

Wingozz'

POSSESSION

ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY BY RUDI O'MEARA

THIS FILM IS NOT YET RATED

POSSESSION

Written by

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BLACK.

The CRACKLE of an old projector. A flicker of light.

An image SNAPS into focus.

BLACK AND WHITE. Grainy. High-contrast.

INT. CASTLE - NIGHT

A claustrophobic stone corridor lit by bare bulbs. Moist walls. Tapestries. Faded frescoes.

The camera GLIDES, predatory. Low to the ground.

A woman's bare feet SLAP against the stone as she runs.

She is young, beautiful. Pale skin. Cool features. Haunted eyes. Hair loose and wild.

She turns a corner, SLAMS into a dead end. Spins.

Breath RAGGED.

Behind her: FOOTSTEPS. Unhurried.

Then, a MAN'S VOICE. Calm, amused, cultured.

UOMO (O.S.)
(Italian, velvet-soft)
Non c'è nessun posto dove andare.

She backs against the wall. A heel slips on something dark.

UOMO (O.S.)
(English, accented)
Don't run. There is nowhere to go.

She looks down. BLOOD. Already here. Already waiting.

She looks up. There he is.

Older. Elegant. Rings catching the light.

His hand reaches in, grips her neck, tilts her chin up.

We never see his face.

UOMO
(Italian, lustful)
Sei bellissima quando hai paura.

POP. POP. BUZZ. BUZZ.

Two brief FLASHES OF LIGHT blot out the scene before it re-materializes. Like a Polaroid picture developing.

UOMO
 (English, haughty)
 You're so beautiful when you're
 afraid.

She SCREAMS.

He lunges further forward, ivory teeth glinting.

SINKS HIS TEETH INTO HER NECK.

Gorges on the blood, bathes his face in the carnage.

Drinks her in.

ADMIN (PRE-LAP)
 Um, is this really necessary?

HARD CUT TO:

INT. PHOTO STUDIO - DAY

While strobe lights FLASH and then BUZZ to recharge in the distance, the same movie plays over a massive white wall.

BORED MODELS (20s) stand on an impromptu runway below the projected, old-timey gore.

Wedged into fast fashion ensembles.

A young female ADMIN (20s) stands staring at the flickering black-and-white horror flick, clutching an iPad.

ADMIN
 I mean, like, ewwww...

Behind her, a chic but overworked fashion designer, DAPHNE (mid-30s) un-spools a massive bolt of raw denim.

DAPHNE
 No, it's our theme. The organizing
 principle of the entire collection.

Daphne looks up, irritated.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
 (perfect pronunciation)
 Giallo.

ADMIN
 Jello?

DAPHNE
Giallo. Italian slasher films from
the mid-70s featuring--

An incongruously chipper RING TONE cuts her off.

She fishes AirPods out of a pocket in her blouse, plunks them in, lifts an index finger toward her admin.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Yo.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. TECH OFFICE - DAY

A sleek but cramped open-plan office space.

Exposed brick. Silver ducting. Tall windows. And bored looking CODERS in black hoodies as far as the eye can see.

Amid them sits MARCUS (mid-30s) a scruffy but stylish programmer in an ergo task chair surrounded by obscure Japanese collectable figurines.

He too talks over AirPods as he rapidly types:

MARCUS
Yo.

DAPHNE (V.O.)
How goes it?

MARCUS
Shitty. You?

DAPHNE (V.O.)
Same.
(hushed)
Jello? It's fucking giallo, bitch.

MARCUS
Huh?

DAPHNE (V.O.)
The inspiration behind my entire--

She can hear the CLACKING of his keyboard, cuts herself off.

DAPHNE (V.O.)
Never mind.

Barely hearing her, Marcus lifts his fingers from the keys, leans closer to his screen, squints.

MARCUS
So freaking bonkers.

DAPHNE (V.O.)
Tell me about it.

MARCUS
Like, it just keeps rewriting its
own code as soon as I debug it.

DAPHNE (V.O.)
Uh-huh.

MARCUS
There's no way to keep up.

INT. PHOTO STUDIO - DAY

As the models prepare to pose, Daphne looks back up to the movie playing over a vintage projector in the distance.

The young victim is now in a heap on the floor, covered in blood, as her vampiric seducer's silhouette wafts away.

