

GLOOMY SUNDAY

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. SMALL APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: PARIS FRANCE, DECEMBER 1932

REZSÓ SERESS, 33, sits at an upright piano. He is clean shaven with dark, slicked back hair. A cigarette burns in an ashtray on the piano bench. His white dress shirt is half unbuttoned and the sleeves are partially rolled up.

There is a photo of Rezsó and Erzsébet, his estranged lover, facing him on the front of the piano. He plays a few chords of a haunting tune and uses a pencil to make record of the musical notes on the paper in front of him.

On the wall behind him is a mirror. In the mirror's image, an entity, much like a lingering shadow, fades in and out of focus. It seems to take the shape of a human outline, while at the same time is indistinguishable.

Rezsó stops writing and glances behind him. He sees nothing out of the ordinary. His coat is on the rack next to the mirror and his tie lies on the floor. He pauses, takes a puff of the cigarette, and exhales. He gently touches the image of woman's face before going back to his work.

SUPER: AUSTIN TEXAS, 2021

INT - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

JONAH HORVATH, 32, average height, thin, with short wiry brown hair, sits on a chair and looks through a box of songbooks and sheet music at an estate sale. There is a small group of people wandering around looking at various items in boxes and on shelves.

CONNIE, 70s, has short grey hair and wears a comfortable sweatshirt with matching pants. She sits on a couch opposite Jonah and watches the various people mull about.

Jonah looks up at Connie to ask a question.

JONAH
How much for the whole lot?

CONNIE
50 for everything there. I don't play and the grandkids aren't interested.

Jonah smiles softly at Connie. He takes a last glance at the contents of the box before standing up and reaching for his wallet. He pulls out \$50 in cash as well as one of his business cards and hands them to Connie.

JONAH

If you come across any more, I might be interested in that as well.

Connie takes the money and looks at the card.

CONNIE

OK Mr. Horvath, I hope you get as much enjoyment out of them as my Randall did.

JONAH

I'm sure I will. It's a great collection.

Jonah smiles as he picks up the box and walks to the front door. Connie stands up and moves to hold the door open for him.

CONNIE

Thank you for coming.

JONAH

Thanks again.

INT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Jonah is asleep in his bed. His facial expression is tense as he breathes rapidly, his eyes clenched tightly, the nightmare all too real.

Suddenly, he jars from sleep, opening his eyes wide. He looks around the room and takes a deep breath as his breathing returns to normal. He rubs his face with both hands as he gathers his wits.

JONAH

Fuck.

Jonah sits up and scratches his head while looking around the room. The bedroom is well kept, but filled with academic books and various memorabilia. There are pictures on the wall of people at various events.

There is a framed diploma for a Master of Arts in Performance Studies from NYU proudly displayed above an electric piano against the far wall.

Jonah clamps his eyes closed and rubs them with his meaty palms. He takes several deep breaths as he tosses back the bedding. He walks across the room to the desk.

He picks up a pen and moves as to write something on a notepad. He pauses. Staring blankly at the pad, he rolls the pen between his thumb and forefinger, attempting to remember something.

JONAH (CONT'D)
...Sunday?

Hesitating, he writes something on the pad and lays the pen down before he tiredly stumbles out of the room.

INT. SIGMA PHI FRAT HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: HOBART COLLEGE, GENEVA NY MAY 23, 1936

PHILLIP COOKE is a typical-looking 21 year old college student. His curly hair is messy and his shirt is wrinkled. He sits on the side of one of the four twin beds in the room.

There is a writing desk next to each of the beds, three of which have books on them. The desk next to Phillip's bed holds a gramophone.

Phillip wields a .22 caliber pistol in his right hand. He looks pained and distraught. He spins the cylinder a couple of times. As he stares at the gun, a shadowy image approaches him from the side. Slowly, the entity begins to take the form of an adult human male.

THE MAN is of average height and weight and appears to be a Caucasian man in his 50's. He wears high-waisted grey trousers with a long jacket and a dark tie. He has dark hair and his eyes are intense, unblinking, and slightly sunken. He holds a black book in his right hand.

The Man bends down and whispers into Phillip's ear.

Phillip sets the gun down on the bed and stands up. He takes the few steps to the desk where the gramophone sits with a record already on its turntable.

Phillip winds the metal crank several times, then flips the switch, which causes the record to rotate. He lifts the needle carriage and places it gently on the record as he turns back toward the bed.

