

A MOTIVE TO DIE FOR

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FADE IN:

SUPER: "Learning is not child's play; we cannot learn without pain." -- Aristotle

INT. THE PALEOPOLI, MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: The Paleopoli, Island of Samothrace, Macedonia (Greece) 331 BCE.

Twenty Cult Members (20-70; males and females from Greece, the Middle East, and Africa) sit on benches on the side of a long, dark temple, lit only by a few torches. They all wear white robes with a red sash around their waists and a single IRON RING on their right pinky finger.

They stare at the high priest, a HIEROPHANT (60s; gray hair and beard), and an INITIATE (40, male) standing in the front of the room. They also wear white robes and red sashes. The Initiate clutches an IRON RING in his closed left hand.

The Hierophant holds up his two hands, revealing an iron ring on each hand. He motions for the Initiate to bow to the Cult Members, which he does.

The Cult Members bow back with stoic faces.

The Hierophant motions for the Initiate to place his ring on his pinky finger, which he does.

The Cult Members look worried as the Hierophant escorts the Initiate to a dimly lit back room.

INT. THE PALEOPOLI, BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

We see a 2 m-deep, 2 m-diameter pit containing the remains (and blood) of sacrificial goats.

The Initiate's eyes open widely in fear.

Two Cult Members (various types) enter the back room, climb down into the pit, and slide back a thin rock covering a small hole big enough and deep enough to engulf and conceal a large human. The rock cover has the symbol for Hades.

SUPER: "Hades (Hell)"

The Hierophant reaches to a small table and hands the Initiate a large clay cup of kykeon (a psychoactive brew), which he chugs down quickly.

The Initiate's eyes gloss over, and he sways on his wobbly legs, as the Hierophant glares into his eyes.

The Initiate becomes less stable, and the Hierophant speaks in a low, dark tone.

All the dialogue in this scene is in ancient Greek with English subtitles.

HIEROPHANT

Do you wish to confess all of your
ill deeds?

The Initiate looks surprised by the question but begins to speak in a low and frightened voice.

INITIATE

Yes, I do. I admit I wore the
finest woven cloth when a lesser
cloth would do.

The Hierophant nods, 'yes,' with stoic approval.

INITIATE (CONT'D)

I amassed a great many statues,
mosaics, and paintings of the gods
for reverence.

The Hierophant nods, 'yes,' with stoic approval.

INITIATE (CONT'D)

I coveted my brother's young
wife... and on more than one
occasion, I...

The Hierophant interrupts, nods, 'yes,' with stoic approval, and motions with his hand for the Initiate to move on with his testimony.

INITIATE (CONT'D)

I eat too much of the goats I
should have sacrificed.

The Hierophant grows impatient, raising his ire.

The Initiate speeds along.

INITIATE (CONT'D)

I struck a beggar I had no time
for.

The Hierophant glares at the Initiate with deep disapproval.

INITIATE (CONT'D)

I still own slaves and sometimes
treat them like my goats.

The Hierophant lowers his head in shame and points to the bottom of the pit.

The Initiate climbs down into the pit, removes the sash from around his waist, and holds it up for the Hierophant to grasp.

The Hierophant glares at him and points to the Initiate's iron ring.

INITIATE (CONT'D)

(very frightened)

I told my teacher about our group.

HIEROPHANT

Who is your teacher?

The Initiate looks away in fear.

INITIATE

Aristotle, of Athens.

(beat)

I told him about our initiation and rituals. Everything! I had to! His curiosity and questioning drove me mad!

The Hierophant shakes his head in disapproval.

INITIATE (CONT'D)

(yells)

Aristotle already knew! He had known about us for many years. He was initiated at the sanctuary in Eleusis as a young man! He knows everything. The rational soul, he wrote.

INT. THE PALEOPOLI, MAIN ROOM - SAME

The Cult Members are both horrified and curious by the Initiate's revelation.

Many shake their heads in wonder at what is to come.

INT. THE PALEOPOLI, BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Hierophant pulls the sash out of the man's hands.

The Initiate glances at the entrance to Hades, then sadly up to the Hierophant.

INITIATE

But what of my journey in and out
of Hades?

The Hierophant shakes his head, 'no'.

INT. THE PALEOPOLI, MAIN ROOM - SAME

The Cult Members are horrified as they creep closer to the back room.

INT. THE PALEOPOLI, BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Initiate has the look of certain death but accepts it.

The Hierophant reaches for a lance leaning against the wall.

The Hierophant lowers his head and stabs the Initiate in the heart with the lance. He flips the lance around and angrily crushes the Initiate's hand with the butt of the shaft.

The Initiate collapses into the pit, dying. We SEE his Iron Ring on his crushed and twitching fingers on his bloody hand.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. THE PALEOPOLI DIG SITE - DAY

SIMON PARSONS (40), a handsome British archaeologist, slowly brushes goat skulls and bones in the same sacrificial pit when he is surprised to find the hand bones from an ancient human skeleton and a tarnished iron ring among the cracked fingers.

He takes out his BRAND smartphone and is photographing the ring, when a smiling tour guide, ZINO DRACOS (25, Greek), approaches with four Tourists (an Italian couple; CLAUDIO and GINA, 30s), and an overly curious Egyptian couple, NUBIA and CEPOS (30s), with cameras with telephoto lenses taking pictures constantly. Nubia is a tall, brown-skin woman wearing a tan business suit with matching spiked heels, which look out of place on the hike. A beautiful, scholarly-looking woman, HELEN THANOS (30), carries a BRAND tablet computer and wears earbuds, and lags happily behind the group. Helen wears designer sandals, short tan shorts, and a light long-sleeve shirt over a tight tank top. Her long blonde hair is in a ponytail.

In plain view of the tourist group is a half-buried ceramic wine amphora (jug). Simon uses his body to hide the human remains and the ring as they pass.

Zino reprimands Helen.

ZINO
(yells)
Please stay with the group, Miss
Thanos, and remove your earphones
so you can hear me.

Zino points to her earbuds. Helen shakes her head like she can't hear him.

Simon turns to the tourists and chuckles, but he smiles when he sees Helen.

The frustrated Zino leaves the two couples and collects the young woman like a lost sheep.

Helen politely removes one earbud to listen to him.

ZINO (CONT'D)
Stay with the group and on the
designated walking paths only, Ms.
Helen! We are coming up to an
active archeological study, and we
must remain together and quiet to
allow Dr. Parsons to continue
uninterrupted.

The tourists peer into the pit at the goat skulls, but Helen focuses on the iron ring and the broken human hand bones.

ZINO (CONT'D)
There is nothing to see here but a
common wine amphora from Rhodes,
and the bones of animal sacrifices
to the gods between 600 BCE and 79
AD, when pagan rituals were
outlawed by Christian Roman
Emperors.

Zino tries to move the tourists along the walkway, as Simon shifts to block their view of the human bones and ring.

Helen reaches the pit and sees the broken fingers of the human skeleton from her POV.

ZINO (CONT'D)

Next, we'll see a fountain
dedicated to one of the greatest
naval victories of all time by the
tiny but mighty city-state of
Rhodes in 190 BCE.

The two couples follow Zino, but Helen remains behind.

HELEN

Find anything interesting?

SIMON

(smiles seductively)
I'd love to tell you about it.
(beat)
But if I did, I'd be the next one
killed!

HELEN

(laughs)
That's the best and the worst
pickup line I've ever heard.

Helen puts in her other earbud, presses play on her tablet
computer, and walks slowly back to her tour group, where she
sees Zino glaring at her.

She doesn't hear Simon as he speaks quietly.

SIMON

Some cults are worth dying for.
(mumbles)
I'm just not ready to go just yet.

He continues brushing the finger bones and ring.

Zino leads the tour group far from the dig site.

Moments later, Helen comes running back to the dig site.

Simon looks up to see Helen with a flirtatious smile.

HELEN

Where is the best beach in
Samothrace?

SIMON

South side of the island. Ten
kilometers. Can't miss it. Follow
the horny old tourists. Lots of
nudity.

HELEN

Take me there. We'll stop for wine
and cheese on the way.

Helen starts to stroll away confidently. She turns to see
that Simon is still working.

HELEN (CONT'D)

(angry)

Everyone gets a lunch break! It's
my last day here. I'll never find
it on my own.

SIMON

I only have two more days on my
permit.

Helen removes her long-sleeve shirt and releases her long
blonde hair from her ponytail, not in a sexy way, but in an
impatient, almost angry way.

Simon tosses his brush down.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I'll give you fifteen minutes at
the beach! Then I have to get back!

Helen turns and strolls toward the entrance without speaking,
her hair waving behind her.

INT. SIMON'S SEDAN - DAY

Simon (driving) and Helen smile and enjoy the scenery on the
coastal road.

Helen turns quickly to Simon.

HELEN

My name's Helen Thanos. What's your
biggest secret?

Simon is stunned.

SIMON

My name's Simon Parsons. What are
you asking, precisely?

HELEN

It's the fastest way to cut through
the bullshit when you meet someone.

SIMON

What's your biggest secret?

Helen looks away, then turns back with a brutally honest answer.

HELEN

I trust people at first sight.
Innocent 'til proven guilty. Then
usually... no, then every time,
they disappoint me.

She shrugs.

HELEN (CONT'D)

What's your secret?

SIMON

I don't trust anyone. Never have.

Simon looks at Helen's left hand and doesn't see a ring.

SIMON (CONT'D)

(laughs)

My mom told me before I left, it's
probably why I'm single too.
Archaeologists have to keep
everything secret until their work
is peer-reviewed and published.

HELEN

How many peer reviewers are privy
to your secret findings before
they're published?

SIMON

Two.

HELEN

But you trust them enough to share
your secrets?

SIMON

I have to or I don't get published.
It's blind peer reviews. We don't
know who they are.

HELEN

But they're subject matter
specialists who probably know you,
and you probably share the exact
location and artifacts you found.

Simon shivers.

SIMON

(angry)

You're making me uncomfortable. I'm never 100% sure of anything!

HELEN

What was your most recent paper about?

SIMON

The iron rings worn by cult members during the Eleusinian rituals.

HELEN

Tell me about them.

SIMON

(laughs)

If I did, I'd have to kill you.

HELEN

(laughs)

I'll look it up on the web tonight. What journal is it in?

SIMON

The Journal of Modern Archaeology.

HELEN

An oxymoron. I love it.

They laugh and drive on.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- We see the heads of Helen and Simon bobbing in the Aegean Sea. They laugh.

-- Their semi-nude bodies on towels.

-- Clothed and drinking wine and eating cheese overlooking the sea.

-- Laughing as they get into Simon's sedan.

INT. CAFÉ - NIGHT

The café has a large courtyard with a view of the Aegean Sea.

Simon types into his laptop computer in a corner seat at a table for two.

He pulls a plastic bag from his shirt pocket and examines the iron ring inside.

The two Tourist Couples who were with Helen enter the café. The Egyptian couple grabs a table nearest the sea, while the Italian couple sits at the table closest to Simon.

Simon slips the plastic bag with the ring back into his shirt pocket.

Helen enters the café with her small backpack on and looks around. She sees Simon and stands at his table.

He ignores her while he finishes typing a line, then looks up.

HELEN

Is this seat taken?

SIMON

Thanks for the swim, but I have to finish my report while it's fresh in my head, and while I have free Wi-Fi!

Helen sits.

HELEN

I won't bother you. I had a few more questions. I head back on the ferry to Alexandroupoli in the morning.

