FADE IN

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - LATE EVENING

It's late fall with daylight almost gone.

We see Manhattan's tall structures from a bird's eye view with glittering lights shaping the city's dusky outline... the view steep-drops in a vertiginous fall landing on the fast moving crowd on Lexington...

The strident traffic competes with the throng moving madly in a frenzied race to beat the evening news.

I/E. SUBWAY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

MARK MILLER, a young artist, stark and lean walks up the subway stairs carrying a portfolio, he's on his way to see his art dealer... sees people stumbling on each other in their dart against time... He's not in a rush.

Out of nowhere a young woman flashing a long colorful skirt and dinky shawl slices down through the subway crowd -- winks Mark with a swift-piercing glance and continues her dive... Dazzled, he eye-tracks her until she disappears in the underground labyrinth... left wondering, wants to go after her- better not- shrugs, and continues ascending the few steps left before mixing with the hurrying multitude.

EXT. UPPER EAST SIDE ON LEXINGTON - NIGHT

A mid-upper class Manhattan apartment building with a modest sign in its first level that reads:

FOSS ART GALLERY

Before going in, Mark peeps through the front door glass panels to see if his "marchant" is there...

He's there.

INSIDE THE GALLERY

JACOB FOSS, an old Jewish art merchant, wealthy and ascetic, lives and works in the same premise. He believes strongly that Mark has no future in art as long as he sticks to just one subject: FEMALE INCISIVE EYES. Mark slithers in... warning door bells TINKLE as he swings the door open... finds him researching over a painted linen.

MARK

Hi Jacob.

Jacob peering through a magnifying lens halts his close inspection of a painting and shifts to look... he moans.

JACOB (blunt) Oh, it's you... if you come for money you'll have to wait till tomorrow... I'm busy now.

MARK Sorry Jacob, I can't, I'm on the edge.

JACOB Than jump, it'll save me from not having to see you again.

Mark unzips his portfolio.

MARK First you've gotta see this one, it's hot, enticing to the eye...

JACOB (indifferent) Just put it anywhere you want, I'll look at it later... (mumbling) A new pair of enchanting eyeballs I

presume.

MARK

(overhearing) Not exactly Jacob, this visual effect you've gotta see- it unleashes an emotional glee that might be of acute interest for a man with your artistic vision.

Jacob skews, moans and... fires back.

JACOB (a beat) So look at what we have here now. (MORE) JACOB (CONT'D) The city slicker thinking he's Van Gogh...! Get this straight Mark. Your tender blossom is not work me over this time- Of course the master was universal, you- you're just too focused... too fixatedthinking that the world is just one huge eyeball!

Uncoils out of his chair... approaching slowly.

JACOB (CONT'D) You think, because you're a few decades younger than me, (now howling) YOU CAN OUTSMART ME!

MARK No Jacob, I didn't mean that.

Jacob blurs the magnifying lens with his breath... rubs it clean with his hankie.

JACOB

(mellows down) The problem with you Mark is that you're not realistic, Why... look at you, penniless, always on the edge, to use your same words... and look at me! I don't have that kind of problem.

MARK

How can you, the only worry you have is feeding your bank account.

JACOB (now disturbed) That's another thing with you, (loud) YOU SHOW NO RESPECT!

MARK

Jacob please... your pump, (points to his chest) I don't wanna be held responsible in case something happens to you.

Puts the lens away... Now he fumes unleashing total wrath.

JACOB

(steaming indignation) My pump, you ocular-beamed maniac, has been pumping blood for me to safe-guard my health against people like you throughout my whole entire existence! So don't come in my place thinking there's more sense in your head than mine, (soothing) If it's a brain what you have in your hollow skull!

MARK

Sure Jacob, don't let out the grudge now, just make the usual appraisal and give me what you think it's worth.

Turns his back.

JACOB

Just how many fucking eyeballs you think you're gonna stack me up with, peeping, glaring, beaming! No more, no sir! I've had enough of your unproductive shit! (a beat) Besides, your stubborn bias isn't gonna get you anywhere.

MARK

Please Jacob I'm three months overdue in my rent and I've gotta pay or... find a park bench to sleep tonight.

Jacob picks up the lens and looks through for transparency.

JACOB It's not my problem.

Mark makes his move.

MARK Yes it is, or- wouldn't be, if you'd just sell my work more regularly.

Jacob shoots back.

JACOB You think, vending art is like selling a hot frank in a bun at lunch time? (furious) Especially your junk! Only a queer from the Village Voice seems to relish your fixed popping eyeballs. I certainly don't.

MARK At least there's someone wiser.

JACOB Yeah, a dick sucking hedonist if that's your idea of a wiz.

MARK Anyway, they're not protruding eyeballs Jacob, you're missing the concept.

JACOB Call it whatever you like, your subject is biased, fixed, too limited for the market,

MARK Listen, I don't have to take your shit Jacob, just give me some of your spare cash and I'll be on my way,

JACOB Fine with me, if it's shit what I give you, don't come asking for it!

Mark picks back his carpet and fakes he resents what he's just heard.

MARK

(feigning) I think I'll do that. Thanks anyway.

Thinking he's gone too far this time, Jacob softens his grudge.

JACOB Hey, hey... don't take it too personal, I'm old and you're young, you tease me, I shoot back... come on, show me what you have for me.

Mark grins, opens his carpet (knowing he's done it again) and displays his ocular art for Jacob.

JACOB (CONT'D) (appraising) Hum... same old shit, I'd wish you wouldn't be so heavy on the eyelashes, they...

Mark is not listening.

JACOB (CONT'D) Hey! Are you listening to me?

MARK

Huh? (comes back from his strayed thought) It so happens Jacob, that on my way here I came across into this femme with the most gazing pair of eyes... there's something in the way she looks that... (records back)) Man, if I could just get hold of

someone with such eyes...

JACOB

That's another problem with you. You just can't keep your eyes of women, and not just their eyes... look at me again, I don't have that kind of problem. To me, (a beat) Women are a sinister payload God inflicted upon man for his constant

disobedience.

MARK

Jacob, Have you ever been with a woman?

JACOB That's my personal secret. MARK Hush-hush. The only secret you have Jacob is how much there is in your cash vault while others like me starve.

Resenting Mark's lack of respect.

JACOB

What?... Don't you have a speck of gratitude for me? You come in anytime you want to, interrupt my work, take my money and --

MARK (interrupting) -- Come on Jacob, not more of the same shit, just give me what you want, I've gotta go.

JACOB If you can't take my shit I don't have to take your insolence!... (takes his time) Besides, I've got something for you.

Jacob walks to his desk-- pans to both sides, making sure nobody is looking and extracts an amount of cash.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Here,

A cell phone RINGS, Jacob hops -- goes for his right pocket, nothing -- goes for the other one, it's there.

SOLO OVER THE PHONE

JACOB (CONT'D) Jacob here... (pause) Who did you expect sweetheart?... (pause) Aren't these devices suppose to be personal? (pause) No sweetheart I don't... (pause) I'll let you know, Bye, bye.

Ends the call.

MARK Who was that Jacob? JACOB The queer from the Voice, wants to know if there's any artistic revelation he can write about, besides yours, of course. Puts back the cel phone in his pocket. JACOB (CONT'D) Anyhow, this is for you. I hope it'll keep you away for some time. Blown away by the amount he's receiving Mark stuns. MARK Why... Jacob! Why do I deserve this generosity? JACOB It's not generosity, it's business. Looks at Jacob with distrust. MARK Are you OK? Picks up the magnifying lens to resume his research. JACOB I sold one of your paintings a few days ago. MARK You did? I thought my art never sold. JACOB I do my best. MARK Jacob, you're an angel. JACOB And you, the devil in person. Now get out. MARK Promise you won't be seeing me for a while, take my word.

JACOB Don't want your word, just make sure you take a month at least before you come back.

Jacob resumes his inspection on the linen with his lens.

Mark leaves the shop... the bells tinkle again.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT

The subway RATTLES on its tracks, Mark wobbles as he rides back to his apartment -- suddenly -- A STARTLE!

Sees the same woman with the long colorful skirt sitting a few feet away -- CAN'T TAKE IT AS REAL!

Without hesitating walks toward her dispersing some passengers as he makes his way through... Stops very close in front of her.

MARK

Pardon my intrusion, but didn't we cross before- this afternoon- at a subway entrance on 82nd?

SOFIA, arcane and beautiful, looks up... mesmerizing eyes hard to look away from.

SOFIA

I believe not.

A passenger sitting next to her looks to both.

MARK (insisting) Why... sure you must remember, I was walking up as you came downyou looked at me, I looked at you...

SOFIA (with foreign accent) Sorry, I can't remember.

MARK Sure you must remember! Why... I certainly can't forget,.. Especially those eyes. She takes a brief pause to respond -- fixing her eyes on him with a subtle glare. SOFIA You must excuse my poor English. MARK No problem, I'll help you find the exact words so you can speak to me. She smiles. SOFIA You are very kind. MARK And you are very beautiful. The passenger sitting next to her gets up and leaves, Mark takes his place swiftly. MARK (CONT'D) I'm Mark. Extends his hand, Sofia takes it. SOFIA Sofia. MARK I presume you are... Spanish? SOFIA Rumanian. Carried away by her charm. MARK (eyes fixed) Your dress is fascinating ... you certainly look stunning in those vivid colors and... your eyes... intrigue me...

SOFIA Sorry you speak too fast, I don't understand. Sits back ... eyes fixed. MARK No, no! It's me. I get carried away very easily and forget where I'm stepping ... sometimes. SOFIA I still don't understand you. MARK It's like this, So-fi-a, that's your name isn't it? SOFIA Yes. MARK When we crossed into each other, a few hours ago, you looked at me with a flare that still has me simmering inside- and now I have you right in front of me. (a beat) Isn't it amazing? SOFIA You sound like a good person. MARK Oh I can be more than that, I'm also very persistent with people that I find interesting speaking to. SOFIA You find me interesting? MARK Extremely interesting. SOFIA Thank you. MARK Where are you heading for? SOFIA Heading for?

MARK Sorry, I meant, going to. SOFIA Yes, I am going to Brooklyn. MARK You live there? SOFIA Yes. MARK I'd say we're almost neighbors, I live in the lower east side of Manhattan. SOFIA Huh? MARK Across the east river from you. SOFIA Now I understand. MARK What part of Brooklyn do you live in? SOFIA In a warehouse, by the river. MARK A warehouse by the river? (quizzed) You must mean a houseboat on the river, SOFIA No, in a warehouse by the river with my tribe. MARK Tribe? You mean your family. SOFIA No, my tribe. MARK Now it's me who doesn't understand.

SOFIA You see, we are many gypsies living together, a commune. MARK In the same house? SOFIA No, in a warehouse with several... (quibbles) Tents. MARK Sounds like an army camp. SOFIA Something like that. MARK Do you stock merchandise or run an import business? SOFIA No, we simply live there. MARK How many of you? SOFIA Can't tell, we come and go all the time. MARK Yeah, I've heard gypsies don't have a permanent home, that they drift constantly from one place to another. (to himself) Man, I've gotta see this. SOFIA

What?