MUSIC CUE: *Szomorú vasárnap* by Rezső Seress

The song begins to play. It is the same haunting, beautiful melody that Rezső Seress played. This time, a male vocalist also sings in Hungarian. Phillip returns to the bed, picks up the gun, and sits back down.

Phillip checks the cylinder of the gun, taking note that it has only one bullet. The Man whispers into Phillip's ear again and takes a step back, watching.

Phillip looks at the gun again, places it under his chin and pulls the trigger. The gun fires with a loud BANG, and Phillip's lifeless body falls backwards as the gun drops to the floor.

The Man smiles. He begins to fade into the shadows and then completely disappears as the music continues to play from the gramophone.

END MUSIC CUE

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

INT. MUSIC STUDIO - DAY

Jonah sits on a piano bench and plays a tune on an upright piano situated against the wall of a small studio. There are sections of foam padding stuck to the walls of the studio throughout. The box of songbooks and sheet music sits on his desk.

A small backpack sits next to the bench on the floor.

Next to Jonah sits ZOË, a 12-year-old African American schoolgirl wearing a private school uniform. She intently watches and listens to Jonah play.

Jonah finishes the song and flashes Zoë a little smile.

JONAH
OK, your turn.

Zoë begins to play. She makes a couple of mistakes, but Jonah gently corrects her and she continues. As the song ends, a cell phone beeps. Zoë looks down, pulls her phone from the outer pocket of her backpack, and looks at it.

ZOË
My mom's here.

Jonah nods.

JONAH
OK. Good job today. Just keep
working on the new material.

Zoë looks down, almost pouting.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Zoë what's the matter?

Zoë looks at Jonah with a guilty look.

ZOË
Jonah, I really don't like that
other song.

Jonah looks mildly disappointed.

JONAH
Well, you can always find another
song to play at the recital.

Zoë perks up and smiles at Jonah. She reaches down into her
backpack, pulls out several sheets of paper that are stapled
together, and hands them to Jonah.

ZOË
This is the song I want to learn.
Billie Holiday sang it. It's really
sad but it's really pretty.

Jonah looks at the papers which read: *Gloomy Sunday* by Billie
Holiday. Lyrics by Sam M. Lewis and Laszlo Javor and music by
Rezső Seress.

Jonah examines the sheet music.

JONAH
This looks pretty complicated. Are
you sure you're up for the
challenge?

Zoë smiles wide, nodding quickly.

ZOË
I'm sure!

Jonah smiles at Zoë.

JONAH
Ok then. You just have to keep
practicing every night.

Zoë nods. She stands up and quickly flings her arms around
Jonah's neck.

ZOË
Thanks Jonah.

Jonah gently hugs her back.

JONAH
OK, now get out of here. Your mom's
waiting.

Zoë picks up her backpack and runs for the door.

ZOË
Bye Jonah!

JONAH
Wait, you forgot your sheet music!

Jonah holds the papers up, shaking them slightly.

Zoë briefly looks back, still smiling.

ZOË
It's OK, I have another copy!

Zoë waves at Jonah as she shoves the door open and runs out of the studio.

Jonah notices a man standing outside near the doorway as Zoë opens the door and runs past.

The Man now wears a modern business suit with a flat cap and carries the same black book in his right hand. He stands on the sidewalk and stares at her with an unsettling smile as she passes without acknowledging him.

Ill at ease, Jonah lays the sheet music down on the bench as he quickly stands up and walks to the door.

INT/EXT. DOORWAY - DAY

The man keeps his eyes on Zoë as she gets into her mother's car parked at the curb, traffic ZOOMING past on the busy street.

Jonah arrives at the door. He eyes The Man suspiciously, unsettled by the way he stares at her.

JONAH
Can I help you?

The Man gives a slight, wry smile and takes a step toward Jonah who stands in the doorway. The Man speaks softly, but distinctly, deliberately, and in a sing-song tone.

THE MAN

I am so sorry to disturb you. I am looking for Jonah Horvath.

JONAH

That's me. Says so right here on the door.

Jonah points to the outside of the painted metal door which reads "Jonah Horvath, MA - Music Education since 2015"

JONAH (CONT'D)

How can I help you?

THE MAN

Ah, so it does. It is very nice to meet you, Jonah. My name is Dan and I would like to speak to you about taking some lessons, if I may.

JONAH

Sure, why don't we set up a time for us to meet later. I actually have another student that should be here any minute.

The Man looks intently at Jonah, narrowing his gaze slightly. Keeping his left hand at his side, he taps his left thumb and fingers together.

Jonah's phone rings. He looks at it briefly and then looks back at The Man.

JONAH (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I have to take this, Do you mind waiting here for a moment?

THE MAN

Not at all.

The Man smiles and stands there waiting as Jonah turns around and lets the door close behind him.

The Man waits patiently on the sidewalk where Jonah left him.

INT/EXT. DOORWAY - DAY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Moments later, Jonah opens the door, still holding his phone.

JONAH

Sorry about that. As it turns out I just had a cancellation so I have some time now after all.

THE MAN

Thank you, that would be wonderful.

INT. MUSIC STUDIO - DAY

Jonah leads The Man into the studio. He grabs a folding chair from against the wall and places it near the piano. Jonah opens the chair and offers it to The Man before sitting on the piano bench facing him.

JONAH

Please, have a seat.

THE MAN

Thank you.

The man sits in the folding chair, still clutching the black book in his right hand.

JONAH

You said your name is Dan, didn't you?

THE MAN

Yes, Dan is what I am called.

JONAH

Great. OK, well, I like to get to know my potential students a bit before making any commitment. I want to make sure that we are compatible and that the student is committed to learning.

THE MAN

I think you will find that I am quite flexible and willing to learn.

JONAH

OK, well then, a bit about me... I've been teaching for seven years and moved to this studio about five years ago. I went to NYU for my masters and I'm currently working on my PhD.

The Man nods, still maintaining a slight smile.

THE MAN

If I may, I would like to make things simple.

(MORE)

THE MAN (CONT'D)

I have a specific song that I would like to learn to play on the piano. I do have some experience. However, I would very much like to learn to play this particular song perfectly.

JONAH

You play some already?

THE MAN

Indeed.

The man smiles again.

Jonah looks a bit confused and uneasy.

JONAH

And you're only interested in learning one song?

THE MAN

Yes, and I would like to employ your help in doing so.

Jonah looks slightly confused.

JONAH

If I may ask, why are you only interested in learning one song? Wouldn't you rather learn how to learn the basics more proficiently, as opposed to adding something new?

THE MAN

Well, to be perfectly honest...

The Man looks at Jonah with a sad expression.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

I am unwell. I am told that I will not likely see the new year. This is one of my final wishes.

Jonah looks surprised, then sympathetic.

JONAH

Oh. I'm so sorry... Of course I'll help you. It sounds easy enough.

Jonah pauses.

JONAH (CONT'D)

I do generally require a minimum of six sessions at a rate of \$40 per session. Will that work for you?

The man reaches into his inner suit pocket and pulls out a money clip that holds a small stack of cash. He pulls five \$100 bills from the clip and hands them to Jonah.

Jonah takes the bills. He looks at them and then back at The Man.

JONAH (CONT'D)

This is more than double the rate I just quoted you and I don't have any change with me.

The man smiles wryly and slightly tilts his head.

THE MAN

Please. I insist that you take the full amount. No change will be necessary.

Jonah looks surprised.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

And I do not believe I shall require more than... three or four sessions. But we can schedule six if you insist.

Jonah sets the money on the piano bench next to him. He pulls out his phone and opens the calendar app.

JONAH

OK. Well, how about Mondays at two?

The Man maintains his wry smile.

THE MAN

It would suit me perfectly, thank you.

The man stands up. Jonah does as well.

JONAH

What is this song you are trying to learn?

THE MAN

The song is called *Szomorú vasárnap*. It is a beautiful Hungarian song.

JONAH

My grandparents were Hungarian but I've never heard of it. I'm sure I don't have the sheet music anywhere.

THE MAN

No need, I will bring it with me on the day. I shall see you on Monday then?

JONAH

2pm. Please be on time.

THE MAN

Oh, I am never tardy.

Jonah notices a faint outline on the cover of the book the man holds. He can make out "LXXI."

The man notices Jonah's gaze and repositions the book in his hand as he begins to walk toward the door.

JONAH

OK, well, I'll see you on Monday then.

The man nods, tips his hat slightly, and exits the studio.

After the man leaves, Jonah picks up the \$500, examining the bills.

JONAH (CONT'D)

What a weird fucking day.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jonah reads a book on his couch, resting his feet on the coffee table. The TV is on, but the volume muted. Against the far right wall is a 100 gallon fish tank, lively with a number of exotic fish.

His phone BUZZES on the couch beside him. He picks it up and answers.

JONAH

Hey Dad, thanks for calling me back.