Simon barely looks up from his laptop but motions for her to sit.

SIMON

But I do have...

HELEN

(interrupts)

Why can't I find much on the web about the Eleusinian Mysteries?

Simon shuts his laptop.

SIMON

There's nothing to tell.

Helen glares at him and speaks in an angry tone.

HELEN

Eluded to by Homer. The cult of Demeter and Persephone was based in Eleusis near ancient Athens.

(angrier)

Called the "most famous of the secret religious rites of ancient Greece," and nobody has written a thing about them since, including Aristotle! And he wrote about everything from biology to philosophy.

SIMON

Aristotle's book on god and religion was never found, so you're all caught up to date then.

Simon stands and begins to put his laptop and notes in his backpack hanging on the back of his chair.

Helen calmly calls to a WAITER (25, male).

HELEN

Bring us a bottle of Ouzo and two glasses.

Helen stands and pulls Simon's arm down.

HELEN (CONT'D)

You're not going anywhere until I get my answers! Once I set my mind to learn something, it's like a fire that can't be extinguished.

Simon laughs.

SIMON

You're persistent. I'll give you that! But the Eleusinian Mysteries have baffled scholars for centuries, and me for twenty years. Don't expect them to divulge themselves to you overnight!

Simon sits back down.

The Waiter drops off a bottle of Ouzo and two glasses. Helen flirts with the Waiter.

HELEN

Start a tab for me, will you, my friend? Thanks.

The Waiter snickers at Simon.

WAITER

You're in big trouble tonight,
Simon.

The Italian couple whispers in Italian like lovebirds all night long. They act like they don't understand English or they're too polite to eavesdrop.

HELEN

The Waiter seems to know you well.

SIMON

(suspicious)
But I don't know you.

Simon studies her left hand again and sees no ring.

Helen smiles and speaks quickly.

HELEN

As I told you. Helen Thanos from Los Angeles. Philosophy degree from UC Berkeley, which wouldn't pay the bills. Master's in Criminal Science, paid my dues as a cop, and just passed my Detective's exam. I start work in a week in L.A. I needed a vacation first. Now you're caught up.

(perturbed)
Again!

SIMON

Okay, I'll tell you enough to make you better informed, but not enough to get you killed.

Helen makes a face -- disappointed, but fills two glasses of Ouzo and slides one over to Simon.

HELEN

How about I tell you when to stop?

Simon stands, threatening to leave when she smiles seductively. He sits back down, takes a sip of Ouzo, and whispers.

SIMON

The secret rites were held annually from at least 650 BCE, as alluded to without detail by one of Homer's stories in the Odyssey, to 170 AD when Christians began to rule, over 800 years. However, the secret society continued in the countryside and much later on Samothrace.

HELEN

How widely known were the rites?

SIMON

Julius Caesar and at least five other emperors of Rome participated in the rites, as did many famous people of the time, including your friend, Aristotle. But you'd never know it from historians because no one would talk about them.

Upon hearing the words Julius Caesar and Rome, the Italian couple begin to whisper less and listen in more.

HELEN

Certain death?

SIMON

You got it! Ancient Greeks invoked the word 'Cabeiri' as "the great gods" in times of danger and stress, but everyone was afraid to name them out loud.

HELEN

(angry)

For fear of being killed?

SIMON

I had to remove a truckload of goat skeletons over the past three months until I got to where I am today. My permit ends tomorrow at sunset, and if I don't find something significant by then, I won't get tenure. I could lose my teaching job.

HELEN

(leans in, whispers)

Then you spotted the human remains!

(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

It surprised you. I saw it in your eyes!

The Italian couple stops talking. The Waiter takes notice.

Helen seductively asks Simon a list of questions.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I read your very short paper about the iron rings, but I want to know about the rituals! What were they, and why were they so secret? Who tried to stop them? What did they do about it? How did it end?

Simon leans in, kissing close.

SIMON

Those are great questions, Detective!

Simon looks around to see if anyone is listening. He doesn't see Zino in the far corner of the café, hiding behind a newspaper.

Helen notices that the Waiter is spending more time wiping down tables closer to them.

Simon leans closer to whisper to Helen, and they share a moment, but in the background, the Waiter glares at them.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Demeter was the pagan goddess of agriculture. Her daughter, Persephone, was tasked with painting all the flowers of the earth.

HELEN

Big job!

SIMON

Before she could finish, she was kidnapped by Hades, the god of the underworld, who took her to his underworld kingdom.

HELEN

Sucks to be Persephone.

SIMON

Demeter searched high and low for her daughter, and sent a mega-drought until Zeus intervened and forced Hades to release Persephone.

HELEN

I get it. She had a good life, was taken to the underworld, or death, then was resurrected back to life as a god... boy, where have we heard that story before?

The Italian couple glares quickly at Helen before continuing the love chat, whispering in Italian.

SIMON

Maybe that's another reason it's not talked about.

Simon continues whispering to Helen, who is captivated.

SIMON (CONT'D)

But what's interesting to me is that archaeologists have found no depictions of ancient Greek gods or goddesses on the ancient buildings. No Demeter. No Persephone. No symbol of Hades!

Helen looks around, suspicious.

HELEN

Curious for a place known as the Sanctuary of the Great Gods.

SIMON

And virtually nothing was written from the very famous visitors such as Plato, Aristotle, Philip II of Macedon, the Greek historian Herodotus, and the apostle Paul.

They continue whispering.

LATER

The lights in the café are low, and Simon and Helen are alone, except for Zino with his back to the table, the Egyptian couple by the door, and the Italian couple. The Waiter continues to wipe down tables and listens to the conversation of the Italian couple behind him, and Helen and Simon in front of him.

Simon, who is a bit tipsy, backs up in his chair.

SIMON (CONT'D)

There are bits and pieces to the secret rituals, including wearing white robes with red sashes, drinking a psychoactive drink, confessing sins...

Helen, tipsy from the Ouzo, grows impatient.

HELEN

(whispers angrily)
You're keeping secrets. You never mentioned...

SIMON

(rudely interrupts)
It's an ongoing excavation.

The Waiter wipes his brow nervously.

HELEN

(whispers very low)
But you found a ring today.

Zino stands, turns, and stomps to the table.

ZINO

A ring? Dr. Parsons, your permit requires you to...

Simon glares at Helen, then stands in defiance.

Helen slips her small backpack on and moves behind Simon, who is under the careful eye of both Zino and the Waiter.

Zino whips out an old cellphone and calls the police.

SIMON

I saw the outline in the clay that may be a ring, but more likely a fishhook as an offering. I couldn't finish excavating it in the dark. I'll know more tomorrow, and I'll turn it in after it's properly described, photographed, and cataloged following your antiquity guidelines. I have twenty-four hours after the item is fully excavated!

Zino flashes a "Greek Antiquities Security Officer Badge" to Simon and Helen.

ZINO

The Antiquities Law states that significant finds must be reported immediately with a photo and description, before excavation. You know this!

Simon wiggles a closed hand behind him as he waves his other hand in a threatening manner.

SIMON

A fishhook is not a significant find. There is a common wine amphora from Rhodes that I'll excavate tomorrow. They're all over the Mediterranean.

Simon forces his hand into Helen's stomach, surprising her.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Why don't you join me at the site tomorrow and see for yourself?!

Helen takes the ring in the plastic bag from Simon and shoves it into her underwear before raising her hands in the air.

HELEN

I'm an American tourist who never set eyes on this goat skeleton grave-robber before today!

(steps away)

He was trying to get me drunk to take advantage of me!

Simon glares at Helen, who looks equally tipsy, while the Egyptian couple quietly exits in the commotion.

Zino glares at Helen and the Italian couple.

ZINO

All of you, leave your name and local contact information with the Waiter, and I'll find you if I need to.

Zino nods to the Waiter, who nods back.

The Italian couple shrugs their shoulders like they don't understand, causing Helen to glare at them as they casually begin to walk out of the café, before the Waiter stops them.

We hear a SIREN approaching as Zino yanks Simon out the door.

Helen turns to the Waiter and flips him 100 Euros.

HELEN

This should cover my tab. Could you please call me a taxi to take me to my hotel?

The Waiter leans closer to Helen, to her discomfort.

WAITER

Which hotel? I need your name and contact information.

HELEN

You don't have the authority. Just call the cab.

The Waiter turns angrily and makes a call on his smartphone.

EXT. CAFÉ - NIGHT

Helen stands across the deserted street with the Aegean Sea at her back. She wears her backpack.

A black BMW with tinted windows races up to Helen and slams on the brakes. The Italian woman rolls down her window and speaks English with a heavy Italian accent.

GINA

You're in danger. Get in!

Helen stares at the woman until the male of the couple (and driver) leans down to make eye contact and speaks in a stronger accent.

CLAUDIO

She's notta kidding.

The Waiter runs out of the café holding a shotgun and tries to drive everyone away.

Helen dives into the backseat of the car, and Claudio races away.

INT. BMW - CONTINUOUS

CLAUDIO

You were asking too many questions.

GINA

Very dangerous.

HELEN

Simon is an archaeologist and professor. He's used to questions.

Claudio looks in the rearview mirror to see a black sedan without headlights on racing up behind them fast.

They hear a gunshot! BAM!

Claudio swerves the car and speeds up.

Helen screams.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I did nothing wrong!

GINA

The Orthodox people who live here have not forgotten the old ways.

CLAUDIO

They spent 2000 years burying the past, including all Ancient Greek gods, in favor of the one true God.

They hear another gunshot. BAM!

Claudio swerves more and drives faster.

HELEN

Who are you two? The history police?

GINA

(laughs)

No one leaves Rome or Athens without becoming one!

The black sedan tries to pass on the left to run them off the road, but Claudio swerves to prevent it.

HELEN

I'm taking the first ferry out of here tomorrow morning!

Claudio floors it.

CLAUDIO

First place they'll look for you!

Claudio leaves the black sedan behind, temporarily.

HELEN

I'll go to the police!

On a narrow spot on the road with a cliff to the seaside, Claudio slams on the brakes, spins the car around, and hugs the inland side of the road.

He flicks on his high beams and races ahead in the direction of the oncoming black sedan.

The game of chicken works, and the black sedan goes flying off the side of the road onto big rocks that high-center the car, rendering it useless.

Claudio and Gina are relieved, but not shaken. Helen is more angry than upset.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Who is after you? Who wants to kill you?

CLAUDIO

(amused)

Nobody is after us, Dearie!

GINA

Someone thinks you and that deadly handsome archaeologist are antiquities smugglers.

CLAUDIO

And here, they shoot first and ask questions never!

Helen gets angrier.

HELEN

Stop the car! I'll take my chances with the police!

Claudio laughs even harder.

CLAUDIO

Your new boyfriend is getting the strip search of his life right now.

Gina slaps her husband's shoulder and warns Helen.

GINA

If they get hold of you, you'll never be able to have children.

CLAUDIO

And if they find that ring on either one of you, you'll spend fifteen years in Korydallos Prison!

HELEN
(screams)
For one stupid ring! I don't think
so!

Claudio slams on the brakes so Helen can leave if she wishes.

CLAUDIO
(quietly)
For what it represents. The return
of the most dangerous secret cult
in human history.

Helen looks down at her crotch and freezes in terror.

GINA
(sadly)
Go on! Get out. Another ungrateful
American. Imagine that!

Helen stares at the Italian couple for a moment.