UOMO (V.O.)
(from the projector)
Il sangue chiama il sangue.

DAPHNE
Exactly.

Daphne stares at the flickering image like it's a holy relic. An object of pure art lost to the sands of time.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
But this is definitely your fault.

MARCUS (V.O.)
What? How's this my--

DAPHNE
I didn't go to F.I.T. to value
engineer faux selvedge denim
manufactured by the lowest bidder
in sub-Saharan Africa.

MARCUS (V.O.)
I didn't go to M.I.T. to wind up
proofing AI commits all day.

She lifts the edge of the denim before her, inspects it.

DAPHNE
And yet here we are.

INT. TECH OFFICE - DAY

As Marcus continues to try and fail to QA code, his fellow developers stand, stretch, and give up in frustration.

MARCUS
And yet here we are.

DAPHNE (V.O.)
Why do you have to do that?

MARCUS
Do what?

DAPHNE (V.O.)
Whenever I bring up F.I.T you try
and trump me with--

MARCUS
Trump you?

DAPHNE (V.O.)
With your fancy degree.

MARCUS
Listen, that's not what I--

DAPHNE (V.O.)
Well, you wrote this stupid code.

MARCUS
No, I didn't.

DAPHNE (V.O.)
Yeah, you did.

Marcus cants his head, pushes back from his desk. The code on-screen just continues to flow automagically.

DAPHNE (V.O.)
Our entire, so called, *consumer-*
informed design engine now runs on
your platform, buddy. Even our
Marketing team is--

MARCUS
Wait. It does? Since when?

INT. PHOTO STUDIO - DAY

Daphne sets the bolt down, looks to the other end of the all-white space, sees a PHOTOGRAPHER shooting mannequins on wheels dolled up in next season's hottest ensembles.

She shakes her head, nonplussed.

DAPHNE

They're not even gonna cast real models anymore. Real people. Just sub in digital doubles based on what clicks better. So dumb.

MARCUS (V.O.)

Actually, that's kind of--

SPLIT-SCREEN:

Marcus looks up, sees a severe HR WOMAN (30s) crossing the space toward him. All agenda.

Daphne looks up, sees an oddly identical HR WOMAN (20s) striding across the studio directly at her.

DAPHNE

Oh...

MARCUS

...shit. I gotta--

Daphne stands. Marcus stands.

Both HR women slow. Identical bright red nails. Matching impossibly thin laptops.

DAPHNE

Someone from HR...

MARCUS

Uh-huh. Me...

The HR women open their laptops in unison.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

...too?

INT. LOFT - DUSK

A lived-in but sadly anonymous loft full of knock-off design classics rented month-to-month (likely via an app).

BANG. BANG.

A banker's box and a milk crate slam down onto the lacquered surface of a sleek, ovoid coffee table.

Two bodies follow the boxes down onto a bright red couch.

Exhausted and shell-shocked.

Fabric swatches and old issues of W, British Vogue, and Harper's Bazaar brim from the banker's box.

The milk crate is filled with hard drives, tangles of cables, and overpriced, ironic Japanese figurines.

MARCUS

Fuck me.

DAPHNE

You're not kidding.

MARCUS

After all these... years?

DAPHNE

And on the same day? It's almost like they planned it.

Daphne turns, gazes across the space. If they tried for homey, they failed. Miserably.

MARCUS

What am I gonna do about my loans?

DAPHNE

You're a programmer. You'll find something new. Easy as pie. Me on the other hand...

Marcus tosses his head back, stares at the ceiling.

MARCUS

No, you don't get it. The engine is running itself now. Writing its own code. Debugging itself better than I ever could. Than anyone could.

(slow exhale)

Better, faster, stronger...

Daphne's eyes drift back the banker's box. Out of it juts a thick issue of Elle with a rail-thin model standing on a verdant hillside somewhere in the Italian countryside.

An idyllic, centuries-old Palazzo looms behind her.

DAPHNE

Severance?

MARCUS

Two months, plus PTO. You?

DAPHNE

Same.

MARCUS
COBRA?

Daphne continues staring at the woman on the magazine.
Almost as if she's drifting into a trance.

DAPHNE
I guess so.

MARCUS
We're so hosed.

