

## The Soul Eaters

Cornwall, 1781.

### 1 EXT CLIFF NIGHT

It is late summer, dusk; the sky is darkening ominously with a gathering of great storm clouds, black, evil and frightening. A terrifying crack of thunder is followed by a crystal clear fork of lightning which illuminates a windswept cliff top path. The rain whips the landscape mercilessly and there emerges from the gloom a coach and horses careering desperately close to the cliff edge. Inside the coach sit two couples facing each other, the younger of which, the newly wed MR and MRS PRESTON are both white with fear. The other couple are; PROFESSOR WYNDHAM, an elderly man, greying hair, bespectacled, with lean, sharp features and quick, piercing eyes and his beautiful young daughter, MYRA, dark-haired, black, haunting eyes and a calm, almost disquieting, self-assurance. Mrs Preston looks out of the window and recoils in horror.

MRS PRESTON

Driver! Driver! (there is no response) Dear God, we'll have to jump, it's going over the edge.

MR PRESTON

(tapping on the roof of the carriage with a cane) Driver!  
Driver! Good God man, you'll have us over the cliff!

A hatch in the roof opens a slit and the strained voice of the driver can just be heard above the storm.

DRIVER

Something's spooked the horses, sir, I think it's the storm,  
I can't hold 'em.

The hatch snaps shut again.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

(calmly, smiling confidently at his daughter) I'll climb  
up onto the roof and see if I can help.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM, with a speed belying his apparent sixty or so years, wastes no time, opens the door of the carriage and climbs out. No sooner has he leaned out of the door than he is gone leaving the MR and MRS PRESTON open-mouthed in astonishment.

MR PRESTON

My God I think he's fallen.

MYRA

(quietly) He's quite safe.

MRS PRESTON

(beginning to panic) What're we going to do, we'll have to jump, it's our only chance.

MYRA leans forward and takes her hand, smiling kindly.

MYRA

Don't worry, my dear, it'll all be over before you know it.

We switch to the roof of the carriage as a blood-curdling scream is heard from inside the coach. PROFESSOR WYNDHAM drives the carriage on with as much strength as he can muster but still, somehow, ever closer to the cliff, the coach driver, now, seemingly unconscious and slumped to one side. The horses screech hysterically as they veer perilously close to the cliff edge and in the gloom we see a human shape leap to safety from inside the coach. A few seconds later, PROFESSOR WYNDHAM jumps off, before the coach, horses and remaining occupants plunge, headlong, off the cliff, a final scream silenced by the storm as they fall to their deaths on the rocks far below.

CUT TO:

## 2 EXT CLIFF NIGHT

Back along the cliff, we find the melancholy SAM CROZARK, mid twenties, tall, blonde, handsome, one of those faces that somehow makes a man instantly likeable, a characteristic reflected by an honest, compassionate disposition. Underneath, however, this there is an element of the tortured soul about young SAM, his brow furrowed as he battles his way along the wind-lashed cliffs to his family home where, now, he lives alone, a mile or so from the fishing port of Seaham, a smallish town of maybe a thousand or so inhabitants. His has been a mixed blessing of a life so far with a happy upbringing, full of life, friends and devoted, loving parents. He has grown up in Seacliff House, a large country manor, with rambling fields, enchanted woods and winding roads that contentedly, gently cradled his childhood.

The idyll was shattered at 15 when the young SAM's world was cruelly turned upside down. His parents, who had been living in India, were killed by thieves, leaving SAM alone and uncertain of his future in the great old house that once had been so full of laughter and optimism. SAM, over the next few years, had become a little reclusive, managed the estate efficiently nonetheless, paid his workers well and treated them with respect and courtesy. He lived quietly and sensibly, though now that that immediate cutting pain of bereavement had gone he had begun to think of his loneliness and how, with luck and a bit of courage, he might not always have to be alone. These thoughts absorbed him this terrible, dark and wild evening as he fought his way through the rain-laced, howling gale to the comfort of his home.

Suddenly, as he sees the lightning, unaware of the drama unfolding ahead of him, he has a flashback to his parent's colonial mansion in Bengal. His mother shielding his sister, no more than an infant as a dark serpentine figure emerges from the shadows and slashes viciously at her with a scimitar, the little child shrieking in horror as the evil shape closes on her. SAM shudders and presses on into the tempest as the lightning once more spears down out of the black night evoking the heart-rending, unshakable image of his father, lying prostrate and blood-soaked at the feet of another of these horrifying, ghoulish predators standing, strong and proud, bloodied sword in hand, remorselessly evil.

SAM shrugs off his terrifying visions, putting them down to an overactive imagination and keeps on into the storm, his heart now beating a little faster. Momentarily he comes upon a stretch of the path that meanders dangerously close to the cliff edge and sees two shapes, which, at first, look like sacks of barley or maybe cattle lying low against the elements. He approaches them with some caution, now frightened not only by his own visions but, as he comes closer, a cold dread that seems to bite into the very core of his being. SAM, as ever, trying hard not to put too much store in superstition or anything not of the mortal plain, shrugs off his trepidation as best he can and goes to see what lies before him. He starts back in fright as he holds up his flickering lantern to see before him, two bodies, a young woman and an elderly man. Carriage tracks seem to lead straight over the cliff edge, the two souls before him, he assumes, having leapt from the carriage seconds before it has plunged to destruction.

A soft moaning sound comes from one of the bodies and SAM rushes to the side of the young woman, who, it has not escaped Sam's notice even in these dire circumstances, is quite hypnotically beautiful.

SAM

Are you alright? Can you talk?

YOUNG WOMAN

(a little dazed and confused)

I think, maybe I... oh my father, my father.

SAM goes to the old man's side and sees that he too is alive although similarly disorientated. He returns to the YOUNG WOMAN, who seems to be the more alert of the two.

SAM

I think your father's alright. Wait here and I'll get help,  
I promise I won't be long, the town is only about half a  
mile back. I'll bring the doctor.

SAM runs back along the cliffs towards the town, his head swimming with this, most dramatic turn of events, of what might have happened and how he might continue to assist these poor souls on this terrible night; but most of all, SAM can't help but think of that hauntingly beautiful face.

CUT TO:

## 3 INT SEAHAM INN NIGHT

SAM bursts into the inn breathless and windswept, attracting the attention of the nine or ten locals gathered around the bar

SAM

I need the doctor, a coach and horses just went over the cliff. A young woman and her father need help, they must have jumped clear just before it went over.

A big, burly man, dark-haired and unkempt walks purposefully across to SAM. He is TOM, the local blacksmith. His brow is furled and though concerned and keen to help there is a slight air of uncertainty about his manner.

TOM

I'll get my cart young lad, Sally here'll fetch Dr Trevisick

SALLY, the barmaid, a young, attractive girl with a bit of a twinkle in her eye, takes a coat from behind the bar and makes for the door before looking round at the lads at the bar.

SALLY

And don't think you can help yourselves while I'm gone, I'll know, I'll know just by the look on your faces.

They all smile as she leaves, SAM turns again to TOM, an almost avuncular influence in his life since the death of his parents.

SAM

I think they're alright, you know, she was awake, just a bit shaken. (pause) D'you know them? Did they come through the town?

TOM

(clearly deep in thought) No, no there's been no one come through here that I know of. You ought to tread carefully though lad, at least until you know more about them.

SAM

I'm sure they're harmless, they're just an old man and his daughter.

TOM

Going where though? On that road, at that time of the day? There's only your house up there.

SAM

Well, I suppose they must've been lost or maybe they were looking for someone in the area and decided to try the estate.

TOM

(scratching his chin) Maybe lad, maybe. Best not to be alone in the house with them tonight, though. Just to be on the safe side. Are all the servants at home?

SAM

Yes, yes I think so, but what do you mean, Tom? I can't see how I could be in any danger.

TOM

Probably not lad, just being careful, that's all.  
(scratching his chin again and looking pointedly at SAM) You never really know what's out there. (pause)  
I'll get the cart.

TOM heads for the door and SAM goes to the bar, puts a coin on the counter and pours himself a whisky, which he drinks in one. He coughs a little and goes and stands with his back to the fire. No one questions his actions although ELY SNARK, a sly, slippery, wicked creature with reptilian features and demeanour to match, also standing by the bar, uncoils an arm from his coat and palms SAM's coin from the bar. Nobody sees him do this and he then sidles up to SAM.

ELY

So who are these folks then Mr Crozark, (adding snidely) young lord of the manor. Well to do folks then are they? Must be if they've a carriage and horses.

SAM

(curtly, with obvious dislike) I've never seen them before and, not that it's any of your business, no, they didn't seem particularly wealthy.

ELY slinks away and settles in a corner. Cut to the same scene a few minutes later as the door opens and SALLY reappears with the doctor, staid, middle-aged, composed and level-headed and, in the company of the bar room, somewhat incongruously attired in hat, suit and tie.

DR TREVISICK

Alright Sam, we'd better get going, Tom's outside waiting.

SAM and the doctor hurry out and meet TOM who waits with his horse and cart.

CUT TO:

## 4 EXT CLIFFTOP PATH NIGHT

Now very dark, the three men approach the scene of the accident where, by lamplight they see the young woman sitting by her father's side on the grass. SAM jumps off the back of the cart and rushes to her side. TOM and DR TREVISICK walk over and join them.

DR TREVISICK

(quietly, to SAM) Alright Sam, let's have a look.

The doctor can see that the young woman is more or less alright and takes the old man's pulse.

DR TREVISICK

Well, he has a very weak pulse, he's probably still very disorientated and distressed. Can you take him up to Sam's house, Tom? I'll know more when I can see if he's sustained any injuries. Sam, I'm sure you can accommodate these good people for a night?

SAM

(enthusiastically) Yes, yes, of course.

TOM

(rather less enthusiastically) Alright then let's get going.

CUT TO:

## 5 INT CROZARK HALL NIGHT

SAM and TOM sit in a large drawing room, drinking brandy by a roaring fire. DR TREVISICK enters, SAM immediately stands up.

DR TREVISICK

Alright Sam no need to be concerned, the old fellow's unusually spry for his age. No injuries, nothing more than the exhaustion of a long journey and a frightening experience.

SAM

What of the young lady, she is well?

DR TREVISICK

(with a smile) She, too, is fine, nothing more to be concerned about than tiredness and distress. A good night's sleep will do them both the world of good. (he pauses, looks around the room and yawns) Tom, are you ready to go?

TOM

I'm ready, doctor, (getting up and putting on his coat before turning to SAM) and you, young fellow, you take care now, you're a good lad, the world needs as many of your ilk as it can keep a hold of.

SAM and DR TREVISICK, as educated men, exchange a smile at the idea of TOM's superstitious naiveté.

DR TREVISICK

Come on Tom, I'm sure Sally's got something strong and heart-warming waiting for us back at the inn.

SAM walks with them to the front door and bids them goodnight before heaving a sigh and gazing at the staircase before him which leads to the bedrooms above.

CUT TO:

6 INT BEDROOM NIGHT

Inside a large, well-appointed bedroom the young woman sleeps soundly as an elderly maid, BETTY, tends to a fire. There is a quiet knock at the door and SAM enters. He looks up at BETTY enquiringly.

SAM

Is she alright?

BETTY

Yes, she seems fine but quite exhausted, the poor dear, Must've been quite an ordeal for her.

SAM

Yes I'm sure it was, (hesitantly) you know it seems so strange, if there's one part of the cliffs where I've made the path and the fencing as safe and secure as it possibly could be, that's it. (as he speaks, SAM becomes a little more animated) Why there? I mean why would horses suddenly bolt off the edge of a cliff...

BETTY puts a comforting hand on SAM's arm, silencing and calming him down simultaneously.

BETTY

Accidents happen, Sam, no point in thinking about that now, you can go down and have a good look in the morning when we're all rested and thinking straight.

SAM

(with a smile of acceptance) Alright, Betty, you're quite right, as always. You can go to bed now, I'll sit here with her a while, in case she needs anything, you know.

BETTY

(knowingly) Yes, I know.

BETTY leaves the room and SAM settles into an armchair beside the mysterious young woman's bed. He leans forward and reaches for the lamp at her bedside and turns it down a little. As he does so he gazes at her sleeping face, almost mesmerised by her beauty.

Some hours pass and SAM still sits, now fast asleep, by her bed.

CUT TO:

7 INT BEDROOM NIGHT

In the dead of night the young lady stirs and opens her eyes to see SAM smiling back at her. She beckons SAM to sit on the edge of the bed and she sits up and looks lovingly into his eyes. She begins to speak in a dreamy, husky seductive voice.

YOUNG WOMAN

Thank you for saving my life.

SAM

I'm glad I did, I'm glad I found you. When I look into your eyes, it's as if, (SAM pauses stumbling to find the words) as if...

She moves closer to him, quieting her voice to a whisper, closing her eyes.

YOUNG WOMAN

As if you'd known me all your life?

SAM

Yes...

As they embrace, SAM opens his eyes to see that her eyes seem to be almost glowing, green and catlike. She opens her mouth to kiss him again and reveals razor sharp, pointed teeth and a face, although still just recognisably the young woman, now serpentine and seething with predatory hostility and an insatiable hunger. She lunges at him, now an ethereal creature, not kissing but biting deep into his body, ripping out his very soul.

SAM suddenly awakens and sits bolt upright in his chair, he has been dreaming. He looks down at his young guest still fast asleep in her bed although there is, somehow, a barely perceptible, just ever so slightly twisted little smile.



CUT TO:

## 8 BREAKFAST ROOM DAY

The following morning SAM and his guests sit having breakfast. DR TREVISICK enters and SAM stands up to greet him, shaking him warmly by the hand before turning to his guests; the young woman and her father.

SAM

Doctor, allow me to introduce, Myra Wyndham and her father, Professor Charles Wyndham.

DR TREVISICK regards the two, who have been eating voraciously as they are being introduced. He greets them both with a firm handshake.

DR TREVISICK

Delighted to meet you both, (pausing) you seem very well, none the worse for your ordeal I trust.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Not in the least, a good night's sleep can work wonders.

DR TREVISICK

Indeed. ( pausing again, a slight air of bemusement)  
And might I ask what your area of expertise is,  
Professor?

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Yes, of course, I am a naturalist, currently working on a paper on predatory instincts. What drives animals to kill? Is it purely survival or is there perhaps more, competition during the mating season, territorialism, perhaps even malice?

DR TREVISICK

Are you including humans?

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

The greatest predator and, I suspect, the most dangerous but no, I have little interest in humans, it is difficult enough to try to analyse the motivation of animals without considering the complexities of a man.

MYRA

Or a woman? The female can often be more dangerous than the male.

DR TREVISICK

(smiling) Indeed. Well, I am pleased to see you both so well. I'd like to examine you both, however, just to ensure that you are as well as you appear to be.

CUT TO:

9 EXT SEAHAM INN DAY

TOM, with horse and cart, stands waiting outside the inn. BOB, a local fellow, thirtyish, awkward, a rather vacant look about him, clearly not blessed with great intelligence but keen to help and fairly honest, and his cousin, WILL, a similar type, a year or two older, the brains of their small operation, but still only slightly smarter and slightly less honest than BOB, also stand about scratching their heads.

TOM

Where is that boy? I think he'll be late for his own funeral.

BOB

He was in the pub last night.

WILL

I knocked on his door only half an hour ago, there was nobody in. I thought he was here.

TOM grunts disapprovingly and trudges off down the street, stopping to peer down alleyways as he goes. He hasn't gone more than fifty yards when he stops, takes a deep breath, wipes his brow and disappears up an alley.

CUT TO:

10 EXT ALLEY DAY

WILL and BOB tread cautiously up the alley to join TOM. At first they are unable to see what lies in front of TOM and peer round the big man's frame to see, to their horror, a young man lying dead on the ground with his throat cut so brutally his head is practically severed. BOB immediately vomits at the sight.

WILL

Is it young Henry?

TOM

'Fraid so.

ELY SNARK appears out of nowhere.

ELY

Well, well, young Henry's had a spot of bother. Gone and lost his head, he has.

TOM

Don't need your comments, Snark, boy's dead, show some respect.

ELY

You'll get no hypocrisy from me, never liked him alive, no reason to like him with his head hacked off. (pause) You'll be needing another hand for that salvage job, I reckon. I'll put in an honest day's work for a shilling or two.

TOM

I doubt you've done anything honest in your life but I'll take a chance this once. (taking a final look at poor HENRY) Alright, get in the cart the lot of you. Any tricks or unpleasantness from you, Snark and you're off the job, you hear? Wait here the three of you till I get Sally to send for a constable and the doctor to take care of poor Henry's body, God rest his soul.

CUT TO:

11 INT HALLWAY DAY

DR TREVISICK descends a grand, sweeping staircase down into a reception hall where SAM is waiting.

SAM

Well, doctor, are they in good health?