MARK Never mind. Anyway, can I walk you to where you're going?

SOFIA (staring) If you wish. MARK (blinking back) Yes, I wish.

SUBWAY TUNNEL

The subway train rattles speeding in the darkness.

EXT. BROOKLYN HEIGHTS/SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

As they exit the subway station, Sofia quibbles.

SOFIA (with angst) Maybe it is not a good idea to follow me.

MARK Why is that?

SOFIA It is better for you to go back.

MARK No, I'd like to walk you home, or... warehouse, whatever.

SOFIA I am used to being alone, I can take care of myself.

MARK In this neighborhood it's not safe for a woman to roam alone.

SOFIA I know were I am.

MARK I don't really think you do.

SOFIA (begging) Please do as I say.

MARK Are you snubbing me?

SOFIA I don't understand what you say. He takes her by the elbow and resume walking.

MARK Come on I'll explain as we walk, I may not see you again and I'd like to make the best out of our coincidental encounter.

SOFIA

As you wish.

MARK Why is it always my wish first. Don't you have a wish of your own?

SOFIA

No.

MARK Tell me Sofia, Do you work?

SOFIA Us gypsies never work. We grab not steal, read palms, fortune tell...

MARK Hold on, You mean like a soothsayer?

They stop.

SOFIA I don't know what that means, but I can read your future for twenty dollars, (a beat) I need light.

They walk to the nearest street lamp pole.

SOFIA (CONT'D) Give me your left hand...

Mark complies.

SOFIA (CONT'D) ... Now open your palm.

The palm opens.

MARK Do you see anything interesting? SOFIA (concentrated) Very interesting ... MARK Like what? SOFIA First you must put the twenty bill over your palm. He follows... she rubs the bill over his palm several times and tugs it in her breast. SOFIA (CONT'D) I see fame... fortune... and... MARK What? SOFIA ... Misfortune. MARK Misfortune is something I've had most of my life, it's not new to me. SOFIA It is your destiny. MARK How many times a day you give suckers the same reading. She resents his remark and breaks away mad. SOFIA You are also very foolish. MARK No, no, Wait! I'm sorry, I didn't mean what I said. Catching up behind her. MARK (CONT'D) I'm sorry for my loose remark, wait, slow down!

The distance from the street lights widens as they slowly scamp into the dark waterfront.

EXT. BROKLYN WATERFRONT - NIGHT

An abandoned warehouse comes into view as they approach the poorly lit waterfront.

MARK Why do you choose to live here? It's so somber, lifeless. I bet you I can shout and nobody will hear me.

SOFIA We are not alone.

MARK

Huh?

Out of the darkness a pair of male silhouettes take shape as they approach.

SOFIA Don't be afraid they are my people.

Mark freezes.

MARK Are you sure?

SOFIA Yes, don't be afraid.

MARK I'm not afraid, I've been mugged before, all you have to do is give'm what they want.

SOFIA They are not robbers.

MARK Lurking in the night is the right job for muggers.

SOFIA Stay still. ATALO, hideous tribe boss with, hard grimace with a flaring golden tooth wants to know who she's with.

IN RUMANI

ATALO (SUBTITLE) Who is you friend Sofia?

SOFIA (SUBTITLE) Someone I met in the subway on my way here.

ATALO (SUBTITLE) You know we don't bring strangers to our commune, send him away.

SOFIA (SUBTITLE) Yes I should have known, please forgive me.

ATALO (SUBTITLE) Do you want me to chase him away for you?

SOFIA (SUBTITLE) No, please! I'll talk to him.

ATALO (SUBTITLE) Tell your friend to leave now.

END OF SUBTITLE

Sofia turns to Mark with anxiety.

SOFIA You must go now, please.

MARK Tell your friends I mean no harm.

SOFIA

Please go.

Mark catches the grim and backs off.

MARK (wrily) Sure, no problem, Nice to have met you... your friends too.

Atalo with fixed eyes makes sure he leaves.

Mark clears out in haste -- looks back repeatedly.

EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE - NIGHT

A Lower East Side neighborhood in the naked city. Old mass tenement relics housing the hopeful and forlorn with fire scapes dangling from the front view... The Bowery Boys still haunt the streets.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT/HALLWAY - NIGHT

LOLA MONTES, Newyorican in her late thirties's, next door neighbor and rent collector is waiting for him.

From her slight opened door.

LOLA Do you have something for me?

Mark introduces the key in his door lock and holds back.

MARK Hi Lola, in fact I do.

Opens the door fully and storms out.

LOLA (requesting) You're three months overdue you know. What are you gonna do about it?

Mark goes for his back pocket, pulls out his wallet.

MARK Here Lola, this should take care of my overdue debt.

Lola takes the money... shocks.

LOLA (stunned) What did you do? Rob a bank?

MARK No Lola, I don't rob Banks, I'm a painter, remember? I make a hard honest living.

LOLA How can I forget, I'm your greatest collector. MARK You're not an art collector Lola, you just abduct my precious work to secure the rent.

LOLA I have to, it's me who takes the nagging from the landlord because of you,

MARK What else do you take from him besides his nagging, I've herd him bouncing in your couch every other night,

Lola holds back briefly -- then lunges fierce.

LOLA

(vexed) How could you say that ? Are you spying on me? I'll take you to court for that... You peeper!

MARK

No Lola I don't spy on you, I just happen to hear the thrusting and the panting through the wall. I live next door to you, remember?

Lola simmers, her eyes almost popping out.

IN SPANISH

LOLA (SUBTITLE)

Maldito seas Mark, mira que soy capaz de cortarte la lengua un dia de estos! Fuck you.

Mark unlocks his door...

MARK

Whatever you're saying it doesn't sound nice, give me my receipt tomorrow after you count the money. Good night.

LOLA Fuck you again. ... Mark enters his apartment shutting his door.

MARK (O.S.) Love you Lola.

Lola SLAMS her door.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD GROCERY - DAY

The grocery and fruit stand is packed with fresh goodies... Mark picks some plump peaches from a fruit basket... smells them... they look good.

TONY the Italo-American local grocer, with apron on storms out of the store.

TONY Oh no you don't! First you pay what you owe me, than you can take whatever you want.

MARK Calm down Tony, I don't come for credit. I come to take and pay.

TONY You do? Show it to me first.

Mark takes his time... selects the fruit and draws a fifty out his side pocket.

MARK Here's for the twenty eight I owe you plus the peaches I'm taking... (with sarcasm) Considering the price, I'd say they come with interest.

Tony takes the money and scratches his cheek.

TONY (skeptic) What happen? Did you hit a jackpot or something?

MARK (bugged) What's the matter with you people! (a beat) (MORE) MARK (CONT'D) Can't a man pay his debts without taking all this malicious talk? Maybe I'll just take longer to take care of my back pays, if that's what you want from me,

Tony cleans his hands with his apron.

TONY

No, no Mark, don't think like that! You're credit is still good, just pay me in time and the house is open to you anytime.

MARK

Last night was Lola stalking me and now it's you so early in the morning willing to strangle me for a petty debt... I think I better find a place to move away from you people.

Tony takes the comment seriously.

TONY

If you're serious I can rent you my attic in Brooklyn Heights for a reasonable price.

MARK

Brooklyn Heights? That's were I was last night, no thank you. I got a pretty close impression of the neighborhood to consider moving there.

TONY

Hey! I live there, a lot people live there, What's wrong with the place?

MARK

I suppose it's good if you're bloodkin to the mob,

TONY

I may be Italian, but got nothing to do with the mob. That's why I charge a fair rent.

MARK Tony, if your rental is as reasonable and fair as the food prices you charge, I better remain where I'm at now. TONY You think I'm not fair. Why... I give you credit don't I? MARK Sure, with loansharking interests, TONY Loansharking me? God forbid. MARK You sound just like Jacob. TONY Jacob?... Who's Jacob? MARK The fairest one of all. TONY (dumbstruck) What? MARK Forget it. Mark takes his bag and walks away. INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE/GYPSY CAMP TENT - NIGHT Sofia spellbound looking herself in a mirror, two candles on her sides... The candles weave subtle rows of light over her

Atalo aborts her trance opening her tent curtain rudely.

IN RUMANI

face.

ATALO (SUBTITLE) Who was the man you were with?

SOFIA I wish you wouldn't interrupt my meditation,

ATALO Leave your witchery for some other time, we have to talk, SOFIA What is it you want to talk about? ATALO We are short of money, SOFIA Send your bagsnatchers to the streets, ATALO It's not enough, SOFIA What do you want from me? ATALO Is he rich? SOFIA Who? ATALO The man you were with, SOFIA I am going to make him rich, ATALO How? SOFIA Don't need to tell you, just trust me. ATALO Bring him here. SOFIA I will do it my way. ATALO Where is he now? SOFIA Waiting for me.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Crappy mess, with so many different things scattered it's hard to walk. Only the unpainted linens are kept in a neat row. It's late and quiet... he always works at night.

An easel holding a recent begun canvas with a pair of unfinished eyes has Mark's strokes on it... Pours some oil paint on his palette... picks out a brush and begins to paint...

A KNOCK on his door breaks his work.

Stops working, goes for the door, peeps through the magic eye and... gulps!

Through the peeping hole.

MARK

Sofia!

Transformed and dressed for a night kill, Sofia glimmers her beauty through the eye piece.

SOFIA (lipreading through the hole) Sur-pri-se!

As soon as Mark opens the door she prowls her way in with the stride of a bombshell.

MARK (stammering) Sofia-, I-, I- ... It's late.

SOFIA Not for me, I work at night.

She looks around finding for a place to sit... without asking goes for the bed and sits.

MARK What brings you here?... How did you find me?

SOFIA You forget I can foretell the unknown, She smirks pleasantly.

SOFIA Why does this room smell like...

MARK

... Turpentine? Oils and solvents all mixed in a suave toxic aroma. I find it pleasing.

SOFIA I must apologize for the other

night, they were so rude.

MARK

You mean the two angels that showed me the way out when I walked you home?

SOFIA

Yes.

MARK Don't worry about it, this is New York City, the town that never sleeps and nestles the wicked.

SOFIA That's why I like it.

MARK It's my hometown, never been out of it.

SOFIA Never? I have crossed the ocean and lived in different cities.

MARK I suppose you have...

Mark tongue-tied can't take his eyes away from her.

MARK (CONT'D) God you have the most mesmerizing pair of beaming beads...