DAD (V.O.)

Heyo, kiddo. Nice to hear from you. Need something?

JONAH
I just need a small favor. Can you ask Grams what "vasárnap" means? It's Hungarian.

DAD (V.O.)
She's right here, let me see if she can help.

JONAH
Thanks.

DAD (V.O.)
She says you pronounced it wrong.

Jonah laughs quietly.

JONAH
I'm sure I did.

DAD (V.O.)
Sunday.

JONAH
Sunday?

DAD (V.O.)
Vasárnap means Sunday.

JONAH
OK, thanks.

DAD (V.O.)
Why are you asking?

JONAH
A new client wants to learn a Hungarian song. That was one of the words. I can't remember the other one. Begins with an S.

Jonah listens as his Dad talks to someone on the other end.

DAD (V.O.)
Jonah, your grandmother is hysterical. What's this about?

JONAH
I have no idea. What are you talking about?

DAD (V.O.)
Hang on, she wants to talk to you.

JONAH
OK... Hey Grams? Are you OK? What's
the matter?

GRAMS (V.O.)
Jonah, you cannot listen to that
song.

JONAH
What song?

GRAMS (V.O.)
Szomorú vasárnap. Gloomy Sunday.
Please, please promise me you won't
listen to that song!

Jonah looks surprised.

JONAH
Wait, you're telling me that
Szomorú vasárnap is the same song
as *Gloomy Sunday*?

GRAMS (V.O.)
Yes! That's what I said! Jonah, you
must not listen to that song!

JONAH
It's just a song. Please tell me
what this is all about?

GRAMS (V.O.)
When I was very young. Just a
child. People died because of that
song. It was banned from being
played. People kept killing
themselves!

JONAH
Those are just stories. Urban
legends. I'm a skeptic when it
comes to ghosts, goblins, and even
killer songs.

GRAMS (V.O.)
(angrily)
No! It happened. All over the
world. Not just in Hungary.

JONAH
OK, OK. If I promise you that I
won't listen to the song, will you
be OK?

GRAMS (V.O.)
Oh Jonah. I just don't want
anything to happen to you.

JONAH
I'll be fine. I miss you.

GRAMS (V.O.)
I miss you too my special kisfiú.
Please take care of yourself. I
should go now. Here's your father.

DAD (V.O.)
Jonah, Just do whatever she says.
It's always better that way. Trust
me, I know.

JONAH
I get it. Thanks for helping.

DAD (V.O.)
I'll talk to you soon. Love you.

JONAH
I love you too, Dad.

Jonah presses the END button and drops the phone on the couch. He pauses, thinking. Then he gets a look of recollection on his face. He stands up and walks past the fish tank and down the hall to his bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jonah walks over to the desk in his room. He looks down at the notepad. In his own handwriting are the words "Gloomy Sunday."

His eyes widen.

JONAH
Jesus Christ. What the fuck is
going on?

INT. DIRTY PANELHÁZ APARTMENT - DUSK

SUPER: BUDAPEST HUNGARY, JANUARY 13, 1968

MUSIC CUE: *Szomorú vasárnap* by Rezső Seress

The apartment is sparsely furnished with old and dirty furniture that has seen better days. A small television sits on a table cluttered with papers and an overflowing ashtray.

A side table has a record player that plays a single record on repeat: The original version of *Szomorú vasárnap*.

Rezső Seress is now 69 years old. His thin, slicked hair is now grey and he hasn't shaved in days. He wears only a pair of grey dress slacks and white tank top t-shirt. He sits, lit cigarette between his lips, on the couch holding a photo in one hand and, a cheap bottle of pálinka brandy in the other.

Tears well up in his eyes while he stares at the old photo of him and Erzsébet. Taking a final drag from the cigarette, he extinguishes it in an ashtray which sits next to a paper bag on the coffee table.

He slowly stands up and takes a long draw from the bottle as Pál Kalmár's voice sings his own song to him from the record player's speaker.

The Man stands beside him. Rezső sees a shadow to his right and quickly turns. Nothing. The Man leans in and whispers in his ear.

THE MAN
(in Hungarian)
Rezső, the time has come.

Rezső looks around, but there's still nothing there. Abandoning the bottle of brandy, he removes a roll of nylon rope from the paper bag on the table before walking toward the small bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - DUSK

Rezső wraps the end of the rope around the main shower pipe that protrudes from the wall. He loops the rope around several times and ties a firm knot so that it is securely fastened. As he ties the knot, The Man leans in to whisper in Rezső's ear.