DR TREVISICK

Better than I would have believed possible. At times last night that old man looked close to death, his breathing, his pulse, even just his appearance seemed to suggest that he might not make it through the night. This morning he has, by all outward appearances, the constitution of a horse and is as fit as most 21 year olds.

SAM

And Myra, she is well?

DR TREVISICK

(smiling) Yes, Sam, she, too, is well. They are both almost too well.

SAM

(scarcely able to conceal his delight) Oh, good, good I am pleased that they are well, (calming himself down a bit) that is to say, I am...

DR TREVISICK

There was one other thing (gravely) the driver of the coach (pause) and the two other passengers are almost certainly dead. I've sent someone to tell Tom to take the bodies back up to my surgery before they do anything else. A young lady came to the town this morning looking for her sister and her husband as she had been expecting them last night, Professor Wyndham confirmed my worst fears.

SAM

(astonished) Other passengers? But they said nothing of any other passengers this morning at breakfast.

DR TREVISICK

Well I'm sure it just escaped them temporarily, they've both had a terrifying experience from which they have only just escaped with their lives, the shock of it all has probably blurred the senses a little.

CUT TO:

12 EXT BEACH DAY

Below the towering cliffs, the haze of a morning sun on the golden sand, no longer at the mercy of storm and darkness seems a place of serenity and even, somehow, promise. Far from the beachhead we see, in the distance, a horse and cart plodding down a dirt track that leads, eventually, to the carnage of the wrecked cart and it's ill-fated occupants. TOM drives and three other men sit in the back; the poisonous ELY SNARK, BOB and WILL. We join them as they jump off the cart a few yards from the wreckage strewn about the rocks at the bottom of a 500-foot cliff. As they are about to commence work, SAM and DR TREVISICK pull up on horses.

SAM

Morning, Tom, anything to report?

TOM

More trouble, I'm afraid, found young Henry Smart dead this morning. Lying up an alley with his throat cut, doubtless got into a fight outside the pub.

SAM

Dear God.

DR TREVISICK

(taking a deep breath) I'll deal with it later. Did you tell the constable, Tom.

TOM

Left it with Sally.

DR TREVISICK

Alright, what have we got here?

TOM

There were three bodies, the coach driver, a young man and a young lady, probably married since they both had rings. We took their remains up to the mortuary like you said.

DR TREVISICK

Good man, Tom, I'll get up there later and complete the formalities.

TOM

I hope you've a strong stomach, doctor, the bodies were all twisted and torn, practically every bone in their bodies broken I should imagine, like lifting rag dolls it was.

SAM

God, those poor souls...

TOM

Another thing; their eyes seemed kind of black, like there was nothing there. The lady, the coach driver and young Henry, that is, but the young gentleman's eyes was just as normal.

DR TREVISICK

Hmm, well, I suppose there could be any number of explanations for that Tom, but I'll examine the corpses as soon as I can. I don't think there's a cause for any great investigation though, it's fairly obvious how they died.

At this moment, SARAH, a young woman on horseback approaches and they all stop and watch as she comes to a halt, breathless, a clear air of desperation about her demeanour. She is a very pretty girl; also mid twenties, dishevelled gold blonde hair, finely featured, petite but, at the same time, somehow tough, honest, determined and, despite the circumstances, obviously a quite vivacious character. She dismounts and approaches the small party.

SARAH

I'm Miss Sarah James, I've come from Penzance, to look for my sister and her husband, the Prestons, Jane Preston, have you had any news, I'd heard there was an accident...

ELY

(smugly, before anyone else can speak) They're both dead. Your sister, what was left of her leastways, is lyin' on a slab in the mortuary.

SARAH screams and runs towards wreckage, hysterical, picking through the debris, vainly, pathetically searching for comfort where none can be found, finally returning with a torn piece of clothing, clasping it to her chest. SAM offers his hand and she hugs him, holding tightly and sobbing. TOM takes a horsewhip to ELY who recoils, spitting with fury and then fists clenched, prepares to take a run at TOM, in turn, himself taking a menacing step towards ELY who immediately thinks better of it.

TOM

Be off with you, Snark, you evil little man...

DR TREVISICK

By God Snark I've known you to be as slippery as an eel but this kind of malice, I never suspected of any man around these parts.

ELY

I've 'ad to lift them mangled bodies. I wants payin' for what I done up till now

TOM

You wants a beatin' for what you done up to now.

ELY

(snidely, bitterly) You'll get yours one of these days blacksmith, just you wait and see (pause) and you, doctor and the young master there, all high and mighty, don't sleep too soundly in your beds, you never know what's coming for you.

ELY SNARK slinks over to a rock near the main site of the debris where lies his coat and bag. He picks them up and as he does so, notices a glint of something bright and shining just a few yards from where he stands. He looks round to see the assembled company still watching him and mutters, 'Now where did I leave my scarf' and in a split second, deftly conceals the trinket, a brooch, in his pocket. He wastes no time now in heading off along the sands.

SAM

I'll take Miss James up to the house where she can rest for a while. (to SARAH) I'm terribly sorry, if you can come up to the house you can meet the Wyndhams, a father and daughter. They were travelling with your sister and must have managed to get clear just before the accident...

SARAH

I'm very grateful, Mr...

SAM

Crozark, Sam Crozark, I own Seacliff estate, this is Dr Trevisick (DR TREVISICK nods gravely) He's going to attend to the, er, your sister and her husband.

DR TREVISICK

I'm sorry we couldn't have met in better circumstances Miss James but you'll be well cared for at Seacliff house, we're not all as cruel and insensitive as the foul Mr Snark.

TOM

My name's Tom, Miss James, I'll deal with the salvage so no need to worry, I'll make sure everything's done right, these here's Will an' young Bob, they's pretty stupid (WILL raises an eyebrow, BOB's expression merely confirms TOM's assessment) but they's mostly honest. We'll bring such effects as we can find up to the house, they're will be no charge.

SARAH

That's very kind of you, (tearfully) you're all being very kind. (SARAH begins to weep brokenheartedly)

After a second or two SARAH draws herself up into some sort of composure and remounts her horse. SAM gets up onto his horse and they ride away together.

TOM

Right then, doctor, I suppose we'd best get on with the salvage operation. There's a right old mess to be cleaned up.

DR TREVISICK

Yes, Tom, we'll need to be careful though, I want to see what has happened here, if I can.

TOM

I knows just what you mean, doctor, I'll never forget those black eyes as long as I live. There's something sinister about this whole sorry business

DR TREVISICK

Well, let's not jump to any conclusions, I'm just being careful that's all. All personal effects to go up to Seacliff House for now.

BOB

(with some concern) Are we still gettin' paid?

TOM

(aiming a kick at his backside) If you do any work you will.

CUT TO:

13 EXT HIGH STREET DAY

ELY SNARK has wasted no time in finding his way to a pawnbroker's. A busy street is bustling with activity, horses pulling carts and coaches, people coming and going, women gossiping in twos and threes, young men in suits striding purposefully with documents in hand, faces set with determination and self-confidence and ELY SNARK sidling along, head down, eyes alert. This is the next town along the coast, much bigger, the pace of life a little quicker, the people that little bit less trusting and of course, less trustworthy themselves. SNARK approaches the pawnbroker's shop which bears the name Solomon Goldsmith, Jeweller and Pawnbroker, takes a last look over his shoulder and slinks inside.

CUT TO:

14 INT PAWNBROKER'S SHOP DAY

SNARK stands in the middle of the shop which is filled with the weird and the wonderful. Banjos, toys, books by the dozen, mannequins, stuffed animals, suits, dresses, wigs, hats and shoes adorn the shelves, corners, walls and even the ceiling. SNARK turns his attention to the counter which doubles as a glass case full of jewellery of all kinds. He leans across the counter to see if he can get his thieving hand into the case just as a wizened old Jewish man, dusty, grey, bespectacled shuffles into view from behind a bookcase near the back of the shop. This is SOLOMON GOLDSMITH.

SOLOMON GOLDSMITH

Ahh! It's my old friend Mr Snark (shaking his hand warmly and taking a seat behind the counter) What brings you to these parts, Mr Snark, come to buy a pretty thing for your dear old mother, I expect.

ELY

My dear old mother's dead an' well you knows it. An' I'd no more buy that drunken old whore a present than I'd buy you one.

SOLOMON GOLDSMITH

Dear, dear Mr Snark that's no way to talk about the lady who brought you into the world, my old mother, God rest her soul, now she was the salt of the earth she was, and a real lady...



ELY

I've no interest in whatever nest of vipers you emerged from (taking the brooch from his pocket) I've got this, see, an' it's worth something, quite a bit of something I'd say.

SOLOMON takes a magnifying glass from his inside jacket pocket and minutely scrutinises the brooch.

SOLOMON GOLDSMITH

A nice thing, it is, for sure, but not exceptional value, where did you, er, acquire it, might I ask?

ELY

Mind your own business old man, it's mine that's all you need to know. It's worth fifty pounds of anyone's money, that is.

SOLOMON GOLDSMITH

(smiling) Now then Mr Snark, you know me...

ELY

Only too well...

SOLOMON GOLDSMITH

And as you know I'm a fair and honest man (SNARK scoffs) so I'll give you two pounds for it and I'm cutting my very throat to offer you that.

ELY

(exasperated) Two pounds! I could sell it on the street corner and get more.

SOLOMON GOLDSMITH

Ah, but you can't can you? The way you stole in through that door there, why, it was almost as if someone was after you. Two pounds, final offer, best I can do.

SNARK snatches up the brooch and turns to leave.

ELY

Someone might very well cut your throat one of these days, Goldsmith.

ELY SNARK slams the door on his way out leaving SOLOMON GOLDSMITH scratching his long, bearded chin. He ponders the floor for a second and then hobbles over to a bookcase on which rest a number of antiquated and sizeable, dust-covered volumes. He reaches up to the top shelf and retrieves a book, showering himself in dust.

He sneezes, turns and shuffles back to his desk, picks open the pages of the old book with a long, gnarled finger then settles down and begins to read.

CUT TO:

15 INT PAWNBROKER'S SHOP DAY

A little later, SOLOMON is still engrossed in his ancient volume, running his crooked fingers down the page, resting on what is clearly an enlightening entry. He scrutinises minutely for a second or two before sinking back into his chair and sighing a great, careworn sigh.

CUT TO:

16 EXT STREET DAY

A coach and horses draws up in the town of Seaham just across the street from TOM's smithy. SOLOMON alights, stiff and sore and hobbling but nonetheless still, by appearance, a man with wit and guile. He crosses the street carefully and approaches TOM, hammering, darkly, on an anvil.

SOLOMON

Might I enquire, blacksmith, whom I might consult for, shall we say, information on local events in these parts.

TOM

(ceasing work reluctantly) Depends on the information.

SOLOMON

Ah, well, it is a simple matter, I happen to be an agent of the London Times, pursuing newsworthy events; thefts, accidents... murders, perhaps, though I can't imagine anything of note occurs here.

TOM

(rising to the bait) You'd be wrong, there old man, there'd be an accident only yesterday, coach went over the cliff; three dead, two survivors, all a bit suspicious if you ask me. Survivors are stayin' up at Seacliff house in the meantime.

SOLOMON

Indeed, and where might I find lodgings, the hours are ahead of me and I doubt if I'll have time to pay a visit to Seacliff House and make my way home afterwards.

TOM

Sally's is up the street a ways, she'll provide a bed and a decent meal.

SOLOMON

Most kind, most kind; and much banter and illumination regarding recent events I don't doubt.

TOM

I dare say but not the most reliable, if you want to know what happened go up to the big house in the morning, Master Sam's an honest lad if you want to know the facts.

CUT TO:

17 INT LIBRARY DAY

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM sits reading a book as BETTY enters.

BETTY

You rang, sir?

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Ah, yes. I wondered if you might bring me a cup of tea?

BETTY

Tea will be served on the veranda at four o'clock, sir. Mr Crozark likes it at the same time every day.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

I see, so no possibility of a cup of tea at, (looking at his watch) say, half past three?

BETTY

(obviously annoyed by the request) If you wish, sir, but as I say, tea will be served on the veranda...

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

At four o'clock, I understand.

BETTY

Will that be all, sir?

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

(resigned to his fate) I shall await four o'clock with bated breath.

BETTY

Very good, sir.

BETTY leaves the room and PROFESSOR WYNDHAM watches her go with a look that suggests he would happily cut her throat.

CUT TO:

18 INT SEACLIFF HOUSE, DINING ROOM, NIGHT

SAM, SARAH, DR TREVISICK, PROFESSOR WYNDHAM and MYRA have just finished dinner. MYRA licks her lips with some gusto, having cleaned her plate, SARAH, pushes her plate to one side, having barely eaten.

SAM

(with concern) Is there anything further we can do for you Miss James? It has been a traumatic day for you.

SARAH

No, thank you, Mr Crozark, you have been most kind, I could not have asked for more. I shall, I think, retire to my room.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

I hope you will indulge me for a moment, Miss James but I often find a little forced brevity can improve one's spirits at times like this, if only to take one's mind to a more tranquil environment.

MYRA

(clapping hands) Yes! Some music, dancing, amusing anecdotes.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Well, let us not become carried away with the idea, my dear, remember, we have Miss James' feelings to consider.

SARAH

I must confess, I would find it all something of a strain but I would not wish everyone else to endure a tiresome evening on my account.

MYRA

(a little too quickly) That's terribly considerate of you Miss James, (pause) does anyone play the pianoforte?

SAM

(getting up from his chair) Perhaps I might escort you to your room Miss James, you've had a long and rather traumatic day, I'm sure.

SARAH

Yes I think I would like to retire if you'll all excuse me.

There is a general nodding and acquiescing from the other guests.

CUT TO:

19 INT BEDROOM NIGHT

SAM draws the curtains across a great bay window and turns to SARAH who sits on the edge of the bed.

SAM

It is a sad time but it will pass, are your parents nearby?

SARAH

I'm afraid they've been dead for some years now, I have a brother in London but I haven't seen him for a long time, over a year, I think.

SAM

My parents, too, died when I was only a child, it is a difficult life, I suppose, when one is alone. Were you and your sister very close?

SARAH

Yes, yes, we were...

SARAH begins to cry, weeping uncontrollably. SAM is clearly moved by this heartbroken waif that life has unexpectedly thrown in his path. He puts his arm around her as she continues to cry, burying her face in his shoulder. After a few seconds she starts to compose herself and stands up straight, determinedly fighting back her grief. SAM takes a handkerchief from his top pocket and gently dabs her eyes. She takes his hand and pulls herself a little closer to him.

SARAH

(quietly) You are a kind man Mr Crozark...

SAM

Sam, you must call me Sam...

SARAH

Sam, I feel as though I've thrown myself upon your mercy without so much as a by your leave.

SAM

I wouldn't have it any other way, you must stay as long as you wish, we have much in common, Sarah and in spite of the circumstances I am happy to have you in my life.

SARAH

I do feel safe, in your company, we shall be great friends I feel sure of it.

SARAH releases SAM's hand and smiles a sad little smile which SAM reciprocates.

SARAH

I should try to get some sleep, I think.

SAM

Goodnight, Sarah.

SAM turns and walks towards the door.

SARAH

Sam?

SAM

Yes?

SARAH

There was one other thing, (hesitantly) I don't understand why my sister and her husband were on this road. They ought to have taken another road out of Angelmouth, there was no reason for them to be in Seaham and even less reason for them to be all the way out here.

SAM

Yes, I hadn't thought of that, I'll ask the Wyndhams.

SARAH

Thank you, Sam.

SAM

Goodnight, Sarah.

CUT TO:

20 INT DRAWING ROOM NIGHT

SAM rejoins the rest of the party to find them playing cards with much gaiety.

MYRA

Oh, Sam, you must joins us immediately, I require a partner with wit and guile. These gentlemen are nothing better than predators.

SAM smiles and sits down to play, MYRA gives a subtle little lick of her lips.

SAM

I wonder if you might assist me Professor, Miss James is a little confused as to why her sister was on this road. It is some considerable distance away from their intended route to Miss James' house, near Penzance.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Ah, yes, indeed, well we met in Angelmouth when neither of our parties were able to find suitable accommodation and were informed that there would be room and board up in Seaham, only a few miles farther along the coast. We got there in due course and found nothing that was entirely to our liking...

MYRA

...although we did stop for a snack, of sorts.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Ah, yes, (smiling) we did have time for a bite. However we were told that you might be able to put us up for the night or at least suggest an appropriate alternative. My daughter has somewhat delicate sensibilities and a rather seedy country inn and its vulgar population was not a contingency with which I, or poor little Myra here, were comfortable.

DR TREVISICK

I see, rather bad luck, too, for that storm to have blown up in such a short time.

MYRA

Devilish luck, but I survive, sensibilities intact.

CUT TO:

21 EXT VERANDA NIGHT

It is now late, SAM strolls out onto the veranda and lights a cigar and stares up at the night sky, now placid and serene. He sighs a little as he exhales and MYRA joins him, linking arms and gazing up at him.