HELEN
You're telling me if I get on that
ferry tomorrow morning, the police
will get me.

GINA
Yes, I'm afraid so.

HELEN
And if I go to the police willingly
with or without this so-called
ring...

CLAUDIO
(interrupting)
You'll be his accomplice, either
way. Everybody heard you two
talking, including Zino-slash-
antiquities security guard, the
creepy Waiter, us, and the thugs
who were shooting at you.

GINA
(to Claudio)
I think they survived that little
crash, don't you, dear?

Helen steps out of the car.

EXT. ROADSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Helen paces in anger.

HELEN

I could hop on a fishing boat
and...

GINA

Yes, a cute little thing like you
would do well at sea with a dozen
Greek sailors....

HELEN

I could hide out on the island here
until...

CLAUDIO

It's a small island and...
(looks at Gina)
People talk.

Helen spins angrily and yells into the car.

HELEN

I suppose you've thought of another
option for me?

CLAUDIO

(yells)
First, I'd get back in the car.
Your pursuers are probably right
behind us in a stolen car!

Helen looks down the road and hops back into the car.

INT. BMW - CONTINUOUS

Claudio races off as Helen struggles to buckle up.

CLAUDIO

We'll think this through together.

GINA

Tonight you can stay in our hotel
suite. We'll order in.

CLAUDIO

They always bring us too much food
and wine.

GINA

They love Italians here.

HELEN
Why is that?

CLAUDIO
(laughs)
Because we're not Americans!

Claudio and Gina laugh.

Helen looks out the window to the side, defeated and sinking into total despair.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Helen drinks coffee and carefully studies a map of the island on her tablet computer while Gina moves her things from the second bedroom into Claudio's bedroom.

HELEN
Do you sleep in separate rooms in
this romantic place?

GINA
He snores and swings his arms at
night.

CLAUDIO
Who knew?

Helen chuckles and sips the coffee.

HELEN
Thanks again for the strong coffee.
I needed it!

As Gina moves her suitcase out of the second bedroom, Helen notices a luggage tag that reads, "Gina Alberti, Venice, Italia."

Helen sees that the little gold ring on Gina's left hand is so large that it frequently slips down and almost off her finger before she catches it and slides it back up. Gina clenches her fingers to get the ring to stay on.

Gina returns from Claudio's room with a smirk.

GINA
Don't get any wild ideas tonight,
Claudio. We have company.

Gina glides over to Claudio and leans to kiss his forehead.

Helen sees that Gina's sunburned chest has left the outline of a crucifix she had removed. Helen quickly turns away and changes the subject.

HELEN

What do you two do for fun when you run out of tourist traps to patrol?

CLAUDIO

Vatican Library catalog work.

HELEN

Sounds interesting.

GINA

Filling out those little index cards is exhausting for us.

Helen turns her head with a bewildered look.

CLAUDIO

The food should be here any minute.

Helen grabs her backpack by her feet, shoves in the tablet computer, stands, and staggers to her newly prepared bedroom.

HELEN

I'll just... put my... things away and freshen up before we eat.

Claudio stands and cuts off any movement by Helen toward the front door. Helen staggers into her bedroom.

Helen enters her room and shuts the door.

Claudio and Gina whisper in Italian (with English subtitles).

CLAUDIO

Three stories up.

GINA

She's not going anywhere drunk on Ouzo. She has something. I know it.

EXT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Simon drives up the street in a small sedan, looking for the hotel. He slams on the brakes when he sees Helen hanging from a balcony on the third floor. She has her small backpack on and has a small flashlight in her mouth.

Simon hops out of the car to see her swing to have her feet land on the second-story balcony, barely making it with her backpack on. The flashlight stays in her mouth.

Simon is speechless as she climbs over the second-story balcony railing and drops to the street-level walkway with another THUD.

Simon runs to her to help her up and sees that she's still wobbly and woozy. She takes the small flashlight out of her mouth and points it at her drunken face.

HELEN

It's me, asshole!

Simon looks at Helen's funny face in amazement.

SIMON

Ah, the face that launched a
hundred ships.

(giggles)

Or ten, maybe.

Helen staggers into the street.

HELEN

I'm mad at you, but get me out of
here!

Helen shuts off her flashlight and puts it in her pocket.

Simon guides her to his car and helps her into the passenger seat, now holding her backpack in her lap.

Simon hops in and races away.

He doesn't see Claudio and Gina angrily looking down at them from the third-story balcony.

INT. SIMON'S SEDAN - NIGHT

Simon drives wildly fast. Helen is still woozy.

HELEN

Thanks for the ring! Asshole! With
one arrest for antiquities theft, I
could have lost my chance to be a
detective and been locked away for
years. You set me up!

SIMON

Are you still drunk? Why didn't you
go out the front door?

HELEN

The Italians... they lied to me.

SIMON

How do you know?

HELEN

Said their last name was Corso, but Gina's suitcase has the name Alberti on the luggage tag.

SIMON

It may have been her maiden name.

HELEN

Gina's wedding ring was too loose.

SIMON

Maybe she lost weight.

HELEN

She wore an old dress. No sign of weight loss. And they said they worked at the Vatican library cataloging books on index cards.

SIMON

So?

HELEN

The Vatican Library went digital in the 1990s.

Helen yawns. Head spinning.

Simon looks overwrought.

SIMON

Hmmm!

HELEN

And she removed her crucifix from around her neck. Probably had different initials engraved, giving away her true identity!

SIMON

Wow. You're very observant.

HELEN

And I think they slipped me sleeping pills in my coff...
coff... coffee.

(almost asleep)

(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

You're going to return the ring to
the dig site.

(yells)

Now! Or I'm calling the police!

Helen falls asleep and doesn't hear Simon.

SIMON

I couldn't let them catch me with
the ring. I would have been
arrested for antiquities theft and
lost my license to dig!

(sees her sleeping)

I hope you forgive me.

He drives on slowly.

INT. SIMON'S SEDAN - PRE-DAWN

It's dark. Simon's car is parked by the entrance of the
Paleopoli in front of the locked chain-link gate and fence.

Helen snuggles next to Simon with a blanket covering her.

Simon drinks hot coffee from a cup with a thermos at his side
against the car door.

Helen moans in her sleep as if having a warm, sexy dream.

Simon grows uncomfortable with her snuggling and soft
moaning, but he doesn't move.

Helen unconsciously extends a hand to Simon's inner thigh.

He sits up straight, looking around, as if considering how to
politely move her hand away.

Helen stirs awake and sits up, alarmed, quickly moving her
hand back, slightly embarrassed.

HELEN

Where am I?

SIMON

Outside the Paleopoli. Maybe the
Italians slipped you something.
We'll turn them in after we return
the ring.

Helen looks out the window to see that they are at the
Paleopoli, then throws off the blanket and shoves her right
hand down her pants to see if the small plastic bag is in her
undies.

She pulls the ring out and is relieved.

She wipes the plastic bag for fingerprints with the blanket, then slams it into Simon's chest.

HELEN

After you return the ring! I want nothing to do with you or that ring! The gate looks locked, and I'm not going to get arrested for trespassing!

Simon looks at the gate and pulls Zino's business card out of his shirt pocket. It reads "Zino Dracos, Finest Tour Guide on Samothrace" and a phone number, and he begins to exit his car.

SIMON

Fine! I'll replace the ring, then call Zino later and beg him to let me continue my dig.

EXT. THE PALEOPOLI ENTRANCE GATE - CONTINUOUS

Simon hops the gate and disappears into the dark.

Helen sits up in the car, worried that Simon hasn't returned. She looks around in anger.

Moments later, Simon returns in a panic and jumps into the car without fully shutting his door.

INT. SIMON'S SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Simon nervously pulls out his phone.

SIMON

It's gone!

HELEN

Your dig site?

He shows Helen a photo of the pit.

SIMON

No! The wine amphora from Rhodes. Somebody stole it!

He shows her a photo from the day before.

SIMON (CONT'D)

See! It was right there.

HELEN

Did you put the ring back?

Simon pulls the plastic bag and ring from his pocket.

SIMON

How could I? It could be stolen
next!

Helen is angry.

HELEN

Idiot! Everyone saw that amphora
yesterday: Zino, the Italians, the
other couple! You! Me!

SIMON

The other couple looked Egyptian or
North African.

HELEN

Doesn't matter! They'll blame you
if they catch you with that ring.
And right now, that makes me an
accomplice!

SIMON

We have to get that wine amphora
back or they'll blame me!

HELEN

Return the ring, then call the
police and report the theft.

SIMON

No way! They'll arrest me for
trespassing and suspect me of
theft.

HELEN

(sarcastic)

Because you stole the ring
yesterday? Imagine that? Did you at
least notice the broken fingers on
your skeleton?

Simon looks puzzled.

SIMON

Lots of bones break over time when
covered by other bones, like the
meter of goat skeletons I removed.

Helen shows him her hand.

HELEN

Your skeleton's fingers were broken mid-bone, not at a knuckle! Blunt force trauma.

Simon pauses to think.

SIMON

Shaft of a spear...

HELEN

Your victim was murdered!

SIMON

No! They sacrificed goats!

HELEN

Back to the missing wine jug. Did you see any suspicious footprints by your pit?

SIMON

Still too dark.

HELEN

Go put the ring back and take flash photos of the area close to the wine jug. It should prove the footprints aren't yours.

Simon smiles devilishly.

SIMON

You stood close to the pit yesterday.

HELEN

I was on the tour!

Simon turns serious.

SIMON

We can't let those thieves get away. You've got to help me, Detective!

HELEN

(yells)

No!

A second later, Helen sees a red laser dot on Simon's chest.

She pushes him out of the sedan before the windshield is hit by a bullet.

BAM!

She yells and she swings open her door and dives out.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Take cover behind the car!

Simon and Helen scurry to the back of the car.

SIMON
You saved my life!

HELEN
Run! You're on your own!

Helen takes off running.

She realizes Simon is right behind her.

EXT. GROVE OF TREES - MORNING

Simon is shaken and out of breath. Helen is annoyed.

HELEN
You don't have a choice. You have
to report an attempted murder.

SIMON
I have to put the ring back first!

HELEN
That's crazy! The pit is open, and
you're a far better target in the
daylight!

Simon has an epiphany.

SIMON
You can go on another tour, flip
the ring into the pit when no one's
looking, and point out the missing
wine jar as you call it.

HELEN
While you try to explain away the
broken windshield glass near the
front gate, to explain why someone
tried to kill you there this
morning?

Simon looks discouraged.

SIMON
I'm screwed, huh?

Helen shows no pity.

HELEN
It's what we call a self-inflicted wound.
(sympathetic)
Tell Zino you drove to the site and were about to call him to accompany you when someone shot at you. I'll back you up.

SIMON
Then they'll know you were there.

HELEN
(worried)
I know. It might be a big mistake. I'll report the Italians, but nothing about the ring. As far as I'm concerned, if they find it on you, you'll have to admit to taking it. I'm getting on the next ferry back to Alexandroupolis, then my flight to Athens, then home.

EXT. THE PALEOPOLI ENTRANCE GATE - DAY

A POLICEMAN (50s) stares at Simon's car.

Helen also examines the windshield. Her hair is in a ponytail with a thick bungee around it.

POLICEMAN
I got everything I need in the car.

HELEN
Did you note that the bullet didn't penetrate the windshield?

The Policeman busily makes notes.

HELEN (CONT'D)
So you determined it was probably a handgun at a great distance?