THE MAN
(in Hungarian)
Yes Rezső, finish it. After all,
you were always a failure, were you
not?

Rezső stops and turns. This time he sees The Man standing there, smiling. Rezső looks startled.

REZSŐ
(in Hungarian)
Who are you? What are you doing in
my house?

The man leers at Rezső.

THE MAN

(in Hungarian)

You know who I am. Do you not remember? That cold night in Paris when you wrote the only song that ever mattered. You wrote that for me. And I thank you.

Rezső is visibly shaken as he realizes who stands before him.

REZSŐ

Dantalion.

The Man smiles evilly.

THE MAN

(in Hungarian)

I am here to collect, as we agreed.

The Man's laughs as he suddenly vanishes from Rezső's view.

Rezső looks shaken as The Man suddenly disappears. Tears once again roll down his cheeks as he returns his attention to the rope. He unrolls the rope down from the main pipe toward the floor, measuring out enough length so as to be short enough to do the job.

He ties a wide, but simple arbor knot that will get tighter as the rope is pulled and wraps the rope around itself to form a small noose.

From behind Rezső, The Man leans in to whisper into his ear once again. This prompts Rezső's actions to speed up. He turns away from the shower pipe, slips the loop over his head and tightens the makeshift noose.

Humming along with the music coming from the other room, he stuffs his hands into the waistband of his trousers as far as he can so that his hands and wrists are immobilized.

He takes a deep breath and exhales as much as he can before closing his eyes, leaning forward, and bending his knees so that the rope holds all of his weight.

He struggles momentarily.

His hands are trapped.

His face turns deep red.

His whole body begins to shudder as he loses consciousness.

The Man stands and observes his evil victory as Rezsó's body eventually stops churning just as the song concludes.

END MUSIC CUE

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

INT. GRADUATE LOUNGE - DAY

Jonah and CARRIE, 27, a mousy blonde graduate student with oversized glasses, are talking in the graduate student lounge.

JONAH

...and my grandmother said a bunch of people all over the world killed themselves after listening to it. I told her it was just an urban legend but she insisted.

Carrie looks fascinated.

CARRIE

That's freaky.

JONAH

Have you ever heard of it?

CARRIE

No, never. But music history isn't my area but I think I know someone that can help you.

Jonah looks at her expectantly.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Janice Kaplan over in Anthro. She's my second reader. She's totally into the weird stuff like old folk tales and legends. I'm sure she'll at least have heard of it.

JONAH

OK, thanks. I'll send her an email. On that note, I'd better go.

Carrie nods and turns back to sitting on the couch normally as she picks up the book next to her.

CARRIE

Let me know how it goes. I want to hear all about the weirdness. See ya!

JONAH
Yeah, see you later.

Jonah smiles and waves as he exits the lounge.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: MONDAY MORNING

Jonah checks the temperature and pH level of the water in the fish tank before feeding the fish. He then walks over to the couch.

He turns on the TV on but immediately mutes it before he sets down the remote. He picks up the laptop sitting on the table as he sits on the couch to do some research.

Jonah opens a new browser and begins to Google "Gloomy Sunday." Most of the resulting links are to various versions of the song - some remakes, some original. Also listed are some of the reports of suicides beginning in the 1930's.

He clicks through a number of links trying to find as much information as possible. However, there don't seem to be many names attached to the reports except in very few cases. Even *New York Times* and *Time Magazine* reports only gave surface level information and no solid facts that would allow him to follow up.

He Google's the name Rezső Seress and a link to a photo comes up. Upon clicking it, it shows a photo of Seress with the caption underneath that says "Rezső Seress: Committed suicide in 1968." Jonah finds another article written in Hungarian.

The translation begins: "Composer Rezső Seress, 69, was found dead in his flat yesterday morning by a neighbor. The flat was littered with memorabilia of his famous song *Sad Sunday* along with a letter written by Seress claiming that he was cursed by a demon that he called Dantalion."

JONAH
Holy Shit.

INT. MUSIC STUDIO - DAY

Jonah paces the floor humming a song as he walks back and forth impatiently. He looks at his phone which shows the time as 2:11 pm.

JONAH
Never late, huh Dan?

Jonah looks through the contacts in his phone but grimaces when he realizes that he forgot to get Dan's number when he booked the sessions.