SOFIA What is- Beaming beads? ... MARK A metaphor. SOFIA A what? MARK Something like ... (a beat) ... sparkling eyes. SOFIA Oh! Your English is too complicated for me. He puts away his brush, soaks it in a cup with solvent, rubs it clean and turns his attention to her. MARK So we are here, the two of us face to face not knowing how to begin ... SOFIA You took the first step. MARK Yeah, an extraordinary coincidence I still can't surpass. SOFIA Do you want me to stay? MARK Why... sure, I just didn't expect you, nobody visits me, I'm a loner in this shabby neighborhood. She looks fixedly straight and lands her query. SOFIA Would you like to spend the night with me? I am all yours for one hundred dollars. MARK (takes his time) Wait a minute- this is going too fast for me, (a beat) (MORE)

MARK (CONT'D) We meet one night, you come to my place, wanna roll in my bed as if we had reach something ... SOFIA I can blow you for an extra twenty, MARK What? SOFIA Wouldn't you like it? MARK Now you stop right there! SOFIA Are you gay? MARK No. I'm not SOFIA Then lets do it. MARK (quibbling) Sofia, I don't buy sex as you propose it, it's just not my way of getting together with a woman. SOFIA You are difficult to understand, most men don't think too long to have me. MARK Well. I'm not one of those men. SOFIA I begin to understand. MARK I don't think you quite do. SOFIA We'll see. Walks closer to her.

MARK Sofia, it's your eyes that enchant me, they radiate something thattells me there's a jinx in them! (a beat) Wait...! He walks away momentarily. SOFIA So you don't want me? Comes back ready with a sketching pad and charcoal. MARK Yes I do... but what I want now is to grind to a halt. Hold still ... SOFIA What are you doing? MARK Drawing you eyes. SOFIA But I must make some money tonight, MARK Don't worry, I'll give you some... SOFIA Can I trust you? MARK Completely... hold still. Mark sketches as he talks. MARK (CONT'D) Hasn't anybody ever told you that you have a captivating gaze? SOFIA Yes I have and few have survived the temptation ... How long will this take? MARK A short while ... just- holdstill... I can feel the temptation too.

She looks away inadvertently.

MARK (CONT'D) No, don't do that!

Looks back.

SOFIA

Sorry.

MARK It's all right, just keep looking at me.

He outlines her eyes... she leans back... he draws slowly revealing her image... she glances... he rubs some shadows... she gazes with malice... time passes... she stares vividly -he nabs the glimpse. He's got it.

It's past midnight... she's weary and wants to go.

SOFIA I didn't really come for this.

MARK Sorry if things didn't turn out for you,

SOFIA It has for you.

MARK Hold on a little longer, I'm almost finished.

SOFIA Please hurry, I must be back before dawn.

MARK Rumani vampirism?

SOFIA No, tribal rules.

Puts aside his pad and charcoal pencil.

MARK OK, we're done for the night.

SOFIA I must go. MARK Will you give me another session? (eyes fixed) I'll pay... SOFIA How much? MARK ... A hundred per night? SOFIA I make more then that. MARK One fifty? SOFIA How regularly? MARK Every time you pay a call. Just call first to make sure I'm here, I'll give you my card. SOFIA Business card? MARK Sort of, it's all in there whenever you wanna reach me. She takes the card without looking at it. SOFIA (in haste) I have to go now. She stands up looking for the door -- says good-bye with a cute kiss -- Mark seizes her -- yanks her close with a vigorous pull and lands a tasting smack. MARK Feel the difference? SOFIA

(breathless) Hush...! Thank you for the night. MARK Come back Sofia.

SOFIA

I will.

She walks out.

BACK TO MARK'S DEN

Without any sign of exhaustion Mark gets to work on his sketches... lines up a clean framed canvas on his easel, spreads some oil colors on his palette and begins painting...

Brushes strike the linen with the mastery of the given talent... an image emerges slowly... hours later Sofia's eyes come to life.

A stunning, captivating, beautiful result!

APARTMENT HALLWAY

Mark leaves his apartment with the still fresh painting in his portfolio...

Lola detects him as he leaves and delivers a spicy comment from her door lintel.

LOLA So... the art vendor also pays sex.

MARK

(joyful) Good morning Lola, did you stay up all night?... Snooping?

LOLA How couldn't I, with all the springs in your mattress yelling for help,

MARK

You heard wrong Lola, it was my hand with its charcoal mate dancing on my drawing paper, not the springs in my bed.

LOLA

Do you take me for a fool? I saw a woman sneak in your apartment last night.

MARK Impossible, you couldn't have,

LOLA And why not?

MARK Because the only sound heard was out of your apartment, someone snoring... (a beat) Say hello to the landlord for me.

IN SPANISH

LOLA (SUBTITLE) (spitting fire) Mira Mark de los demonios que te voy a joder un dia de estos! Fuck you!

He walks out grinning.

MARK (hastily) Go back to bed, you'll need it in case the landlord decides to come back for some more.

Lola SLAMS the door.

INT. JACOB'S ART GALLERY - DAY

Absorbed, the old man contemplates the painting... Sofia's gawking glare stuns him... tests the dryness of the linen with a touch.

MARK Careful Jacob the oil is still fresh,

JACOB Don't teach me how to handle art... (rapt) It's very luring that's why I tried to touch it, it looks so real, it seems wanting to spill a tear, MARK

I think it's good too,

JACOB More than good Mark, it's excellent, enticing, absorbing!

MARK Never heard such praise from you before.

JACOB

(rubbing his hands) You have earned it this time my wonderful, gifted, talented friend.

MARK You think so?

JACOB

(overwhelmed) I think you've stroke the bell of the big chapel this time.

MARK

Can you be more specific?

JACOB

What I mean is that you have finally found your place in the arduous world of art.

MARK

No shit...

JACOB

Throughout my extensive years in the business of art marketing, I have learned to recognize when an artist is heading for success.

MARK

Sounds odd coming out of you Jacob, you were always nagging that I didn't have a future.

JACOB

I was wrong, I owe you my deepest apology.

MARK Jacob, I'm dumbstruck, it doesn't sound like you.

Jacob can't detach his eyes from the painting.

MARK (CONT'D) Are you all right?

JACOB

Never felt better before this day, I'll hang it up for display after having it framed. I presume you're for some money?

MARK Well, I promised the model I'd pay her a hundred fifty per session.

JACOB

Who is she?

MARK

I don't really know, she's someone out of nowhere... She's given life to my paintings.

JACOB A devil's cousin?

MARK Something like that,

JACOB

What ever you do with her, don't bang her for the time being. It's not good to mix sex with business.

MARK Difficult, I'm getting close.

Jacob stresses his advise.

JACOB

(hissing) Don't let her go, put her in a cage if you have to, but don't let her go! She's ours.

MARK You're beginning to sound creepy Jacob. JACOB Do as I tell you! Walks over to his desk. Mark knows what it means. JACOB (CONT'D) Here's fifteen hundred dollars for ten sessions, Bring all the work to me, YOU HEAR, to me! Hands Mark the money. JACOB (CONT'D) Don't forget. MARK Sure Jacob, no need for the steam. Baffled, Mark leaves the gallery. EXT. MARK'S APARTMENT PORTICO - NIGHT Mark approaches the entrance to his old building, finds Sofia sitting in the front stoop... she's weary. MARK Sofia! You keep surprising me, How long have you been here? SOFIA (bored) Long enough, I called but nobody answered. MARK As you can see, I'm just getting home. It's been a good day for me... you look disturbed. SOFIA Why didn't you answer the telephone? MARK Because I wasn't home.

SOFIA You are lying. MARK No I'm not. I went to see Jacob SOFIA I know. MARK You know? How could you? You weren't there. SOFIA I just know. MARK If you know that much, maybe you can tell me what I was doing there and I'll freak out right here. She stands up. SOFIA Mark you are coming with me. MARK Coming with you? Where to? Secures his hand and begins to lead him. SOFIA

A gypsy feast.

MARK Feast? What's it like?

SOFIA You'll find out when we get there.

MARK I always like to know where I'm going before I head in any direction.

SOFIA We have a gypsy gathering at the docks. A full moon ritual.

MARK (looks up) Where is it? -- don't see it. SOFIA You can see it only from the waterfront,

MARK Fine with me, never been in a gypsy feast. Will there be booze?

SOFIA What is booze?

MARK

Liquor.

SOFIA There will be plenty of wine plus extra pleasures.

Stops.

SOFIA (CONT'D) Tonight, is our night.

Mark halts to a stiff.

MARK Hey! Hold on... what's in there, I'd like to know,

SOFIA Don't you want to be with me? I have seen the desire in your eyes.

MARK Sure I'd like to, but it's just the way this whole thing is unfolding, (a beat) It spooks me...

SOFIA Speak simply.

MARK First Jacob acting strangely and now you with this creepy moon-light invitation.

Resume the stroll, hands laced.

SOFIA We must hurry or will be late for the gathering.

MARK Can I stay overnight?

SOFIA I will sleep with you.

Puts his arm around her.

MARK (V.O.) Beautiful, let's get there.

INT. BROOKLYN WATERFRONT/WAREHOUSE- NIGHT

The moon shines above the East River with New York's skyline in the background.

INTERIOR WAREHOUSE

It's dark in the cavernous structure. Scattered tents inside the post-war II warehouse make up the gypsy commune. An indoor camp preserving their tradition to live under the stars, in this occasion, without the stars.

The old, young and children mingle to celebrate the gathering with hilarity around a bonfire, a pig suspended in a spike roasts for the midnight feast.

Mark and Sofia approach the spread, Mark is cautious... scans the place from top to bottom, left to right.

Atalo spots them approaching.

Mark overwhelmed with the scene doesn't see him.

MARK (excited) Hard to believe this is happening in New York, (to Sofia) Incredible!

Atalo makes an unfriendly advance.

ATALO (frosty) If You come as a friend, we welcome you, if not, LEAVE NOW! Mark stuns.

MARK Yeah, guess we're friendly, Aren't we Sofia?

Atalo tweaks his grimace from wry to pleasant.

ATALO

Good,

Sofia steps in.

IN RUMANI

SOFIA (SUBTITLE) It's my day Atalo, let us be.

ATALO (SUBTITLE) I am not speaking to you.

SOFIA (SUBTITLE) He comes as my guest, be polite?

ATALO (SUBTITLE) I just want to make sure you don't forget the agreement.

SOFIA (SUBTITLE) I said I will go along with it. (looks away) Now leave us.

ATALO (SUBTITLE)

Good.

END SUBTITLE

Atalo squats so close to Mark he can almost sniff him.

ATALO (CONT'D) (with grudge) It is you I am speaking to now, tonight you take one of our women for a reason, not for pleasure... (drinks from his wine boot) Enjoy her! MARK Huh, Well, I didn't know our tryst was heading so indiscreetly.

ATALO You have been told, enjoy the night.

MARK Can I ask you something?

ATALO

What?

MARK Don't you wanna know what kind of people I am?

ATALO We know all about your painting using one of our women for your profit.

MARK Now wait a minute... (turning to Sofia) Does he think I'm exploiting you?

SOFIA Yes he does.

Atalo shifts to Sofia.

IN RUMANI

ATALO (SUBTITLE) Do you agree with what I say Sofia?

SOFIA (SUBTITLE)

Yes I do.

ATALO (SUBTITLE) Good. Now we celebrate.

END OF SUBTILE

Atalo extends Mark his drinking boot as a sign of good gesture.

ATALO (CONT'D) Here, have some wine. Mark takes the boot -- Sofia shows him how to squeeze it -- he pumps several times -- swigs the wine and exhales with a gush.

MARK (recovering) Strong wine, What's it made of?

ATALO

Sour grapes with women's piss.

BURSTS with an impudent laugh and walks away.

MARK

Is he always so unpleasant?

Sofia cuddles close.

SOFIA

He was born with his head last, which means in gypsy terms, he thinks with his feet.

MARK

How did he become head of the tribe if he's not so smart.

SOFIA

Intelligence is not needed tu run a tribe, only guts and brutality make a leader.

MARK

Got a lot to learn about you people, get me some of that pissed wine of yours. I'm getting drunk tonight.

SOFIA You liked it?

MARK Can't say I do, it's different.

SOFIA

Then have some more.

MARK Can't, he took the wine boot with him, SOFIA

I will get you some wine.

MARK Got the feeling it's gonna be a catchy night.

SOFIA Then let's dance around the fire to blend our spirits and share the warmth of the fire.

MARK With you so close I'd burn.

SOFIA (with seductive glance) Follow me.

Mark goaded walks toward the fire.

MARK That gypsy wine is taking possession of my head. It works fast.

SOFIA Our wine sends the devil away, come, first we must circle the fire five times, (with fixed glare) Hold me close.

MARK (humbly) Your wish is my wish.

Their bodies meet... Mark follows Sofia's sensual movements... knows he's hooked and plays along as they contour.

Atalo from a distance peeps at them with shrewd malice -- a sudden shift of his head steers away his attention.

Unexpectedly a brawl breaks up between two drunk gypsies -one is thrown to the ground and yanks back fluttering a shining blade -- the other one responds exposing his knife resolved to fight. Atalo throws them a rope -- one of them catches it in the air and ties himself to one end -- the other one does the same clutching his five-inch blade with the other hand.

Mark attracted to the bloody showdown wants close range.

Sofia tries to pull him away.

SOFIA Get away from them.

MARK (resisting) No, I wanna see this.

SOFIA You can get hurt.

MARK I want first row.

She walks away.

Mark takes a place in the small crowd gathering around the duel... the excitement is on.

The two men tied to each other fan their deadly blades -- a evil look in their eyes flares the hateful thirst-for-blood in their veins -- they pull each other with yanking thrusts -back out maintaining distance... close in slowly for a first wipe.

A first blow -- a quick evasion -- a distance is kept... their eyes fixed on each other... they breathe rough exuding hate.

Atalo overlooks from a close distance.

With lightning speed a thrust -- a wince too slow -- a deep cut in the arm scores -- the wounded YELLS his pain but won't stop -- he bleeds -- spits out with defiance... the victor is ready for the kill... shortens the distance when the tribe boss intervenes cutting the rope.

> ATALO You have had enough, kill each other some other time.

Mark overwhelmed gasps with astonishment.

MARK (frantic) That was quick and bloody. Wasn't it Sofia? Wipes to his side and finds her. MARK (CONT'D) Gotta give it to you Sofia, the spectacle made my night. This is live Rome again! SOFIA I have seen worst... deadly ones. He plunges to her side. MARK Nothing can be... better than this. Live gladiators! Takes the wine boot and gobbles down another load. MARK (CONT'D) (with excitement) Man, this is live and happening in the city of New York ... Unbelievable! Settles down breathless. SOFIA (gloomy) One of them will have to go. When a gypsy draws blood from another gypsy is mortal vengeance. MARK (stuttering) You mean- it wont- stop there? I'd like to be- in the next bout. SOFIA One of them will take the other's life in the near or far future. MARK Let me tell you Sofia- these people sure know how to handle a blade. SOFIA It's bad omen to feast and spill blood at the same time

(MORE)

SOFIA (CONT'D) (a beat) Besides the night is waiting for us. MARK Damn right it is, and what I'm going to do is spill- love- all over your bed tonight. He tries to kiss her -- she leans back. SOFIA Not here, let's go to my tent. MARK Show me the way. Get up and walk away. INSIDE SOFIA'S TENT Mark takes off his shoes and springs into the bed... Sofia undresses revealing a gorgeous body... she takes the lead ripping off his shirt violently... her lips plumped and moist... she gets on top... begins to straddle... up... down. Mark makes a sudden twist... now he's on top... it goes on endlessly. INT. JACOB'S ART GALLERY - NIGHT Jacob rounds up art critics, cult personalities and party goers to promote Mark's recent collection. The gay art critic from the Post, absorbed by one of Mark's paintings observes wordless.

> JACOB (waiting impatient) Well, what do you think sweetheart?

CRITIC Jacob, This is revealing! Astonishing to the eye! Lures you into a hypnotic fantasy! (sighing) How I'd wish I had eyes like that!

JACOB Quiet right my dear, keep wishing and you'll get there, (MORE) JACOB (CONT'D) (looks around) Where's Mark?

CRITIC Mark? -- You mean Mark Miller, the wannabe whose gawking eyes you dread so much?

JACOB Not anymore sweetheart, there's been a twist of fate.

CRITIC You don't say!

Mark holding a wine glass socializes with a party group.

MARK Where I got the subject from? Can't tell, it's a pro's secret.

PARTY GOER With banging rights instilled in the contract?... Or a purely professional agreement.

MARK It fits both, if that's what you wanna hear.

Jacob spots him and CALLS.

JACOB

MARK!

MARK looks to the call.

MARK Coming Jacob! (interrupts his chat) Excuse me.

PARTY GOER Don't take long, you may wanna put in your bio what I've gotta say.

MARK Be right back.

Joins Jacob.

JACOB

I want you to hear this.

CRITIC I was telling Jacob that I find your collection of peering eyes fascinating, this one for instance...

Points to a linen with Mark's first session with Sofia.

CRITIC (CONT'D) ... It's so luring... it feels like being pulled into a trance of no return.

JACOB Honey, don't go over the line, keep your lips on the ground.

MARK I share your emotion, I felt the same effect while painting it.

JACOB You banged her already?

Mark heeds in silence.

CRITIC Jacob, what a disgusting thing to say,

JACOB The dollar green matches the color of the eyes, good omen for me.

MARK The color of money, that's all there is for you, Isn't it Jacob?

JACOB Got a better idea to live a peaceful life?

The critic rests his hand on Jacob's arm.

CRITIC Jacob, consider it sold. JACOB

To whom?

CRITIC An unknown benefactor, you old buzzard, that's all you get to know.

JACOB First come, first served.

MARK I thought you were gonna hang it up in your office, Jacob.

JACOB It's not ethical to interfere with a customer's preference, I'll let it go.

MARK Ethical?... Well, thank you both for your generosity... I left some unfinished talk I must go back to.

Before he walks back to join the unfinished talk, Mark is taken by surprise.

MARK (CONT'D) Melt my heart! La Maja in person...

Sees Sofia walks in the party elegantly transformed in a black night gown... She stuns the guests as she strides her way in.

Jacob notices the twain.

JACOB Do you know her?

MARK (pleased) She's my model.

JACOB Who invited her? (a beat) No matter, go get her!

Mark dashes to her with a charging zest.

MARK Sofia! Great to see you! (gazing) You look fabulous!

Exuding elegance, Sofia continues to lures the attention of a nearby guest.

PARTY GOER 2 Where did that bombshell come from?

PARTY GOER 3 Maybe she's part of the goodies being served.

SOFIA (with confidence) It seems you forgot to invite me, I see myself every where, and yet... ignored by you.

MARK No, it's not like that, this is purely commercial. It's Jacob's move to sell my art.

SOFIA

Your art?

MARK Yes, why? Is there someone else besides me?

SOFIA

Yes.

MARK

Who?

SOFIA

Me.

A waiter passes by with a tray of goblets filled with wine, she takes one.

SOFIA (CONT'D) Don't you think you could have invited me?

Mark drinks his wine.

MARK No, I don't think so, you see, the longer I keep you in the dark the better it works (toasts) Cheers... you are my secret. SOFIA Your secret? I thought we were lovers by now. MARK We are, except I don't mix love with work... Jacob's advise. SOFIA But when you work you make love to me. MARK True, with a slight difference. Skewing at the guests around her. SOFIA What difference? MARK Your eyes Sofia, that's what fills me up, not your body- and don't take me wrong. (drinks) I enjoy your gorgeous body just as much... SOFTA Then, we should have an arrangement. MARK Please Sofia, don't talk like that, you're the most wonderful thing ever to happen to me. SOFIA Since when? MARK Since the night we bumped into each other. SOFIA Yes, fateful coincidence.

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Drinks the wine to the end. SOFIA (CONT'D) It's boring here with so many people looking at me. MARK You're just too beautiful not to look at. She comes close... her lips over his ear... bites gently. SOFIA (whispering) I want you to come with me? MARK Let go... Where to? People gaze the scene with saucy delight. MARK (CONT'D) Hey! Go easy we're not in your shack. SOFIA I prefer a different place. MARK Well? I don't know... (thinks twice) This gathering means a lot to me. Jacob bumps in mocking. JACOB Mark, you're missing a piece of your ear. (gawking) Aren't you going to introduce me to this adorable creature? MARK (blunt) Sofia this is Jacob, he sells my work. Fascinated by Sofia's glimmer, Jacob vents an amorous bouquet of rhythmic words.

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JACOB Even a greek goddess would shun before the radiance of your beauty, (kisses her hand and holds) SOFIA (flattered) You are very kind, I am Sofia a Rumanian pagan. JACOB Paganism opened the door of libidinous extremes only to be unjustly labeled, as sin. MARK (steers clear) Jacob, her English is limited. JACOB I'm sure she understood every word. It's not how you say it, but how you express it. Releasing her hand. MARK Beautifully said, but we have to -she wants to go. JACOB Could I get you anything to make you stay longer and perhaps get, (a beat) Better acquainted? SOFIA Yes, champagne instead of wine... JACOB You see! She wants to stay. Don't you dear? SOFIA No, I came for Mark MARK (edgy) Thank you Jacob but we have to go.

JACOB Go Where? Your paintings are selling for the first time, important people listened to the call, and you wanna leave?

MARK

I know and I'm grateful, but Sofia has something else in mind. Sorry, we have to go.

JACOB But... What am I gonna tell the guests?

MARK Give a speech... You'll find something to say... gush out a toast.

JACOB This isn't right,

MARK You've said your last.

Sofia hands the empty goblet over to Jacob -- peers at Mark suggestively... Mark does the same.

SOFIA Sorry we have met for so short time.

They split away leaving Jacob speechless holding a wineglass in each hand.

EXT. JACOB'S GALLERY/STREET - NIGHT

Sofia and Mark rush away from the party... find the street crowded with party-swingers, city-slickers, drifters all sorts of night prowlers... Mark's glee turns sour.

> MARK Couldn't have we stayed a little longer... Where are we going?

SOFIA (with haste) To our tent.

MARK Our tent? I thought only members of your club were allowed in! - And do what? Roll over? I'm in the middle of an important social meeting and you come in and storm me out. SOFIA Tonight I want to be with you. MARK Fine with me... (a beat) Sofia, there's something you must understand... Subtly grabs his penis. SOFIA (unabashed) Don't you want to be with me? MARK (bashful) Yeah, but not all the time, not here Sofia, please Mark shifts his head suddenly. A pair of Romanies lean against a motorcycle at the other side of the street. MARK (CONT'D) (focusing) Hey Sofia! Why are they here? SOFIA To keep an eye on me... and you. MARK Maybe you need oversight, not me. I don't like the invasion of my privacy... I think I'll go and tell them to take a ride. Sofia pulls him back rudely. SOFIA Stay away from them. He persists.