The Policeman writes again.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Concluding it was meant to scare Dr. Parsons, but not kill him?

The Policeman is annoyed.

POLICEMAN

I'll do my investigation. Thank you.

He checks his notes.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

A drunk and angry American woman hitchhiker, 40, was picked up by Mr. Bertoli and his wife at the café and taken to her apartment at the port.

HELEN

(yells)

Bertoli? Those liars told me their name was Corso!

POLICEMAN

Drunk and angry?

HELEN

(angry)

I'm 30, I was tipsy but not drunk, I had the Waiter call me a cab when I was offered a ride by an unmarried Italian couple of liars who told me their names were Claudio and Gina Corso.

POLICEMAN

Mr. Bertoli showed me their two passports...

HELEN

You didn't see Mrs. Bertoli or her luggage tag that read, "Gina Alberti from Venice?"

POLICEMAN

She was in the shower.

HELEN

I'll bet that was just before sunrise.

POLICEMAN

How did you know?

HELEN

That's when someone took a shot at Simon! I'm a detective, remember.

The Policeman stomps over to Simon.

SIMON

I've told you everything I know. We were shot at just before dawn.

The Policeman winks and hands Simon his card.

POLICEMAN

Call me if you think of anything else.

(glances at Helen,
whispers)

Too bad they missed your annoying lady detective friend!

Simon whispers back with a smile.

SIMON

Tell me about it.

As the Policeman walks back to his car, Simon gives Helen the 'thumbs up' sign with a big smile.

The Policeman races away as Zino races up in an old truck. Zino snarls as he gets out of his truck.

ZINO

You two! The police reported a shooting.

(glares at them)

Terrible shots, I see.

SIMON

I called you this morning to report the incident, and I hoped you could accompany me to the dig site so I could show you what I'm finding.

ZINO

What's she doing here?

SIMON

She volunteered to record for me.

HELEN

I missed my ferry to Alexandroupolis this morning. I've got a day to kill.

ZINO

Interesting choice of words. The Ephorate of Antiquities of Evros was murdered three days ago on the mainland.

Simon is in shock.

SIMON

Ms. Gallegos was a dear friend of mine.

Zino gets in Helen's face.

ZINO

What day did you two arrive in Greece?

SIMON

Three months ago. Haven't left the island since. You know that!

HELEN

Four days ago.

Zino glares at Helen.

ZINO

I see. Interesting coincidence.

SIMON

Can we get back to work? It's my last day.

Zino looks suspiciously at Simon and Helen.

ZINO

In the absence of a local Ephorate of Antiquities, I must insist you notify me of any significant find.

Zino yells as he storms off.

ZINO (CONT'D)

Including fishhooks!

EXT. THE PALEOPOLI DIG SITE - DAY

Simon brushes away soil atop the hand on the skeleton to give Helen a better look.

He glances back at Helen to see her release her ponytail from the thick scrunchie.

She hands him the iron ring.

SIMON
Ingenious hiding place!

He places the ring in a small plastic bag, then keeps dusting the hand bones, leading to an arm bone.

HELEN
I wouldn't call Zino about the missing wine jug either.

Helen inspects footprints on the rim of the pit.

SIMON
Where was our security guard?

HELEN
Strip searching you! I see at least five sets of prints, including mine and yours.

Helen bends down to see the footprint of a spiked-heel shoe.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

-- Helen sees Nubia walk several feet from the pit, but taking photos with a telephoto lens.

-- Helen sees Nubia's companion, Cepas, in nondescript brown shoes, similar to Zino's shoes.

-- Helen sees the Italian couple walking by the pit but doesn't look down at their shoes.

END FLASHBACK

Helen is upset with herself and flails her arms.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I can't believe I missed important clues.

Simon is also angry.

SIMON
Now I have to report the theft or they'll think it was us!

HELEN
You mean, you! I was with the Italians last night until I was drugged.

Simon gets in Helen's face.

SIMON

Not before you got to the café! Why would I steal something everybody saw?!

HELEN

Are you going to report it to Zino? He'll shut you down, you won't get tenure, and you'll likely lose your job.

SIMON

And Zino will assume you're my accomplice!

Helen is furious!

HELEN

And I won't get to start my detective assignment until this mess is straightened out.

(yells)

He'll have to wait until after you recover the wine jug!

SIMON

You're the detective, partner!

He slaps his car keys in her palm.

Helen paces and thinks aloud.

HELEN

Okay, partner. But when I get back, you'd better answer more of my questions! Why crush the hand of the vic to release the ring, but not collect it? And why after the vic was killed?

SIMON

You're speculating that the vic, as you call him or her, was killed first.

HELEN

That's a very precise blow. It wouldn't happen if the vic was flailing his or her arm.

SIMON

Maybe ceremonial.

Helen pauses.

HELEN
To disassociate the vic from the
group?

SIMON
(laughs)
You'd think death would be enough.

Helen is angry.

HELEN
Motive is everything!

SIMON
(defensive)
Relax!

HELEN
Pagan cult festival in a big room
nearby. Everyone had opportunity.
(beat)
My missing jug case is easier. Only
five people with opportunity. I
just hope they haven't left the
island.

SIMON
They didn't. The dig is just
getting to the good stuff. They'll
want to steal more.

INT. FANCY HOTEL #1 - DAY

Helen approaches the front desk with a young male Clerk (20s) and seductively asks about a couple describing the tall woman with spiked heels, and an average husband with brown skin.

He shakes his head 'no' and she smiles and leaves.

INT. FANCY HOTEL #2 - DAY

Helen approaches the front desk with an elderly female Clerk (60s) and politely asks about a couple, describing the height and the woman's shoes.

She shakes her head 'No,' smiles, and leaves.

INT. SIMON'S SEDAN - DAY

Helen drives by several other hotels on the island in frustration and has an epiphany.

She smiles and drives off.

INT. CAFÉ - AFTERNOON

When Helen walks into the near-empty café, she sees the Waiter and a Bum (50s; male in raggedy clothes) haggle over the price of an old coin the Bum has in his hand.

As Helen approaches them, she glances at the coin that is quickly pocketed by the Bum.

The Waiter steps between the Bum and Helen with a nervous, smarmy smile.

WAITER

The question woman has returned.

Helen smiles insincerely.

HELEN

I'll take that as a compliment.

Helen gets in the Waiter's face.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Do either of you drive a red convertible sports car?

The Waiter shakes his head no. The Bum just stares.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Have either of you seen the Egyptian-looking couple who were in here last night?

WAITER

I don't remember them.

The Bum shrugs his shoulders, indicating he doesn't understand Helen.

HELEN

The tallest woman on the island who wears spiked heels, fancy clothes, and carries a big camera around her neck?! Accompanied by a sleazy-looking man of average height and weight?

The Waiter and the Bum appear perplexed.

WAITER
No. No. I can't say...

A car starts and REVS the engine in front of the café.

Helen begins to run out, but the Waiter blocks her exit for a moment and holds her arms fiercely tight.

Helen politely addresses the Waiter.

HELEN
Please remove your grip on me.

The Waiter doesn't budge.

WAITER
Or wha...?

He doesn't finish the word 'what' before Helen kicks him in the groin and pushes him aside.

EXT. CAFÉ - CONTINUOUS

But when Helen gets outside to the street, the red sports car is well down the road with a tall woman driving, and a short person sitting next to her.

Helen races to Simon's car and is in fast pursuit.

SERIES OF SHOTS ON THE ROAD

- The sports car lengthens its lead at first.
- Helen takes more risks around blind turns and begins to catch up.
- Simon's car overheats, and Helen is forced to slow down.
- Helen pounds on the steering wheel.

HELEN
Damn it!

But as she looks as far down the road as possible, she sees the sports car pull into a private driveway on the left.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Got ya!

Helen abandons Simon's car on the side of the road, smiles, and starts to walk.

EXT. VILLA - AFTERNOON

Helen approaches the estate like a cat burglar on the prowl. She hides behind trees and shrubs as she approaches the side of the house. She sees the red sports car and a black sedan in front of the estate. The right side of the sedan has scrapes and dents.

Helen pauses to think.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The Italians swerve their BMW to avoid the gunshots from a black sedan.

On a narrow spot on the road with a cliff to the seaside, Claudio slams on the brakes, spins the car around, and hugs the inland side of the road.

He flicks on his high beams and races ahead in the direction of the oncoming black sedan.

The game of chicken works, and the black sedan goes flying off the side of the road onto big rocks that high-centers the car, rendering it useless.

Claudio and Gina are relieved, but not shaken. Helen is more angry than upset.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. VILLA - CONTINUOUS

She sneaks glances into a clean and tidy parlor.

HELEN (V.O.)
Looks like a rental. It was them!
(beat)
And, they're probably armed.

Helen looks at her waist and left shoulder.

HELEN (V.O.)
I'm not. And no radio, no backup,
and no plan.

She pauses, but moves on, peeking in windows as she moves.

HELEN (V.O.)
Elegant and contemporary? Not the
home of petty thieves.
(MORE)

HELEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 How much can an ancient wine jug
 fetch these days?

She pauses to check her phone.

HELEN (V.O.)
 Two thousand Euros tops?

She moves down the house toward the back of the house,
 peeking in windows as she goes.

She sneaks a look out to the backyard to see a luxurious
 swimming pool with two lounge chairs.

She looks perplexed at the Egyptian couple. The gorgeous,
 tall woman, Nubia, is topless and sipping Champagne. The
 slightly darker-skinned man, Cepos, is fully dressed in his
 brown suit and shoes and drinking sparkling water. Both wear
 sunglasses. The man is avoiding eye contact with the topless
 woman.

Helen pulls back.

HELEN (V.O.)
 Strangest couple I've ever seen.
 Who risks several years in jail for
 antiquities theft for two grand?

Helen sees a partially opened window, but hesitates to enter.

HELEN (V.O.)
 No warrant. Hell, no authority.
 (beat)
 The cars!

Helen moves quietly to the cars.

She peeks into the red sports car first. She sees a Chi-Rho
 symbol of Greek Orthodoxy hanging from the mirror.

HELEN (V.O.)
 No vow of chastity, I see. May have
 become a little less dogmatic about
 the religion over time.

She sees a brochure for "The Altar of St. Paul" on the
 passenger seat and reads it.

HELEN (V.O.)
 Around 50 AD, St. Paul the Apostle
 visited Samothrace on his second
 missionary journey. Huh!
 (MORE)

HELEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Yesterday's podcast said recent Greek Orthodox clergy thought they were immune from the ravages of COVID, but the disease spread through the churches in Greece like wildfire. Looks like the Egyptians are history buffs, but I knew that from the tour.

She replaces the brochure.

She inspects the damaged sedan next. She examines the scratches and the undercarriage, where she sees further damage and an oil leak.

She peeks into the sedan's tinted windows, occasionally glancing back toward the pool.

She uses her tank top to open the unlocked door. She sees a fez (a Masonic fez) in the passenger seat.

A HUGE Dog begins barking in the house.

Helen quickly shuts the car door and races to the trees.

Moments later, the topless woman opens the front door and lets the barking dog loose.

Helen bolts to the street as the dog runs straight to the side of the house and follows a scent to the black sedan and the red sports car.

Helen runs back toward Simon's car.

EXT. ROADSIDE - AFTERNOON

Helen returns to Simon's car and immediately opens the trunk to inspect its contents. She sees archaeologist brushes and trowels, a tire iron, and a gallon of coolant.

