

BLACK

The short husky chuckles of an older man.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

Be-foh I arrived in fifteen-hundred and five, I expended innumerable time during the late hours in the labor-tree at the school. It took only three years to build the machine, and oh what a beautiful machine it was. I used the finest metal, perchance silver, you see.  
(exhal es; yearni ng)  
I wish you could've seen it. And now... Here I am...

THE FACE OF A PEASANT SITTING IN A WOODEN CHAIR

The grin on his face is illuminated by a single candle somewhere in the bare cottage room as he stares off, wearing rags for clothes, unshaven and unshowered. The wall behind him is made of rock. He turns to someone.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

...be-foh you, my fellow.

A bespectacled young man of late thirty in Medieval garments sits in a chair across from the old man and studies him carefully.

YOUNG MAN

What sort of thing is this "meh-sheen"?

OLD MAN

Oh, a very rare and beautiful thing, my fellow. A recherché jewel, you may say. No living man except I had ever seen such a thing.

MAN

... A... jewel, you say?

OLD MAN

Tis perchance the only way I am to explain such a thing, as tis difficult to imagine, my fellow.

YOUNG MAN

Alright. Tell me then. Why did you kill the old man?

OLD MAN

My fellow. It will be painful on me to explain the nature of my doing but be patient with me, I beg. You see, the old man there is not some man that merely feeds for his wife and two children. He is a very important man. Tis, he is the father of my lineage. And now that he is dead, you see, no longer am I of his lineage. No longer am I disturb at night by sleeplessness and troubled with cheerlessness. Can you not tell me merry..? Perhaps I must explain the origin of my troubles.

He wets his lips and swallows.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

For all my life I'd been plagued with a dreadful malady for which no learned man could explain. It was a horrible thing I dare not speak of even now but I must. A feeling arised within me at an early age, much close to your's perchance, whereupon I was incapable of feeling the beating of my very own heart. For hours the powerlessness frightened me. What was I to do, my fellow? What is any man to do..? And suddenly it began to beat yet again. Again and again, in its usual pace. It occurred several times over the years.

(MORE)

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Being a learned man I re-suchd thoroughly my constitution but could discover no fault. And so I lived the remainder of my life with the malady and collected an uncanny dolefulness which had distend me from any happiness I'd lust. In what manner then did I arrive here, you ask? By calculations of the learned sciences well advanced Aristotle and Doctor Communis.

Suspiciously, the young man leans in.

YOUNG MAN

What sort of sciences are those?

The old man chuckles heartily.

OLD MAN

My fellow, I should fear God if I was to say. After all, tis because of His blessing I have come to this time to end the origin of my malady. Alas, I cannot return and shall live the remainder of my days here.

(Beaming with a chuckle)

But I must tell you this, as even now it jollies my gut warmly. Fearing I might appear alien to this time, I learned your speech and habits of communication to my best so I may make myself around. And naturally I was to arrive unclothed, this is why the man you spoke of said he saw me running bare in the woods. Had I seen this man myself, naturally I would have calmed him with some explanation. Confessing, yes, these clothes I took from a cottage down east. I had not predicted to arrive so far from where I was to come.

The young man looks at him without saying much.

There is a long silence.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

You do partially understand, yes?

YOUNG MAN

You say it was the Scholastic sciences that brought you here.

OLD MAN

Without question.

YOUNG MAN

And who invented them?

The old man thinks.

OLD MAN

Many men, but in truth, I cannot say much as I fear these men will no longer exist.

YOUNG MAN

What is your name?

OLD MAN

You may call me Robert.

YOUNG MAN

I see here, Robert, nothing to persuade me that you are not a liar, a thief, and a murderer.

The old man is taken aback.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Have you heard of witchcraft, Robert?

ROBERT

But, yes, I have. Certainly. But tis not--

YOUNG MAN

And do you know what I believe of your story?

ROBERT

But, my fellow. Please don't believe that.

YOUNG MAN

I believe you're an idiot.

ROBERT

Please. I shall attempt my best to explain whatever this you desire without putting at jeopardy the veracity of tomorrow.

YOUNG MAN

The more I hear you speak, the more I don't like you.

The old man pauses and thinks.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

The king's men are waiting.

The old man turns to the young man.

ROBERT

A thought has occurred to me, my fellow.

The young man stands.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Will you allow me some time for explanation of something untruthful I have told you.

YOUNG MAN

Which is?

ROBERT

(Whispers)

I must inform you prior and have your word that you cannot speak of this to anybody.

The young man nods.

ROBERT (CONT' D)

You recall the machine I spoke of.  
The machine which God blessed and  
allowed me to traverse into your  
world.

The young man nods.

ROBERT (CONT' D)

Would it perchance interest you to  
see this machine, my fellow?

The young man looks at him suspiciously.

YOUNG MAN

With my own eyes?

ROBERT

With your own eyes! Yes!