MYRA

Tell me, Mr Sam Crozark, young lord and master of the estate, why do you always seem to have the weight of the world upon your shoulders.

SAM

(smiling) Well, I suppose I inherited a great deal of responsibility at a very young age and that's more or less dictated how I live. There are times when I wish that I could throw caution to wind and race off around the world having all sorts of exciting adventures but somehow there's always something to be dealt with, sick animals, meetings with bankers, the harvest...

MYRA

A house full of refugees from a storm?

SAM

(laughing) Quite.

MYRA

(drawing him close, gazing up into his eyes and whispering) You know, I'm rather glad I ended up here.

SAM pulls away albeit with some reluctance.

SAM

I don't think your father would approve. (hesitantly) I mean, he would surely find this...

MYRA

(confidently) What? An outrage? (walking towards SAM again) Don't worry about my father, he's quite a free spirit and anyway, he and the others have all gone to bed, he'll be having his nightcap even as we speak.

CUT TO:

22 PROFESSOR WYNDHAM'S BEDROOM NIGHT

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM, takes a cut throat razor from a suitcase just as BETTY enters his room.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Ah, Betty, how good of you to come, could you open a window for me I find this summer air quite stifling.

BETTY

Very good, sir, (opening his window) Will that be all?

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

No, Betty, could I just see your hand?

BETTY

My hand?



PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Indeed, I have a great interest in palm-reading lately and wondered if you could just give me...

As BETTY proffers a reluctant hand, PROFESSOR WYNDHAM quickly and deftly slices open her palm with the razor and begins to suck at the open wound. BETTY screams but is no match for the good PROFESSOR WYNDHAM. It is not her blood that he craves, however, and she recoils in horror as the ethereal stream of her very soul is being consumed before her eyes. Her face grows paler at first and then completely ashen, her expression one of abject horror. PROFESSOR WYNDHAM is merciless, with the teeth of a moray eel he tears the essence from her body, biting, sucking and swallowing almost at once. He greedily draws out the last of her soul as she tries to back away, her strength disappearing altogether. She begins to fall, a limp, lifeless corpse and as she does so PROFESSOR WYNDHAM pushes her backwards out of the window and down onto the terrace below. He wipes his mouth, grins contentedly and leaves his room to raise the alarm.

CUT TO:

23 EXT VERANDA/HALL NIGHT

SAM leans in towards MYRA but as their lips touch a scream is heard and he pulls away. Alarms are sounding around the house and people congregate in the entrance hall to see what is happening. SAM and MYRA enter the hall from the veranda, DR TREVISICK comes in through the front door with a grave expression.

DR TREVISICK

It's Betty, I'm afraid, she's dead, Sam.

SAM

Dead! My God, how?

DR TREVISICK

She appears to have fallen from an upstairs window down onto the terrace.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM and SARAH descend the stairs.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Yes, she was in my room, I'm really not sure what happened, I asked her to open a window, I heard a scream and when I turned round she had disappeared. I can only assume she must have leaned out for some reason and overbalanced, I'm most dreadfully sorry.

DR TREVISICK

Mm, it's a terrible business, I'm really very sorry, Sam, Betty was a kind, decent soul...

SAM is clearly distraught and tries to fight back his tears.

SAM

You know she was practically a mother to me, I really don't know what I'll do without her.

MYRA

(taking his arm) You ought to sit down for a moment; you've had a most awful shock.

SARAH

Is there anything I can do?

MYRA

(quickly) No, I don't think so.

SAM

What about Betty, what do we do?

DR TREVISICK

I'll get one of the servants to help me move her to a bedroom, Sam. You try to get some rest, I'll attend to the, er, formalities, in the morning.

MYRA

Have some brandy Sam, I'll sit with you awhile if you wish.

SAM

Not tonight, I need to sleep, I think, if I can, try to come to terms with it all.

CUT TO:

24 INT SURGERY DAY

The next morning, DR TREVISICK, now in white coat, stands in his surgery with BETTY's prostrate body on a table. He scratches his head and steps back to address SAM.

DR TREVISICK

Sam, come and have a look at this. (he opens BETTY's eyes to reveal a cold, black hollow) You see, Tom was right. I can't think of any explanation for this although I'm sure there is one.

SAM

What about the others?

DR TREVISICK

Indeed. Young Henry, poor soul, Mrs Preston and the coach driver, Swales, I believe his name was, are all the same but Mr Preston seems quite as one might normally expect.

SAM

Any suggestions?

DR TREVISICK

Not really, I'll see what I can find out but with this, where does one start looking?

SAM

I wouldn't have the faintest idea. Look, John, I really have to go, this is quite distressing seeing Betty lying there...

DR TREVISICK

I understand, Sam, I'll come up to the house for dinner tonight and we can talk more then.

CUT TO:

25 INT SEACLIFF HOUSE, DRAWING ROOM, DAY

It is the afternoon of the same day; a maid shows SOLOMON, hobbling, into the drawing room where he is met by SAM and DR TREVISICK. They regard him with some suspicion but are, nonetheless, polite.

MAID

A Mr Solomon Goldsmith, sir.

SAM

Mr Goldsmith, I'm Sam Crozark and this is my friend Dr Trevisick.

They all shake hands as SOLOMON looks them both up and down before taking a seat and carefully withdrawing a large reference book from his coat.

SOLOMON

It is a matter of some delicacy upon which I make this visit and I must assure you from the outset that I am in earnest and that although no sane man would normally give any credence to the subject matter that I am about to discuss with you, the details, nonetheless, can all be found in this volume. In short, it is the truth, upon my life.

DR TREVISICK

I assume that you are Solomon Goldsmith, the pawnbroker from Angelmouth.

SOLOMON

The very same but this, gentlemen, is not a matter of business rather than life or death.

SAM

What on earth do you mean, life or death?

SOLOMON

May I first ask, have either of you fine gentlemen any connection with India?

SAM

Why, yes, indeed I have, my parents ran a plantation there before they and my sister were killed by thieves. I was here at school when it happened.

SOLOMON

I thought that that might be the case. You see, a man came to me today with a brooch, a very old and very expensive item it was too, not a piece one might often see in these parts. I had seen it before, though, you see, a long time ago, in India. You have not heard of the Singaree? The Soul Eaters?

DR TREVISICK

This is all very entertaining Mr Goldsmith but if you are going to tell us a wild tale of the supernatural and then somehow try to extort money from us you are sadly mistaken.

SOLOMON

No, sir, I understand your trepidation but you must hear me out. Your lives may depend upon it. The Singaree are all too real. A talisman such as this brooch is cursed in a ritual sacrifice and from that moment can be used to pierce the skin of any living creature from whence the Singaree can then draw out the living soul. The more souls they consume, the wiser and stronger they become. I have seen it done, seen the withered remains of a man that it left behind. This is a ravenous predator, gentlemen, as ruthless as it is efficient. It has only one area of vulnerability, however, that is to say, there is only one way to kill it. It must be slain by the last surviving member of a family it has slaughtered.

SAM

Good God, man this is preposterous! Even if all of this were true, what could it possibly mean to anyone here?

SOLOMON

A man by the name of Ely brought this brooch to me, this rare and very unusual brooch that I saw used by a rather beautiful young woman to prick the skin of rival in love. A rival that I saw with my very own eyes almost petrify and die in horror as her soul was sucked out of her body leaving nothing more than a wilted corpse, deathly still. One other thing. They have the power to transform themselves into a serpentine form (SAM and DR TREVISICK look at each other and raise their eyebrows) yes gentlemen, unbelievable but nonetheless true. They still take the shape of a human but have green reptilian skin, and the head, while still recognisable as the individual they have been, is not a human head but that of a moray eel, complete with razor teeth in a mouth that opens wide enough to bite a man's head clean off. Their hands and feet become claws and their superhuman strength is enhanced even further. They cannot fly as such but can leap high into the air and swoop down upon their prey like dragons. In this state they are more vulnerable but infinitely more dangerous...

SAM

(interrupting before he can continue) Well Mr Goldsmith, if we come across any monsters, petrified bodies or indeed a deadly talisman we may well seek your advice but for now I thank you for your warning but we must excuse ourselves as we have other business to attend to.

SOLOMON

(getting up) I'll be staying down at the village until tomorrow, you might find this (handing SAM the book) useful in the meantime. (SAM holds up his hands and refuses to take the book) As you wish (tucking the book back inside his coat) but tread warily gentlemen, I know whereof I speak.

SOLOMON hobbles out leaving his hosts with bemused smiles.

DR TREVISICK

Well, did you ever hear such nonsense? I'm quite sure the fellow's determined to exact money from you and I've no doubt that Ely's behind it somehow; trying to take advantage of recent events and the presumed superstitious nature of us country bumpkins.

SAM

Yes, I'm sure you're right, what an extraordinary fellow, though, I must say. I was almost tempted to give him some money just for his performance.

DR TREVISICK

(smiling) Quite.

CUT TO:

26 EXT GARDEN DAY

MYRA stands outside the drawing room window unseen by SAM and DR TREVISICK. She has clearly been listening intently to all that has just been said.

CUT TO:

27 INT DINING ROOM NIGHT

Later that night SAM, SARAH, DR TREVISICK, MYRA and PROFESSOR WYNDHAM sit finishing dinner. It is a rather muted affair, the events of the last few days seeming to have taken their toll.

SAM

Any developments, Doctor?

DR TREVISICK

No, Sam, I've consulted such literature as I have at my disposal.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Developments?

DR TREVISICK

We discovered an unusual condition in the bodies of the deceased, a blackening of the eyes, a condition associated with atrophy after death, I assume.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Physiological, or, dare I say it, spiritual?

DR TREVISICK

You may dare, Professor, it is an interesting phenomenon although I doubt if it will be of great interest to a professor of animal behaviour.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

On the contrary, one might argue that soulless eyes are the very epitome of the cold, calculating predator. A human, even a dead one, is still an animal.

DR TREVISICK

Of that I have no doubt.

SARAH

(distressed, almost crying) You must excuse me, I really must retire.

SARAH gets up and rushes out of the room. SAM chases after her and catches her in the hallway.

SAM

I'm most dreadfully sorry, John, the doctor, he's a good man but sometimes more of a scientist than a humanitarian, the professor, well, he's a rum sort of a fellow but I'm sure he's a good sort, really.

SARAH

(taking his hand) It's alright, Sam, I'll survive a few insensitive remarks, just let me rest, I'll be fine in the morning.

SAM

If you're sure?

SARAH

I'm sure.

CUT TO:

28 INT DRAWING ROOM NIGHT

SAM and MYRA sit together on the settee in a large drawing room. A log fire burns brightly, casting flickering shadows around the room. SAM leans back and sighs, a soulful, sad expression upon his handsome, young face. MYRA leans across to him and begins to stroke his hair.

MYRA

Poor Sam, such sadness for such a young man. You should be enjoying life at your age.

SAM

(philosophically) Yes, I imagine I should; parties, balls, dancing and the like.

MYRA

Indeed, and if I might make so bold, perhaps the pursuit of romance?

SAM

I've thought, lately, that I might...

SAM pauses, unsure of himself particularly in the company of MYRA who, despite her best efforts, is unable to disguise her long experience in matters of love.

MYRA

Fall in love?

SAM

Well, yes, I mean, well, I wasn't going to advertise in the newspaper, I imagined I might be introduced, in the proper fashion...

MYRA

(laughing) In the proper fashion? (MYRA pauses and leans back beside him, resuming the stroking of his hair) One needn't necessarily follow society's conventions to the last letter. Sometimes it is necessary to simply to follow the moment.

MYRA and SAM embrace, tenderly at first, SAM's uncertain kisses responded to demurely by MYRA. There is, though, a hot, quickening desire and they begin to kiss passionately, SAM's diffidence evaporating as MYRA responds to his every move. They stand up and begin hurriedly to remove their clothes. Suddenly the doors to the drawing room are kicked open to reveal the silhouette of a tall man who hurls a dagger directly at MYRA who in turn ducks as the dagger whistles into the wall behind her and the stranger coolly draws his sword.

MAN

Sam! You must stand aside, young fella, she's going to rip the soul out of your innocent body as surely as I'm going to take her vile head off.

SAM pulls MYRA behind him protectively as the man advances, menacingly. As he comes in to the light we see that he is scruffily dressed but still clearly of high social class, about forty, rugged in appearance, roguishly handsome, much different to SAM's boyish good looks, an impetuous, devil-may-care vagabond but with a candour that persuades SAM to address him with cautious trust.

SAM

How do you know my name?



MAN

(ignoring SAM for the moment) Your time's come, Myra, if that's still the name you're using. (pausing then speaking slowly, pointedly) Is it, Myra?

MYRA

(desperately) Don't listen to him Sam, he's a lunatic, he's been following me, he loves me and he won't desist from this entirely unwelcome attention. Kill him, Sam, here's a gun (taking a small silver pistol from beneath her skirt)

SAM takes the gun and points it at the advancing stranger who adamantly stands his ground.

MAN

Carlton MacIntyre, sir, your father's greatest friend and your own Godfather. I have tracked this monster and her husband all the way from India. I'll wager there are a number of unfortunate deaths in their wake or am I wrong?

SAM

Husband? I thought... (pausing for thought) how do I know you're telling the truth?

CARLTON takes a letter from his coat and throws it to SAM who immediately unfolds it and begins to read.

SAM

Alright, maybe you are who you say you are but that doesn't necessarily mean that what your vile insinuations about this young lady are the truth.

CARLTON

This is most certainly anything but a young lady. Tell me, have you known her long? (SAM remains silent) I thought not. (CARLTON takes an amulet from inside his shirt) A harmless trinket wouldn't you say? But deadly poison to a singaree, a soul eater, come Myra (closing slowly on her) try it on, (MYRA backs away, terrified) you see, Sam, this little trinket will reclaim all the souls Myra has consumed, restoring her to her original human condition; that of an evil, twisted harpy, now middle-aged and ravaged with the debauchery of her lifestyle. Am I close, Myra?

As CARLTON advances ever nearer to MYRA she begins to transform into the serpent of SAM's nightmare and SOLOMON's portent. SAM flies back from her in shock as she spits and bears her razor sharp fangs. CARLTON lunges at her with his sword but

she parries his attack and rears up, suddenly a human serpent, eyes yellow, piercing, reptilian.

MYRA

(hissing) I'll get you yet, Crozark, I'll bite your head off. And you MacIntyre. (now spitting pure evil) I'll eat you both and spit out your bones.

As MYRA rears up, preparing to bite, the drawing room door opens to reveal SARAH who screams at the now spectral, serpentine MYRA.

MYRA

(bitterly, maliciously) Oh, and you, little waif, little dolly, you can have him if you want, see how you like him after I've eaten him alive. And then, if I'm still hungry, I'll have you for breakfast.

MYRA grins wickedly and lunges, snapping and snarling but begins to shrink back a little as CARLTON comes at her again with sword and amulet and, in an instant, swoops up, crashes through a window and is gone.

CUT TO:

29 EXT BEDROOM NIGHT

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM hurriedly packs a few things into a bag, opens the window from which BETTY fell and leaps out. He, however, lands like a cat and quickly slips away into the night. CARLTON bursts into the room a few seconds later and dashes over to the window where, now, there is nothing to be seen. A second or so later he is joined by SAM.

SAM

Gone?

CARLTON

Gone alright, with indecent haste. (half to himself, half to SAM, gazing into the night) I'll get you Wyndham, I'll get you.

CUT TO:

30 EXT CLIFFTOP ROAD NIGHT

MYRA, now back in human form, is joined by a breathless PROFESSOR as they make their way back towards the town.

MYRA

Well?

## PROFESSOR

Discretion is the better part of valour my dear, we shall have young Mr Crozark, when the odds are in our favour, we shall have him.

CUT TO:

## 31 INT DRAWING ROOM NIGHT

SAM, DR TREVISICK, SARAH and CARLTON sit in the now, well-lit drawing room all looking a bit shell-shocked.

## DR TREVISICK

You're all absolutely sure this wasn't just some sort of an hallucination. It's not entirely unprecedented for people under great stress to exhibit similar or even identical symptoms.

## CARLTON

I've had this conversation many times doctor, you have three witnesses, a smashed window and several unexplained or at best extremely unfortunate and coincidental deaths. And me. Why do you think I'm here, particularly at this time.

## SAM

If you'll excuse me Dr Trevisick, John, we've been friends for many years and you know me to be a man of common sense, I think (DR TREVISICK nods) and now I believe that we cannot waste time on a debate that three of us know to be pointless. These things are out there and if I don't kill them, they'll kill me.  
(pausing, turning to CARLTON)

## CARLTON

We'll talk more in the morning and enlist the help of this man Goldsmith if God has spared him but the gist of it is this. They want Sam because one of the very few ways that they can be slain is a decapitation by the last surviving member of a family that they have killed. They themselves will kill in two ways; a cursed artefact of some kind, Myra has a brooch and Wyndham has a razor. These items are used to draw the blood of an innocent in a Singaree ritual and then, after piercing the skin of any man or woman, create a portal from which the very soul can be drawn inexorably, fatally from the body. The souls they take make them stronger and stronger. In time, as in the case of the Wyndhams, not only do they become a formidable foe with superhuman strength but they cannot live without souls or that

strength begins to wane and eventually they will die. This latter point of fact makes them the most ruthless and savage of predators.