She removes the gallon of coolant and is stunned to see a bundle of rags and towels.

She puts the coolant aside in the trunk to inspect the bundle of rags.

She slowly unravels the rags and stops when she sees the top and one handle of the ancient wine jug he sent her to recover. She grabs the tire iron and yells.

HELEN

That asshole! I'll kill him!

The Policeman drives up and parks behind Helen, who is holding the tire iron. He exits his patrol car with a suspicious look.

Helen calmly shuts the trunk and smiles.

POLICEMAN

What seems to be the trouble?

HELEN

It was running a little warm, so I pulled over to check the tires.

POLICEMAN

Check the tires?

HELEN

I don't know much about cars.

POLICEMAN

Pop the bonnet.

HELEN

The bonnet?

The policeman points to the hood/bonnet.

He walks to the front of the car as Helen leans into the car and pops the trunk.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Oops!

She beats the Policeman back to the trunk, yanks out the coolant, then slams the trunk shut like a pro.

She leans into the car to pop the hood, as the Policeman returns to the front of the car and examines the engine.

Helen points to the oil cap.

HELEN (CONT'D)

(seductively)

Where does this stuff go?

As the Policeman points to the coolant container, his car radio BEEPS.

POLICEMAN

I've got to go.

The Policeman hands her a business card with a sleazy look.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

This has my number on it. Call me
first if...

Helen takes the card as the officer's radio BEEPS again.

Helen breathes a sigh of relief as the Policeman races away.

Helen shoves the Policeman's business card in her shirt pocket, quickly adds the coolant, and turns to see the Policeman pull into the Villa's driveway.

HELEN

They would have put us both away
for 15 years if they found that
wine jug! I'll kill him!

Helen tosses the tire iron onto the passenger seat, starts the car, spins around, and races off.

She passes the café not far from the Paleopoli and sees Zino talking to the Waiter.

She guns Simon's car and races to the dig site.

EXT. THE PALEOPOLI ENTRANCE GATE - AFTERNOON

Helen slams on the brakes, skids to a stop, and angrily hops out of the car with one hand on the tire iron.

She pops the trunk and removes the wine jug wrapped in rags and towels and storms over to the dig site.

EXT. THE PALEOPOLI DIG SITE - CONTINUOUS

Simon sees her coming.

SIMON

I can explain.

HELEN

The last guy who told me that died
soon after.

She reaches the pit and tosses Simon the wrapped-up wine jug before charging him with the tire iron.

Simon barely catches the jug and cringes.

SIMON

We had to know about the Egyptians!

She threatens him with the tire iron again.

HELEN

You set me up, asshole! The topless female is or was Greek Orthodox.

SIMON

Topless?

HELEN

The male is a Freemason or a Shriner, and a real prude!

SIMON

How do you know?

HELEN

He wouldn't look at his half-naked, gorgeous wife, girlfriend, or boss. I don't think they're married.

SIMON

Huh?

HELEN

No rings. And, they had a huge barking dog that could have killed me!

SIMON

Sorry, okay?

HELEN

Not okay. Your stupid car overheated, so when I popped the trunk, I found the wine jug you stole.

SIMON

I saved it from being stolen.

HELEN

The Policeman who stopped might not have seen it that way, and we both could have gotten 15 years! I would have lost my...

They see Zino approaching them, and both turn civil.

Simon uses his back to shield Zino's view as he unwraps and replaces the wine jug in its original position.

Helen growls at Simon and pulls the tire iron down.

SIMON

(to Helen)

If you can help me catalog this item...

(to Zino)

Zino! Nice of you to supervise this common but important find.

Zino glares at Simon, then at Helen.

ZINO

Ms. Thanos, why did you race past me at the café?

HELEN

Simon loaned me his car to race back to my hotel.

She waves her hand below her belt.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Female problems. You wouldn't understand.

Now, Simon uses his body and Helen's to shield the view of the now more-exposed skeleton.

SIMON

(excited)

We're just about to catalog the wine vase from Rhodes.

Simon is drawn to the vase. He sees the Greek letter, kappa (k), engraved in the terracotta.

ZINO

Why the letter kappa? Why not Rho for Rhodes?

Helen leans in to inspect the wine jug.

SIMON

Ancient mystery, Mr. Dracos. It could take me weeks or months to decipher.

Zino shrugs, dissatisfied.

ZINO

Make something up when I bring the tour by again in an hour.

SIMON

I thought you were off today.

ZINO
That rich Egyptian couple wanted
the same tour again! Imagine that?

HELEN
And that nice Italian couple?

ZINO
Why, yes. They signed up too.

Zino glares at Helen.

ZINO (CONT'D)
You are not encouraged to sign up,
Ms. Thanos! Your behavior...

HELEN
(smiles)
I'm busy here, recording for Dr.
Parsons.

Zino speaks as he walks away.

ZINO
Remember, Dr. Parsons. You are
required to photograph and cover
the pit at the end of your last day
of digging.

Simon yells.

SIMON
Yes, Mr. Dracos.

Helen insincerely waves goodbye.

While Simon dusts off the wine jug again, Helen raises the
tire iron.

HELEN
You put my life and career in
danger. You're an irresponsible
archaeologist and a worse human
being. I'm out of here!

Helen tosses the tire iron down and begins to walk away.

SIMON
Ask me about the kappa on the wine
jug.

Helen turns, angry but curious.

HELEN

Why?

Simon steps closer with puppy-dog eyes and holds up the jug.

SIMON

It didn't contain wine! It was filled with kykeon, a psychoactive brew used in the secret ceremonies of the Eleusinian Mysteries, you're so crazy about.

Simon points to the skeleton.

HELEN

And?

SIMON

I think your vic was killed at the end of the big, annual induction ceremony in July.

Simon gets on his knees to plead with her.

SIMON (CONT'D)

But I need your help to prove it!

Helen turns and begins to walk away.

HELEN

You were right about the Egyptians. Their black sedan was the one that ran the Italians and me off the road.

Simon stands proud.

SIMON

You see?

HELEN

I assume the Egyptians were after the Italians, not me, but I don't know why.

SIMON

We'll know in an hour if they're all on the tour. You gotta stick around to find out.

HELEN

I don't care. And I don't trust you to make adult decisions!

Simon looks pitiful.

SIMON

You have to help me cover the skeleton to protect the Eleusinian Mysteries!

Simon points to the skeleton.

SIMON (CONT'D)

If we get this guy to talk, that is, if he yields any more clues, we could finally see inside the most secretive cult in human history!

HELEN

What did you mean by more clues?

Simon holds out the iron ring.

SIMON

This didn't belong to our vic!

HELEN

Who did it belong to?

Simon shows Helen the engraving on the inside of the ring.

SIMON

A guy named Aristotle.

Helen is shocked as she looks at the ring.

HELEN

I didn't look at it closely.

SIMON

I know. You used Aristotle's ring as a ponytail tie! You weren't very observant.

Helen is furious.

HELEN

I didn't ask for the ring!
Remember?

Simon points to the skeleton.

SIMON

I didn't ask for a murder victim!

Helen bends down to examine the skeleton.

HELEN

That's not... is it?

SIMON

No. After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE, anti-Macedonian sentiment forced Aristotle to leave Athens. He died north of Athens a year later with digestive issues. He's buried next to his wife, who had died some years before.

Helen points to the skeleton.

HELEN

Then who is this? How did he get Aristotle's ring? Who killed him and why?

SIMON

Motive is everything! You told me that!

Helen is reluctant to help Simon, but she looks compelled.

HELEN

Hand me a bush.

Simon is giddy as he hands her a brush.

SIMON

But we have to cover up this part of the pit when the tour goes by.

HELEN

What about the wine jug?

SIMON

Who would risk 15 years in jail for a wine jug worth fifteen hundred Euros?

Helen punches him hard in the shoulder before brushing off more of the skeleton.

SIMON (CONT'D)

There's some evidence that Aristotle participated in the Eleusinian Mysteries when he was a teenager, and he didn't write about it.

HELEN

Why?

SIMON

Some said because of the secrecy requirements and potential punishments...

HELEN

But...

SIMON

I think he was unimpressed by the strict ceremony and ritual requirements...

HELEN

Or he had a genuine conflict with celestial authority.

Simon gets in Helen's face with a bit of anger.

SIMON

You think you know Aristotle? You don't! I told you his writings on the gods were lost to history.

(glares)

Maybe you're not cut out for this!

Helen glares back.

HELEN

You're still an irresponsible asshole. Do you know that! I know less about the Eleusinian Mysteries than I did when I met you!

They glare at each other, but both keep brushing.

INT. SPORTS CAR - SAME

The Egyptian couple races down the road. Nubia drives while Cepos polishes a large knife called a "makhaira," a type of Ancient Greek weapon. Nubia wears a stylish, open V-neck blue pantsuit and matching spiked heels. Cepos wears his same brown suit.

Nubia gazes over at Cepos and rests her hand playfully on his knee.

As he shines the blade, her hand moves up closer to his crotch.

He stops shining the blade, so her hand returns to his knee.

He begins to shine it again, and her hand caresses his inner thigh.

He shines more, and her hand begins to rub his crotch.

He moans as she speeds up and drives away.

INT. CAFÉ - SAME

The Italian couple, dressed like the day before, converses quietly while the Waiter wipes tables all around them, listening in to their conversation. He doesn't look up.

WAITER

You lost the woman with all the questions, and I know where she is.

Claudio stands and apologizes.

CLAUDIO

We mean her no harm. She was being chased and shot at.

The Waiter's eyes open wider.

GINA

Poor thing knows nothing about what goes on around here with the cult.

The Waiter's eyes open wider in fright.

CLAUDIO

We quit the cult years ago and returned to the Church of Rome.

The Waiter caves.

WAITER

She's at the dig site with Dr. Parsons. It's his last day. He has to wrap up the dig by sunset. Somebody big rented the entire Paleopoli tonight 'til midnight.

Claudio and Gina are impressed.

CLAUDIO

That would be that crazy cult!

WAITER

The same group is renting the café.
They're flying in a chef from
Athens with a helicopter to cook
stuffed goat.

GINA

What's the occasion?

WAITER

I don't know, but outsiders are not
invited.

CLAUDIO

Huh? Imagine that!

GINA

Let's go, our tour is about to
begin.

EXT. THE PALEOPOLI ENTRANCE GATE - LATE AFTERNOON

Zino paces and stares at his watch.

EXT. THE PALEOPOLI DIG SITE - SAME

Simon anxiously scrapes and brushes, working sloppily and
fast.

HELEN

Don't you want to be more careful?

SIMON

Excuse me. I'm in a bit of a rush
to save my career.

Helen shakes her head in disgust but notices a leather strap
under Simon's foot. She points to it.

HELEN

What's that?

Simon spins in eager anticipation, only to shrug in despair.

He brushes away the leather strap.

SIMON

Just a leather strap. It could have
been on a sandal, a purse, a knife
sheath, or anything. Not a major
find.

HELEN
 (sarcastic)
 Sorry for seeing it.

SIMON
 No. That was good. Just not quite
 enough for tenure.

Simon shrugs in despair.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 Only a few hours of daylight left,
 and we have to cover the skeleton
 when the tour comes by, or I'll be
 answering questions for an hour!

They keep digging.

EXT. THE PALEOPOLI ENTRANCE GATE - CONTINUOUS

The Italians are the first to join Zino. They greet him in
 Italian.

CLAUDIO
 Buongiorno.