Marcus looks away, seems equally underwhelmed by the
anonymous artifacts of the domestic life they've assembled.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I always knew this would happen.
That the robots would be coming,
but for, like, other people's jobs.
Not mine. Not ours. Not yet anyway.
(beat)
Not so *frigging* soon.

Daphne reaches out, grabs the magazine, pulls it closer.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I thought we'd be safe. In the
clear. That it'd be the menial shit
that gets replaced first. The dumb
stuff. The repetitive jobs. Not
creative stuff. Not programming and
whatever it is you actually...

Marcus looks to see Daphne staring into the image.

DAPHNE
What if we just... left?

MARCUS
What do you mean left?

DAPHNE
Started over. Somewhere real.

Marcus LAUGHS halfheartedly.

MARCUS
Yeah? With what money?

Daphne ditches the magazine, grabs her phone, unlocks it,
stabs at an app, scrolls, clicks, scrolls some more.

DAPHNE

One-Euro houses. I clicked on some reel about it, like, ages ago.

She pauses, types, scrolls some more. Searching.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

They pay you to, like, renovate 'em, fix 'em up. Better the local community. Bring an infusion of youth. New blood.

Having finally found what she was looking for, Daphne flips the phone over in her hand, flashes it toward Marcus.

He stares at it blankly.

On the screen: a reel of a charming Italian farmhouse.

Stone walls. Wooden beams. Undulating vineyards stretching as far as the eye can see.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

*Italia, baby. Home of my peoples.
Miei antenati.*

Without even looking, she flip/scrolls with her thumb through reel after reel after reel.

Marcus just watches, his face lit by the flickering glow of sunlit terracotta and swaying Cypress trees.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

My ancestors.

MARCUS

One Euro? How's that even--

DAPHNE

You apply. There's a stipend. Some conditions. I don't know what they are. But they pay you, like, thirty-six *thousand* Dollars to rehab, like, houses and apartments in, I dunno, quaint little Medieval villages that don't have any young people left anymore because they've all bailed to the freaking cities just like we did.

Daphne sets her phone down on her lap, clicks it off, leans toward Marcus, serious as a heart attack.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
We'd finally own something for a
change. Not just owe. Not just
rent. Possess. Like, forever.

Marcus shakes his head, stands.

MARCUS
Nothing's free. You know that.

Daphne looks to his milk crate, frowns as Marcus crosses
toward a high-end but barely used kitchen.

DAPHNE
We're not building anything here.
We're just... renting our lives.

He heads for the massive (but empty) stainless steel fridge.

MARCUS
I didn't know you spoke Italian.

INT. LOFT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

With a half-empty bottle of red and the remains of a frozen
pizza on the island between them, Daphne and Marcus gaze at
an open laptop.

On the screen: an image of a tiny, rustic hill town.

DAPHNE
Babe, that's it. *Montetesoro*.
Treasure freaking Mountain.

Daphne swipe/scrolls through a series of images mostly of a
quaint stone building that looks close to crumbling.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Three bedrooms, two bath. Full
kitchen. Patio overlooking the
valley. Roof deck. Garage. Cellar.

Marcus reaches out, tops up his wine glass.

MARCUS
Are you kidding me? That looks like
a Fred Flintstone haunted house.

DAPHNE
It looks perfect. All original.
Local stone walls. Nearly two feet
thick in places.

MARCUS
Is there even plumbing?

DAPHNE
I dunno. Yes?

MARCUS
Electricity? Wi-fi?

Daphne rolls her eyes.

Marcus empties the bottle into her glass.

DAPHNE
Says there's a caretaker on-site
who could assist with finding local
craftsmen. Stone masons, plasters.
Serve as a general contractor. Get
plans approved by the--

MARCUS
Plans?

Daphne takes a sip. On the screen before her we see a
slightly out of focus picture of said caretaker.

Wary smile. Very few teeth. Skin like leather.

DAPHNE
(dreamily)
Arturo Rinaldi.

Marcus does a slow double-take.

MARCUS
That dude's gotta be at least
eighty years old!

Daphne gulps down wine like it's water.

DAPHNE
Well you know what they say,
Mediterranean Diet and all.

Marcus draws a breath. She cuts him off:

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
What if we actually *made* things
instead of making things that made
making things obsolete? With our
own two hands? I'm sick of all this
short-term, transient, trendy, fast
fashion forever FOMO shit.