SARAH

How hideous, but what was that creature I saw, it was Myra, somehow, but it was, well, almost a snake.

CARLTON

That is our other problem. Once they have possession of a cursed artefact and have used it to take a soul they can transform into the creature you saw before you tonight. In that state of transformation they can kill and eat at will with no need for the cursed relic.

SAM

Why didn't she prick me with her brooch? In fact, now that I think about it, I didn't see a brooch. My God! Solomon's story, he spoke of a brooch.

CARLTON

Indeed, I believe that she may have lost it, by the sounds of things that fact has saved your life, Sam, there was some sort of an accident, I hear.

SARAH

Yes there was; my sister and brother-in-law...

CARLTON

You have my condolences, my dear but we must examine the site of the accident, the bodies of the deceased and then consult Solomon at our earliest convenience. To secure that brooch must be our first endeavour. I suggest we all sleep in one room although I doubt if they'll be back tonight. We'll take turns to keep watch just in case. You have no objections, I trust, Miss James.

SARAH

No, of course not, I must confess to being quite bewildered, not to say, utterly horrified by the whole affair.

CARLTON

It's not over yet.

CUT TO:

## 32 EXT BACK STREET DAY

The next morning MYRA and the PROFESSOR walk hurriedly, furtively along a back street in the town's slum area. The PROFESSOR approaches a slovenly drunk slumped in a doorway.

## PROFESSOR

Excuse me my good fellow (smiling, brandishing a shiny coin between thumb and forefinger) I'm looking for a man by the name of Ely, do you know anyone by that name frequenting these parts?

## DRUNK

Well, there's Ely... (stops, looks the PROFESSOR and MYRA up and down and thinks for a second) I might do, might very well, cost you more than a shilling though.

## PROFESSOR

(with a knowing glance at MYRA) I'd be reluctant to exchange a larger sum out here on the street, if you'd like to accompany me up this alley (indicating a dark opening between buildings a few yards away) I'll make sure you receive everything you deserve for your cooperation.

The party of three make their way up a nearby alley, the drunk looking pretty pleased with himself. He stops and confronts the WYNDHAMS.

## DRUNK

Alright that's far enough. I'd guess t'would take somethin' powerful desperate to make a couple of toffs like yourselves come down to this part of town and seek out the company of a thing like Ely. I'll give him to you though, not many wouldn't that know him as I do but you folks look like you might be in a hurry. I thinks maybe ten shillings would find Ely; name, address, where to find him of an evening.

## PROFESSOR

(laughing) Ten shillings indeed, well, you're a clever fellow for sure and you shall have your ten shillings and perhaps a little more, a bonus, of sorts. It must take a great deal of money to maintain this level of drunken, surly bravado.

The PROFESSOR takes a wallet from his coat and finds a ten-shilling note, which he unfolds, snapping his fingers crisply as he offers it to the drunk who snatches it greedily. He puts it in his pocket and eyes the WYNDHAMS, now, with a little suspicion.

## DRUNK

Ely Snark's his name. Bides by himself, not surprisin' if you know Ely; down on Port Street, 'bout half way along but you'll find him in the Mariners Tavern mostly, this time of day, up at the Seaham Inn at night, leastways when he's got money. That's all I've got for you except, you better watch him, he'll eat folks like you for breakfast.

The PROFESSOR quickly, deftly produces his razor and in the blink of an eye has circled round behind the hapless drunk, grabbed him by the scalp and slashed his throat wide open.

## PROFESSOR

(with glee, blood spurting against the walls) On the contrary my dear fellow we shall have him, and you, all for the knockdown price of ten shillings. (motioning MYRA towards him) Feast, my love, feast.

MYRA dreamily, hungrily approaches the blood-soaked convulsing drunk, opens her mouth surreally wide and begins to draw out the ethereal stream of the pitiful, dying man's soul. She gulps and eats with the craving and ecstasy of an addict until, finally, there is no more and the PROFESSOR, taking the ten-shilling note from the man's pocket, allows the bloody, limp, ashen corpse to slide to the ground. MYRA wipes a splash of blood from her cheek and licks her fingers contentedly.

CUT TO:

## 33 INT SEACLIFF HOUSE DAY

CARLTON cuts himself a piece of meat from his breakfast plate and eats with gusto. The morning sun streams through the windows of the breakfast room as SAM, DR TREVISICK, SARAH and CARLTON sit considering the previous night's events. SARAH and SAM pick at their food. CARLTON continues to eat voraciously and seems calmer than the others.

## CARLTON

Well, first things first, we should try to track down Ely, I reckon, if the Wyndhams haven't already got to him.

## SAM

What about Solomon Goldsmith?

## CARLTON

Good point, should we split up and arrange to meet later in the day?

## DR TREVISICK

I think that might be wisest.

CARLTON

Fine, (smiling) Sam, you have no objections to the company of Miss James I imagine?

SAM

(a little red-faced) None at all.

CARLTON

Miss James? Will you feel safe with only one of us by your side?

SARAH

(sharply) I can look after myself quite well, when the need arises, thank you, Mr MacIntyre. I have two pistols and I can handle a sword as well as most men.

CARLTON

(unmoved) Well then, I shall rephrase my question. Sam, will you feel safe with only Miss James for protection?

CUT TO:

34 EXT SEAHAM TOWN DAY

SAM, DR TREVISICK, SARAH and CARLTON approach the outskirts of the town on horseback.

CARLTON

Well then, doctor, let us pay a visit to Mr Ely Snark. We'll meet you back at Tom's smithy at five o'clock.

CARLTON and DR TREVISICK gallop off towards town leaving SARAH and SAM continuing to canter along at a gentler pace.

SARAH

How far is it to Angelmouth?

SAM

We should be there in about an hour.

There are a few seconds quiet before SARAH speaks again.

SARAH

And why, pray tell, were you in a state of semi undress when Carlton burst in on you and Myra?

SAM

(not at all sure about this one) I, er, that is to say, I, or we, er...

SARAH

Yes, that's what I thought.

CUT TO:

35 EXT MARINERS TAVERN DAY

CARLTON and DR TREVISICK draw up outside the seedy-looking Mariners Tavern and tie up their horses before entering the bar.

CARLTON

Your man the blacksmith was right about this place. We won't have to look hard for a thief in here.

It is indeed a grimy place. A few glassy-eyed, greasy, unkempt drunks prop up the bar while a few other surly faces look up from dark corners as CARLTON and DR TREVISICK stride in and approach the barman, TWILL, a fat, course lout with ruddy complexion and lank, greasy hair, wearing a filthy apron upon which he wipes his hands at the sight of his well-to-do clientele.

TWILL

How can I help you gentlemen? A pint of our finest ale for you both?

DR TREVISICK

(looking disdainfully around the premises) No, thank you, we're looking for information as opposed to infection, Ely Snark to be precise; Tom said we might catch him in here at this time of the day.

TWILL

Well he's a popular fellow today, couple of folks dressed not unlike yourselves been in lookin' for Ely not half an hour ago.

CARLTON

There's half a crown in it for you if we get to him first.

TWILL

Ah, well, I did say to these folks I'd let them know as soon as he came in, they're up in my finest room, relaxing after their long journey so they are, but I suppose I could send someone out to look for him if there was a couple o' shillings in it for them.

CARLTON throws some coins on the counter.

CARLTON

There's your money now be quick about it.



TWILL nods across the room at a small, bleary eyed man sipping carefully at a pint.

TWILL

Jonesy, (JONESY, drunk, gets up slowly from his chair) run up to Ely's and see if he's about, there's a shillin' in it.

JONESY, clearly used to this kind of employment, trudges over to the bar to collect his shilling.

CARLTON

(to JONESY) And there'll be another one if you come back with him within ten minutes.

TWILL

(as JONESY leaves) He won't be long either way, can I interest you gentlemen in a drink?

CARLTON

Whisky for me, Doctor?

DR TREVISICK

Bit early for me.

TWILL pours a glass of whisky for CARLTON, takes his money, says 'thank you' and starts to edge into the background. Beginning to look a little furtive, he shuffles his feet and then heads for a door at the back of the bar. He has a final quick look around and, seeing CARLTON and DR TREVISICK turn away from him and begin to talk, slips quietly through the doorway and heads down a dark alleyway that leads to a small yard at the back of the building. He closes the back door behind him and turns round to confront ELY.

ELY

(secretively, impatiently) Well?

TWILL

You was right, the doctor and that posh-lookin' fella was askin' for you aswell, what you been up to Ely?

ELY

Ain't been up to nothing, just might have somethin' they're looking for that's all. You just keep your mouth shut an' you'll get paid. Get rid of the stranger an' the doctor, he knows me too well. That other two'll pay a bit more, I reckon, send Jonesy through when they've gone.

CUT TO:

## 36 INT MARINER'S TAVERN DAY

Ten minutes or so later, JONESY reappears and shrugs his shoulders at TWILL, CARLTON and DR TREVISICK indicating that ELY is nowhere to be found.

TWILL

He might be at home, gentlemen, down on Port Street he bides or maybe Seaham Inn, he's never far from the pub that one. If you call back in a while I'm sure I'll be able to lay hands on him in that time.

CARLTON

(downing his whisky) Alright then doctor, let's go and see if what we can dig up.

DR TREVISICK

Might be an idea to recruit Tom for the afternoon, town blacksmith, good man, usually has his ear pretty close to the ground.

DR TREVISICK and CARLTON leave, watched all the while by TWILL who wastes no time in dashing out the back door, this time turning left up a staircase. At the top, he bustles breathlessly along a lobby and knocks at a door.

TWILL

Mr Pendleton? Mr Pendleton, sir?

The door is opened not much more than a crack, revealing the face of PROFESSOR WYNDHAM.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM.

What is it Twill? Mrs Pendleton is feeling rather faint.

TWILL

It's Ely Snark, sir he's just come into the bar, sir, I thought you'd like to know.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM.

(smiling) Good fellow, Twill, a shiny coin for you I think; we shall both be down presently.

CUT TO:

## 37 INT HOTEL ROOM DAY

Inside the room MRS PENDLETON aka MYRA luxuriates in a bath, raising a svelte, sleek leg, seductively wiping off the bubbles and blowing them at the PROFESSOR.

MYRA

Must we meet this tiresome little man now? I do so feel like having fun.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

We must have your brooch, Myra and well you know it. We need it, or rather you need it and on top of that we need other people not to have it.

MYRA stands up and steps slowly, sexily out of the bath.

MYRA

(dreamily) Oh well then, if we must.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM.

(unable to resist, taking her in his arms) Dammit all Myra, you're insatiable. I swear it'll be the death of us one day.

MYRA

Mm, keep little Snark waiting; it'll be good to let him think we're not all that desperate and anyway we can kill him and the rest of this horrid little town any time we like.

CUT TO:

38 INT MARINER'S TAVERN (PUBLIC BAR) DAY

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM, MYRA and ELY SNARK sit at a table in a corner eyeing each other suspiciously.

MYRA

So, where is the brooch?

ELY

Nowhere you'd be able to find it, that's a certainty.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Now Mr Snark, Mrs Pendleton's brooch was a family heirloom and I really think that we are being more than generous by offering you a reward rather than going straight to the authorities. Now ten shillings is a generous offer...

ELY

Oh, I wouldn't be so hasty Professor Wyndham, that's right, I know who you are and I know there's somethin' fishy about that brooch...

MYRA

(feigned outrage) Well, I've never been so insulted, how dare you question our credentials in this way, many people travel incognito these days it's a simple matter of security.

ELY

That's as maybe, or maybe not but it doesn't explain why there was two other gentlemen in here not half an hour ago looking for me and, I would guess, my precious brooch.

MYRA

(starting to lose her temper) Why you nasty little man...

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

(trying to calm her down) Now, now Myra, no need for a dramatic scene, we simply pay this gentleman a decent price for our brooch and go our separate ways. (to ELY) Come now, Mr Snark, what's your price?

ELY

I want a hundred pounds, not a penny less.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

And what makes you think we have that kind of money?

ELY

You're sort always 'ave money, you stink of the stuff. Hand it over an' I'll give you your brooch.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

(scratching his chin) Alright but we really must see the brooch first.

ELY

(uncompromisingly) You'll get it when I gets my money.

MYRA

(firmly) Where is the brooch?

ELY

Can't tell you that either.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

(straightening up in his chair, applying a little menace to his tone) Mr Snark, I can be very persuasive when I need to be...

ELY, upon seeing the PROFESSOR's rather more aggressive stance, turns around and nods at TWILL, who has been watching intently from behind the bar. TWILL in turn motions to two thugs who get up from their seats at the bar and move threateningly towards the corner where the PROFESSOR, MYRA and ELY are seated.

ELY

(sidling back and away as his thugs advance) You ain't got no business coming in here and trying to push folks around, Wyndham, this is our place, our domain and we'll just have to take our payments, I think, cause something tells me you people won't go to the constable or you'd have already done it. (motioning to the two thugs) Alright boys get a hold of 'em.

The first thug lunges at the PROFESSOR who is, of course, far too quick for him and in a rapier sharp movement, fends off his assailant's clumsy attempt to grab him, takes him by the hair and lifts him clean off the ground. There is a flash of steel as the razor whistles through the air and slices open the throat of thug one. Just as the PROFESSOR lets him slip to the floor, thug two lunges into the fray. The PROFESSOR, this time simply holds up his hands and backs into the corner. The thug grins and turns to look at ELY who is, back against the wall, edging slowly away from thug two with a look of horror on his face. He is looking not at thug two but directly behind him where MYRA has now assumed serpentine form. Thug two slowly, nervously turns round to see what ELY is staring at and no sooner catches sight of MYRA than she pounces, his blood-curdling scream stifled as she bites off his head. Suddenly there is mayhem. A woman stands in the middle of the tavern screaming hysterically, the seven or eight remaining patrons are running for the nearest exits, back and front. ELY has made his way behind the bar but the snake-like MYRA is too quick for him and in one deft, swirling movement, flies across the room and slams the back door shut before he or TWILL can get out. She corners them both behind the bar as the professor, turning his attention to ELY and TWILL, walks slowly, deliberately towards them. The still screaming woman is the only other person left in the tavern and the PROFESSOR, fed up with the noise, picks up a poker from the fireplace, sticks it through her head from ear to ear, pins her against the bar and begins to twist. Her eyes bulge almost out of their sockets, flailing arms become limp and puppet-like, screams turn to desperate chokes until finally the PROFESSOR makes a small cut in her neck which is enough for him to delightedly twist her head off, cascading the room in blood. He then opens his mouth wide bearing razor edged teeth and begins to draw the soul from her headless torso. As the last ethereal shadows are consumed, he licks his lips, straightens his tie and looks over to ELY and TWILL. Still cornered by MYRA, they stare open-mouthed at this horrifying spectacle as the PROFESSOR strolls over to confront them.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Now then gentlemen, my lady wife here (MYRA hisses and grins in anticipation) will have her brooch and I, let me see now, what'll I have? (pouring himself a whisky from a bottle on the bar top) I think I'll have Mr Twill's head on a plate. (with a flourish, rather like a circus ringmaster) Over to you Myra!

MYRA licks her dark, green lips with a forked tongue. TWILL screams and leaps over the counter but MYRA, in a flash, is there in front of him again. He tries to run but is caught by PROFESSOR WYNDHAM who lifts him upside down, holding him by one leg and swinging him to and fro until he swings up to just the right height for MYRA to bite his head off. As another fountain of blood bursts out of the headless corpse MYRA begins to suck out his soul, drawing in the sinuous vapour until there is no more. ELY, still behind the bar, once more tries to sidle towards the back door but is being watched all the while and his escape barred by the PROFESSOR who takes him by the scruff of the neck and throws him to the floor in the centre of the room. He and MYRA then close on ELY who squirms and begs for mercy.

ELY

No, no, please, dear God, what are you?

PROFESSOR WYDHAM

Oh, nothing to do with God Ely, that's for sure. Now where is the brooch?

ELY

You don't think I'd be stupid enough to have it with me, do you? Kill me and you'll never see it again.

PROFESSOR WYDHAM

Oh, Ely, I will rip your head from your shoulders (placing his hand on ELY's throat) one day very soon I am sure. Now, (menacingly) where is the brooch?

ELY

A hundred pounds, that's the deal.

PROFESSOR WYDHAM

(Stepping back and looking at MYRA, now back in human form, who nods agreement) Alright Ely but cross us and, well, you see what happens.

ELY

(standing up, backing away) You'll get your trinket, as long as I get my money.

As ELY is backing away the door opens and CARLTON, TOM and DR TREVISICK burst in. Opened-mouthed in horror they survey the carnage and the bloodied remains that lie around them before focusing on the smiling WYNDHAMS. The three men draw their swords, CARLTON also produces the amulet which he has been wearing on a chain around his neck. This, he brandishes as he advances, sword in hand.

CARLTON

I have you, Wyndham, you and your snake of a concubine.

## PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Oh, come now, Carlton, she was once more to you than a snake. Have you forgotten how once you loved her...  
(retreating slowly)

As PROFESSOR WYNDHAM talks, MYRA transforms back into serpent form, sidles around the bar and rears up beside TOM and DR TREVISICK, hissing and snarling. CARLTON briefly turns his attention to her but hesitates slightly. No sooner has he done so than both WYNDHAMS make a dash for the back door with supernatural speed and are gone. In the confusion, with attention momentarily diverted from him, ELY makes a run for the front door. He just evades TOM's outstretched fingers, scrapes through the doorway and away into the gloom and anonymity of the back streets. Inside the tavern there is a stunned silence as the three men survey the blood-soaked carnage. Eventually the DOCTOR speaks.

## DOCTOR TREVISICK

Loved her?

## CARLTON

Yes, doctor, that demonic creature was, (becoming quieter) in another lifetime, my wife.

CUT TO:

## 38 EXT ANGELMOUTH (OUTSKIRTS) DAY

SAM and SARAH, oblivious to the drama unfolding behind them seem happy and relaxed as their horses make their way at walking pace into the town.

## SARAH

It is, well, it is all rather exciting, though isn't it?

## SAM

(darkly) In a dark, horrifying sort of way, I suppose it is, yes.

## SARAH

Aren't boys supposed to like this sort of thing?

## SAM

You forget I'm the one they're after. (miserably) She said she was going to bite my head off.

## SARAH

(flippantly) Well, that's not very nice, is it, I mean, you invite people to stay for the weekend and well, really...

## SAM

Yes, alright, very amusing Miss James.

SARAH

(laughing) Oh come on, Sam. It won't do us any harm at all to try to see the funny side of things for a moment. Apart from anything else, if you can laugh at something it makes it very much less frightening, don't you think?

SAM

(with mock bravado) Yes you are absolutely right, we shall carry on defiantly with a smile on our faces and a song in our hearts and even if she does bite my head off it'll all have been worth it if we've had a great adventure and a jolly good laugh.

SARAH

(laughing uncontrollably) Oh for goodness sake, (quietening a little) it won't come to that, we'll be ready for them the next time and anyway we're fighting for good and good always prevails over evil.

SAM

(with grave reservations) I hope you're right.

SARAH

(suddenly a little more seriously) There is another thing.

SAM

Oh God, what now, if this is another horrifying scenario involving my untimely death...

SARAH

(laughing) No, well, sorry for laughing, no, it's not that. It's just that, well, I'm glad that Jane's death has some meaning now. If she hadn't died in the crash in which it seems that Myra lost the brooch then you probably wouldn't be alive now.

SAM

Yes, that had occurred to me. I didn't want to point it out, I'm sorry.

SARAH

You didn't do anything wrong, you didn't know any more than the rest of us. I'm just glad it wasn't all for nothing.

CUT TO:



## 39 EXT/INT SOLOMON GOLDSMITH'S SHOP DAY

SAM and SARAH dismount, secure their horses and step inside SOLOMON's shop. SOLOMON stands with arms folded, regarding them with a knowing, but nonetheless benign, smile.

SOLOMON

Good morning, my dears, Mr Crozark, if I'm not mistaken, and presumably Miss James. Deeply sorry for your loss, my dear, deeply sorry.

SOLOMON motions towards a small coffee table and chairs which sit inside a recess, squared off on three sides by bookshelves not unlike a modern bookshop café. SOLOMON pulls out two seats for them, saying 'please' as they sit down.

SARAH

How do you know who I am Mr Goldsmith, I do not think that we have met?

SOLOMON

I investigated, Miss James. When I left the company of your friend yesterday I had a feeling that there was more to know about the events unfolding in Seaham. Four deaths within a day or so in a small place like Seaham are more than a little suspicious.

SAM

Er, five, I'm afraid.

SOLOMON

Five?

SAM

My maid, Betty, the night before last.

SOLOMON

I'm sorry to hear that. Do I take it, Mr Crozark that you have come to realise that I was not the unscrupulous rogue that you first supposed me to be?

SAM

I must apologise for my attitude Mr Goldsmith.

SOLOMON

Solomon, you must call me Solomon, we are friends here, now.

SAM

Truthfully, we have had the most unusual and not to say frightening experience since your visit, indeed, all that you warned us of has proved to be true. We felt that we should pay you a visit in order to find out all that we could about these terrible creatures.

SOLOMON

I shall endow you with the benefit of my experience but first you must tell me all that has occurred since I left you.

SAM

Well...

CUT TO:

Same scene a little later, SAM has finished talking and leans back in his chair.

SOLOMON

A most disquieting tale, Sam, most disquieting. (taking a sigh) Now you must know who and what these formidable enemies are. They must kill you, Sam, you must know this with your heart, they cannot let you live.

SAM takes a deep breath and SARAH takes his hand. SOLOMON continues.

SOLOMON

This is what I know to be true. There is an ancient Jewish tribe, the Moshraheim, the Moshraheim are traditionally the protectors of humanity. As the years passed and myth and superstition receded from the minds of man the prominence of the Moshraheim diminished. In all but one respect; the Singaree, a fearful and terrifying cult, originating in Ethiopia, prospered, flourished over the centuries and became a dangerously powerful force for evil. The Moshraheim evolved into the protectors of humanity against the Singaree alone. A daunting task, as you no doubt now are aware.

SARAH

Are you a Moshraheim?

SOLOMON

I have that dubious privilege. To continue, many years ago, my old mentor, Isaac, returned from a trading excursion to India with tales of the most gruesome atrocities. He was, by this time, an old man and not capable of contending with this most savage of mortal enemies. I was, therefore, dispatched to India to consider the problem. When I first arrived in Calcutta I was introduced to a Mrs MacIntyre at an evening reception. She clearly had little interest in me, not a bad thing as it turned out. I knew before I left that Professor Wyndham, as he called himself, was one to be wary of but knew nothing of the MacIntyres.

SAM

MacIntyres? You mean Carlton?

SOLOMON

Carlton and Myra MacIntyre...

SARAH

Myra? You mean that creature was...

SOLOMON

I do indeed. It was at this point that discovered for sure that Wyndham was the singaree that I pursued. Imagine, if you will a veranda late at night when all but a few tired guests have returned to their homes as full of food and drink as their stomachs will allow. The bubbling excitement of the ambassador's party has quietened to the purr of insects and murmured intimacies in dark corners...

CUT TO:

40 EXT VERANDA NIGHT, CALCUTTA

The scene SOLOMON describes now unfolds in flashback. MRS MACINTYRE, (MYRA) stands facing PROFESSOR WYNDHAM on a wide sweeping veranda at the front of a large colonial mansion house. He takes her hand and kisses it gently as might a lover. They turn to gaze out on a tropical garden at night, palm trees and shrubs faintly lit by the glow of the lights from the house. They, themselves, are almost in silhouette.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

How married are you, exactly?

MYRA

Oh, only a little. Less with champagne and hot summer nights in India. Even less still when asked to endure boring little men who concern themselves with engineering and wives who consider an ability to produce irritating children to be suitable material for an entire evening's conversation. Bring on the champagne, I say.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

What if I told you, you could have champagne and much more besides for all eternity? What if I told you, you could eat these engineers and their wives and, if you wished, their vile children; and think nothing of it?

MYRA

Well, wouldn't I jump at the chance?

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

I would hope that you would because I can give you this; I can give you all that your heart desires.

MYRA

Well then how could I refuse?

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

(suddenly deadly serious) Give me your hand.

MYRA complies without question and offers her hand to PROFESSOR WYNDHAM who takes his razor from his pocket and nicks her palm. MYRA winces but allows him to continue as he puts her open wound to his mouth and seems to breath deeply into the cut. MYRA goes into shock at first and shakes with horror as he continues to exhale. She sees his past atrocities flash before her eyes as she becomes a part of him then, overcome with emotion, faints and slips to the ground as he finishes his work and lets her fall. In a few seconds she comes round and finds PROFESSOR WYNDHAM kneeling over her. She gives a little cry of shock as she looks into the eyes of the man who, she knows with ominous certainty, has become her mentor, guide, partner in crime, lover, in fact, her whole life for all eternity.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Worry not, my dear, it is, at first, a fearful consideration. These things that I have done, that you have just now seen, these things are the price of immortality. Soon, though, you will tolerate this and, in time, you will begin to thirst for these moments and these humans will matter less and less until the day arrives that you will despise them and see them only as food.

MYRA

Food?

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Souls, my dear, we feed on souls.

CUT TO:

41 INT SOLOMON GOLDSMITH'S SHOP DAY

SOLOMON smiles at his two guests who continue to gaze intently as he tells his tale.

SAM

And what of my parents, Solomon? Where do they come into this? I simply can't imagine either of them wanting to have anything to do with Wyndham, or Myra for that matter. My father was not a man to suffer fools and wastrels such as Wyndham.

SOLOMON

Indeed not. That, in fact, was part of his sad demise. I learned much of the social politics of expatriate Calcutta upon my arrival there and it did not take a great deal of investigation to discover that Wyndham was regarded with suspicion and often downright loathing. Your father, particularly, made no secret of his feelings to this effect and openly shunned Wyndham at the social events to which they were both invited. Wyndham, you see, despite being the subject of much unfavourable discussion, was, and still is, as you now know, an extremely charismatic and charming individual. He found it relatively easy to ingratiate himself with the rich and the powerful, especially the ladies. This, if anything, is his one great weakness. He enjoys the high life, is something of a snob and will go to tremendous lengths to place himself among the upper echelons of society. Whether it is the effect of his own extraordinary powers or whether he would always have been this way is a matter of conjecture but he is without question completely self-possessed. Now, young Sam, you must brace yourself, for I come to the part of the story that concerns your parents. It is an ugly, brutal affair but I feel that you must hear it. Do you agree?

SAM

Pray, continue Solomon, it's better that I know.

## SOLOMON

As you wish. Now, I had, as you know, discovered that Wyndham was the Singaree, the soul eater responsible for the reported atrocities. A week or so after the night Myra first entered his world I followed them to the house of Mr and Mrs Crozark...

CUT TO:

42 EXT/INT LARGE SUBURBAN MANSION HOUSE, CALCUTTA

SOLOMON's story continues as we follow MYRA and WYNDHAM to the front door of the CROZARK mansion. PROFESSOR WYNDHAM raps on the door with his cane and, a few seconds later, a maid answers and ushers them into a long, dark, dimly lit hallway. Once inside, WYNDHAM wastes no time, draws a sword from his cane and beheads the maid. He goes towards the bleeding corpse where he kneels down and begins to inhale deeply, drawing out the maid's soul, a look of ecstasy lighting up his face as he finishes, leaning back and sighing. Almost immediately JOHN CROZARK, SAM's father appears and looks down, stunned, at the scene before him.

## JOHN CROZARK

Good God, Wyndham, what horror is this that you have brought to my house. (shouting back into the house)  
Alison, Alison, send for help, send someone immediately.

## WYNDHAM

You know, John, you've been right to be suspicious of me, quite right indeed. You didn't ever quite know why though, did you? Well here it is, John, in all its glory. We are Singaree, soul eaters, we kill, we take souls from the dying bodies of our victims and we grow strong. I say 'we'; you've met Myra, of course, she's proving to be quite an enthusiastic devotee of our cult.

## JOHN CROZARK

Myra, in the name of God, I always thought you a trifle impulsive, irresponsible, even, but this? This is the very devils own work.

## MYRA

(standing up) This is immortality, John. (walking towards him, taking her brooch from her dress and with lightning speed, slashing his face) And you, John are going to help me on my way.

MYRA throws back her shoulders and begins to inhale deeply. JOHN looks at her in shock as his soul snakes out of the open wound and is consumed voraciously. He finally falls limp and collapses silently to the floor. MYRA turns to WYNDHAM satisfied and smiling just as ALISON CROZARK comes rushing into the hallway with a little girl,

SAM's sister, PENELOPE, behind her. She screams and falls on the lifeless body of her husband.

ALISON CROZARK

(looking up at WYNDHAM and MYRA, hysterically)  
No! No! Oh God no, what are you? Why are you doing  
this to us?

WYNDHAM

(Taking her by the hair) Worry not my dear, I intend to  
relieve your misery without delay.

WYNDHAM takes his sword and decapitates her before kneeling down as before to draw her soul. MYRA takes the crying, stunned little girl by the hand away from the carnage and, with an ominous, evil smile on her face, leads her into the next room.

CUT TO:

43 INT SOLOMON GOLDSMITH'S SHOP DAY

SAM stares, ashen-faced as SOLOMON takes a sip of tea and sighs.

SOLOMON

And that is that. You were not the first, SAM, and  
likely you will not be the last. Now there are a few  
things you must know, some you may already have  
guessed of course but I should reiterate.

SARAH

Sorry for interrupting but, well, do you have special  
powers. Are the moshraheim...

SOLOMON

(laughing) No, my dear, at least not as you might have  
hoped. A man very much wiser than me once said that  
knowledge is power. Knowledge, in fact is all I have,  
that and a, shall we say, (tapping his nose) nose for  
danger. I can be of no use to you when physical  
confrontations present themselves, as they surely will,  
but I can certainly give you advice if nothing else.

SAM

So what do we do now?

SOLOMON

Finding Ely Snark might be a start, you are aware that  
he has Myra's brooch?

SARAH

Yes, Carlton and the doctor are looking for him now.

SOLOMON

Good, he's a weasel, that Snark, but he might be useful now. To continue, you can, as you know, kill them in two ways. The last surviving member of a family slain by them can kill them by means of decapitation or they can be returned to mortality by applying a sacred amulet to an open wound much in the same way that they draw souls from their victims. This will release all the souls they have ever taken and would kill Wyndham as he is over two hundred years old, Myra would not die but would be rendered weak and powerless.

SAM

The amulet that Carlton brandished at Myra, the night she left.

SOLOMON

If she appeared frightened then, I assume, yes. This wouldn't be Carlton MacIntyre would it?

SAM

Yes, yes it was. Do you know him?

SOLOMON

As I said before, only by reputation, we were never introduced but over the years I have heard his name mentioned in dark places and I, of course, knew that he was Myra's husband...

SARAH

It's hard to believe. That thing? (pause, nudging SAM in the ribs) Well she gets around doesn't she?

SAM

(not sure what to say)Hmm.

SOLOMON

I have followed them for many years taking great pains to keep myself hidden from them, waiting for a chance to use my own amulet but somehow the chance never came and I began to grow old and weary. Knowing that they would one day arrive in this part of the world because of Sam, I bought this shop and waited for events to overtake me hoping that I would get to Sam before they did. Carlton, clearly, has pursued with more vigour than I and so here we are.



SAM

Can we see the amulet?

SOLOMON

I'll do better than that, I'll give it to you.

SOLOMON produces an amulet on a chain which he has been wearing around his neck. It is a flat, silver disc, palm-sized and inscribed with ancient text. He hands it to SARAH.

SOLOMON

I give this to you young lady because they won't suspect you of having it and Sam's unique position means that he doesn't need it quite so much. They are clever, mind. (straightening up in his chair, looking gravely at SAM and SARAH) They possess, as you now know, superhuman strength and speed of movement. They take souls by making a cut in the skin of their prey with their cursed artefacts – a brooch in the shape of a snake, in Myra's case, Wyndham has a cutthroat razor - and then inhaling deeply from the wound at close quarters. They can transform into serpentine shape, at which point they can take souls without their accursed artefacts. They will, wherever possible, find quiet, sparsely populated places. They have two weaknesses. Firstly, when in serpent form, the amulet which I have given you and, presumably the one which Carlton possesses, can kill them stone dead in seconds, and they know it. They are, of course much more dangerous in this form but only resort to it when confident that they are completely safe or believe that it is their only option. In human form, remember, the amulet will only work when pressed against an open wound, withdrawing the souls they have taken. Fatal to the professor, since he is over two hundred years old but only rendering Myra mortal. Always remember this, they are as vulnerable to cursed artefacts as the poor souls they use them against. Secondly and perhaps even more importantly, they have a penchant for the theatrical, they may become complacent, assuming themselves to be immortal, although they very nearly are. This, however, could cause a measure of recklessness. With them perhaps taking too much pleasure in their atrocities, smugly delighting in their power, you may see an opportunity. Do not try to reason with them, they are devoid of compassion, morals, humanity. Do not trust a word they say and above all remember this. If you see a chance to kill, do not hesitate, do not think twice, kill, kill without mercy or they will be upon you

SARAH

What do we do now?

SOLOMON

Be watchful, be afraid at all times. They mean to kill you, Sam, they cannot allow you to live as long as you pose a threat to them. They prefer the cover of darkness, for obvious reasons. They will come for you in the night.

CUT TO:

44 EXT TOM'S SMITHY DAY

CARLTON, TOM and DR TREVISICK sit drinking brandy in the smithy. WILL and BOB hover in the background shuffling their feet. The smithy is at the end of the town nearest to Seacliff House and takes the form of a wooden shed, extended from the front of a house, barn-type doors, open to the street. They sit on barrels all rather serious and look up to see SARAH and SAM approach, dismount, tie up their horses and go in to greet their comrades.

CARLTON

Well, I trust you've had a pleasant afternoon.

SAM

I'd rather have been sitting here drinking brandy, it was somewhat harrowing I must say.

CARLTON

Indeed, I, for my part have just seen my wife turn into a snake and bite someone's head off. Any advance on that? Anyone?

TOM

No, can't say as I can. Think we'd best go back to Seacliff House and have a good think about things. (picks up an old horse shoe and throws it in the general direction of WILL and BOB) You idiots are in charge, God help me. Take the names of any customers and lock up at sundown. Understand?

WILL

We're not stupid.

TOM

Yes you are.

CUT TO:

## 45 EXT STREET DUSK

The WYNDHAMS hurry furtively along the main street of the town heading in the direction of TOM's smithy. Both are in disguise, MYRA wearing a blonde wig and glasses, feigning pregnancy, the PROFESSOR having shaved his beard and wearing the attire of country gentleman, tweeds, waistcoat and flat cap. They encounter BOB, loitering across the street from the smithy.

## PROFESSOR

Excuse me young fellow, we are rather desperately in need of a doctor, my wife... (motioning towards MYRA) well you see...

MYRA moans and clutches her stomach.

## BOB

(completely taken in) Yes, yes, the doctor's up at Seacliff House, it's just...

## PROFESSOR

I couldn't possibly leave my wife, and she really can't go much farther. Here's a shilling, young fellow, can you fetch the good doctor for us.

## BOB

(taking the shilling happily) I'll get him for you, there's a smithy just across the street here, over there, see (pointing at the smithy which is only 50 yards or so away) I've the keys here, you can wait there, I'll only be half an hour, will you be alright?

## MYRA

(desperately, groaning, overacting a bit) I might just be able to hang on but go quickly.

BOB hands over the keys and races off.

## PROFESSOR

(smiling wickedly) And now we wait.

CUT TO:

## 46 INT SEACLIFF HOUSE NIGHT

SAM, CARLTON, SARAH and DR TREVISICK sit in the drawing room back at SAM's house considering their options.

## CARLTON

Well, what do we do now; it's them or us I'd guess.

SAM

We have to think of a plan, somehow, find a way to make them vulnerable.

There is a knock at the door and a maid enters.

MAID

Excuse me, sir but there's a young man from the town here, says there's a pregnant woman in the town needs the doctor.

SAM

Who is it? Did he say?

MAID

No, sir, I don't think he knew, just said it was urgent.

DR TREVISICK

I'd better go.

TOM

I'll come with you, doctor, better be on the safe side.

CARLTON

Yes, I agree, it could be a trick.

CUT TO:

47 EXT SEACLIFF HOUSE NIGHT

DR TREVISICK and TOM find BOB waiting at the back of the house. They mount their horses and consider BOB.

TOM

What did they look like, these people?

BOB

They was just like normal folks, country folks like.

DR TREVISICK

What did they look like, Bob? What were they wearing what colour was their hair? That sort of thing.

BOB

She was a blonde lady, sir, with glasses, she was moaning a lot, sir and holding on to her belly. He was like a country gent, with a waistcoat and everything. They gave me a shilling an' said I should hurry.

DR TREVISICK

(to TOM) Sounds genuine.

TOM

Maybe so, I'll come along anyway. (as an afterthought)  
You ain't seen Ely anywhere lately have you, Bob?

BOB

Yeah, I seen him earlier, in a right old hurry he was,  
headin' off the far side of town, towards Shepston  
Manor, well, might have been, only road out there  
leastways.

TOM

Hmm.

DR TREVISICK

Tom?

TOM

Likely going up to his brother's place to lie low,  
brother's the gamekeeper up there, stays in the lodge.  
Maybe we got a lucky break.

They give rein to their horses and gallop off into the night.

CUT TO:

48 EXT/INT SMITHY NIGHT

It is now dark, TOM and DR TREVISICK slow down to a trot as they approach the smithy. The doors are closed but there is a light shining from within. They dismount outside the smithy and approach the doors.

TOM

I've a bad feelin', doctor, a real bad feelin' 'bout this.

DR TREVISICK

(reassuringly) Come on, Tom, I'm sure it's all quite  
innocent, their descriptions didn't fit the Wyndhams.

They push open the doors which are unlocked and step inside. The DOCTOR leads on as they see no one.

DRTREVISICK

Hello, anyone here?

DR TREVISICK is about to turn to TOM when PROFESSOR WYNDHAM descends from the rafters, lands catlike on the ground, sword in hand and in a split second, slices

the DOCTOR's head off. MYRA, who has been hiding behind the door, slams it shut and takes off her disguise.

MYRA

Now, blacksmith, where's Ely?

TOM

There's help coming, there's people know where we are.

WYNDHAM

Ely Snark, tell us now or you'll end up like the doctor.

TOM

Alright, I'll tell you, makes no difference to me what happens to that evil creature anyhow. He's gone off to Shepston Manor, down the bottom end of town from here, his brother's the gamekeeper there and not much better than him, mark you. He'll be layin' low down there for sure, that's all I know.

There is a knock at the door and BOB shouts, 'Hello? It's...' Before he can finish, Tom picks up an iron bar and hurls it at MYRA and dashes for the door. The PROFESSOR throws his sword, spear fashion, piercing TOM's leg as he escapes through the door. The WYNDHAMS run out after him bumping into BOB who is trying to get out of the way, not entirely sure what is happening. TOM, stumbling away in the darkness shouts to BOB, 'Run, Bob, run man, get away.' It is too late for BOB, though, and the WYNDHAMS grab him, allowing TOM to make his escape.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Well, Bob, you're going to take us to Shepston Manor lodge.

BOB

Do I get a shilling?

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Well, you'll get something. We'll just have to wait and see what it is.

BOB

(smiling) Good, I like surprises.

CUT TO:

49 INT LODGE NIGHT

ELY bursts in through the front door of a small hunting lodge. It is sparsely furnished, a log fire burning brightly, illuminates a room of shabby furniture, animal pelts, various

guns, traps and a man in his forties, who looks up with familiar surly, smug expression. This is EVAN, ELY's brother.

EVAN

So what do you want, Ely?

ELY

(taking the brooch from his pocket) Here. Take this and keep it safe, there's a lot of folks after it an' I'm going to get a pretty penny for it when the time's right.

EVAN

Now, hold on, Ely, what're you getting me into here, that looks like a pricey trinket.

ELY

(hissing) Just take it, Evan, you'll get a piece.

There is a knock at the door and a voice is heard, 'Ely, it's me, Bob, let me in.' ELY and EVAN look at each other and shrug their shoulders before ELY goes and opens the door. Strangely, there is no one there. They both go outside into the night and step cautiously beyond the house a few yards, looking and calling, 'Bob, are you there, Bob?' and, seeing nothing, go back inside where, on the floor in front of them in the middle of the room, lies BOB's head. They stop dead in their tracks, open-mouthed in horror before the door slams shut behind them. There stand MYRA and PROFESSOR WYNDHAM, grinning and licking their lips.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

This time, Ely, it's the brooch or you and your brother here will die a horrifying death.

Evan wastes no time and immediately takes the brooch from his pocket.

ELY

Don't be stupid, Evan, they'll kill us anyway, don't...  
(it's too late, as EVAN meekly hands it to MYRA)

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Clever boy, Evan, well, clever up to a point anyway, the problem being that, in fact, Ely was quite correct. We will kill you anyway.

Both PROFESSOR WYNDHAM and MYRA suddenly transform themselves into serpentine form and come at EVAN from opposite angles, circling, rearing, swooping around him before the PROFESSOR lunges in and bites off the helpless EVAN's head. They quickly resume human shape and confront ELY.

## PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

I will spare you, Ely, for now, because I feel that you may be of some use to us but beware Ely, do not cross us. (he takes some coins from his pocket and flips one into the air) Here's a shilling, Ely, in fact, (fishing out another shilling) here's another, let's call it a shilling a head.

MYRA laughs wickedly and they are gone.

CUT TO:

## 50 INT CROZARK MANOR NIGHT

CARLTON, SAM and SARAH sit in the drawing room looking worried and somewhat frightened as TOM staggers in, bloodied and exhausted.

## SARAH

Oh my God, Tom, are you alright?

## TOM

It's just my leg, get bandages and some brandy, there's news, bad news, I'm afraid.

CUT TO:

Same scene a little later, TOM has evidently explained all that has just occurred.

## CARLTON

Jesus, well, we're going to have to assume that they've got to Ely. Even with his brother's help I doubt if they'd have been a match for the Wyndhams.

## SAM

They'll have the brooch.

## CARLTON

That they will and I doubt if they'll waste any time now. If I know them they'll want to finish the job tonight and be on their way before anyone outside of ourselves can really piece it all together. This is how they work. They like to move fast before people start to take against them in large numbers.

## SARAH

What do we do, do we run?



CARLTON

Run where? No; we're as safe here as anywhere. This is our territory, they might not have banked on Tom getting back here with his story and even if they do they'll consider this to be their best chance to kill Sam before greater precautions are taken. No, they'll come tonight, I'm sure of it.

SAM

And they don't know that Sarah has the amulet.

SARAH

No, they don't, nor that I can use a sword when necessary.

The sound of smashing glass, followed by a terrified scream breaks the conversation and a look of dread overcomes them all before CARLTON stands up and draws his sword.

CARLTON

It's time. I think we can safely assume that the servants are either dead or fleeing for their lives. Tom, can you fight?

TOM

(resolutely) I can fight.

CARLTON

Alright then, to arms, to the death.

The four stand up as one and march through the double doors of the drawing room, now grimly determined. As they emerge from the drawing room into the large, entrance hall of the house, they see, at the far end of the hall, facing them, the WYNDHAMS. The hall is an open, ballroom-sized area sitting at the bottom of a wide sweeping staircase, which, at the top, leads into balconies winding away in opposite directions to the bedrooms beyond. It is well lit by a central chandelier and numerous candelabra; otherwise it is an open space with walls adorned with deer heads, tapestries, coats of arms and paintings.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

So we meet again, Master Crozark. You may give us your life to save your friends if you wish. It is a fair offer, I think and I am, of course, a man of my word.

Tom takes a sword from a coat of arms and spears it at the WYNDHAMS only narrowly missing the PROFESSOR.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

That is your answer?

SAM

It is.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Then let us begin.

The two walk cautiously towards each other before CARLTON lunges at the PROFESSOR who parries his attack and engages him in battle. As they fight, MYRA backs away before transforming into her serpentine shape. She swoops high into the air before diving upon the other three who scatter before regrouping at the bottom of the staircase. She lunges again and again as SAM and SARAH repeatedly fend her off, all the while backing up the stairs.

Carlton, meanwhile, lands a telling blow, lacerating the PROFESSOR's arm. PROFESSOR WYNDHAM recoils for a second, slumped against the wall as CARLTON closes in.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Think again my friend, with a cut I am just as vulnerable in supernatural form as human.

Saying so he, too, transforms into his moray eel of an alter ego and immediately draws himself high up above CARLTON, preparing to attack.

Above them the other three have now been separated at the top of the staircase. TOM and SAM go one way as SARAH is forced back along the other balcony. MYRA hisses at SARAH before pursuing TOM and SAM who continue to only just fend and parry her advances along the narrow corridor, wary that the balcony on one side plunges forty feet or more beneath them as she bites and snaps at their heads.

SARAH dashes down the stairs to join CARLTON who has been cornered by the professor, his only defence, now, the amulet that he brandishes as PROFESSOR WYNDHAM thrusts relentlessly, slashing with razor teeth at his face and arms as he tries to protect himself. SARAH produces her amulet as she nears PROFESSOR WYNDHAM. At first he doesn't see her and she rushes toward him and almost manages to press the amulet to his skin. At the last moment he spins around and lashes out, biting and snarling. CARLTON sees his moment, however, and rises to force the PROFESSOR, now, back into a corner. With two lethal opponents threatening him, PROFESSOR WYNDHAM calls to MYRA who immediately turns to see what is happening below. She realises that she must act and begins to make a retreat. As she does so she resumes human form and SAM drops his guard. In that instant, she turns on a sixpence and slashes his chest with the brooch. Seeing this SARAH and CARLTON try to close on PROFESSOR WYNDHAM who calls her again and she runs to him again assuming serpentine shape. Forced to turn away from the PROFESSOR to deal with MYRA, CARLTON and SARAH lose their advantage although are quickly joined by SAM and TOM. Sensing the odds going against them, the WYNDHAMS back away to the front door, smash it open and are gone in a second. There is a communal sigh of relief as they gaze out at the fleeing monsters. After exchanging somewhat forlorn smiles, SAM suddenly collapses on the floor, holding his chest. SARAH immediately falls to his side and, seeing his bloodied chest, begins to cry.

CUT TO:

## 51 INT LODGE NIGHT

ELY sits staring at the bloody carnage before him, evidently having sat, stock still in a chair since the slaughter. He rises slowly to his feet and, with a sudden burst of spite, kicks poor old Evan's head across the floor.

ELY

(to himself) Stupid idiot, knew he would come to no good. Well, might as well make a penny out of it all.

ELY goes outside and drags in BOB's decapitated body and rifles through his and EVAN's pockets, finding a few coins only. These he palms before wandering through to a makeshift kitchen area at the back of the room. He scans the shelves until he finds a demijohn full of whisky.

ELY

Might as well have a drink I reckon, all mine anyways by rights, fella needs a drink after that skirmish.

ELY takes the cork out and takes a long thirsty swig.

ELY

(with satisfaction) Aah! That's hit the spot and no mistake. Here's to you, you fools, Ely's a match for anyone when it comes to survival, Ely always knows how to get by and do it with a shillin' in his pocket often as not. (taking another long drink) An' here's to me! The last of the Snarks, the cleverest of us all, I'll live forever, I will, the indestructible Ely!

CUT TO:

## 52 INT BEDROOM NIGHT

SAM lies in his bed in a state of delirium. SARAH, CARLTON and TOM stand by gazing helplessly.

CARLTON

We have to take him to Solomon, it's our only chance, Sam must live.

SARAH

I think you're right, there must be something we can do, the cut doesn't seem to be all that deep and yet, (crying) he won't stop bleeding, it doesn't make sense.

TOM

We can't go out there tonight, these things are evil in daylight. In darkness, they're the devil itself.

CARLTON

Tom's right, Sarah, we'll have to wait till morning, (pause) we'll stay with him and go to Solomon at first light.

SARAH

No, you two must sleep, I feel that we will all need our strength in the days to come. I'll stay with Sam and I'll call you if I need you.

CARLTON and TOM acquiesce and retreat slowly from the room. They close the door quietly behind them and SARAH sits on the edge of the bed and leans in to SAM.

SARAH

Don't you die, don't you dare die, I love you, I love you and you can't die.

SARAH kisses SAM and he opens his eyes for a second or two.

SAM

(half awake, dazed and delirious) I love you too.

CUT TO:

53 INT BEDROOM MORNING

SAM lies in his bed, pale and gaunt, still weak and bleeding. SARAH still sits by his bed. CARLTON and TOM enter quietly, knowing without asking that they must act quickly.

CARLTON

Any improvement?

SARAH

(sighing wearily) No, not really, we should go to Solomon, he's our only hope now.

TOM

The carriage is waiting, Sarah...

CUT TO:

## 54 INT SOLOMON'S SHOP DAY

SAM is slumped in an armchair inside SOLOMON's shop. CARLTON, SARAH and TOM stand waiting by his side as SOLOMON shuffles into the room, still a bit bleary-eyed from sleep.

SOLOMON

Well, a fine pickle we're in now, aren't we, a fine old pickle. Just as well you came to me when you did. He'd 'ave bled to death for sure. Now first things first, where are your horses?

SARAH

Where are our horses? Good God he's bleeding to death.

SOLOMON

(quietly, firmly) Where are the horses?

TOM

We tied 'em up in a back alley, a clever place I know about just off Gloucester Road, so as not to draw attention.

SOLOMON

Good boy, Tom, good boy. Now...

CARLTON

I don't mean to rush you but it seems to me he could bleed to death by the time you're finished talking, whenever that's going to be.

SOLOMON

Somewhat impetuous, Carlton, aren't we, (CARLTON opens his mouth to speak but is silenced by SOLOMON) oh yes, know all about you, quite an interesting fellow by all accounts.

SARAH

(impatiently) Solomon?