GINA
 Ciao.

ZINO
 You again? It's the same tour as
 yesterday...

They all turn to see the Egyptian couple angrily stomping
 toward them. The woman added a floppy blue hat to her
 ensemble.

Gina glares at Nubia's spike heels and shakes her head in
 disgust at her showy cleavage.

The Egyptian woman catches Claudio sneaking glances at her,
 and she snickers and looks away.

ZINO (CONT'D)
 You again? It's the same tour as
 yesterday...

Cepos motions them to get on with the tour, then stomps ahead
 of Zino, heading to the dig site.

The Italians are suspicious of the Egyptians, and vice versa.

EXT. THE PALEOPOLI DIG SITE - LATE AFTERNOON

Simon is excited as he uncovers a thin 60cm x 60cm rock on the side of the pit next to the skeleton.

HELEN

What's got you excited about that rock?

SIMON

Odd to find a thin rock in the lining of an animal sacrifice pit like this.

HELEN

You said it was odd to find a human skeleton also.

SIMON

Very odd.

Simon dusts away.

HELEN

What?

SIMON

Sometimes, they had a drain-like system of blood and guts to be washed away or flushed into a creek.

HELEN

(sarcastic)
Sounds lovely.

SIMON

But this stone had a marble polish at some point.

Simon tries to move it, grunts, and fails.

Helen jumps in to help. They grunt together and pull the stone back to reveal a dark entrance to a pit-within-the-pit.

Helen tosses a stone and hears it hit something.

HELEN

Eight or ten feet deep is my guess.

Simon stares at the stone that covers the deeper pit with a perplexed look. He slumps to the ground.

SIMON

We uncovered a garbage pit. That
will never get me tenure!

Helen turns to see Zino and his tour group heading their way.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Quick. Help me pull the tarp over
this half of the hole and the
skeleton, and we'll both start
dusting the wine jug.

They stand atop the pit, ready to cover it up when Zino
yells.

ZINO

Freeze! I order you not to move, or
you'll be shot.

Helen stares at the wine jug.

Simon glances at the kappa on the wine jug, and back to the
skeleton, then to the small cavern entrance.

He whispers to Helen.

SIMON

We may have solved the greatest
Eleusinian Mystery of all time. I
need one more day to excavate! And
I need to turn the jug around so
they can't see the kappa.

Helen glares at Zino as the group arrives at the pit.

Simon turns and addresses Zino and his tour group, who look
suspiciously at Simon and Helen.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Mr. Dracos, I was just about to
call you.

He points to the jug.

HELEN

It's a wine vessel from Rhodes.

Helen looks up to see the Italians glaring at her.

GINA

Older than 300 BCE?

SIMON

Yes, I think so, of course, it requires more tests...

Simon and Helen see that Zino's hands are behind his back, and he's sweating profusely.

HELEN

Mr. Dracos, are you okay?

CLAUDIO

Dr. Parsons, tell us about the wine jug.

SIMON

I've already cataloged and photographed it. You'll be caught if you...

Cepos hops into the pit and pulls the dagger out, and holds it to Helen's throat.

CEPOS

Where's the ring?

Helen immediately dredges up the appropriate self-defense strategy from her training.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. POLICE TRAINING GYM - DAY

Helen has a big, strong POLICE OFFICER (40s, male) in an athletic suit behind her holding a knife to her throat.

In a series of swift moves, Helen grips the man's knife hand with her two hands, pulling the knife down and away from her neck. She retains a strong grip on the knife hand as she tucks her head under her assailant's armpit and bends his knife hand behind him, forcing the blade hand up high toward the man's head.

He screams in pain and bends down, where she takes the knife from him and pretends to stab him.

END FLASHBACK

As Helen snaps back from her training memory, she sees Claudio holding a pistol against Zino's skull.

SIMON

What the hell is going on here?

Helen glares at Simon.

HELEN

It's called a hostage situation.
They want something!

GINA

We want the wine jug.
(points to the Egyptians)
They want the ring.

ZINO

And I demand you stop your digging
now, and leave the island on the
last ferry on the hour.

SIMON

I have until sunset to complete my
work, and regulations force me to
cover the site before I leave.

ZINO

The entire Paleopoli is rented
tonight starting at sunset, so you
have to be gone.

Cepos grunts and threatens to kill Helen.

HELEN

Why all the weapons and threats?
Just ask us to leave. We will!

Claudio pulls back the trigger of the pistol against Zino's
head.

ZINO

You can take your notes and file
for a dig extension tomorrow.
(sad)
Except that the Ephorate of
Antiquities of Evros was murdered
four days ago, and she won't be
replaced for several weeks.

Simon looks very sad. Helen glares at Zino.

SIMON

Did they find out how she died?

ZINO

Bullet to the heart.

Helen glares at Zino again.

Simon reluctantly hands the wine jug to Gino, and he pulls
the ring out of his pocket to hand to the smiling Nubia.

Immediately, Claudio and Gina race away with the wine jug.

Helen's eyes open wide, and she uses her self-defense moves to disarm Cepos and leave him yelping in pain. Helen holds the knife to her assailant.

HELEN

Mr. Dracos, call the police!

As Helen looks up, she sees Nubia has pulled out a small 0.22 pistol and has it pointed at Simon's head.

NUBIA

I've already called him.

Helen's eyes open widely.

HELEN

Simon, let's go!

Simon is reluctant.

NUBIA

Give the nice man back his knife,
or I'll shoot your boyfriend.

Helen surrenders the knife to Cepos, as Simon speaks and the Policeman walks toward them with his pistol drawn.

SIMON

She's not my girlfriend! She's a
regular tourist helping me out by
recording observations. Do you
remember her from the tour?

Helen has an epiphany. She turns to face Nubia and yells so the Policeman can hear her.

HELEN

Wait. I know...

Helen HEARS the BAM of the pistol shot before getting hit on the back of her head.

She collapses to the ground. She looks dead.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE PALEOPOLI DIG SITE - NIGHT

Pitch dark.

We HEAR Helen groan weakly in the "garbage pit" (the pit within the pit), large enough to engulf and conceal a large man.

We HEAR her moan and groan a bit louder.

We SEE the BEAM of her small flashlight looks down in the pit-within-the-pit.

We see the skeleton of a man and a small brownish-green snake (Dahl's Whip Snake; non-poisonous; skinny and a meter long) slithering at her feet.

She holds back a scream and uses her hands to feel the diameter of the pit. At less than twice the width of her body, she puts the flashlight in her mouth and goes back to the wall to use her hands and feet to ascend the pit.

She gets near the top of the pit to see is mostly blocked by its rock cover she helped move earlier that day. But this side of the rock cover has the symbol of Hades on it.

She looks back down at the skeleton to see an iron ring on each hand. To the side of the skeleton is a broken lance.

She looks back to the Hades symbol on the rock. She mumbles without dropping the flashlight in her mouth.

HELEN

Gotcha!

She maneuvers in the pit and tries to kick the rock cover off.

It doesn't budge.

She tries again and fails.

She wedges herself closer to the rock cover and uses all her foot pressure to push the top of the cover forward, and the cover falls open.

Helen can now hang from her arms on the rock cover and boost herself up to the dig site that is now covered by a thick tarp held in place by steel stakes all around.

The light from torches creeps into small openings in the tarp caused by bullets and gaps at the perimeter between stakes.

Helen dims her flashlight and peeks out.

She sees the ruins of an ancient hall, with Twenty Cult Members (various ages and types) dressed in hooded white robes with red sashes.

Each cult member wears an iron ring on their left pinky finger and a N95 COVID mask. Three of the Cult Members carry ancient Greek lances.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Okay, that's weird.

The dim light and costumes make it impossible for Helen to identify anyone, but it is clear that the three people with lances surround a hostage. The Cult Members surround the hostage.

HELEN (CONT'D)
That's even weirder.

The lancers aim their lances at the hostage.

INTERCUT between Helen's POV in the covered pit and Nubia's POV, who is mixed among the Cult Members and moving among them.

NUBIA
Confess!

The prisoner (Simon) is silent.

HELEN
The Egyptian woman!

NUBIA
I said, Tell us what you found, or
face blood atonement.

HELEN
They've got Simon!

Helen quietly attempts to push off the tarp and escape, but she sees it's a thick swimming pool cover anchored down with steel stakes.

NUBIA
Give him more kykeon!

Two Cult Members produce a wine jug that looks eerily similar to the wine jug from Rhodes found at the dig site.

Helen squints her eyes in disbelief as she sees no "Kappa" on the jug.

HELEN
That's it, I'm calling Zino.

Helen grabs for her phone in the back pocket of her shorts and doesn't find it.

She points her flashlight to the ground and turns it on briefly.

She sees the flashlight beam light up the tarp and quickly shuts it off.

She peeks out to see if her position is compromised, but it is not.

She uses her hands to feel her way back to the pit-within-the-pit.

She reaches her arms down the hole and turns on her flashlight.

There, in the darkest corner of the pit, is her phone. The snake is coiled next to it.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Slipped out while I was climbing.
Of course, it did!

She gathers the courage to drop into the hole to fetch her phone. She hangs down from the rock cover and falls a few decimeters (1 foot) into the hole.

She grabs her phone as the snake races behind the skeleton.

She takes a photo of the skeleton with a close-up of the two rings. She takes a photo of the broken lance.

She tosses the spearhead half of the lance up through the top of the pit-within-the-pit, and nudges the end of the shaft of the lance against the wall of the hole to easily climb out.

Back in the pit and under the tarp, she uses her phone to call Zino.

She HEARS a BUZZ in the corner of the pit. She finds Zino dead, under a thin layer of soil. She removes his phone from his pocket and uses her hand to wipe the dirt away from Zino's chest.

She feels for and finds a large bullet hole.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Not a twenty-two, that's for sure!
Glock. Nine millimeter. Had to be
the cop!

She brushes off Zino's face and takes a low-light photo.

She takes the Policeman's "personal" business card out of her shirt pocket, but dials another number. She whispers.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Hello, Greek Island Time Shares?

(pause)

No, I'm not interested, but my boyfriend would like you to call him tonight, no matter how many times you try to reach him.

(pause)

Yes, my name is Gina Alberti, and my boyfriend's number is +30 551-555-1212.

Helen hangs up and peeks out at the Cult Members. Seconds later, a phone rings.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Gotcha.

She HEARS the Policeman cursing (mumbling) in Greek.

HELEN (CONT'D)

And we know we have a 9-mm pistol in the arena. And he'd kill me as sure as he did Zino!

She scrambles to the back end of the tarp to cut it open with the spear.

She hears another SCREAM.

She scrambles to the edge of the tarp and peeks through the small opening.

NUBIA'S POV

Simon is drowsy and barely able to maintain his balance. His speech is slurred. He has blood on his neck.

NUBIA

Confess!

SIMON

There is little to tell. I told you everything.

NUBIA

Again!

SIMON

The human skeleton had no obvious fractures or bone cut marks.

HELEN'S POV

Helen pauses to think.

HELEN
No bone cut marks?

Helen scrambles to the human skeleton. She hovers over the skeleton to reduce the glare of the flashlight. She examines the rib cage of the skeleton and finds clear evidence of an iron spearhead piercing two rib bones before entering the heart.

HELEN (CONT'D)
He's such a liar!

She scrambles back to peek out.

NUBIA'S POV

SIMON
I swear on my mother's grave.

HELEN'S POV

Helen pauses to think.

HELEN
His mother's grave?