(MORE)

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
I want dirt under my fingernails,
under our feet. Permanence.

She sets down her empty wine glass, swipes again to a picture of an imposing castle high on a hilltop.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Sun-dappled Tuscany. Not far from Carrara. Just two restaurants. One bar. Natural local hot springs. God, it would be just like living in 8 1/2 24/7.

MARCUS
Huh?

DAPHNE
8 1/2. The Movie.

MARCUS
That piece of shit with Mickey Rourke from the 80s?

Daphne stands, wobbles, heads back toward the couch. Beyond it, we can see a massive, wall-mounted television.

DAPHNE
No, dummy. Fellini!

Another blank stare from Marcus.

Daphne grabs a thin remote from beside the boxes on the coffee table.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
You've never seen 8 1/2?!

MARCUS
Uh...

CLICK.

On goes the television. The light casts an eerie blue glow over the entire space.

DAPHNE
Who even *are* you anymore?

INT. LOFT, COUCH - LATER

As Daphne dozes with her head on Marcus' lap, the famous taking the waters scene set to "THE FLIGHT OF THE VALKYRIES" flickers over the flat-panel.

Marcus, to our surprise, is fully transfixed. Riveted.

We PUSH IN on Daphne's placid face as her eyelids twitch and her eyes behind them zigzag back-and-forth rapidly.

Dreaming.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT [DREAM SEQUENCE]

On the run, frantic, Daphne streaks barefoot through a claustrophobic stand of tall, leafless trees.

Her dress is torn and spattered with what appears to be blood. Or paint.

And her eyes are wild. Full fear.

Behind her: a pack of RAVENOUS WOLVES give chase.

Starlight glints in their feral eyes and sparkles from their razor sharp teeth.

Daphne SKIDS to a stop, her feet and her face bleeding.

Before her: a vertiginous cliff. Nowhere to run.

She wheels around to find herself standing face-to-face with a lone figure dressed in all-black.

A MAN (60s) pale as the moonlight piercing the trees.

His face is familiar though. Nearly identical to that of Marcello Mastroianni. From 8 1/2.

But full of menace.

MAN
(a guttural rasp)
Il sangue chiama il sangue.

He reaches out to her, draws her near, bares his teeth.

The wolves hang back, SNARLING.

MAN (CONT'D)
Blood calls to blood.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

INT. LOFT, COUCH - LATER

Daphne JOLTS awake with a start.

Marcus smiles, tightens his grip on her, hits pause.

On the screen before them: a freeze-frame of Barbara Steel vamping it up, Uma Thurman style. Iconic.

MARCUS
Alright. I'm sold.

Daphne blinks, her dreamy countenance momentarily rocked.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I'll see if my dad's firm can deal
with all the paperwork. Put it in
both our names. Set up a trust?

Daphne sits up, looks entirely drained of color.

Marcus aims the remote back at the TV, hits play again.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
And you said I wasn't marriage
material...

The dance sequence from the actual 8 1/2 plays on.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL BUS STOP - DAY

Marcus and Daphne stand under an aging brutalist bus shelter amid a torrential downpour.

SUPER: MONTETESORO, ITALY | THREE WEEKS LATER

It's as though the sky has been bleached of color. Dark gray thunderclouds as far as the eye can see.

MARCUS
Sun-dappled Tuscany, huh?

Across the steep, two-lane road opposite them: an overgrown cemetery full of leaning headstones covered in ivy.

DAPHNE
This is not what I pictured at all.

At their feet: two heavy rolling suitcases.

All their worldly possessions.

Marcus stabs a hand into his pants pocket, pulls out his phone, checks the screen.

MARCUS
And, of course.

DAPHNE
No signal?

MARCUS
No signal.

Marcus shoves his phone back in his pocket, checks his watch, SIGHS heavily as the rain falls in sheets.

DAPHNE
Well, think of it as a digital
detox. A break from doomscrolling.

Daphne looks right.

In the distance, high above: hints of the ancient village we've only caught stylized digital glimpses of so far.

In the rain and the low-lying mist, it's more grim and severe than picturesque or ideal.

MARCUS
Isn't he supposed to be here?
What's his name. To pick us up.

Daphne nods. *Maybe this was a terrible idea?*

Marcus reaches into his stylishly aged faux military jacket, pulls out a hefty skeleton key.

It's almost comically old-school. And obviously heavy.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Well, I guess we could just hike up
there and try every door until we
find the place.

DAPHNE
Still can't believe they just
FedEx'd you the key.

Marcus turns the key over in his hand, seems to quietly like the weight of it.

MARCUS
It's not like we're gonna steal the
place and ship it back home.

From their left, a faint: HONK, HONK.

Daphne and Marcus turn to see a tiny, matte blue, three wheeled Piaggio Ape pattering up the road toward them.

Inside the closed cab: ARTURO RINALDI (80s) eyes them cautiously as he pops a fogged vent window open.

ARTURO
(subtitled Italian)
Into the back, yes?

He SCREECHES to a stop just as a blinding FLASH of lightning paints the blackened sky.

Half a second later: BOOM! A massive peal of thunder.

ARTURO (CONT'D)
You speak Italian, yes?

Daphne just stares, her mind a blank. Marcus elbows her.

DAPHNE
(subtitled Italian)
Yes, yes. A little. I'm sorry, Arturo?

Arturo nods grimly, gestures to the closed section of the miniature truck bed behind him.

It looks like it could only barely fit their suitcases.

ARTURO
With pleasure, madam. With pleasure. Let's go!

I/E. APE/COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Packed like a pair of rain-soaked sardines inside the filthy bed of the Piaggio Ape, Daphne and Marcus brace and bounce.

DAPHNE
I never said you weren't marriage material.

She tries to put on a brave face.

MARCUS
You didn't have to. Your mom did. To my dad. Repeatedly.

Daphne struggles to snake a hand down into her jacket pocket, pulls out her phone, flips it around, holds it out to take a selfie of the two of them.

DAPHNE
For the wedding video.

FLASH. CRASH. More LIGHTNING. More THUNDER.

MARCUS
 If we make it out of this tin can
 alive, that is...

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

With Arturo still safely ensconced inside the only dry part of the Ape down on the cobblestone street behind them, Marcus struggles to unlock a hefty wooden door.

It won't budge, even if it looks like you could blow it in.

MARCUS
 (over his shoulder)
 Are you sure this...
 (to Daphne)
 Is he sure this is it?

Daphne looks up, squints into the rain. *Sure looks like it.*

DAPHNE
 (down toward Arturo)
This is the place?

ARTURO
Yes, young lady. This is the place.

KA-THUMP.

Something metallic finally turns inside the door and it CREAKS loudly open.

Beyond: nothing but dank darkness.

ARTURO (CONT'D)
 (not subtitled)
Ecco ci qua. Andiamo!

Arturo guns the engine: PUT-PUT-PUT-PUT-PUT. Pulls away.

ARTURO (O.S.)
Ci vediamo domani mattina...

Marcus and Daphne lean forward, narrow their eyes.

By the looks of it, the entire interior beyond the now open door is chock full of lumber, garbage, and random debris.

MARCUS
 What'd he say?

Daphne slowly crosses the threshold, parts a massive wall of cobwebs as she goes.

DAPHNE
See us in the morning...

Marcus grabs both bags, follows her in.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
...I think.

INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As her eyes adjust, Daphne climbs over mounds of discarded bricks and dozens of wooden doors stacked like matchsticks.

Amid the debris: hits of canvas-draped furniture.

The floor, barely visible, appears to be covered in terracotta pavers. And the walls, cracked and covered in soot, are off-white and rain-soaked.

Heavy, hand-carved wooden beams, also painted white, also wet, line the smoke tarnished ceiling.

MARCUS
You've got to be kidding me.

Daphne nods as she steps over a half-empty bag of plaster, makes her way past a gigantic stone fireplace with a blacked wood mantle dripping with water.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
This was a terrible--

Marcus sees something sticking out from beneath one of the bags of plaster, bends to pick it up.

It's a Polaroid picture of a young couple standing arm-in-arm inside the very same room full of debris.

A handsome Black man in his 30s and a coquettish woman with a black bob and olive skin. Both are smiling, arm-in-arm.

But their eyes have been violently scratched out.

Marcus lifts the photo closer as Daphne, oblivious, continues on toward what appears to be a kitchen.