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MARK No, you wait here...

SOFIA (persisting) Do as I say Mark.

Mark thinks twice.

She waves for a cab calling LOUD.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

TAXI!

The cab stops, they get in and drive away -- the motorcycle with the two riders track behind.

INSIDE THE CAB

Mark heeds in silence.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Are you mad?

MARK

How should I feel? First you break in the middle of an important event for me, drag me out... and I'm suppose to smile.

SOFIA You should have invited me.

MARK

Listen, I have to square something out with you,

SOFIA

What?

MARK

It's taken me a long time to have people look at my work for a first time... try to understand, I need my personal space to get through and obtain the recognition every artist needs in this town.

SOFIA

so,

MARK So? It means you're interfering, getting in my way! SOFIA You forget I work with you, MARK Yes, you are the subject of my work, but does it mean I have to tap my tips every time you play your song? SOFIA Talk plainly. MARK Shit! This isn't gonna get us anywhere. (commands the driver) STOP! The cab stops with a screech. MARK (CONT'D) I'm getting off here. Mark jumps out of the cab leaving the door opened -- Sofia calls back. SOFIA Mark! Get back here. Pays the driver a 20. MARK Take the lady away. The cab drives away. Mark looks to his sides, sighs seeking relief. Lucky night, finds a Bar across the street with neon glittering. MARK (CONT'D) (to himself) Hell, here I come!.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

He walks in the Rumshop... few people, somber lighting... Takes a stool by the BARMAN standing.

> BARMAN What would it be sir?

MARK I'll have a Manhattan with a doublescotch to topple fast tonight.

BARMAN Whoosh! A skull cracker.

MARK Yeah, I need to crack my skull tonight and let the devil out.

The barman prepares the mix.

BARMAN Coming your way...

OUTSIDE THE BAR

The two riders park their chopper and wait.

IN THE BAR

Mark downs the cocktail with haste, followed by the two shots of scotch.

MARK The same round again.

BARMAN

Aren't you going too fast? You'll get loaded before the night's over and walk out of here thinking your king of the hill.

MARK Well, lets say I need to let something out tonight,

BARMAN If your devil ever comes out of you, which I'm sure he will, he might just wanna run away. MARK (grins a smile) That's a good one.

The barman looks to a silhouette approaching from a dark corner of the joint.

BARMAN Speaking of the devil, here it comes now.

MARK

Who?

A Bar hooker makes her move, sits on a stool next to Mark.

HOOKER Hello loner, looking for some company?

MARK Not exactly, I just got rid of it.

She lights up a cigarette expelling the smoke straight to his face.

HOOKER Lets say you're in a poor mood for a roll over tonight?

The Barman jumpy heeds a warning.

BARMAN Hey! No smoking in here, it's against house rules and... the Law.

HOOKER Fuck you and the Law.

Mark turns to take a good look at her.

MARK You couldn't guess any better.

HOOKER

That's rude.

MARK Listen honey, I'd like to enjoy my solitude, If it's all right with you... no offense meant.

HOOKER A lone prick is always a bad fuck. MARK Right again. She gets up and leaves. MARK (CONT'D) Another round for my suffering soul. TIME LATER... OUTSIDE THE BAR Mark storms out of the bar drunk to the marrow -- he stumbles, and falls flat. The two riders waiting outside approach, lift him on his feet -- one of them looks for a cab and waits... Mark is pumped out, can't hold himself... the cab arrives... they put him inside taking away the money he has left. The cab driver is paid in advance and handed a piece of paper. BTKER Take this man to this place. The cab drives away. EXT. MARK'S APARTMENT/SIDEWALK - NIGHT The taxi cab stops at the address told -- the driver gets off to help him out. Mark stoned-drunk doesn't know where he is. CAB DRIVER Here you go, you better go easier on the booze the next time buddy ... MARK (boozed) What?- Where am I?- How did I get here? CAB DRIVER You are where I was told to drop you off.

60.

Mark recognizes his place.

MARK Yeah, yeah... How much?

CAB DRIVER It's already been taken care, just get off please, I need to go on with my work.

Mark goes for his wallet -- it's gone.

MARK Where's my wallet? -- my money? Give it back...

The cab driver yanks him out.

CAB DRIVER I don't have your wallet, just go home and sober out... please.

Drunk, Mark makes a public scene nobody hears.

MARK (yells) HELP! I've been robbed!

Total silence...

The cab driver dumps him on the sidewalk and drives away.

ON THE ENTRANCE STEPS

Grasping the hand rails, Mark walks up the front stoop with difficulty -- stoops -- gets up -- stoops again.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Stumbling, hardly makes his way to his apartment door and crumbles.

NEXT MORNING...

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Lola slowly opens her door, just enough to peep out.

Mark slumbers on the floor.

She comes out cautiously ... wipes to both sides ... gets closer. LOLA (goading) Mark, are you OK? He doesn't move. LOLA (CONT'D) I better call an ambulance, Mark reacts. MARK No Lola, just get me more booze, LOLA More booze? You're dead drunk and want more? MARK Do as I tell you, LOLA Let me help you get up... (a beat) What you need is a bed to sleep out your tipsy sorrow, She makes a strong effort to put him on his feet -- gets his keys and opens the door. MARK (muttering) Yeah, a bed with you in it... my sweet Latin slut, LOLA What did you call me? You better watch your mouth or I'll dump you right here. She carries him to his bed. MARK about rolling in my couch with How me? She throws him violently in his bed.

LOLA

You son of a bitch, this is how you pay me for putting you off you misery? It's that vamp you've been out with that's got you like this. I saw it coming the minute I laid eyes on her.

MARK

(mumbling) Lola? You haven't even met her.

LOLA

I can smell witchery a mile away, she's got the eyes of a night prowler, you've better watch your step.

MARK (almost cooked out) It's her eyes Lola... her eyes.

ENGLISH SUBTITLE

LOLA (fearful in Spanish) Mal de ojo, Virgen santisima! (she crosses her heart) Mark?- Mark?...

Mark blacks out.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

It's late, Mark is seen walking out of his apartment... unaware, Lola peeps as he leaves.

EXT. SUBWAY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Mark steps down fast in an underground station.

INSIDE THE SUBWAY CAR

He looks disturbed, anxiety shows on his face... the train RATTLES along.

Mark steps out in haste and walks towards the waterfront... it's dark with no one in sight.

INTERIOR WAREHOUSE

Without much prevention, Mark walks in unannounced... Guitar STRINGS and flamenco SINGING is heard... Mark walks directly to the source of the music.

Finds Sofia rubbing close with a man her kind.

A guitarist, a singer with Atalo clapping, and a group of gypsies hail the flamenco -- the guitar and singing stops.

Mark approaches and stops.

Sofia speaks out.

SOFIA What do you want Mark?, You are not invited this time.

Approaching.

MARK I'm sorry about the other night.

SOFIA No need to apologize, just stop, turn around and leave.

MARK Gotta talk to you,

Atalo stands up with defiance.

ATALO You heard her, get out.

MARK It's not you I wanna see.

ATALO Then I'll throw you out!

Atalo proceeds.

Sofia waves him to hold back.

SOFIA (turning to Mark) Go back, I don't want you here. Can't you see I have a friend with me? She cuddles close to her guest. SOFIA (CONT'D) (provoking) You are a poor lover, I don't need nor like your social life, go away. MARK We're different cultures, we need to adjust. SOFIA Adjust to you? No, You adjust to me! MARK Lets not argue, please come with me. SOFIA Sorry I can't, you see ... my friend has come a long way just to see me, (a hot kiss) ... I am spending the night with him. The man kisses her neck and touches her breast. Mark explodes. MARK (shouting) YOU ARE COMING WITH ME!

Sofia shocks, loosens herself from her friend with lightning speed and goes for Mark -- her breasts half stripped very aggressive.

SOFIA Go away NOW!

MARK (adamant) You're coming with me. Mark tries to force her -- she refuses pushing him -- he looses his balance and falls... in the struggle she drops a ring earring.

SOFIA

ATALO!

On the ground he's barely given time to pick up the earring -- Atalo and his men yank him out.

EXTERIOR WAREHOUSE

He's is thrown out savagely -- rolls over... lifts himself up.

MARK (shouting) I'LL COME BACK FOR YOU! You hear!

Staggering walks away in the dark.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Mark walks out holding a pint of booze in a paper bag... Looks for a way to go... can't find any, drifts alone aimlessly.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT

Rides solo from one end of the subway route to another... drinks the bottle to the end... doesn't give a fuck who's looking... he looks bad.

The train clatters along...

A cop finds him dozing and wakes him up with his club.

COP Get up buddy, you can't sleep here.

Mark opens his eyes at the same time the train comes to a screeching stop and storms out of the car wildly.

The cop tries to go after him, but holds back.

Mark disappears.

Mark drunk to the marrow, tries to get the key in his door lock... can't do it.

Lola peeping as usual, watches... comes to his help.

LOLA My god Mark! You're so drunk you can't even get your key in.

MARK

(mumbling drunk) Damn right Lola, I don't know what's gotten into me, I'm not my self anymore.

Lola takes his key and opens the door.

LOLA I know what's happening to you, you are possessed by eyewitchery. She's using you.

INSIDE MARK'S APARTMENT

MARK Seems like it, I can't get her off my mind, it's terrible Lola, she's like something you can grab but can't hold... a nightmare.

LOLA I believe you. You need help and I know where to find it.

MARK What I need is to see a shrink.

LOLA I've got something better.

MARK

What?

LOLA

A medicine man, a shaman, as they are called by the natives in my country.

MARK I- don't know... (disproving) You're asking me to see a sorcerer? LOLA Not a sorcerer, a medicine man which is different... MARK No, I don't wanna do that, LOLA You won't have to spill your guts out, just talk to him about your hoodoo. MARK Jinx, spell, fuck! Whatever's happening to me I wanna know ... need to know. LOLA Listen, sober out, take a shower and get ready. I'll see you in one hour. MARK Right. TIME LATER... Lola knocks on his door, mark answers... they leave the hallway. MARK (CONT'D) How are we getting there? LOLA I'll drive you there, we'll take my car. EXT. UPTOWN - DAY The car cruises uptown Lexington Ave heading north ... MARK (O.S.) You think the witch doctor can do something for me? INTERIOR CAR

LOLA Don't call him that or we won't get any help from him.

MARK Sorry, I'm just screwed up, only think right when I'm sober.

LOLA Your high-rolling is becoming notorious, for someone who couldn't pay his rent last month.

MARK It's a new twist in my life.

LOLA Sure is, look at you.

MARK No nagging please Lola, I've been up all night the last twenty four hours. I can take the rattle but

LOLA Huh? Don't get it.

not the nag.

Mark thinks for an available response.

MARK I've been riding subways cars from one end to another since yesterday.

LOLA I still don't understand.

MARK It's a whole mess I can't explain.

LOLA I know why.

Mark skews.

Lola sits up.

EXT. BRONX PARK EAST - DAY

Lola parks the car.

A huge apartment block housing immigrants mostly Puertorican... SPANGLISH is the language heard in a dispute as they enter the building.

LOBBY HALLWAY

They walk into a no-lock unguarded entrance lobby where the light is dim with no electric power to light a bulb.

Lola finds her way... a heavy iron door different from others is the place she's looking for... finds it, looks for a concealed bell ringer she's used before and rings.

Mark hasty has double thoughts.

MARK You think this is gonna work?

LOLA Trust me, I have seen this man chase away evil spells from trapped souls like yours.

MARK Cut the bullshit Lola, what I wanna know is, What kind of medicine does he practice?

LOLA Watch your words, he might take it as irrespectful and send you back where you came from. Is that what you want?

The door opens revealing an old man, TOBIAS, so wrinkled he could pass to be over ninety.

LOLA (CONT'D) Hello Tobias, this my friend Mark.

Without saying a word shows them in.

INSIDE TOBIAS' DWELLING

The old man leads the way through a dark corridor ending in a somber lit room... Christian saints and fetich icons adorn a shrine with a cross centered in an altar. A shining knife and a goblet filled with red wine guard the cross.

TOBTAS Have a sit, How can I be of help to you or... (looks at Mark) ... Your friend who seems to be in distress. They sit on cushions on the floor, no chairs... the wise man listens. LOLA Yes, he is in deep trouble Tobias, he's under a terrible hoodoo, put into him by a "Mal De Ojo". ("Mal de Ojo" is a spell transmitted by maleficent potent vision according to mystic practice.) TOBIAS How could you be so sure it's hoodoo, it can also be an obsession, curable by psychiatric treatment. LOLA Then it's malignity, Tobias, I've seen it before. TOBIAS If it's malignancy it only responds to the power of black magic and I, don't practice that. LOLA Whatever it is Tobias, he needs your help. Tobias turns back to mark. TOBTAS What seems to be afflicting your soul, young man? MARK I don't really know. Something inside of me is wrong... I'm not myself anymore, can't sleep, can't think right... It's like Lola says, like a spell.

TOBIAS Why do you say is a spell?

MARK

Because ever since I met this woman, she is inside of me all the time. I can't get her out of me, she's taken total control of my life, all I do is think of her and wanna be with her all the time.

Looking rigid.

TOBIAS And where is this woman now.

MARK She's with her gypsies.

TOBIAS

Gypsies?

MARK

Yes, Why?

TOBIAS They are evil, treacherous and dishonest.

MARK She lives in an indoor camp by the Brooklyn waterfront.

TOBIAS It's their way of life, (a beat) How did you get to know this woman?

MARK

It was accidental with coincidence at the same time. I was walking up a subway stairs and she suddenly crossed in my way and... (looks back) glanced at me. Since then I just can't get rid of her attraction.

TOBIAS Beautiful eyes with captivating vision?...

Lola confirms.

LOLA Mal De Ojo! I told you. Tobias raises his hand signaling for her to keep silence. TOBIAS Why do you feel she' in control of you? MARK Because she is everywhere in my life -- in my mind, at my work, at my front porch... (thinks back)) It all began when I first painted her ayes... they are so beautiful I just wanna keep on painting them without stopping. TOBIAS And deadly if they are used with the skill of dynamosychism. MARK Dynamo- what? TOBIAS An ancient potent mental power only recently revealed to science, to suppress, destroy or take over docile minds. MARK Then... I'm hooked? TOBIAS Not hooked, possessed which is worst. MARK Can you help me? Tobias takes a brief pause. TOBIAS Do you have anything that belongs to her?... Something personal.

MARK (tries to recall) Yeah, I have this earring I keep with me. It makes me feel close to her. Mark goes for his pocket -- it's not there. MARK (CONT'D) Shit! It was here, I know I had it, I can look for it and bring it to you, TOBIAS You do that. Tobias provides Mark a small metal case with a miniature lock. TOBIAS (CONT'D) When you find the earring, put it here, lock it and return it to me. Mark looks at Lola for consent. LOLA Do as he says. He takes the small metal case. TOBIAS If there is a spell over you, the small lock will snap open by itself with the object inside. Don't open it, just bring it back to me. MARK I'll do as you say sir. TOBIAS This will be all for today. Come back tomorrow once you find the earring to breach the catharsis. LOLA And the malignancy ...? TOBIAS (bluntly) Come back tomorrow. OUT IN THE STREET

As they get back to the car.

MARK Do you think he can help me?

LOLA I'm sure he will if you follow what he says.

MARK I'll follow.

Unaware, a motorcycle with a lone rider sits stalking a safe distance away.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mark on his bed with Sofia lurking in his mind... his phone RINGS... once... twice... he hesitates to answer. Finally picks it up.

OVER THE TELEPHONE

MARK Hello... SOFIA (O.S.) Mark?

MARK Yeah, it's me.

SOFIA (O.S.) How are you?

MARK What do you want?

SOFIA (0.S.) To see you.

MARK Well, I don't wanna see you.

SOFIA (O.S.) Please Mark, forget about the other night. MARK There's nothing to explain, everything is clear to me.

SOFIA (0.S.) No it's not, there's something I must let you know. It's very important.

MARK Yeah, what? That you had a good fuck that night and now you want me back, No, I don't wanna see you, stay away from me,

SOFIA (O.S.) Please Mark, what I did to you was the same you did to me when you walked out on me... I have a terrible need to see you.

MARK You do huh?

SOFIA (0.S.) Yes, very much.

MARK Tell you what, lets meet at the middle of the Brooklyn Bridge. I'll walk from my end and you do the same from yours.

SOFIA (O.S.) Why the bridge?

MARK I might wanna jump after I finish talking to you.

SOFIA (O.S.) Don't say those things, you don't scare me, it's very important that I see you.

MARK I don't mean to scare you, just wanna get rid of you. See you at the bridge... Alone, no bike riders lurking in the dark.

Hangs up.

Mark peers down at the water running under the old bridge... the water glitters with hypnotic sparkles... His vision blurs briefly.

He waits... he's edgy... thinks it might be worth to try the steep dive... looks away from the water... then a voice behind.

A VOICE Hello Mark.

nerre nar

He turns over.

Sofia radiates with irresistible beauty.

MARK It's you... (a beat) I didn't see nor hear you get near.

SOFIA How could you? You were staring down at the water.

MARK I was looking for a way out of this.... breach of peace.

Their eyes are on each other... regardless of her stray he walks toward her... she takes a step forward... he seizes her -- their lips meet...

SOFIA

Mark...

MARK I'm sorry Sofia for whatever has gone wrong.

SOFIA We are hurting each other and you are taking the worst.

MARK I don't care, can't take it being without you,

SOFIA Mark, I don't want to hurt you,

MARK Don't say anything --He seizes her again kissing her to satiety... she untangles. SOFIA (gasping for air) Mark, we have to stop this, it can't go on... (long beat) You can be in danger if we continue seeing each other. MARK Why? How could you harm me? When all we have is love between us, SOFIA It's not me, it's Atalo. MARK Oh, That jughead, I'm not concerned about him, SOFIA You should, MARK Why? What's he got against me, She takes few paces backwards and turns her back. SOFIA (hands embraced) There is something I have to confess. MARK If it's what I saw the other night, let it go, I don't care. SOFIA No, it has nothing to do with the other night. MARK Then... what is it?

SOFIA Mark, until now I have been using you.

MARK Using me? I don't quite understand,

Faces him.

SOFIA You are going to be extorted viciously.

MARK You mean, clipped? By who?

SOFIA By Atalo and his lizards.

MARK But... I'm not rich- sure my art is selling- But why me?

SOFIA Because I have told them you were an easy prey I was working on.

MARK You mean, all that's been going on between us is fake?

SOFIA Yes... And no.

MARK You've been juggling with me?

SOFIA Whatever you are saying it's not the way you see it.

MARK (long beat) Some how, I knew this twist in my life was too good to be true.

SOFIA

It is true, because I care for you, that's why I'm am here.

MARK But, how can they know about me? SOFIA I have told them,

MARK Told them, What?

SOFIA

Everything.

MARK

You've told them all about me... I mean- all this time you were just setting me up for the squeeze?

SOFIA (looks down) Yes, until now.

MARK To understand it better, I was the prey and you were the bait?

SOFIA Try to understand.

MARK

(in a daze) Shit, what kind of world is this? Everything is turning upside down for me, can't put it together. Why is all this happening?

She comes closer, trying to secure his confidence.

SOFIA

Mark...

MARK (distressed) No! Keep way- you're just another snake rattling your ass as any fucking night hooker. (a beat) Lola was right.

SOFIA

What Lola?

He backs away staggering.

MARK (shouting) SIMMER IN HELL SOFIA!

Turns away -- accelerates and runs.

Sofia tries to stop him, but he's too far to reach -- she SCREAMS.

SOFIA

MARK!

Distressed, he vanishes with the bridge traffic flowing akin to his run.

EXT. MARK'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Mark resorts to his self-destructive boozing... looks awful, with a bottle in his hand stumbles from the edge of the street to a lamp pole on the corner.

A pair of street walkers approach.

WALKER 1 Watch out for the junky,

Mark stumbles into them holding to his bottle.

MARK

Sorry.

WALKER 2 Fuck off boozer,

Pushed away rudely.

WALKER 1

Easy on him, don't have to kick his ass to shove off the poor bastard,

WALKER 2 Hate this motherfucker bums, they're worst than shit.

Mark crumbles flat drunk to the floor and begins raving delusions.

MARK (insanely) What is this? -- what's happening to me? Will someone please help me! WALKER 1 Man, this fucker is really cracked, see if you can rip him off his bottle and split. Yanks the bottle off him -- Mark resists. WALKER 2 Let go prick. Helpless Mark yields collapsing on the sidewalk pavement. INT. MARK'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY Lola knocks on Mark's door ... waits ... gets no answer. LOLA Mark! Are you there? Knocks again. LOLA (CONT'D) Mark, we have an appointment... remember? Still gets no answer... baffled walks away. EXT. BRONX PARK EAST- DAY Lola alone goes back to see Tobias. She's worried, Mark is missing, but she keeps the previous appointment... she walks inside the building. LOBBY HALLWAY Knocks on the door, finds it slightly opened... pushes... walks in with caution. LOLA Tobias, Are you here? INTERIOR APARTMENT

No answer... continues to walk inside... peeps cautiously in a room.

Warily continues... goes for the next room, gradually opens its door.

Finds the wise man lying on the floor, blood pouring out of his slit throat -- in shock, she SCREAMS and rushes out terrified.

EXTERIOR BUILDING

Lola hurriedly comes out of the front entrance, picks up speed, gets in her car and drives away in haste.

EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE/BOWERY - NIGHT

A traffic light is the beacon stopping cars for a windshield wipe to get a quarter... Mark roams the street, alcoholics, tramps and drifters are on the prowl... Looks like one of them... Pot smoke is in the air... A small group pass the joint while waiting for their turn to hook a wipe.

Mark distanced from the group, bottle in hand leans against a light pole... looks almost done for the night.

A black tramp strapping a knapsack eyes him as he waits for his chance to earn his tip.

> BLACK TRAMP (curious) Hey brother, you're new here, haven't seen you before.

Mark sips from his pint.

MARK Haven't been here before, You wanna a shot?

BLACK TRAMP No, I don't do that anymore, that's what got me in the streets. (a beat) My name is Denzel.

MARK Like the actor?

DENZEL No, like the D.C. Capitol. (bursts a laugh) MARK No shit. DENZEL Lost your home too? MARK Kind of. DENZEL Well, you see, I've got mine strapped to my back, MARK Not much in there, is it? DENZEL That's all there's left, Denzel wipes to his sides... no cars in sight. DENZEL (CONT'D) I've got something better than booze, MARK I don't do drugs, DENZEL I don't either, what I've got is pure Colombian gold, best there is. MARK You mean pot? DENZEL Better than booze, MARK (downs a mouthful) I'll stick to my swig, I've got my own angel. DENZEL Are you hobo or drifter? MARK Bit of both.

84.

DENZEL What brings you to our club? MARK Don't know, I'm just drifting along. DENZEL Drifters don't join the club nor stay long. MARK Well, let's just say, I fit this circle, might wanna stay. Any objection? DENZEL No, none. MARK What's it take to become a member of this club. Denzel watches anxiously as the cars pass by without stopping... DENZEL Lets say, the first thing is... (honestly) Not à speck of pride left in you... MARK I pass. DENZEL ... The second thing is: You've gotta beg for good folks generosity... The traffic light turns red -- a car stops -- Denzel lunges with sponge in hand. MARK Go on. Taking distance cleans a car's windshield. DENZEL

(voice raised) ... And third, You've gotta love the streets like I do!

MARK Think I'm eligible.

Mark swigs the liquor left in his bottle... Denzel walks back with some change.

DENZEL Man, you sure are in a less than no time to git nowhere, ought to take it easy on the venom.

Mark dumps the bottle.

MARK I'll get another bottle.

DENZEL There's a booze joint a block away,

MARK I'll find it,

Walks away

DENZEL Make sure you come back.

MARK

Wait here.

Denzel tracks him not knowing if he's coming back.

INT. HALLWAY/MARK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jacob rings his door bell... no answer... he insists.

Lola opens her chain-secured door from inside, only shows half her face.

LOLA Are you looking for Mark?

JACOB Indeed I do, Do you know where he is?

Jacob walks closer toward her.

LOLA Don't come any closer- Who are you? JACOB I'm Jacob Foss his art representative, I need to find him.

LOLA Me too, Mark's been gone for days, nobody knows where he is.

JACOB That's weird. Do you have any idea where he might be?

LOLA No I don't.

Bluntly shuts her door.

Boggled, Jacob leaves the hallway.

EXT. BOWERY STREET - NIGHT

Mark drunk stumbles zigzagging from one side of the street to the other, a week long beard proves how forlorn he's become... staggers and falls... tries to get up... can't.

Denzel spots him, goes to his help.

DENZEL Man, you've gotta go easy with the booze drifter.

MARK Never told you my name huh?

DENZEL No need to drifter, we're acquainted.

As he drags Mark away a van screech-stops by their side -two gypsies jump out of the slide door and grab Mark.

Mark resists.

MARK Let go of me!

They Knock him unconscious.

DENZEL Hey! Watcha doing? Let the man go! Denzel fights back -- but gets thrown to the ground brutally.

Mark is dumped in the van -- they shut the slide door and speed away.

DENZEL (CONT'D) (yelling helpless) Hey! You can't do that- that's kidnapping!

INT. WATERFRONT/GYPSY INDOOR CAMP - DAY

A large kettle on top of a rustic fire simmers with a heating flow, an old woman carefully lifts the lid and pours some of the hot stew on a bowl and walks away.

INSIDE SOFIA'S TENT

The old woman opens the tent curtain with the hot bowl... Sofia takes it.

SOFIA (SUBTITLE) (in Rumanian) Thank you.

Mark comes back from the snatching the night before, he's down weak on a bunk... Sofia by his side gives him comfort.

MARK Where am I...? How did I get here? (tries to sit up) Shit, my head hurts.

SOFIA You are with me now Mark, don't worry.

Tries to sit up -- can't hold ... falls flat on his back.

MARK How did I get here?

SOFIA You were picked up from the streets dead drunk laying on a sidewalk.

MARK (very emotional) No I wasn't- I was fine on the street, no problem until someone whacked me! SOFIA Here have some of this hot stew, (spoon-feeding) You look as not having eaten for days. MARK I... can hardly remember anything, the last face I saw was Denzel's, he was carrying me... SOFIA Who ever he is, do not try to remember now, just rest and forget. Sofia caresses his hair ... cleans his forehead gently with a moist wad. SOFIA (CONT'D) You are going to stay here with me from now on. Mark sits back looking confused... dumbstruck- tries to put things back together ... No use, he's in pain and too baffled to think ... Falls back to sleep. Atalo storms in the tent aggressively. IN RUMANIAN

ATALO

Sofia!

Holding the hot bowl steady... turns over.

SOFIA (SUBTITLE)

Yes Atalo.

ATALO (SUBTITLE) Your pigeon is going to remain here with you, make sure he doesn't go anywhere. SOFIA (SUBTITLE) I will, just let him recover so you can work on him.

ATALO (SUBTITLE) I had him brought here after a long search and now you are going to nest and feed him.

SOFIA (SUBTITLE) For how long?

ATALO (SUBTITLE) He is going to remain here and share his success with us, if you understand me,

SOFIA (SUBTITLE) I agree, just don't harm him, leave him in my care.

ATALO (SUBTITLE) You forget it is you that has brought him the profits with the enchantment of your eyes, (with sinister look) So feed him well!

SOFIA (SUBTITLE) What goes on between me and him will be of no interference.

ATALO (SUBTITLE) You are even beginning to think like an American, don't forget we Gypsies are an indivisible family, or, do you have a different idea?

SOFIA (SUBTITLE) I live and die by our rules, no need to remind me or question my loyalty.

ATALO (SUBTITLE) Good. We need you and your friend's money, to survive.

SOFIA If you are going to keep him in here, how is he going to produce money? He's a painter not a street puppeteer. ATALO (SUBTITLE) Let me worry about that, I have already found a way to get to his money.

SOFIA (SUBTITLE) Do as you wish, I only ask you to let me care for him, he's ill.

ATALO (SUBTITLE) Yes, feeble minded by your soothing witchery.

END OF SUBTITLE

She gives him a despiteful look -- Atalo feels it, blinks twice and leaves the tent.

A DAY AFTER...

Holding a piece of paper and pen, Sofia tells Mark what to do with it.

SOFIA Mark, you must write a note to your friend Jacob.

MARK A note?- For what?

SOFIA You must tell him to send you an amount of money.

Looking despondent sits up in the cot.

MARK Money...? What for? I have some in my wallet.

SOFIA Not any more, they took it when they found you.

Mark goes for his back pocket and confirms the looting.

MARK Where's my wallet?, My documents?, Credit cards...?

SOFTA They are safe, I have them but the money is gone. MARK Sofia, what's going on? SOFIA Just write the note to your friend asking for ten thousand dollars to pay Atalo his bid. MARK Ten thousand... what? Mark shakes his head. MARK (CONT'D) You don't know Jacob, he just won't do that... what is this? Am I being held for ransom? Kidnapping is a federal crime, you go to jail for that in this country! SOFIA Please Mark, pay him off so that he will let you go. MARK Let me go?- I'll walk out of here this minute! SOFIA You can't, they will not let you. MARK We'll see, I'll think of something. SOFIA Mark, this is no game. MARK I won't leave here without you... (a beat) ... And that fucking brute is not gonna take my money, betcha my life on it! SOFIA Atalo holds your life in his hands.

MARK Huh! Does he? SOFIA Please, write the note. MARK I'll write it, but it won't work. Mark does as he's told. EXT. JACOB'S ART GALLERY - NIGHT Two gypsies looking like ordinary town people walk in the shop... the disguise doesn't help much, they look just what they are. INTERIOR JACOB'S OFFICE Jacob in his desk. GYPSY Good day sir. JACOB (surprised) Who the hell are you? How did you get in? GYPSY The door was open sir. JACOB Yeah, only to buyers and you don't look like one. GYPSY We bring you a note from Mark. JACOB Mark?- You know him?- Where is he? The gypsy hands him the note. Jacob puts his glasses on... reads the note. JACOB (CONT'D) Ten thousand dollars? Is what I read on this scrap of paper right?... What kind of dumb asshole you take me for?

Takes his glasses off.

JACOB (CONT'D) Listen you two pair of stupid looking hoods, - you wanna go to jail for this? - Where's Mark? What have you done with him?... I'm calling the FBI now!

Jacob picks up his phone -- the two mean looking characters stampede out of Jacob's shop disappearing.

JACOB (CONT'D) Hello! 212? Get me the FBI I want to report a missing person... (a long beat) Never mind.

INT. SOFIA'S TENT - NIGHT

Atalo storms in the tent with two of his thugs -- Mark cuddling in Sofia's arms is taken by surprise.

ATALO The Jew refused to send the money.

Mark sits up.

MARK I told you it wasn't gonna be easy, you just don't know Jacob,

ATALO (SUBTITLE) And he doesn't know me, (commanding his men in Rumanian) Hold out his arm!

The two thugs yank him of the bed -- overcome by force tries to resist -- he's forced helpless. MARK Hey! What is this? What the fuck you think you're doing?- Let go of me!

Sofia tries to intervene but Atalo strikes her violently and hurls her to the floor -- she flees out of the tent.

Mark immobilized by the thugs have his arm stretched out, they hold him steady.

Atalo pulls out a sharp edged knife from his waste and with lightning speed cuts off Mark's little finger.

OUTSIDE THE TENT

Sofia hers the HOWL.

INSIDE THE TENT

ATALO This time I send your finger with the message, if the Jew still refuses to pay, I will cut one of your ears and piece by piece until he pays.

Mark bleeding profusely curls in pain.

Sofia comes back stricken.

SOFIA (with anguish) Mark! You listen to me now, you have to convince Jacob to pay,

Mark Writhing in his torment.

MARK How? -- he's a stubborn son of a bitch...

SOFIA When he gets the second message, with your finger inside he will pay.

MARK Not so, he'll probably have the city police, Feds, everyone looking for me... (WAILING in pain) How the fuck did I get to this?

SOFIA You have to get out of here,

MARK Will you help? SOFIA If I help you escape it's death for me.

MARK No it wont... (in pain) Because you're coming with me.

She cleans his bleeding wound and thinks.

SOFIA (cavils) I think I know how...

MARK

How?

SOFIA ... I will concentrate on the gatekeeper while you sneak out.

MARK It has to be tonight, this fucker

is gonna kill me anyhow,

SOFIA Just remember, once you are in the streets you are on your own.

MARK Sofia, I'm not leaving without you.

SOFIA

As soon as they find out you are gone, they will come after you like wolves.

MARK Better running than being chopped to pieces.

SOFIA

Atalo is an assassin with no limits,

MARK (in pain) Don't you think I know by now?... I can't talk anymore... shit it hurts! TIME LATER...

EXT. WATERFRONT - NIGHT

It's cold, a thunderstorm breaks loose with lightnings flashing over the waterfront.

WAREHOUSE GATE

The thunderous rainfall sends the gypsy on watch for cover... takes his last drag and steps on his cigarette.

Mark peeps from a slot in the gate.

Sofia makes her move... she whispers something close to the gatekeeper's ear... he smirks... enticed by the whim abandons his post... she shows the way.

The gate rolls back swiftly... Mark exposes his face with fear... walks out and pans to both sides... hears strong PANTING, walks towards the source...

Finds Sofia with the gypsy on top banging her.

She stops thrusting -- the gypsy turns to see what's on his back -- a blow to his head knocks him out.

Sofia pulls up her lingerie.

MARK Did you have to fuck him?

SOFIA There was no other way.

MARK Sure there was, I could have knocked him off before he got on top of you,

SOFIA Let's not argue now, we have to go.

From inside the warehouse a loud YELL is heard.

SOFIA (CONT'D) Now we have to run. Come on.

WAREHOUSE FRONT

It's wet and slippery, Mark, bleeding grabs her and start running heading in the wrong direction -- she stops him.

SOFIA You are going the wrong way!

MARK Where to?- You lead!

SOFIA (pointing) This way.

Makes a sharp turn toward the nearest fence -- finds a hole to slit out -- are over the fence.

WAREHOUSE GATE

The gate slams open -- Atalo storms out fuming heat -- looks for the runaways and finds nothing.

IN RUMANIAN

ATALO (SUBTITLE) After them! If they get away we are doomed.

A motorcycle with a rider scoots out -- Atalo jumps in the back and speed away -- another rider follows close behind.

WATERFRONT BACK STREET

Mark and Sofia run desperately, almost out of breath -- stop to scoop some air -- dash out to gain the street.

Too late, they're caught up and encircled... no escape.

Sofia takes refuge behind Mark.

A gypsy on foot shuts the only gap left to escape -- the motorcycle with Atalo stops dead close... Atalo descends clutching his blade.

ATALO (CONT'D) You thought you could escape from me? How stupid of you Sofia. Mark shivers -- surrounded daunts the gypsies with his blood stained finger.

MARK

Now you stop right there! This is not your fucking land and what you're doing is illegal!

Unnerved, Sofia lunges against Atalo with the fury.

IN RUMANIAN

SOFIA (SUBTITLE) (dashing fearless) Burn in hell you murdering beast!

MARK

Sofia, NO!

Only gets close enough to get stabbed -- once -- twice... Atalo holds and dumps her.

She falls bleeding.

SOFIA

Mark... (exhaling) run...

Staggered Mark looks for a way out -- knocks out the nearest biker from his running motorcycle and flees.

Atalo spits out a chilling warning.

IN RUMANIAN

ATALO (SUBTITLE) (spiteful) AFTER HIM!

Looks down at the gypsy still flat on his ass.

ATALO (CONT'D) You let him GET AWAY- you finish him.

Sofia lays dead... her body is carried away.

DOCK

Her body is thrown over in the river.

Mark scoots over the streets with the motorbike doing top speed -- he skids splashing water side-wiping a patrol car sitting under the tracks.

POLICE CAR

Two cops on duty watch get splashed.

COP 1 Did you see that?

COP 2 Probably some punk under effect of his fix.

The patrol car turns on the strobe lights and takes off in pursuit.

ELEVATED SUBWAY ENTRANCE

They catch up, find the motorcycle flat on the pavement close to an elevated subway stairs... get out for a close inspection -- the rear wheel still spinning.

> COP 1 He must have skidded off the road.

COP 2 Yeah, but- Where did he go?

They both look up the flight steps... a subway train RATTLES away.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT

Mark rides in the train car blood stained and looking a mess... holds his bleeding hand.

Passengers begin to alarm, stare conspicuously at him... one of them leaves his seat running to the next car.

Presuming the passenger ran for help, Mark also abandons the car the opposite way.

The passenger returns with a policeman.

Mark's seat is empty -- the train stops -- the cop steps out, as he sees Mark scramming up a stairs.

COP 3 HEY YOU!, Stop! Mark is gone. INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT Tries desperately to open his door with his left hand -- it's difficult -- the pain -- the fear, all combine against him. Lola pops out of her apartment -- shocks when she sees him. LOLA Mark! What's happened to you? Where have you been? (impressed) You're bleeding! Trembling Mark gets the key in the lock. MARK It's a long story, Sofia is dead, they're after me. You've gotta help me! (breaks down) It's been hell for me Lola, abducted, got my finger cut off... need help. Lola helps him in. **L'OL'** Sofia dead?- What?- Who's after you? (baffled) What's happened to you? MARK They cut off my finger- held me for ransom... killed Sofia. LOLA What?- Who's done all this? MARK Fucking gypsies, they're fucking evil bastards... (in panic) Look out the window- see if they're there.

LOLA I told you to keep away from that witch- you know that Tobias was murdered?

MARK No shit! They've done him too...

Panting with anguish, looks out his window.

FROM ABOVE HIS APARTMENT

Two riders dismount their choppers and head directly for the front door.

MARK (CONT'D) They're here! They've come for me-

LOLA Mark! You re mad!- Who's come for you?- Control yourself!

MARK I've gotta go!

LOLA Wait!- I'll call the police!

HALLWAY

Mark flees in panic up the roof stairs -- slams the roof door as he dashes out.

The gypsies hear the noise from atop and go up.

BUILDING ROOF

Runs across the roof looking for the fire escape -- climbs down briskly landing in an enclosed alley -- dashes away disappearing.

EXT. BOWERY DISTRICT - NIGHT

The traffic is heavy under a drizzle, Mark walks like a zombie, can't stop looking to his sides -- almost gets ran down by a passing car avoiding it in time.

Denzel spots him from the other side of the street.

DENZEL Hey Mark, over here! Walks across the street walks to him, can't keep steady. Denzel hugs him. DENZEL (CONT'D) What's happened to you man? You're a mess. MARK (stammering) I'm- in- deep- shit. Denzel shakes him. DENZEL What deep shit? MARK Gypsies- Sofia is dead- they're after me, gotta go. DENZEL What the fuck you saying? Who's after you? Mark holds leaning against a wall. MARK Denzel you've gotta help me! DENZEL Sure, but first I've gotta know what's happening. Is this the same with the people that snatched you the other night? MARK (shivering) Yeah. DENZEL Then lets hide, I know where. Are you in some drug problem? Out of the traffic a motorcyclist stops screeching its breaks very close to them.

Mark erupts in panic.

MARK

N0000!

Breaks loose and runs away.

MOTORCYCLIST (removing his helmet windshield) What's with him?

DENZEL Looks like he's seen the devil.

MTORCYCLER

Me?

EXT. JACOB'S ART SHOP - MIDNIGHT

Mark rings the door bell several times, waits... no answer.

Rings again hammering the bell this time... waits -- looks to his back -- shivers -- a light turns on lightening the entrance, he's desperate for Jacob to appear... we hear Jacob's voice.

> JACOB (0.S.) Who's out there? What do you want at this time of night?

Mark looks back with fear.

MARK It's me, Mark, open up!

INSIDE THE SHOP

Jacob in night robe and slippers unlocks his door -- Mark lunges in rudely.

JACOB Mark?- What the hell are you doing here?

MARK Lock the door,

JACOB What's happened to you?

MARK (yelling) LOCK THE DOOR! JACOB Sure, put yourself together, Where have you been all this time? MARK I'm in deep trouble. JACOB What's happened to you? Your hand is bleeding, Are you in some problem? MARK (puffing with fear) Yes Jacob, they killed Sofia and... Mutilated me, JACOB Who? MARK Those damned gypsies. JACOB What gypsies? - You need a doctor, I'll call an ambulance. MARK NO! JACOB

Look at you! You're bleeding!

MARK Jacob, please... they're hunting me,

JACOB Who's hunting you?

MARK The fucking gypsies, Don't you believe me?- Sofia is dead and look at me!... (shows his missing finger) I've gotta hide,

JACOB

Hide? No, I'll call the police, that's what I'll do...

He squats clutching his head with his hands smearing blood over his face.

MARK You don't seem to fucking understand, they're on my trail, I'll be fucking dead before the cops get here!

JACOB Now you really begin to worry me. I'll call the cops right now!

Jacob goes for the phone, Mark yanks him to a stop.

MARK (terrified) Where are my paintings?

JACOB They are in a safe place, they're worth a fortune now.

MARK (out loud) WHERE?

JACOB I've got'em stacked in the back, Why?

Mark gets up -- staggers.

MARK Take me there,

JACOB What are you gonna do?

MARK Just take me to where they are!

JACOB Yeah, sure- control yourself.

They head for the back room... Sofia's painted eyes are everywhere neatly exposed...

yanks them off the wall and dumps them -- frenzied looks for something -- finds what he wants: a bulky newspaper -- tears it apart crushing the pages.

MARK It's the paintings Jacob, that's all there is...

JACOB Hey, You're insane!

Mark on his knees-- squats -- rises -- he's out of himself -- finds another thing he needs: a gallon of turpentine -- starts spilling the flammable liquid over the paintings.

JACOB (CONT'D) What the hell do you think you're doing?

MARK Get me a lighter!

JACOB What?-- You better not do that, You're fucking mad, I'll call the police!

Jacob flees in panic looking for his phone.

Mark needs one last thing: a lighter -- can't find one -opens up all the drawers in the cabinets... Finds a pack of matches stacked in the front shelf -- rips one out, strikes it and ignites the fire.

The paintings start to burn slowly -- than quickly rise to a blaze with Mark watching insane.

Jacob dials the phone.

JACOB (CONT'D) (stammering) Police?- Get the fire department here quick!-(begins coughing) I've got a maniac burning- BURNING up my place!

PHONE (V.O.) Please describe your address sir... JACOB (choking) MARK!- Mark...

Mark walks out staggering -- badly burned... hardly makes it out in time and collapses.

EXT. JACOB'S ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Fire engines on the scene... police units flashing their emergency strobes with cops keeping the curious away... two paramedics carry Mark away in a stretcher and put him in an ambulance.

The ambulance speeds away with its siren wailing.

Jacob's art shop, burnt to ashes has one last exposure to show... Amongst the smothering debris, a charred linen with Sofia's eyes beam with a malicious glare... The rain continues to fall suffocating the last embers still smoking.

TIME LATER...

EXT. DEAD END STREET - NIGHT

A hand with a missing finger is seen lifting the lid of a trash can... Mark's face with burned scars reveals a forlorn destitute lurking in the night... one by one, he scrapes the cans looking for the find of the night.

FADE TO BLACK