SIMON (V.O.)
My mom told me before I left, it's probably why I'm single too.

NUBIA'S POV

Nubia grabs a lance and draws blood on Simon.
Some cult members cheer. Some grunt in anger.

SIMON
(yells)
I told you! I never had a chance to excavate the entire skeleton, but I'm 100% sure there's nothing more to find!

HELEN'S POV

Helen pauses to think.

SIMON (V.O) (CONT'D)
I'm never 100% sure of anything!

Helen glances back at the skeleton.

She scrambles over to the skeleton and sees the symbol for Hades on the rock cover to the pit-within-the-pit.

She leans over to glance down at the other skeleton in the hole.

HELEN

Gotcha! I know how it happened.

Helen looks back at the skeleton in the pit.

She sets her phone on record memo.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I'll call you, the first victim, One Ring, in the main pit, and the killer, Two Rings, in the pit within the pit. I'm betting that wearing two iron rings signifies the authority figure. I think Two Rings led One Ring to the pit to perform the part of the ceremony involving the confession of One Ring to Two Rings, within hearing range of other cult members. Upon a successful confession, One Ring was supposed to be lowered into the Gate to Hades, then brought back up in a triumphant resurrection. But that didn't happen. I found the skeletal remains of Two Rings in a hole covered by a rock with the symbol of Hades on it. He was accompanied by the murder weapon, a lance broken in half. Furthermore, Two Rings was buried with the Hades symbol facing him or her, suggesting he or she was not likely to see a resurrection. I speculate the other cult members did not approve of the actions of their high priest, but the motives for the two murders remain a mystery.

Helen hears a SCREAM and scrambles to get a view of the current cult members.

HELEN (CONT'D)

But that's it! I'm out of here!

Helen begins sawing the back end of the tarp open with the spear.

NUBIA'S POV

Nubia holds the spear at Simon's throat.

NUBIA
How was the iron ring engraved?

Simon looks drunk and confused.

SIMON
Aristotle?

NUBIA
Is that a question or a fact?

Simon pauses. Thinking is hard now.

SIMON
It could have been a gift from his teacher or a sign of loyalty to his teacher, nothing more.

NUBIA
Was any other evidence found related to that atheist self-appointed demagogue, Aristotle?

Simon is groggy but defensive.

HELEN'S POV

We see Helen listening to the conversation outside, but the hole in the back of the tarp is large enough for her to escape. She begins to crawl out, then freezes.

Helen freaks out.

HELEN (V.O.)
Jesus! What would Simon do if he were here... and not drugged?

She scrambles back under the tarp and to the One Ring's skeleton.

HELEN (V.O.)
He would dig up a motive!

She grabs the spear point and starts digging under the skeleton.

SIMON (O.C.)
No, but Aristotle was no demagogue, and his writings on religion were lost to antiquity. I'm not sure he could be easily categor...

Nubia draws blood from Simon's neck. Many Cult Members grow uncomfortable.

NUBIA (O.C.)
Silence.

Simon is silent and groggy.

NUBIA (O.C.) (CONT'D)
It's a moot point, anyway!

NUBIA'S POV

Nubia points to the dig site.

NUBIA (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Tomorrow morning, a new cement slab
will be poured over the entire site
for our new Visitor's Center!

The Cult Members cheer.

HELEN'S POV

Helen scrambles across the pit to peek out to see Nubia pointing to her. Helen whispers as she scrambles back to the skeleton!

HELEN
The site will be lost to humanity.
I gotta hurry.

Helen digs painfully slowly under the skeleton's skull and finds nothing. She HEARS CHANTING from the Cult Members.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I can't save you, Simon. I'm
outnumbered and they're heavily
armed, but I'll save what evidence
I can to preserve your life's work.

She turns on her flashlight and puts it in her mouth as she digs.

HELEN (V.O.)
They're bound to see me. Hurry!

She takes a rib bone with cut marks on it and shoves it in her back pocket.

She HEARS the chanting slowly coming toward her.

She freezes when she sees what looks like a leather sword sheath under the skeleton.

She has the presence of mind to take a photo of the sheath that appears to have a thin terracotta tablet inside the sheath.

HELEN

Sorry to steal this from you, One
Ring!

She rips the leather sheath from under the skeleton and grips it hard in her left hand.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Gotta run!

Helen grabs her phone in her right hand and begins to crawl out of the rip she made in the tarp.

EXT. THE PALEOPOLI GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

Helen turns to hear Nubia yell.

NUBIA

Stop her! She's getting away!

Ten of the Cult Members give chase, including the three with lances, Cepos with his ceremonial knife, and the Policeman with his 9mm pistol drawn.

The Policeman turns and SCREAMS at Nubia.

POLICEMAN

You said she was dead! Who checked
for her pulse?

Nubia pulls her 0.22 pistol and holds it to Simon's head, but Simon appears too groggy to care.

Helen races through the Paleopoli like a track star.

One Cult Member throws a lance that barely misses Helen.

She changes course and speeds up as a second lance barely misses her.

She changes course again when she hears a pistol shot. BAM.

A third lance barely misses her, and a pistol shot grazes her arm. She's bleeding but keeps running into a grove of trees.

Helen gets away.

The Cult Members gather around the angry Policeman.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

We'll be at the ferry in the morning. She won't get far!

(beat)

Come on. We have a sacrifice to make!

EXT. CAFÉ - NIGHT

Helen sneaks up on the full parking lot at the café. She spots the Police car and the red sports car driven by the Egyptians.

HELEN

Cult members! Gotcha!

She takes out her phone and begins photographing license plates for evidence.

The café is quiet and dark except for the lights in the kitchen.

Helen sees the Italian's BMW parked behind the red sports car.

HELEN (CONT'D)

The Italian's BMW?

She investigates the BMW and finds no obvious bullet holes.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The Egyptians in their black sedan give chase to the Italians in their BMW.

The Egyptians are directly behind the Italians when Helen hears the pistol shots! BAM! BAM!

END FLASHBACK

HELEN

No one misses a BMW at such close range unless they're trying to miss! They were trying to frighten me away! To stop me from asking questions!

Helen stares at the lights in the kitchen.

SIMON (V.O.)

Thanks for the swim, but I have to finish my report while it's fresh in my head, and while I have free Wi-Fi!

HELEN

Free Wi-Fi! And I need insurance!

Helen stealthily moves to the far side of the café and checks for a Wi-Fi connection. She sees 'Café' and has a strong signal, but it reads, "Enter Password."

She tries several obvious passwords: the name of the café, "Paleopoli," "GreatGods," and nothing works.

She looks back at the light in the kitchen. She walks to the back door.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Trust everyone, right?

Helen knocks on the back door of the café and is surprised when the Waiter answers.

WAITER

The question lady!

The Waiter stares at her filthy clothes.

HELEN

I'm Helen. Helen Thanos.

She puts out a hand to shake, to realize he is still assessing the dirt on her clothes and a bloodstain on her shorts from wiping off Zino's blood.

WAITER

(laughs)

Have you been in a fight with a pack of wolves?

HELEN

I need your Wi-Fi password.

The Waiter looks around before hurrying Helen in the door.

INT. CAFÉ - CONTINUOUS

The Waiter rushes Helen to the restroom.

WAITER

You clean up. I'll find you pants and a blouse. We look the same size. More or less in different areas. That cult is meeting here tonight. I have to get you out of here.

HELEN

I just need the password.

The Waiter pushes her into the restroom door.

WAITER

It's "samothraki" all lowercase, the Greek name for the island. Now go clean up!

She shuts the bathroom door.

Moments later, the Waiter returns with a pair of bellbottom pants and a T-shirt that is two sizes too small. He hands them through the door.

HELEN (O.S.)

I'll need a sweatshirt too.

WAITER

I could loan you mine, but I want it back!

HELEN

Fine!

WAITER

Fine!

Helen exits in her new outfit, and the Waiter hands her his sweatshirt.

WAITER (CONT'D)

They'll find you here. Follow me.

Helen follows the Waiter to a small broom closet.

WAITER (CONT'D)

In here! Use your phone, but don't call the police.

HELEN

I know.

Helen gets in the Waiter's face.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Why are you helping me?

WAITER
(winks at her)
We both hit on the same man. You
have good taste.

She grabs his arm.

HELEN
I thought you weren't allowed to
work their dinner tonight.

WAITER
(laughs)
The chef cancelled. I knew how to
make ancient Greek foods like the
broiled goat they all eat at the
ceremonial dinner. I make ancient
drinks too. Speaking of which, when
they captured your boyfriend, they
asked me to brew up the kykeon --
the psychoactive brew favored by
any righteous Greek cult.

He points to a gallon jug of wine on the broom closet shelf.

Helen stares at the jug.

WAITER (CONT'D)
But I still love Simon, so I gave
them another gallon bottle of wine
that looked the same, but without
the LSD-type ingredient from a
local fungus.

Helen looks away.

HELEN
So he was faking he was drunk to
yell instructions to me.

The Waiter opens the broom closet door for her, and she steps
in.

WAITER
They're going to sacrifice him
anyway!

Helen's eyes open widely.

WAITER (CONT'D)

Sneak out the back door when you're done. They're marching down from the Paleopoli now. You've got five minutes or so! I've got to check on my broiled goat.

The Waiter shuts the door.

Helen swings it open and holds out the ancient Greek writing on the thin terracotta tablet.

WAITER (CONT'D)

What's this? The five commandments? I took ancient Greek in school, but...

HELEN

Five questions of some kind?

WAITER

Roughly speaking, Number one asks, "Do all ethical societies treat people equally?"

HELEN

Number two?

WAITER

"If gods are fiction, are rituals and sacrifices to them absurd?"

(beat)

The Pope isn't going to like that one!

HELEN

Number three?

WAITER

"Can we learn from good stories about the gods even if they are fiction?"

HELEN

Less controversial. Like Aesop's Fables.

WAITER

Exactly.

HELEN

Four?

WAITER

"If god is not man, and man is not god, what do hierophants pretend to be?"

Helen makes a face.

HELEN

Hierophants?

WAITER

High priests! Every religion has them!

HELEN

He's saying they're all pretenders! Wow! Five?

WAITER

"Should we learn from teachers or hierophants to reduce secrecy, ceremony, and exclusion?"

HELEN

The death knell for all cults. Asking questions rather than blindly following cult leaders.

The Waiter strains his eyes to read a signature at the bottom of the tablet.

WAITER

Signed by Aristotle? Where did you get this?!

They HEAR the cult members storming through from the front door.

Helen and the Waiter whisper.

HELEN

Simon's dig site.

WAITER

They'll kill you if they find that.

Helen hands the Waiter the jug of kykeon.

HELEN

Serve everyone but Simon some of this.

WAITER

You're crazy! They'll kill me too!

He shuts the door as Nubia bursts into the kitchen. She yells.

NUBIA
Serve the broiled goat! Now!

The Waiter looks back at Nubia calmly as he holds up the jug.

WAITER
I believe it's customary to have wine from Rhodes before dinner.

Nubia looks at him suspiciously.

NUBIA
You drink it first to make sure it's not poison!

The Waiter pours some kykeon and drinks it and makes a face.

WAITER
The recipe is from 500 BCE. It's an acquired taste.

Nubia takes a small sip from the Waiter's wine glass and makes an ugly face!

NUBIA
They will all drink it if they are told to do so!

The Waiter sees Nubia, who wears two rings.

WAITER
Great! I'll serve the wine and goat.

NUBIA
Then you'll leave before our ceremony! Is that clear?

She hands the Waiter 1000 Euros.

WAITER
My pleasure. Believe me!

Nubia storms out yelling.

NUBIA
I want guards around the perimeter!

The Waiter peeks into the broom closet.

WAITER

The Egyptian woman wears two rings.

HELEN (O.C.)

I thought so! See if Simon's okay!

The Waiter nods and quietly closes the door.

INT. CAFÉ BROOM CLOSET - SAME

Helen connects to Wi-Fi and sends text messages about everything she has to her Chief Detective in L.A. She types a message.

HELEN (V.O.)

If anything happens to me or Dr. Simon Parsons, go public with this information. I suspect the local policeman killed Zino Dracos and the antiquities chief on the mainland, both killed by bullets to the heart. Serial killers rarely change their methods. I'm very worried about Simon.

Helen is proud of herself, but worries as she presses the send button.

Helen looks up the Editor of "Modern Archaeology" and forwards him the same note.

HELEN

Backup insurance.

INT. CAFÉ - CONTINUOUS

The Waiter pours wine and serves bowls of boiled goat to the Twenty Cult Members in white hooded robes, with red sashes, and wearing N95 masks. The guests include the Egyptians and the Policeman. Simon is wedged in a corner table with the three strong men with lances guarding him.

The Waiter pours the three guards wine from the kykeon jug, but Simon wine from another jug, without suspicion, as everyone listens to Nubia at the head table. The Policeman is next to her, but his hands are in his lap under the table.

All but the Policeman and Simon drink the spiked wine.

They all HEAR a small motor-scooter speeding away.

Everyone drinks and eats. We see the Policeman has one ring on his right hand.

NUBIA

Enjoy the wine from Rhodes and
broiled goat tonight from the
ancient recipe.

One of the Cult Members' phone BUZZES, drawing the ire of Nubia and the Policeman.

Nubia stomps over to his table and takes his cellphone.

NUBIA (CONT'D)

To the Editor of Modern
Archaeology.
(beat)
From Helen Thanos?

She reads the message in horror as Simon looks up, bewildered.

NUBIA (CONT'D)

If anything happens to me or Dr.
Simon Parsons, go public with this
information. I suspect the local
policeman killed Zino Dracos and
the antiquities chief on the
mainland, both killed by bullets to
the heart.

The Policeman stands and finally reveals both his hands. He wears three iron rings.

POLICEMAN

Find her and kill her! This is the
only Wi-Fi around. She must be
outside but within 20 meters.

Everyone but the Policeman, Nubia, and Simon stagger drunkenly outside to hunt for Helen.

Nubia starts to wobble on her legs.

The Policeman smells his wine glass, then stomps over to Nubia and yanks the phone from her hand.

The Policeman yells at Nubia.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

Bring me that Waiter!

NUBIA

Gone. Motor-scooter.

POLICEMAN

The bastard drugged you.

He looks around at the empty wine glasses.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

He drugged everyone!

Nubia collapses in a chair as the Policeman thumbs through the photos that Helen sent.

We see the Policeman go quickly through the license plates of the cars out front, but he freezes at the terracotta tablet with the five questions to study them.

Nubia passes out.

The Policeman glares at Simon.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

You knew!

The Policeman takes out his gun and points it at Simon's heart.

Helen enters from the kitchen with her hands in the air and her smartphone tucked in her waistline, with her video camera on. She wears the Waiter's sweatshirt tucked in the front so the camera lens is exposed.

HELEN

He knew most of the story.

The Policeman spins and points his pistol at Helen's heart.

The Italians are marched in with Cepos staggering behind them and pointing his ceremonial knife at Gina's back.

CEPOS

I found them in the car using the free Internet, like you said.

HELEN

I'm glad they're here to see this.

Claudio and Gina raise their hands in surrender when they see the Policeman's pistol.

CLAUDIO

We'll return the wine jug.

GINA

It's in the trunk.

Cepos rushes to Nubia and collapses in the chair next to her.

NUBIA
(groggy)
Where are all the members?

CEPOS
Driving away. Very badly. All of
them!

HELEN
Too much wine.

POLICEMAN
You drugged us.

HELEN
The Waiter drugged you. He was
protecting Simon. He loved him.

SIMON
That's sweet.

HELEN
(to Simon)
That's why he didn't drug you for
your ceremony, and why you were
able to yell your instructions to
me. You saved my life!

Simon smiles.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. THE PALEOPOLI DIG SITE - EVENING

Helen HEARS the sound of the pistol before getting hit on the
back of her head.

She collapses to the ground. She looks dead.

Simon rushes to her, obscuring Nubia's and Cepos's view as he
checks her pulse.

SIMON
She's dead! I'll toss her in the
garbage pit where she belongs.

HELEN (V.O.)
You checked my pulse, and you knew
I was alive. You saved me from the
Policeman putting a bullet in my
heart.

Simon moves the stone cover and catches a glimpse of the Hades symbol on the back.

As he lowers Helen into the pit, he catches a glimpse of the skeleton.

He returns the rock cover, leaving a crack for light to enter.

SIMON

They'll never find her.

The Policeman yells from a poor vantage point where he can't see into the pit.

POLICEMAN

Drag Zino to the pit and cover them both. We have a ceremony to attend.

Cepos, Nubia, and Simon drag Zino to the pit, and cover it up as the Policeman stomps up to the pit's edge, empties his clip in random places on the tarp, and stomps away.

END FLASHBACK

Helen glares at Simon.

HELEN

But I couldn't figure out why you were helping the Policeman and the Egyptians until later.

Helen paces.

The Policeman's pistol points alternately at Helen and Simon.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I figured that after you saw the Hades symbol and the second skeleton, you needed my help finishing your dig. Your permit expired.

Helen has an epiphany.

HELEN (CONT'D)

You can put your ring on, Simon.

Simon sheepishly reaches into his pocket and puts an iron ring on his pinky.

GINA

He's one of them!

Claudio and Gina lower their heads, disappointed.

HELEN

Just to stay alive. Isn't that right, Simon? That's why you couldn't tell me everything about the Eleusinian Mysteries. You'd be killed. But if I found out on my own, that would be okay!

The Policeman points his pistol at Helen's heart.

POLICEMAN

Until she found the tablet of questions.

Helen pulls the terracotta tablet from her back pocket and strolls it over to Simon.

HELEN

A philosophical Rosetta Stone from Aristotle, or his student -- the first skeleton in the pit -- we may never know who wrote the questions.

Simon holds it like a sacred text.

SIMON

I've been looking for this my entire career.

Simon studies the tablet as Nubia and Cepos grow more sober and alert.

POLICEMAN

(angry)

Five ridiculous questions!

The Policeman points his pistol briefly at Nubia and Cepos, who look around and are frightened by the Policeman.

HELEN

Your wrong! Those questions were worth dying for. The cult initiate in the pit thought so.

All eyes are on Helen as she explains.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

SUPER: "331 BCE."

INT. THE PALEOPOLI, MAIN ROOM - SAME

The Twenty Cult Members (from the opening scene) huddle close to the entrance of the back room. They are anxious and scared for the Initiate going through the rites.

HELEN (V.O.)

Aristotle's student came to the annual ritual of the Eleusinian Mysteries with this list of questions.

SIMON (V.O.)

They weren't written on papyrus like Aristotle's other works, they are carved into terracotta to last an eternity. The Initiate knew he was supposed to confess his sins, but instead, he asked questions that must have infuriated the Hierophant.

The Cult Members are both horrified and curious by the Initiate's questions.

Many shake their heads in wonder at what is to come.

Anxious moments pass.

HELEN (V.O.)

But the Initiate wasn't given a journey in and out of Hades.

The Cult Members are horrified as they creep closer to the back room.

The Cult Members grow angry, shaking their fists in silence.

They HEAR a Lance ripping through a man's flesh.

They HEAR a body collapsing to the ground.

HELEN (V.O.)

He was murdered with a spear, and his hand was crushed by the shaft of the lance!

INT. THE PALEOPOLI, BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

HELEN (V.O.)

Hearing this, the Cult Members must
have charged into the back room,
horrified at the sight of the
Initiate's murder.

The Hierophant holds up his hands to show the Cult members
his two rings. He screams.

A Cult Member (a woman, 40s, darker-skinned) rips the lance
from the Hierophant's hand and shoves the blade into his
heart. She leans the lance against the wall and gives it a
mighty kick, breaking it in half.

SIMON (V.O.)

They killed the Hierophant and
shoved him in the hole.

HELEN (V.O.)

And turned the cover stone over so
he would face the entrance to Hades
forever!

The Hierophant collapses backward, head-first, into the small
cave. We see his feet twitch as two Cult Members climb into
the pit, toss the broken lance in with the second body, and
cover the smaller pit with the Hades symbol toward the body.

END FLASHBACK

HELEN

I found the terracotta tablet in a
sword sheath that must have been
tied under the Initiate's robe.

Simon hugs Helen.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Questions worth dying for, and
worth killing for.

(angry)

Isn't that right, Simon?

Simon releases his hug and pushes Helen a few steps away.

Hellen yells at Simon.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I trusted you, and you were trying to get me arrested for antiquities theft when you slipped me that ring in the café and put that wine jug in the back of your car! A fifteen-year prison sentence!

Simon calmly reaches into his pocket and puts three more iron rings on his fingers. Helen scoffs at him.

HELEN (CONT'D)

It appears our recently ordained high priest of the cult didn't care if I lived or died in the pit! Those lancers in the procession weren't holding you hostage; they were your bodyguards!

Simon yells at the Policeman.

SIMON

Shoot them. Shoot them all!

Helen yells at Simon, pointing to the phone at her waist.

HELEN

Say that again, Simon! We're live streaming on the web.

Simon's face freezes in terror.

Helen turns to the Policeman.

HELEN (CONT'D)

And everyone knows you killed the antiquities chief on the mainland and Zino. Ballistics will put you away for life.

The Policeman points at Simon before dropping his pistol.

POLICEMAN

I should never have trusted Simon. I was just following orders.

Helen glares at Simon, pointing to the terracotta tablet.

HELEN

From a so-called hierophant or high priest, whose biggest mistake was digging for answers without asking the right questions.

The Italians and the Egyptians race to the exit.

HELEN (CONT'D)

(yells)

They won't get far! Interpol and the Greek police are sending a team from the mainland.

Simon looks away.

Helen looks sadly at Simon.

HELEN (CONT'D)

And my biggest mistake was almost falling in love.

EXT. THE PALEOPOLI DIG SITE - MORNING

Yellow police tape surrounds the dig site. Four Police Officers (various ages and types) conduct a crime scene investigation.

Simon, The Policeman, Nubia, and Cepas are handcuffed and being guided away.

Simon yells back at Helen with an angry look.

SIMON

Those questions ruined my life!

She yells back, equally angry.

HELEN

"Learning is not child's play!" Aristotle said. And better yet, those were rhetorical questions meant to get us all to think and keep asking questions! That should give you all a lot to think about in prison!

The prisoners look away in guilt.

Gina and Claudio return the wine jug to Helen at the dig site.

The Police Officers photograph Zino's body and the two skeletons in the pit.

Helen poses for photos holding the terracotta tablet of questions before returning it to the skeleton.

Helen stares at the symbol for Hades on the stone cover.

Helen stares at the terracotta tablet and the dig site with a confident smile.

FADE OUT.

THE END