A single line written in red ballpoint ink at the bottom of the photo reads: "MONTETESORO RENOVATION - YEAR 3!"

From off:

DAPHNE
Oh, wow.

Marcus drops the photo, steps cautiously forward.

KITCHEN:

Daphne pushes past a long, seemingly centuries-old dining table with a black marble top. It's covered in dust.

And mud.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

I don't remember the site saying it was furnished.

At least eight wood and wicker chairs in various states of disrepair line both sides of the table at odd angles.

Beyond the table, a pill-shaped, squat refrigerator that looks like it was purchased in the early 1960s.

Next to it: a wood burning stove ducted into the wall.

And, next to the stove, a long stone counter leading to yet another (sodden and soot-blackened) fireplace.

But this one looks like it was meant for cooking. A thick iron chain dangles from the flue.

Attached to the chain: a jagged, anchor-like hook.

MARCUS

What the what...

Daphne spins, sees a lovely vintage wooden cupboard also with a black marble counter top. It's mostly dry.

Beyond the thick glass panes of both doors: stacks of china plates, teacups, and saucers all with gold-leaf details.

They don't match. But they're pretty.

DAPHNE

Holy cow.

Marcus notices a halo-like light fixture dangling above the dining table, turns, feels the wall for a switch, finds a twisted cloth cord leading to one, flicks it:

CHINK. CHINK. CHINK. BUUUZZZZZZZZ.

The halo illuminates, fills the room with harsh light.

Invisible creatures scurry.

Marcus represses a gasp at the sight of a haunting, hand-painted bust of the Madonna and child hung on the wall above the fridge like a gruesome hunting trophy.

On the opposite wall: a profoundly garish crucifix.

In the light, the entire place is even more dauntingly disgusting. Grime everywhere. Mold galore.

Only Daphne doesn't see it.

Instead, she steps over more detritus and heads for what appears to be claustrophobic stairwell leading up.

And down.

MARCUS

Where are we gonna sleep?

From outside: FLASH. BOOM.

DAPHNE

So many questions.

PRIMARY BEDROOM:

At the top of the stairs, Daphne bends right, walks into a generously-sized bedroom (still full of junk and debris).

Two stately single bed frames with tall, inlaid mahogany headboards and foot boards sit pushed together in the center of the room.

No mattresses. Thankfully.

Above both bed frames, another weird, twisted, dust-covered light fixture. And an oil painting of Jesus on the cross.

Blood runs down his forehead in scarlet rivulets.

DAPHNE

Oh, snap. A deck!

Indeed: beyond the mattress-less bed frames, double-doors out to a flooded, narrow deck.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

And that must go to the roof.

Daphne points to a dangerous-looking, perilously steep wooden set of stairs to a metal hatch in the ceiling.

Water pours through all four sides of the hatch.

MARCUS
I just can't...

Daphne spins, drags Marcus with her across the hall.

GUEST BEDROOM:

Yep, you guessed it.

Another decently proportioned bedroom. More peeling paint. More alarming looking cracks bisecting the stone walls.

More hefty soaked beams. And yet another empty bed frame.

But this one features an oak headboard with an inset enamel panel emblazoned with a painted portrait of a young girl.

Even through the decades of grime, we can immediately pick up on her indelible resemblance to Daphne herself.

As if it could be her as a child. Or some distant relative.

DAPHNE
So beautiful.

Marcus does a slow, stunned double-take.

Beyond the bed, a mirrored and vividly-inlaid mahogany dresser with a matching black marble top.

From a cloth cord hung from the ceiling: a single bare bulb.

This time Marcus doesn't even bother looking for the switch.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
C'mon. Let's see what's downstairs!

CELLAR:

Clutching their phones in flashlight mode, Daphne and Marcus wind their way down the plaster-clad stairs until they slowly give way to hand-carved limestone.

Daphne runs her free hand along the damp stone wall.

DAPHNE
These stones. They must've been
here five hundred years.

She bends right, ducks under a low arch, takes the last handful of stairs into a long, narrow space lined on both sides by dozens and dozens of dusty bottles of wine.

MARCUS

And they're about to fall on us.

On the floor: gigantic wicker-wrapped wine jugs with wax-sealed corks and well-worn leather handles.