He walks over to the piano and starts to play a bit to kill the time. As he goes through a range of warm up exercises, there is a loud BAM BAM BAM on the door. Startled, he stops playing and turns around.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Come in, it's open!

Jonah waits for Dan to open the door, but it remains shut. He stands up and walks over to the door, opening it expectantly. No one is there. Cars drive past, but no one appears to have pounded on the door. With a perplexed look, Jonah scans the area before he closes the door.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Great, now I'm hearing things.

His phone buzzes. Jonah answers it as he walks toward the box on his desk.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Hello?

Jonah listens for a moment.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Oh, Hi Dr. Kaplan, thanks for calling me back.

As Dr. Kaplan speaks, Jonah notices an envelope in the box, between two of the books. He picks it up and looks at it, pausing to answer Dr. Kaplan.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Yes, I'm under Dr. Schroeder in the School of Music. I just have a couple of questions for you if you have time?

Jonah listens while examining the envelope, noting that it is blank and looks old.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Sure, I think I can do that. Great, see you in about an hour. Bye.

Jonah ends the call.

He opens the envelope and looks inside. He sees some folded papers.

He removes the papers from the envelope and unfolds them to reveal that it is old, yellowed sheet music. There is no other writing on the sheet. He also notices that this is not a copy, but an original written in pencil.

Jonah folds the sheet music back up, placing it back into the envelope. He picks up his backpack and tucks the envelope into one of the side pockets before exiting the studio.

INT. FACULTY OFFICE - DAY

Jonah sits in a chair opposite DR. JANICE KAPLAN, a short, squat woman of 51. She wears half-size reading glasses that she glances over the top of as Jonah speaks. She adjusts a couple of the many books on her desk.

DR. KAPLAN

As an anthropologist that specializes in sociopsychological analysis of folk tales, music from pre-war Eastern Europe isn't exactly my area.

Jonah nods.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

However, I have heard of the song, but other than what you've probably already found yourself, I don't know if I can give any additional insight. I would consider it to be maybe slightly more than an urban legend but not by much.

JONAH

Sure, I understand. Since I'm here, and you're sort of a people expert, I was wondering...

Dr. Kaplan eyes him intently.

DR. KAPLAN

Go ahead?

JONAH

Well, this guy that came in. He was very... strange. He had a very odd manner of speech. Formal, but not what I would call "posh." It was kind of like if a British person were speaking with an American accent.

Dr. Kaplan nods.

JONAH (CONT'D)
He was carrying a book embossed
with what I later realized were
Roman numerals. LXXI.

DR. KAPLAN
Are you sure it wasn't a bible? We
are in the south, and it's not that
uncommon for people to carry bibles
around.

JONAH
I don't know...Maybe.

Dr. Kaplan gets a thoughtful look on her face.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Is something wrong?

DR. KAPLAN
Have you ever heard of the Spirits
of Solomon?

JONAH
No...

DR. KAPLAN
This may not match everyone's
belief system. In fact, Theologians
dismiss it outright.

JONAH
I'm not religious. I have no bias
either way.

DR. KAPLAN
According to this version, there
are Seventy two demons that rule
Hell. Each of them has many legions
of lesser demons that do their
bidding.

Dr. Kaplan taps away at her keyboard momentarily and then
begins reading aloud from the screen.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
"Dantalion, Great Duke of Hell,
with thirty-six legions of demons
under his command; he is the 71st
of 72 spirits of Solomon.

(MORE)

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

He teaches all arts and sciences,
and also declares the secret
counsel of anyone, given that he
knows the thoughts of all people
and can change them at his will."

Dr. Kaplan shrugs.

Jonah nods nervously at hearing Dr. Kaplan say the name
Dantalion.

JONAH

Yeah, of course. I really
appreciate you seeing me, but I
have a student this evening so I
really have to get back.

DR. KAPLAN

Sure, any time. Say hello to Jim
Schroeder for me.

Jonah nods.

JONAH

I'll do that. Thanks again.

Jonah stands and waves as he quickly exits the office. Dr.
Kaplan has returned to her work and doesn't notice him leave.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Jonah closes the door to Dr. Kaplan's office. He pauses,
leaning against the door for support. He looks exasperated.

JONAH

(softly, to himself)
Can this guy really be a demon?
This is insane.

INT. MUSIC STUDIO - EVENING

Jonah wraps up after his last student of the day. He walks
over to his backpack and pulls out the envelope. He walks
over to the piano and sits on the bench. He carefully
flattens the old sheet music and places it in front of him
before beginning to play.

Jonah plays the haunting melody from the sheet music
completely and then begins again, eventually from memory. It
is the same song as was heard previously: *Szomorú vasárnap*.
He continues playing the song over and over for the next
three hours, transfixed, as if under a spell.

Eventually he begins to tire and notices the time.

He looks around to get his bearings.

JONAH
Jesus Christ.

Jonah looks at his phone again. 10:47 p.m. He shakes his head and takes a deep breath. He scrutinizes the sheet music for a moment, then puts it back on the piano as he stands up. He grabs his backpack, turns off the lights, and locks the door as he leaves the studio.

INT. BEDROOM - DAWN

Jonah lies in a restless dream state. He breathes rapidly and occasionally lets out a slight murmur.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jonah slouches on his couch, mindlessly watching TV.

He notices some distortion, so he switches the channel.

The distortion grows into a hazy shadow...

The shadow begins to grow and takes on the outline of a person.

The TV starts flashing and blinking wildly.

Jonah rubs his eyes with both hands...

But as he opens his eyes...

The Man stands opposite him in front of the TV.

Jonah bolts upright.

JONAH
What the fuck?!

The Man smiles at Jonah.

THE MAN
Did you enjoy the gift, Jonah?

JONAH
What? What are you talking about?

THE MAN

Seress's sheet music, in his original hand. I heard you playing it, and It was marvelous. You are a wonderful pianist, Jonah.

JONAH

How do you..?

THE MAN

I am capable of a great many things, Jonah.

Jonah absently clenches the remote tightly in his hand.

JONAH

Who are you and what do you want from me?

THE MAN

I am known by many names and many more faces. All I want of you is for you to play my song.

The man smiles broadly and evilly.

Jonah yells at The Man.

JONAH

Dantalion! Get the fuck out of my house!

The Man disappears.

Jonah looks around. Everything suddenly appears to be normal. After a moment, he looks around cautiously, and slowly starts to relax. He drops the remote on the table and sits back down on the couch. He begins taking yoga breaths. Slowly in, and slowly out.

From behind him, The Man leans in and whispers in Jonah's ear.

THE MAN

You will play, Jonah.

Jonah screams.

JONAH

No!

Jonah bolts back up and turns around. There is nothing there. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees something.

He looks in the direction of the hall, and sees something in his peripheral vision.

The Man stands on the far side of the room, next to the fish tank.

THE MAN
Beautiful creatures.

The Man stares at the tank, watching the fish swim.

Jonah trembles with anxiety.

JONAH
Fuck off.

Jonah clenches his fists.

JONAH (CONT'D)
This has to be a dream.

The Man turns to Jonah, smiling.

THE MAN
But does it?

The Man taps his left thumb and fingers together. The water in the tank instantly begins to boil. Steam rises rapidly from the top. All of the fish, instantly dead, rise to the top of the boiling water.

JONAH
NOOOO!

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jonah stirs. Although asleep, he has a pained expression on his face, his breathing is rapid and regular.

JONAH
(very softly) No...

Jonah wakes with a start. He sits up, wide-eyed, still breathing heavily, trembling, and sweating. He looks around the room. Everything appears normal. He rubs his face with both hands.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Oh my God. What the hell?

Jonah stands up, puts on some pants and a clean shirt, and tiredly trudges from the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

As Jonah walks into the living room, he notices that the TV is on.

JONAH
(to himself) I don't...

He quickly walks to the front door. Locked. He looks around, and can find no evidence of anything else out of the ordinary. Until he sees the fish tank.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Oh, fuck.

He rushes over to the tank and kneels down. The water is slightly cloudy. None of the fish are swimming around. All of them float on, or near the top. He begins to panic.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Oh, no no no no no no...

He touches the glass and immediately recoils. It's hot. He looks toward the back of the tank at the thermometer. The temperature reading on the thermometer reads 184 degrees Fahrenheit.

JONAH (CONT'D)
You motherfucker.

He stands up, takes a deep breath, and walks back toward the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jonah rummages through the drawers of his desk, not finding what he's looking for. He stands straight up and looks around the room. Then he see's it. On the wall is a framed photo of Jonah and his grandmother at his NYU graduation.

He walks over to the photo and pulls it off the wall. Taped to the back is a hamsa, a hand shaped charm with an eye in the center that hangs like a pendant from a blue leather cord.

JONAH
Well Grams, I hope this works as well as you seem to think it will.

Jonah takes the ward off the back of the photo and puts it in his pocket before replacing the photo on the wall.

INT. MUSIC STUDIO - DAY

Jonah sits on a folding chair to the left of Zoë as she sits on the bench playing the piano. He smiles at her as she plays.

The Man stands behind Jonah, watching with a slight smile on his face.

Zoë finishes playing the song and Jonah stands up applauding and smiling at her.

JONAH

Well done! That was nearly perfect!

Jonah high fives Zoë as she smiles brightly at him. Suddenly, she stops smiling and points behind Jonah.

ZOË

Who's that?

Jonah, still smiling, looks around.

JONAH

Nobody's here but us. Did you see someone?

Jonah stops smiling, now looking all around to see if there is someone else in the studio with them.

ZOË

There was a man behind you. He's gone now.

JONAH

Are you sure? What did he look like?

ZOË

He was wearing a suit and a funny hat, and he had a book.

Jonah freezes. He looks around again, but doesn't see anyone.

JONAH

(nervously)

I'm sure it was just your imagination. It's just us in here, I promise.

There is an audible DING from Zoë's backpack.

ZOË

I think my mom is here.

Jonah checks the time.

JONAH

Yep, 5:15. You know, you really nailed it today.

Zoë smiles as she picks up her backpack, heading for the door.

ZOË

Thanks Jonah! I'll see you next week!

Zoë waves as she exits the studio. Jonah follows her to the door. As he watches Zoë get into the car, he begins to close the door as The Man stands behind him and whispers into his ear.

THE MAN

The time has come, Jonah.

Jonah spins around, looking for The Man.

JONAH

Where are you, you son of a bitch?

The Man stands about five feet from Jonah, smiling. Jonah does not see him.

THE MAN

Play, Jonah. Play.

Jonah suddenly gets a blank look on his face. His jaw clenches and tears well up in his eyes. He slowly, almost mechanically, walks toward the piano and sits down on the bench. He begins to play the original *Szomorú vasárnap*.

The Man watches, still smiling.

Tears are actively rolling down Jonah's face onto his shirt and onto the keys of the piano. Occasionally, he clamps his eyes closed, all while swaying with the music. His jaw is tight, but his fingers are nimble and move with perfect timing, playing the perfect melody.

The Man takes a few steps toward Jonah, who continues to play. Jonah's hands tremble as they play. The Man leans in and whispers. At the conclusion of the song, Jonah stands up.

He turns toward the door. The Man places the yellowed sheet music into Jonah's hand and Jonah puts it into his pocket.

As Jonah puts the paper into his pocket, his fingers brush against the hamsa. Instantly, Jonah reclaims some control over his body. He stiffens and takes a deep breath as he uses all of his strength and willpower to wrap his fingers around the charm.

Summoning all of his strength, he pulls the hamsa out of his pocket and thrusts it toward The Man, glaring at him with every ounce of hatred that he has within him.

The Man sees the talisman and freezes...

THE MAN (CONT'D)

Oh, my dear boy Jonah. What do we have here?

The Man taps his left thumb and fingers together without breaking eye contact.

Jonah's entire body stiffens. He cannot speak. His thoughts are muddled. He cannot move.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

I'm afraid your little trinket is of no use.

The Man waves his left hand in front of him as if he is throwing something to his left.

The hamsa flies from Jonah's hand and hits the far wall before falling to the floor.

Again, The Man taps his left thumb and fingers together.

Jonah, with a blank expression and tears falling from his eyes, turns and walks toward the door and exits the studio.

EXT. BUSY CITY STREET - DAY

Jonah walks to the edge of the sidewalk and stops. The Man appears on the far side of the street across several lanes of traffic. He continues to smile.

Jonah closes his eyes and reopens them quickly. He focuses his vision on The Man. His breathing is deliberate. He sets his jaw and glares at The Man. His hands tremble at his sides.

The Man now glowers at Jonah. Keeping his left hand at his side, he taps his left thumb and fingers together without breaking eye contact.

Looking straight ahead, Jonah bolts toward the man and runs directly into traffic. From his left, a delivery truck's tires SCREECH. There is a loud THUD. Jonah's body flies forward and into the next oncoming lane. The driver screams.

The driver of a large pickup truck traveling the opposite direction slams on his brakes just before the large left front tire rolls over Jonah's battered body. It comes to a complete halt after having rolled over Jonah's now compressed ribcage, rendering him lifeless.

The Man smiles. His form fades into a shadow before completely disappearing.

FADE OUT.