SOLOMON

(taking bandages from his coat) Now, Sarah, take your amulet and press it to Sam's wound and use these bandages to hold it in place.

As SARAH follows SOLOMON's instructions he continues to explain...

SOLOMON

You see, I should've told you all this, very important, I forget so much these days, where were we? Yes, you see when someone is wounded with a soul eater's talisman, someone who they then fail to kill, the wound can never stop bleeding as long as the soul eater remains alive and a soul eater. Was it Myra, or the professor?

TOM

Myra's brooch done it, 'ard to believe that little thing could kill.

SOLOMON

It'll kill and more besides, but there is reasoning behind this special part of their accursed magic. You see, if they wound but fail to kill, the wounded party, clearly, knows of their existence. This is a potential danger to them, of course, and so not only does the wound fail to heal but it leaves a scent which they can follow presumably with a view to finishing the job.

SARAH

(looking up, having finished putting on SAM's bandage, she sits by him stroking his brow) Is there no end to their ghastly tricks?

SOLOMON

It seems not my dear, but this time perhaps we can use their powers against them. It is likely that they will assume that you do not have the information that I have just given you and that they will shortly be following the scent of Sam's blood to this place.

CARLTON

So we lie in wait here?

SOLOMON

No, not exactly, they will be prepared for a fight, they will come here ready to do battle, secure in the knowledge that Tom, Carlton and Sarah whom they assume to have an amulet, are in attendance.

SARAH

I don't understand, won't that be the case wherever we are?

## SOLOMON

No, not quite, I have done a little research of my own, I am their nemesis, although they are yet to come to understand this. I have followed them, you see, as I have always done and I have discovered where they now lie. The vile Ely Snark, in part, did my work for me, you see, I knew that they would pursue him and so I followed them to where Ely had run to earth at his brother's lodge. They killed and extracted the soul of a local lad by the name of Bob who had led them there...

## TOM

(shaking his head grimly) I knew that one was too stupid too last long with them monsters about.

## SOLOMON

As you say, so I found a safe place to hide and heard them talking as they came out of the lodge after killing Ely's brother, although not Ely for some reason.

## SARAH

Why not Ely, why does that nasty little gargoyle continue survive through all of this?

## SOLOMON

You may well ask but I suppose it has been quite clever of them when you think about it. First of all he had the brooch and that was enough to save his skin for a while. Now I think that through either threats or promises they've kept him alive as their creature, doing their bidding, no doubt providing them with information. (pauses, then as an afterthought) Are you all quite sure he didn't follow you here?

## TOM

Pretty sure, we came away at first light an' if there's one thing sure it's that Ely don't know much about the world before lunchtime.

## SOLOMON

(with a smile) No doubt, no doubt indeed. Well, to continue, as they were talking outside the lodge I managed to ascertain that they were about to take up residence in Shepston Manor. The old man has but three servants, all somewhat advanced in years themselves and doubtless no match for our singaree. They would have little or no opposition to their plan; law enforcement authorities being thin on the ground in these parts at the best of times.

CARLTON

Not to mention bent as three bob pieces.

SOLOMON

Quite. So they would reckon to be safe there for a few days at least and, of course, there would be valuables enough to keep Myra in finery for a while.

CARLTON

Yes, expensive tastes, that woman.

SARAH

Woman?

CARLTON

Well, thing, snake, eel, my God I don't even know what I married.

SAM

(showing signs of coming round) Well, you've pretty decent grounds for divorce, I imagine.

SARAH, forgetting herself, throws her arms around SAM and kisses him.

SARAH

Oh, thank God, thank God, oh I thought you would die.

SAM

(glad of the attention but a little embarrassed) No, well, I, er, well, I'm glad you're here, thank you my, er, well, thank you, you know, I knew you were with me, somehow I knew. (quietly) It made me want to live.

SARAH

(hugging him again) I'm glad.

CARLTON clears his throat, SAM straightens himself up a bit, a little embarrassed by his show of emotion.

SAM

So, well done, Sarah, that was a, er, a decent effort.

CARLTON

Good God, man, you make it sound as though she's just put in a good late run to get third place in the Derby.

SOLOMON, clears his throat and sits upright in his chair in order to reassert the gravity of their situation.



SOLOMON

If we might continue our discussion, we may very well, if we are quick of mind and of execution, be able double back on them and lie in wait at Shepston manor. We shall have the element of surprise and the opportunity to prepare. They shall have neither. It is our best, our only, chance.

CARLTON

Sam, how do you feel?

SAM

Well enough.

SARAH

Sam, are you sure?

SAM

(determinedly) I'm ready.

SOLOMON

So we are resolved. Now you must come with me. I have one or two items which may be of assistance.

SOLOMON takes a lamp and leads them all through to a back room where he reveals a side door behind a heavy, dark curtain. He takes a key from around his neck, unlocks the door and opening it, lifts up his lamp to illuminate a spiral staircase which descends into a cellar. Lighting a succession of lamps as he goes, they follow him down the steps into a dark, stone-walled cavern. There are scrolls stacked up on shelves, a great oak table in the middle of the room and on the floor against a wall, a series of large wooden chests, of which SOLOMON opens three in turn. In the first is armour of all shapes and sizes, the second contains weaponry and in the third an assortment of artefacts, papers and curios. SOLOMON turns gravely to the four friends and issues his instructions.

SOLOMON

You will take armour; it is the best you will ever see. There should be something in there to fit you all. The same applies to these weapons, you may choose whatever you feel suits you best.

TOM

You've a great deal of faith in our chances, old man, what makes you so sure that we're worth gambling on?

SOLOMON

(with a wry smile) I'm not so sure. (taking a seat) But the thing is; they've rarely, if ever, to my knowledge, left themselves so vulnerable. Normally, upon discovery, they would disappear like phantoms in the night. This time they must finish the job since Sam will always be a threat and they don't want to be caught unawares somewhere down the line. Secondly, as a matter of simple strategy, you have an opportunity to take the upper hand. Finally, you seem a close-knit band of comrades who know what you are up against and will fight to the death to defend each other. That may just be enough to save your lives and with luck, vanquish these evil creatures once and for all.

SAM

What's all that stuff in the third box?

SOLOMON

Ah, yes, one last thing.

SOLOMON rises from his seat and goes over to the final box. He digs around for a second or two before producing a dagger. He turns back to the four friends and casts it upon the table.

SOLOMON

This, I procured from a singaree many years ago. He was as naïve as I, but, to his cost, imagined himself to be indestructible. That was his downfall as I, then a much younger man, sliced open his neck and applied my amulet to the gaping wound as he danced himself homeward with great glee after taking the souls of a newly married couple on their wedding night.

SARAH

They really enjoy their work, don't they?

SOLOMON

That they do and remember it well, their taste for the theatrical is insatiable. If they could get away with it, I don't doubt they would be happiest performing their desperate act in a travelling show.

CARLTON

What of the dagger?

## SOLOMON

This dagger is a cursed artefact and will render them mortal in combat. That is to say, a fatal blow, save decapitation by Sam, from any ordinary weapon will cause them no harm. A fatal strike from this weapon will kill. Additionally, any wound, as is the case with their own weapons, will continue to bleed. They will, as any mortals, die from their injuries. It is only a dagger but you can use it against them as though they were mortal. Who is to have it?

## SAM

Carlton must have it. He has more experience and guile in these matters than any of us.

## CARLTON

What about Tom? He is the only one of us who is unprotected.

## TOM

God sees what's right an' what's wrong, I may be a simple fella but I reckon I'll take my chances an' trust in the almighty to get me to the other side.

The sound of breaking glass, causes them to stop dead. Their silence continues as more sounds of violence are heard from above. SOLOMON turns to the four.

## SOLOMON

Go, go now.

SOLOMON hurries to one of the shelves containing scrolls and pulls it away from the wall revealing a small door, which he opens and ushers them all through.

## SOLOMON

(in a whisper) This will take you to the street above. Ride like the wind and remember all that I have told you.

## SARAH

What about you?

## SOLOMON

I'll find a way to survive, they're not the only ones with a talent for acting, now go. Go fast.

SOLOMON closes the door and takes a deep breath. He turns and trudges up the staircase knowing that he may well be walking to his death.

CUT TO:

## 55 INT SOLOMON'S SHOP NIGHT

MYRA and PROFESSOR WYNDHAM stand poised in the centre of the shop as SOLOMON slowly trudges up the stairs and cautiously steps through the door at the top.

SOLOMON

Please, I'm only an old man, all I have, you see before you, take it if you must...

MYRA

(unsheathing a cutlass and pointing it at SOLOMON's throat) Silence old man. We're not after your trinkets.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

(quietly, menacingly) Sam Crozark.

There is a silence as the two parties stare at each other, SOLOMON doesn't blink.

SOLOMON

There were some people here just a moment ago. I cannot tell you their names.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Cannot or will not?

SOLOMON

Cannot, there were four of them, three young men and a young lady.

MYRA

(hissing) It's them alright.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

(drawing his sword slowly, aiming it directly at SOLOMON's heart) We're getting there, I hope you're not holding out on me old man. These people, they wouldn't be hiding here would they?

SOLOMON

Why would I hide them? Why would they want to hide? They came in asking questions about some man called Snark and a brooch or was it a necklace?

MYRA

(forcing the tip of her sword right into SOLOMON's neck) If they're here, you will die a death that you could not imagine in your very worst nightmares.

SOLOMON

(still remarkably composed) You are welcome to search the premises but I can assure they have gone.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

And what did you tell them?

SOLOMON

Very little, Snark came in here looking for money for a brooch he had found, stolen I'd guess, and I offered him a fair price. He cursed me for my, shall we say, cautious estimate of his piece and then left. That is all I could tell them and it is all I can tell you.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

(relenting a little) I'm inclined to believe you old man and we will leave you, for now, but rest assured that if I discover that you have been retaining information that might have been useful to me, I will slice you open and cut out each organ and feed them to the dogs in the street and then I will consume your very soul.

The WYNDHAMS sweep out of the shop leaving SOLOMON breathless but content that he has survived and given nothing away.

CUT TO:

56 EXT STREET NIGHT

The WYNDHAMS stand on the street outside the old man's shop, gazing out at the night, pondering their next move.

MYRA

Why didn't you kill him?

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Patience, my dear, we'll have an ample supply of blood in due course. If he is lying we may need to come back and torture the truth out of him. The trail went cold inside the shop, I could taste nothing in the air.

MYRA

No, I noticed that. Could he have died?

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

It's possible, I suppose. Something just doesn't make sense, though. Why come here to die?

MYRA

Maybe they were looking for a doctor.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Maybe, let's find Snark and torture him.

CUT TO:

57 EXT ROAD NIGHT

SAM, SARAH, TOM and CARLTON ride at top speed along the dark country road. They come to a fork in the road and pull up their horses for a moment.

SAM

If we take the right fork it'll take us along the cliff road, it's much quicker but in this light it's dangerous, there's a good thousand-foot drop if you go off the edge.

SARAH

How wide is the road?

SAM

Tom?

TOM

I'd guess mostly just about wide enough for a carriage but it's rough and there's nothing to stop you goin' over the edge.

CARLTON

There's just about enough moonlight I'd say and with any luck the Wyndhams won't even know about it. How much time can we save?

TOM

Oh, I'd guess, even at a trot, probably ten minutes.

SARAH

It's settled then, you lead the way Tom.

They all set off into the along this dark precarious path, cantering at first but soon slowing to a trot. SARAH sidles up to the cliff edge and peers over to see waves crashing into the rocks far below. She stares down the sheer cliff face at the violent sea beneath her for a second before SAM comes and takes her arm gently, pulling her away from the edge. SARAH starts as he does so but joins him, pressing on along the path.

SAM

It can be quite mesmeric, gazing down into that boiling madness, I used to find myself doing it sometimes, you know, after my parents died. I think people thought I was going to throw myself off the edge but I really wasn't thinking that at all, d'you know what I mean?

SARAH

Yes, yes, I do, I suppose I was thinking of poor Jane and her husband. What must it be like falling to your death like that?

SAM

I suppose, in the end, you realise that it's best to try not to think of it. Just to accept it and remember all the good things.

SARAH

You always seem to know the right things to say, Mr Sam Crozark...

CARLTON

Come on you two there'll be time enough for flowers and romance tomorrow, now we have work to do...

CUT TO:

58 EXT CLIFF PATH NIGHT

ELY stumbles drunkenly back towards the town, along the same cliff top path, stopping suddenly at the sound of horses ahead of him. ELY's natural instinct being to hide he quickly scrambles up the steep side of the path and into some undergrowth at the top. He lies low, behind the bushes and watches as SAM and the others come into view. SARAH brings up the rear. ELY braces himself and prepares to pounce. Just as she passes he leaps out and falls upon her. Taken by surprise, SARAH squeals a little arousing the attention of the others but not before ELY has grappled her to the ground then dragged her to her feet by her hair and put a knife to her throat. The others close quickly but cautiously on them. SAM dismounts.

ELY

Hold it right there young Crozark. Another step an' I'll give you her head to play with.

TOM

Ely Snark (advancing threateningly towards ELY) I'll give you an 'ead to play with alright...

ELY

(drawing his knife slowly across SARAH's cheek, cutting her) And you blacksmith, keep back all of you, now, empty your pockets let's see what you've got.

They all empty their pockets, throwing change and one or two notes to the ground in front of ELY, away from the cliff edge into the darker, walled side of the path.

ELY

Think you're very clever don't you, thinking Ely'll get down an' grovel for a few coins an' you'll take 'im. Well, I'm not that stupid. You, Crozark, get down there an' pick up that money, do you good to do a bit of grovelling on my behalf.

SAM slowly steps forward and begins to gather up the money. ELY begins to push his luck and puts his hand inside SARAH's blouse.

ELY

So, what else do we have here, I wonder. (SARAH squirms with disgust, trying to free herself but not before ELY finds the amulet given to her by SOLOMON) well, a most pleasant search, my dear, and fruitful too, what shiny thing is this?

ELY averts his gaze for a second to examine his find and SAM grabs his leg throwing him backwards though still holding on to SARAH. As they collapse on the ground SARAH wriggles free, springs to her feet and runs but not before ELY, too, jumps up in pursuit and makes one last grab for her, catching her arm and sending her reeling sideways and off the edge of the cliff. She just manages to cling on to the edge by her fingertips and SAM goes to her rescue but ELY, just ahead of him, slashes at him with his knife lacerating his arm. ELY stands on SARAH's fingers brandishing the knife at the others as they look on, helpless. CARLTON, having kept well back, and in the near dark, has, unseen by ELY, removed a rope from his saddle.

ELY

Any more trinkets? I bet there are, let's have them before I let anything slip. (grinding his boot on SARAH's fingers) One false move remember and off she goes. An' don't think of rushing me cause if I go I'll take 'er with me.

SAM

(trying to reason with him) Alright Ely, we'll give you everything we have, just give us Sarah and the amulet you took from her an' we'll both go on our way.

ELY

Alright, but I'm keeping the amulet, if it's worth that much to you it's worth something to me.

CARLTON files forward a step and whispers into TOM's ear.

CARLTON

You take Ely and I'll grab the Sarah. Wait for me to make a move.



TOM nods, CARLTON approaches ELY with caution, rope still in hand. He is now only a couple of feet from the edge, directly above SARAH. He holds out his hand as if to present something to ELY but ducks down and steps to one side allowing TOM to step in and take ELY's knife with one hand and punch him squarely in the face with the other. SARAH screams loses her grasp and begins to fall just as CARLTON lassoes her arm and pulls her to safety.

ELY has fallen backwards and loses the amulet which rolls away behind him, resting perilously close to the cliff edge. He scrambles back and dives on it, just taking it ahead of TOM who closes on him.

ELY

Keep back, blacksmith, this is mine, see, got to have something for my night's work.

TOM

Ain't no use to you, Ely, not worth a thing, only sentimental value to the lady, belonged to her sister.

ELY

(backing off) It's mine and I'm keeping it.

SARAH

You can have all our money, just give it back.

ELY

Worth that much is it?

As ELY addresses SARAH, TOM tries to grab the amulet from him. ELY recoils from the advance only to stumble off the edge of the cliff. TOM dives down and manages to grab his free hand, ELY still grasping the amulet in the other.

TOM

Throw up the amulet, Ely, and you can be on your way. I can't hold you for long.

ELY

I'll keep it till I'm safe.

ELY raises the hand with amulet and SAM tries to take it from him. ELY jerks it away inadvertently wresting his other hand from TOM's grasp in the process and falls, flailing, screaming to his death, taking the amulet with him.

TOM

Good thing he's dead, because right now I could kill him.

CARLTON

Ain't nothing we can do about it now.

CARLTON takes out the dagger given to him by SOLOMON and gives it to SARAH.

CARLTON

You'd better have this, I have my amulet for protection, this might save your life, you never know.

SARAH

(quietly) Thank you, Carlton.

CARLTON

(remounting his horse) Better move on, we're losing time.