(Laughs; whispers)

Certainly, my fellow. I shall take  
you to it and you shall see it for  
yourself. But! You must understand  
how important tis that you do not  
speak of this anybody. Not a man of  
the king's, a peasant, or any woman  
that may be on our way to it.

YOUNG MAN

Tis not here?

ROBERT

Why, no no no! But that would be  
impossible. Tis of enormous size.  
Tis not if I may have simply  
slipped it into my pocket. Earlier  
I compared it to a jewel, an  
enchanted jewel. Why, yes, it might  
appear to be similar in the way you  
may conceive it, tis not a jewel.  
Tis the size of a room, perhaps--

He stands drags the chair with him up to the wall behind him.

He looks down at his feet, closes his eyes and pushes the  
chair forward.

He stops. Opens his eyes and looks up at the man.

ROBERT (CONT' D)

There. Approximately the length of the wall over there to the hind legs of this chair here. Tis the size of the machine, my fellow.

YOUNG MAN

And where then?

Robert approaches the young man.

ROBERT

Hidden in the woods from which the farmer saw me naked.

YOUNG MAN

Take me to it, old man.

ROBERT

(Bows his head)

It would be my pleasure.

The young man walks to the door of the cottage and opens it and calls out

YOUNG MAN

Barda.

BARDA (O. S.)

Yes, Mi Lord?

YOUNG MAN

I shall need your horse.

BARDA (O. S.)

Yes, Mi Lord.

He closes the door.

After a moment of silence he turns to Robert.

YOUNG MAN

Tell me. How does this thing, actually, work?

ROBERT  
 (Beaming)  
 With science, my fellow! With  
 science.

DISSOLVE TO:

WOODS - NIGHT

Three horsemen in the far distance are moving slowly on a small path. Two of them are the King's men (late 30s). The other is a prince (late 20s).

PRINCE  
 (Pointing)  
 Barda. Over there.

BARDA  
 (Looks)  
 Yes, Milord.

PRINCE  
 Doran, stay here and keep a look  
 out.

DORAN  
 Yes, Milord.

The prince unmounts his horse and walks to a nearby river.

RIVER

It is calm and slow moving. Barda and his horse stand beside looking across it.

The prince approaches him from behind and looks across too.

PRINCE  
 God!

He rushes through the river to the other side.

The young man lies at the bank with a dagger in his hip, blood draining down the hill into the river.

PRIEST  
 Martin!

The prince embraces the young man.

He holds him close.

A noise a twig cracking in the woods before the prince.

The prince and Barda look up.

The prince jumps to his feet and unsheeths his sword.

PRINCE  
Show yourself at once!

BARDA  
Milord, come to my side.

PRINCE  
Keep quiet, Barda. Do not test my  
patience! Show yourself at once!

A whisper.

PRINCE (CONT'D)  
I said show yourself not speak up!

ROBERT  
My fellow, please do not hurt me. I  
mean no harm to you or the Knight's  
man.

PRINCE  
Approach slowly.

The noise comes closer.

The prince readies himself.

Then Robert appears from the shadows.

ROBERT  
My fellow, the man that lies there  
was recently killed.

PRINCE  
I can see that.

ROBERT  
And I have been traumatized, my  
fellow. I had witnessed the  
entirety of it. I had witnessed it.  
I beg you. Do me no harm and allow  
me to explain myself.

PRINCE  
Do not test my patience old man.  
Tell. Who killed this man?

ROBERT  
Tis not as simple as you may think  
but I have the answer to your  
question.  
(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Be-foh I arrive here the man at your feet was in a verbal confrontation with an old man. An insane man. He regarded your friend as his father. What is more insane than that? I wrongly made a noise which startled them both but not in the young man's favor, I must admit. At first chance, the old man drove the dagger into his hip and ran across the river as fast as he could. I was in horror, my fellow. I approached the young man and asked to help him but before he was able to say a word he took his final breath.

PRINCE

You shall come with me then and explain it to the King.

ROBERT

It would only be God's will that I do, my fellow. But I may not, alas.

PRINCE

Why can't you?

ROBERT

...At an early age, much close to your's perchance, I was struck with a rare illness that is easily infectious. Tis not--

The prince resheeths his sword.

PRINCE

Go! Run off before I've changed my mind and kill you to avenge my friend's death.

ROBERT

(Bows his head)

As you wish, my fellow. Please pass along my deepest sympathies to the King.

Robert disappears into the shadows.

His hurring run fades gradually.

PRINCE

Barda!

BARDA  
Yes, Milord?

PRINCE  
Kill that old man.

BARDA  
Yes, Milord.

PRINCE  
And do not speak of it to Doran or  
anyone else.

BARDA  
Yes, Milord.

Barda crosses the river with his horse. The prince kneels down and takes the young man into his arms and lifts him off the ground.

Barda has crossed the river and moves past the prince and his horse runs deep into the woods.

The prince carries the young man across the river.

DORAN

Stands alert and sees the prince approaching with the young man.

BARDA

On his horse looking around for the old man.

SLOWLY FADE OUT: