knighthawk is a tough patient. It’s possible he won’t fall at all, in which case a far more strenuous endeavour may be required. In the meanwhile I’m assuming that he will, and that I therefore ought to be preparing for Dr. Baines’s final commission.

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

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

JACK
That priest has you rattled?

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

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

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

JACK
Drive them off, do you? Why am I not surprised at that revelation?
WARE
Oh, you’ll be very surprised at the revelation.

JACK
Touche’.

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

JACK
I suppose I should be flattered.

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

Jack is embarrassed, recovers.

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

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

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

JACK
Never thought of myself as a particularly brave man.

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

JACK
How is that?

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

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

JACK
Why not the cat?

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

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

JACK
I’ll do my best.

WARE
Why would you do that?

JACK
I’m sorry?

WARE
I’ve no idea what you mean by your ‘best.’ What’s in it for you?

(Beat:)
I know that there’s something in this situation that hits you where you live. My first guess at what it might be proved wrong, did it not?

JACK
The woman Greta, you mean?

WARE
She’s not human.

JACK
What difference does that make?

Jack has Ware’s attention.

JACK (CONT’D)
I love women. I have special – uses for them. Of the sort I don’t find easily indulged.

WARE
Denied even to a man of your resources.

JACK
Imagine my frustration.

WARE
Well done, yet unnecessary in this instance. Neither extortion nor additional income interest me.
JACK
I’d be stupid to acquire any new tastes that only you could keep supplied.

WARE
‘Pander to,’ is the expression.

JACK
I want to learn the Art.

WARE
Well, then. That is a reversal.

JACK
I know you said you don’t take on apprentices, but I wouldn’t be trying to stab you in the back, or take over your clients. I’d only be using the Art for my specialized purposes.

(Beat:)
I’m not rich like Baines, I couldn’t pay a fortune, but I do have money. If I make some moves I think I could come up with two million dollars.

(Beat:)
Perhaps close to three. I know that’s not significant to you, but it’s not nothing.

(Beat:)
If nothing else you could have this place painted.

WARE
As my apprentice you would be the one painting it.

JACK
Fair enough.

WARE
Nothing is fair in the Art.

JACK
My first lesson?

WARE
I haven’t decided that yet.
JACK
I could do the reading in my spare time, and come back after a year or so for the actual instruction. I think Baines would give me a sabbatical for that. He wants some one on his staff to know the Art, only he thinks it’s going to be Hess.
(Beat:) Hess will be too busy and will bullshit her way out of the assignment until it doesn’t matter any more.

WARE
You really hate Dr. Hess, do you not?

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

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

JACK
Doesn’t everybody?

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

JACK
You haven’t lost yours.

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

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

JACK
Possibly, if it met my primary requirements.

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

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

JACK
I’ll take the chance.

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

JACK
None.
WARE
The revolt in Heaven involved angels from every order of the hierarchy.

JACK
So?

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

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

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

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

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

JACK
What do I need to do?

INT. JACK’S SUITE - NIGHT
IN A SHADOWY CORNER - HESITANT - JACK TREMBLES. The door KNOCKS! KNOCKS! KNOCKS!
A moment, then:

JACK
Come in. Come in. Come in.

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

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

Jack begins to speak, she reaches quickly:

GRETA (CONT’D)
No. Demonstrate.

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

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

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

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

CLOSE UP:

Jack demands in a nocturnal emission of passion:

JACK
What the FUCK do I call you?!

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

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

Jack tenses, Jack and Greta kiss.

GRETA (CONT’D)
You are very distant.
(Beat.)
Perhaps you worry. Perhaps you worry that I am only pretty on the outside.
(MORE)
GRETA (CONT’D)
(Beat.)
That would be unfair.

JACK
Why is that?

GRETA
Come to me.

JACK
You shall have to do better than that.

GRETA
You son of a bitch.

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

A LONG STOCKING is rolled up a thigh.

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

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

JACK
Please.

GRETA
I have other business.

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

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

JACK
I don’t understand.

GRETA
Then keep silent.
Greta dresses.

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

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

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

FROM ACROSS THE WAY -

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

JACK
I meant no offense.

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

ACROSS THE WORLD

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

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

JACK
A child? What are you talking about?

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

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

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

GRETA (CONT’D)
Shall I return tomorrow?

JACK
Oh - God - yes.

INT. WARE’S BEDROOM - MORNING

Ware awakens from nightmares.

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

GRETA
You were dreaming.

CLOSE-UP:
Ware. In his bed, pushing away a globby, sweaty cat.

WARE
Fantasies.

GRETA
Ahh.

WARE
Mind yourself, minder.

GRETA
I meant no offense.

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

GRETA
I apologize.

Ware glares, waits. Finally:
GRETA (CONT’D)
Lord Ware.

WARE
My bath is ready?

GRETA
Yes, Lord Ware.

INT. WARE'S BATH - MORNING

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

WARE
You enjoy your role.

GRETA
Now YOU mock.

WARE
I do.

EXT. WARE’S ESTATE - ITALY - DAWN

A new sun rises.

INT. WARE’S OFFICE - MORNING

Ware’s eyes closed in contemplation.

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

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

All react in their own way.

BAINES
Very good.

JACK
Not as devout a fellow as we feared?

WARE
Disrespect not the damned. My patience is at an end, I insist now on answers.
BAINES
I’m ready to discuss my final commission, if the planets and so on don’t make this a bad time.

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

CLOSE UP:
Baines’s entire life has been leading up to this request:

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

A moment.

DOMINICO
Is this an act of possession?

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

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

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

(Blinks.)
Accomplish? I’ve had my life. It’s almost over, which leaves me thinking of all those who couldn’t be me – what of them?

(Beat.)
Creatively, they leave much to consider. Disposition.

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

BAINES
Three kinds in arms sales – those with no consciences, and those who don’t listen to their consciences.

Nobody reflects on Jack, not even Jack.

Eyes on her, Dr. Hess turns away.

BAINES (CONT’D)
The other are artists such as myself – who understand chaos enough to take pleasure in the necessity of creative suffering.

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

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

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

BAINES
It won’t be an obliteration, but a whole set of individual actions, each in itself small scale. Each one interesting in itself.

(MORE)
BAINES (CONT'D)
It won’t be total because it will also be self-limiting to some period of time, twelve hours, whatever’s left from kick off till dawn.

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

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

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

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

HESS
Oh my God.

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

Baines reflects, thoughtful.

HESS
I should think you’d be pleased.

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

To die humiliated in education and admiration of their betters.

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

Rewriting Job is the humanist’s favorite pastime.

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

How might you propose to pay for all this?

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

It’s hardly enough, considering the risks.
DOMINICO
Am I to conclude that you are going to undertake this fearful insanity?

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

Ware looks to Hess. She picks a side.

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

Ware smiles. Dominico does not.

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

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

BAINES
Of course I’m satisfied.

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

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

WARE
Will you take it on?

WARE
Yes.

Dominico rises.

WARE (CONT’D)
Hold - your commission is NOT discharged. You must observe this sending. You have said yourself that it is going to be difficult to keep under control. It is all in your mission by stipulation, and in the Covenant by implication.

(Beat.)
I do not compel. I but remind you of your positive duty to your Lord.

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

A moment.

WARE
Nobly faced.

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

WARE
You can demand no such thing.

DOMINICO
Not to interfere, but to stand by, in case of disaster. It would be too late to call for them once you knew you were losing control.
WARE
Hmmm... probably a wise precaution, and one I couldn’t justly prevent. Very well. About the day, what would you suggest? May Eve is an obvious choice, and we may well need that much time in preparation.

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

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

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

INT. WARE’S LABORATORY – LATER
Ware enters to discover that – some how – Hess has let herself inside to explore unaccompanied.
Ware is horrified.

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

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

HESS
I’m sorry.

WARE
Tell me what you’ve touched.

HESS
Nothing.

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

HELL
Should I sit?

WARE
You should not. Why are you here?

HELL
I wanted answers.

WARE
What are your questions?

HELL
You know who’s going to be in Hell?

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

HELL
Even before we were born.

WARE
Depends upon whom you ask.

Is that the only thing we should bother to ask?

WARE
You needn’t bother to ask.

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

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

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

DOMINICO
Heart attack?

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

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

He does, they do.

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

We see each Father as they are introduced.

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

Father Montieth nods.

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

A CHUCKLE of LAUGHTER; it does not last.

As Umberto speaks, a LARGE TELEVISION SCREEN replay of certain ceremonies is repeated, as narrated in nervous stammer:
UMBERTO (CONT’D)
With great reluctance it was
decided to reach out to the
Heavenly Hosts for aid and comfort.
(Beat.)
As always these images are
recreations.

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

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

As animated and explained:

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

CLOSE UP:

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

FATHER ATHERLING. Pulling himself together.

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

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

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

INT. UMBERTO’S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

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

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

MONK
Father Dominico! Come quickly!

Dominico rushes out, followed by others.

INT. MONTE ALBANO CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON

Dominico and the other’s race the corridor.

MONK
Is this one of the proper hours?

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

UMBERTO
He puts all of our souls at risk!

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

INT. THE GREAT ROOM - MONTE ALBANO - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

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

EXT. VATICAN CITY - NIGHT

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

INT. BAINES’S SUITE - NIGHT

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

The bell continues to toll.

INT. JACK’S SUITE - NIGHT

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

GRETA
Take from me LESS than you need--!

JACK
No.

GRETA
Take from me LESS THAN YOUR NEED!

JACK
No.

GRETA
Then TAKE MORE THAN YOU MUST--!

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

Seeing her now naked and laying back across an Altar, innocent and decadent and lusting for the thrust
GRETA (CONT’D)
Take this from me, or I’ll let some one else have it while you watch.

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

INT. WARE’S LABORATORY - NIGHT

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

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

THE LAST CONJURATION

EXT. THE CHAPEL - AFTERNOON

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

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

JACK
Last evening?

WARE
Bad dreams?

Father Dominico takes his position as an observer.

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

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

Ware lights the necessary candles.
WARE (CONT’D)
I conjure and command thee,
LUCIFUGE ROFACLE, by all the names
wherewith thou mayest be
constrained and bound - SATAN,
RANTAN, PALLANTRE, LUTIAS...Thou
who imposeth hatred and
propogandeth enemities, I conjure
thee by Him who hate created
thee...

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

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

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

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

FORM
Nothing may be known until it is
spoken.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We see this world for a moment through MOUSE EYES.

It looks the same as it does to us.

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

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

Hess throws brandy into the brazier:

WARE (CONT’D)
I, Theron ware, Karcist of Karcists, hereby undertake to open the book, and the seals thereof, which were forbidden to be broken until the breaking of the Seven Seals before the Seven Throne.
(Beat.)
I have beheld Satan as a bolt falling from Heaven.
(Beat.)
I have crushed the dragons of the pit beneath my heel - commanded angels and devils.
(MORE)
I undertake and command that all shall be accomplished - that from beginning to end, alpha to omega, world without end, none shall harm us whom abide here in this temple of the Art of Acts.

Then comes the procession:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It passes in a rush.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WARE (CONT’D)
Sytry!

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

WARE (CONT’D)
Jussus secreta libenter detegit feminarum, eas ridens ludicransque ut se luxurise nudent, great prince, obey me!

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

It is beautiful, and sick.
As it passes, Ware presses a ring against his lips.

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

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

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

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

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

Ware thrusts his wand into the brazier.

WARE (CONT’D)
Transform, transform!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Greta’s body on the altar has been consumed.
WARE (CONT’D)
Bune, thou strong duke, obey me!

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

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

Baines trembles from ecstasy.

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

Ware turns another page.

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

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

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

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

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

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

All three heads breathe fire.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Separ, a mermaid wearing a ducal crown.

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

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

Zagan, a griffin-winged bull.

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

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

Amduscias, a unicorn among many musicians.

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

WARE (CONT’D)
The last we call is that mighty king created next after Lucifer and first to fall in battle before Michael. Formerly of the Order of the Virtues. BELIAL himself.
Worshipped in Babylon, envied by God.

(Beat.)
Belial! Mighty King of All - Obey me!

BELIAL - beautiful and deadly in a chariot of fire, the fire fueled by all the lost love in the world.
WARE (CONT’D)
Now, great spirits, because ye have
diligently answered and shown
yourselves, I do hereby license ye
to depart, without injury to any
here. Depart, be ye willing and
ready to come at the appointed
hour, when I shall duly exorcise
and conjure you by your rites and
seals. Until then, ye abide free.
Amen.

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

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

Ware also snuffs the candles.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jack squeezes a handful of ash through his fingers.

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

BAINES
What’s the matter?

DOMINICO
Look out there, Mr. Baines.

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

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

BAINES
Well?

DOMINICO
You don’t see anything?

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

CLOSE-UP:

The unfolded LAP TOP COMPUTER plugged into speakers:
COMPUTER VOICES
(live streaming:)
Now established that the terrorist
cell’s decision to behead the
children in real time on the live
feed--

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

HESS
Jesus Christ. Did I hear that?

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

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

BAINES
I refuse to give our clerical
friend the satisfaction.

They look to where Dominico pouts, frustrated.

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

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

ON THE LAP TOP STREAMING:

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

DEMON
Welcome to - Stripping corpses.
I’ll be stripping corpses.

DEMON #2
(Knowingly.)
I’ll be stripping corpses.
DEMON #3
I’ll be stripping--

SMASH CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE UP - VOLUME CRAZY LOUD:

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

DEMON #4
YOU THERE!

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

FROM THE TELEVISIONS:

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

CHANNELS ALL CLICK AWAY TO -

EXT. HUGE BURNING MUSEUM - LIVE ON CNN - STREAMING

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

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

GUNSHOTS! In the studio!

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

More shots, then
Father Dominico looks as if he might cross the line himself any second, as

Across the room.

JACK
Baines?

BAINES
What?

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

BAINES
How would I know?

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

BAINES
Dark Ages. At best.

JACK
Dark Ages? What does that even mean?

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

BAINES
I don’t give a god damn what any of this means. I made this, it’s MINE. I did it. Every other possible fact about it, minor or important, is technicality. Something I pay fanatics to attend to on my behalf, at my whim.

(MORE)
Thanks for playing.

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

Occam may be right: There goes Rome.

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

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

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

WARE
No one move.

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

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

Ware puts on his PAPER HAT.

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

All rush to position, even THE CAT scrambles.

Ware lites the brazier, speaking:

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

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

Jack looks over at Baines.
Baines shrugs.

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

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

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

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

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

The Goat smiles.

Baphomet reveals Himself.


Ware drops slowly to one knee:

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

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

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

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

WARE
I was wrong.

BAPHOMET
There is a last time for every thing, as the first. Worm, we thank thee - Agent of Armageddon.
(MORE)
BAPHOMET (CONT'D)
Let that be written before all writings, like all else, go into the everlasting fire.

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

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

WARE
But - master and guest - the law--

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

HESS
You’re right - you’re both right - you all have a point.

JACK
Another crazy bitch.

WARE
SILENCE YOU FOOL!

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

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

HESS
Lucky for me, I I don’t see you, Goat.

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

Baphomet smiles. Baines is interested, Jack confused.

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

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

The world shudders.

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

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

BAPHOMET
Funny monk - I was never in that
bottle.

Dominico holds out his crucifix:

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

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

Even as the cross burns itself to splintered black wood, then
ashes. Even as nothing is left but
Dominico’s hand as it BLISTERS and the BLISTERS crack, pop, and OOZE and

CLOSE-UP:
Baphomet rising.

BAPHOMET
Too late, Magician. Your White College also fails – as the Heavenly Hosts fail. We are abroad, and loose, and None shall be put back.

(To Ware:)
And YOU are my dearly beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.

(Beat.)
I go to join my Others and Lovers in the Great Work, but shall return for you at Dawn. Prepare.

DOMINICO
How can this be possible? It was written.

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

BAINES
Whatever’s fair.

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

BAPHOMET
We?

DOMINICO
What was our failure?
BAPHOMET
(Speaks Three Words, Unheard Yet:)
(Sound of a ram horn--)

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

Baines, Jack - in horror.

Dominico - shattered.

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

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

Baphomet smiles, opens his mouth - no further sound.

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

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

GOD. IS. DEAD.

Repeats as necessary, until interrupted.

CREDITS.

FADE OUT.