CUT TO:

59 EXT TOWN OUTSKIRTS NIGHT

MYRA and the PROFESSOR trot somewhat ponderously along a path leading away from the town and back to Shepston Manor. In the distance is heard ELY's desperate last scream.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

You know if I didn't know any better I'd say that that sounded like a scream. A scream from a man, a man such as Ely Snark.

MYRA

You know, I think you're right and I'll tell you something else, I can smell blood, the blood of Sam Crozark unless I'm very much mistaken.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

I think you may be right my dear. Now what does all of that add up to, I wonder?

MYRA

They must have found Ely and tortured him as to our whereabouts. What else could it be?

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

If they're on this road, they must be looking for us, irrespective of Ely's involvement.

MYRA

They're surely not going to try to kill us. Why it's laughable.

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

Not so, my dear, the human spirit is quite hopelessly optimistic not to mention romantic. I suspect that with the perceived element of surprise on their side and with Carlton's help, presumably they now also know that young Crozark has the power to kill us, they imagine that they can ambush us to good effect.

MYRA

Or lie in wait for us at Shepston Manor?

PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

More likely, more likely. Either way we shall have them (pause, and then with a determined malice) and we shall consume them.

CUT TO:

60 INT SHEPSTON MANOR NIGHT

TOM, SAM, SARAH and CARLTON step cautiously inside the front door of the large manor house. The entrance hall is a grand affair not unlike Crozark Manor, it is, however, crumbling a bit, dusty with cobwebs in all the nooks and corners. There is a grand, wide staircase descending to the middle of the hall with short balconies at the top leading into the upstairs apartments. Unlike Crozark Manor, however, there are no balconied galleries sweeping around the upper level. The walls are adorned variously with paintings of stern old men with hunting dogs, coats of arms bedecked with weaponry and a number of plaques displaying animal heads on the walls. At either end of the hall there are double doors, one set leading into a dining room, the other to a drawing room. Alarmingly there is also a lot of blood spattered around and upon surveying the hall, Carlton spots that two of the animal heads have been replaced with human ones.

CARLTON

(indicating the heads) Dear God, look at that! A taste for the theatrical indeed.

SARAH

How could anyone enjoy such horror?

They all pause and look around for a second or two, suddenly all seeming to realise that this is it, there's no turning back, they stand here, united, about to engage in a fight to the death.

SAM

It's pretty macabre. (pausing and sighing) Well, we'd better find somewhere to hide. Do we spread out or keep together? Carlton, you're in charge now.

CARLTON

We'd best stay together. I reckon if we can anticipate where they'll come in we might be able to use the element of surprise to end it quickly.

SAM

I hope you're right Carlton but I have the horrible feeling that one way or another, this won't be easy.

TOM

Let's 'ave a look around, there must be somewhere we can lie in wait.

SARAH

(skipping over to the staircase) What about under here?

TOM goes with her to investigate while SAM and CARLTON wander about looking for hiding places.

SAM

You know, Carlton, I keep wondering, did my parents and my sister, did they die, well, quickly?

CARLTON

(putting a hand on SAM's shoulder) Yes, it really was very quick, they would've felt nothing.

SAM

Were you there, at the time it happened?

CARLTON

A few minutes later, unfortunately, but the soul eaters were in a hurry, they knew that I, amongst others were on to them so, no, don't worry, it all happened very quickly.

SAM

I'm glad about that, or at least I'm grateful to you for saying it.

CARLTON

We shall travel to India when this is all over and I'll show you around and tell you a few tales of happier times.

SARAH and TOM amble back towards the other two.

## SARAH

We'll have a look in the dining room, you two check the drawing room. Be quick we'll have to come up with a plan.

They separate and walk to the opposite ends of the hall and each peer cautiously into their respective rooms. They enter and begin to look around. As they do so the PROFESSOR and MYRA appear from opposite sides of the landing at the top of the staircase and stand on the balconies to the left and right of the stairs.

## PROFESSOR WYNDHAM

(in a whisper) Now my darling, slaughter them all, now.

The PROFESSOR and MYRA, leap over their respective balconies and land like cats. The PROFESSOR withdraws his sword, the metallic whistle ringing like a sinister, ominous death knell. CARLTON, still in the dining room with SAM, hears the sound first and stops dead in his tracks. He looks at SAM before turning and dashing for the door, taking out his sword as he runs.

## CARLTON

(stepping carefully, deliberately back into the hall)  
Sarah, Tom, they're in the hall, now.

The PROFESSOR swishes his sword a few times and steps out into the middle of the hall to confront CARLTON who steps forward with a look of grim determination. SAM, white with fear, comes out of the drawing room behind CARLTON but draws his sword and steps forward to join him. SARAH and TOM step out of the dining room and confront MYRA who closes on them also brandishing a sword.

## MYRA

Alright, who's first? What about you little dolly, I said I'd take your head off and that's just what I intend to do.

The PROFESSOR looks round for an instant to see MYRA lunge at SARAH and very nearly do as she has promised.

## PROFESSOR

Careful, my dear, they have protection, remember.

## MYRA

(lunging at SARAH again) Their trinkets are no match for my power.

MYRA continues to attack with lightning speed as both SARAH and TOM parry her advances as best they can.

PROFESSOR

(swishing his sword flamboyantly) So, Carlton, we meet again, you know that I cannot allow the boy to live.

CARLTON

And you know that I cannot allow you to kill him.

PROFESSOR

To the death then, well, your death anyway.

They engage in battle, the PROFESSOR, with superior speed and strength, enjoying the best of the exchanges. After a moment or two CARLTON backs off a little and turns to SAM who has been more or less a spectator.

CARLTON

You'll have to help me, Sam, I can't beat him on my own. He's afraid of you, remember that, you can kill him. Try to get in behind him while I draw his advances.

SAM does as instructed and tries to move into position but at each turn the PROFESSOR is there before him cutting and thrusting before SAM can get near. As the PROFESSOR moves to cover the danger presented by SAM, however, he is forced backwards up the staircase. CARLTON realises this and presses on.

CARLTON

Good, Sam, keep going perhaps we can corner him somewhere.

PROFESSOR

Corner me! You cannot win, you fools, you are fighting an immortal, (now screaming, histrionically) I am superhuman, I am greater than all of you combined, you cannot kill me, (reaching a crescendo) I am a God. (suddenly he lowers his voice to an evil hiss as he transforms into serpentine form) and you are my prey.

The PROFESSOR spirals high into the air and flies over the heads of SAM and CARLTON, coming to ground like a cat, behind them in the centre of the hallway. He weaves back and forth lunging in, snarling and slashing with razor teeth. SAM is caught off guard as he and CARLTON try to continue to hold their advantage, edging forward just as the PROFESSOR swoops down from on high and zeroes in on SAM's throat. SAM just about fends him off but sustains a brutal gash to his arm. As this is happening CARLTON deftly steals in and pierces the PROFESSOR's shoulder with his sword, takes his amulet from his pocket and tries to press it to the wound. He is, however, not quick enough and the PROFESSOR lashes out with his arm, knocking the amulet across the floor. It comes to rest a few yards away from MYRA, who has SARAH and TOM backed into a corner. She looks round and dashes across the floor to pick it up. TOM and SARAH pursue her but she is too quick, she kneels down and

picks up the amulet. TOM seizes the opportunity to take his sword slashes open her arm as she tries to fend him off. In a fit of rage MYRA lunges at TOM and SARAH, seeing a chance, rushes towards her, manages to grab the hand containing the amulet and force it to the wound sustained on the other arm. MYRA swiftly brushes SARAH aside but finds, suddenly, to her horror, that the amulet is stuck fast to her arm. It begins to glow with a blinding white light and MYRA shrieks, looking round for the professor.

MYRA

Charles, Charles, the amulet, they've got me.

The PROFESSOR, still in serpent form, looks round but can do nothing as he is still engaged by SAM and CARLTON. SARAH and TOM look on in amazement as the ethereal shapes of all the souls consumed by MYRA escape through the amulet and soar, like angels, high up into the vaulted ceiling of the hall before disappearing out into the night. This continues for several moments before one of the silvery shapes circles SARAH, kisses her on the cheek and seems to wave goodbye before vanishing like the others. A tear rolls down SARAH's face and she turns to TOM.

SARAH

My sister.

TOM puts his arm around SARAH as they watch MYRA collapse to the ground, reduced to the mortal she would otherwise have been. She looks old and decrepit, her face, scarred, gnarled and wrinkled well beyond her forty or so years. She stands up slowly, exhausted and beaten, a sad miserable old harpy. SARAH steps forward, sword poised but his stopped by TOM.

TOM

We're not killers, Sarah, she's no danger to us now.

SARAH

I'd like to cut her head off all the same.

MYRA recoils at the suggestion and TOM points his sword at her.

TOM

We'll 'ave no more trouble from you now, lady, I'm sure of that.

The PROFESSOR, having seen what has happened to MYRA, dashes over and slashes wildly at SARAH and TOM. Both flinch and retreat before the PROFESSOR's spitting fury as he bites and snaps at them both but he is quickly surrounded by all four of his foes. MYRA backs away and hurries for the door. TOM makes to go after her but is called back by SAM.

SAM

Leave her, Tom, we can deal with her later.

TOM turns to rejoin the others but the PROFESSOR, seeing him off guard for a second, lashes out with his sword and lacerates TOM's leg, rendering him lame and

unable to continue to fight. He crawls back into a corner behind his friends as the PROFESSOR bears down on the other three.

CARLTON

It's still three against one, Professor, the odds are in our favour.

PROFESSOR

Remember, Carlton, a wounded tiger is often the most dangerous prey. I've been in worse scrapes than this, my friend and won the day. (hissing) Prepare to die.

The PROFESSOR flies up in the air and swoops down directly at the other three, forcing them to scatter in different directions. He flies at SARAH first before they can regroup and though she evades his sword his flailing hand catches her on the side of the head, knocking her out. The PROFESSOR licks his lips in anticipation of finishing her off but CARLTON and SAM come to her aid before he can kill her. CARLTON deftly takes the cursed dagger from SARAH's hand and now they stand before the PROFESSOR as he brandishes his sword and grins with pure evil.

PROFESSOR

Two against one now Carlton and two injured parties to protect. Perhaps, if you give me the boy, I'll let you be on your way, (hissing) perhaps...

CARLTON

(to SAM's astonishment) Alright (lowering his sword) you can have him, but I'll be back, you mark my words.

CARLTON grabs SAM's arm, pushes him aside and retreats a step as the PROFESSOR smiles and closes on the bewildered and helpless-looking SAM. At this moment CARLTON suddenly lunges at the PROFESSOR and cuts his arm clean off. He tries to drive home his advantage but is fended off as the PROFESSOR backs away for an instant. Both SAM and CARLTON gaze in astonishment as the severed arm withers away to nothing and a new one grows in its place.

PROFESSOR

And so you see the power of the singaree, my worthy foes. Worthy thus far but now that you have seen the awesome beauty of the immortal being, you must die.

CARLTON

You may kill us, Wyndham, but others will come and ultimately you will die. In your arrogance, you see yourself as the predator but you are, in fact the prey.

While speaking CARLTON backs away from the open door to the dining room, circling round with SAM following his lead two steps to one side. As he does this, he manipulates the PROFESSOR into a position directly in front of the dining room doors. CARLTON screams at SAM as he flies at the PROFESSOR.



CARLTON

Now SAM attack!

They both force the PROFESSOR back towards the doorway as he fends off their attack and grins smugly and brandishes his sword. There is the shrill ring of steel being withdrawn from a sheath and the PROFESSOR looks round to see SOLOMON standing behind him, sword poised.

PROFESSOR

(in amazement) You! You're just an old man, what do you think you can do here?

CARLTON

Now Sam, cut his head off now!

The PROFESSOR turns back and away from SOLOMON to confront SAM and bears down upon him. SAM raises his sword to attempt to take on the PROFESSOR, who smiles again, a smile of security in the knowledge that his attacker is weak and no match for his power. The PROFESSOR raises his sword but SAM stands firm, fearful, steadfast and ready to die. The sword of the PROFESSOR descends and SARAH, watching, screams and then, in the same instant; quickly, suddenly, SOLOMON nimbly steps forward, sword in hand and slices off the PROFESSOR's head. The headless corpse writhes and twitches on the ground for a second or two as SAM and CARLTON step back awaiting regeneration. Nothing transpires, however, and the three of them are somewhat transfixed as the head rolls across the floor. SOLOMON looks down at it with grim satisfaction.

SOLOMON

Worry not my friends, he cannot resurrect himself from this. You see, the one thing I kept from you was that I, too, am the last surviving member of a family murdered by this creature. (pause) I have waited almost fifty years for this moment.

SARAH awakens from her daze to see the head of the PROFESSOR staring up at her. She jumps up and lets out a scream and SAM runs to her side. He hugs her reassuringly.

SAM

It's alright, it's over, Solomon has killed him.

SARAH

Where is Myra?

TOM

She limped off into the night but I made sure she went without this (holding up the brooch).

SOLOMON

Good man, Tom, she presents little danger now, even less without the brooch.

SAM

Should we go after her?

SOLOMON

I think not. She couldn't identify a singaree now even if one were standing in front of her.

CARLTON

I'd be happier if she were dead and buried, I must confess.

SOLOMON

She is mortal now. We have no more right to kill her than we would any other living soul, no matter what how loathsome a creature she may be.

SARAH

I'm not so sure of that, I must say I agree with Carlton, I don't particularly want to spend the rest my life looking over my shoulder worrying about her somehow coming back to haunt us.

SOLOMON

In the first instance we would be committing murder if we were to kill her and could, from a moral point of view, be considered to be no better than the singaree given that she is now, in many respects, a helpless woman. Secondly, consider the logic of the situation. The chances of her finding another singaree are unlikely to say the least. They rarely, if ever, reveal their true identities to mortals and when they do, the mortals concerned are usually slaughtered in moments. She, of all people, knows this. It would be a very dangerous endeavour indeed to try to track down a singaree. They are not like you and I. They are beasts, without morals, without compassion in any sense. If, by some miracle, she found one, they would almost certainly kill her. We are quite safe my friends. Now, unless anyone has any objections I'm in the mood for a large brandy.

SAM

Shall we make our way back to Crozark manor?

CARLTON

Yes, I think Solomon deserves a large brandy. As do I.  
Let us go and celebrate a good night's work.

CARLTON goes and aims a kick at the PROFESSOR's head but it simply bursts into a cloud of ash. They all look amazed apart from SOLOMON.

SOLOMON

He was two hundred years old, at least. And now a pile of dust.

CUT TO:

61 INT DRAWING ROOM CROZARK MANOR NIGHT

It is still dark but TOM, SAM, SARAH, CARLTON and SOLOMON sit at ease sipping brandy in front of a large, comforting log fire. The sense of urgency, desperation and, most of all, fear has gone. Suddenly they all look happy and relaxed, SARAH is sitting with her head resting on SAM's chest. SAM, unusually for him seems perfectly at ease with the arrangement. The others lie back with boots off enjoying their drinks and gazing into the fire. CARLTON speaks with brandy-soaked enthusiasm.

CARLTON

You must all come to India. Sam, you must come out and I shall show you all the places your father and I used to go. We shall hunt, drink and I dare say have an adventure or two.

SAM

I should like that very much I think, Sarah, how would you feel about a trip to the subcontinent?

SARAH

Hunting, drinking and adventuring? Why not? But whatever should you boys do when I am out drinking and shooting tigers all day with the other ladies?

CARLTON

(ignoring SARAH's remarks) Tom? Solomon? Should I make arrangements for five?

TOM

Seems like a long way away.

CARLTON

Nonsense, you'll love every minute of it, come on man, travel expands one's horizons, once you get a taste you'll never look back.

CUT TO:

## 62 EXT GRAVEYARD INDIA DAY

The five friends are assembled in a graveyard, solemnly gazing down at the gravestones of SAM's parents and sister. It is a dry, hot, dusty Indian day, SARAH squeezes SAM's hand as a tear rolls down his cheek. There are a few seconds of silence before CARLTON speaks.

CARLTON

They were good people, Sam, and in the end, their deaths were not in vain. We got them, never forget that. We spared this sadness for countless victims in the future.

SAM

(choking back his tears) Yes, thank you, Carlton, you've been a good friend to me through this.

SARAH

I'm glad we came, it makes sense of it all somehow.

SOLOMON

Well, I think it's time for an old man to have a rest and perhaps a bite to eat.

SAM

(drawing himself together) Yes, I think so, (philosophically) time to think of the future now.

As SAM is speaking, there is a sinister hissing sound, just audible at first but then increasing in volume until it is almost deafening. It seems to come from directly behind them and they all turn round to see MYRA, in all her serpentine glory. They focus on her bright green snake eyes as they close, slowly at first and then lunging straight at them with the speed of a cobra. There is a blood-curdling scream and the last thing we see are those evil shining, emerald eyes.

THE END