And, along the back wall, a bank of wooden shelves sporting all manner of ancient looking liquor bottles. All full.

DAPHNE

You were saying?

Beyond the shelves: a tiny door in the wall barely big enough for an adult to crawl through.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Hmm. That must be where the wine elves go to sleep it off.

Daphne just stares at it all as if fully convinced that this cellar alone vindicates their entire decision to leave.

DAPHNE

Did I not tell you?

Marcus sees another light switch, crosses toward it, reaches out for it, recoils.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Ouch. Shit.

A jagged section of metal piping jutting from the wall cuts a nasty gash across Marcus' palm. He nearly drops his phone.

Blood instantly gushes from his palm in heavy spurts, pours down his wrist, to the stone floor.

DAPHNE

Oh my god. Oh my god.

Marcus stares down at the blood pooling at his feet.

MARCUS

Um...

Thinking fast, Daphne YANKS off her still soaked scarf, LUNGES over, wraps it quickly around Marcus' hand.

DAPHNE

Back to the kitchen. See if there's running water. Hurry.

She takes his phone, rushes toward the stairs.

MARCUS
 Maybe we should bring some--

DAPHNE
 C'mon.

As she disappears, we slowly PUSH IN toward the pool of blood on the (miraculously dry) stone floor.

To our shock, it swiftly begins to disappear into the stone like water into a sponge. Absorbed.

As if the house is claiming it. Possessing it.

In the fading light, Marcus barely clocks it.

He bends to one knee, rubs the stone. Dry.

The blood is gone.

FLASH. BOOM!

KITCHEN:

Now clutching Marcus' hand by her blood-soaked scarf, Daphne tries one faucet handle, then the other.

From somewhere down below, a heavy RUMBLE.

They swap a quick, nervous glance.

The RUMBLE grows, morphs into metal-on-metal BANGING.

Then, crystal clear water gushes from the faucet.

DAPHNE
Ecco.

She runs a finger through the water.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
 Oh, wow. So cold.

She bends, sniffs at it, takes a sip.

MARCUS
 What the hell are you doing?

DAPHNE
 The water in Italy.
 (gulp)
 The best.

She unwraps his palm, places it under the water.

He nearly jumps.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Don't be such a baby.

As the water begins to wash away the blood, she wrings out her scarf, looks around briefly.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
I think we're gonna like it here.

MARCUS
Oh you do, do you?

DAPHNE
Once the bleeding stops, rinse this back out, put it back on. We'll tie it tight for tonight. Go to the tabac for some Band-Aids in the morning.

MARCUS
Tabac?

DAPHNE
It's like a smoke shop drugstore combo with candy and newspapers.

She turns, heads for the stairs again.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Let's check out the--

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The rain has finally stopped. The hatch is open.

And Daphne and Marcus sit side-by-side on a pair of rusted chaise lounges that look to be from the early 1950s.

No cushions (of course). But the canvas straps that zigzag across each metal frame actually look comfortable.

And somewhat dry.

No more lightning. The sky has cleared.

And there are two open bottles of wine and a lit candle stuck to a saucer on the roof between them.

They snack ravenously from crumpled bags of train station *Cuscinetti* as crickets and cicada CHIRP and HUM.

It's a jarringly loud, otherworldly racket. The sound of the country. Of the natural world awakening after a deluge.

DAPHNE

I'm sorry I said that. About you.
Being a baby.

MARCUS

Apology accepted.

Daphne grabs one of the dusty wine bottles, wags it toward Marcus' injured hand.

DAPHNE

Hold it up, above your heart.

He does.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

Slows the blood flow.

Marcus nods, reaches his free hand down for the second bottle, lifts it to his lips, guzzles, sets it back down.

MARCUS

(slurring slightly)
I think this is, without question,
the best bottle of wine I have ever
had in, like, my entire life.

DAPHNE

That's Italy for ya.

MARCUS

And you're right. Maybe we are
gonna like it here.

Across the valley in the distance: the jutting silhouette of the palatial Medieval castle we've seen briefly.

Lit now by the rising moon, it seems more eerie than idyllic. Like a hand-painted backdrop from a silent black and white expressionist horror film.

Daphne sets down her bottle of wine, reaches out for Marcus' good hand, grips it tight.

DAPHNE

Love you.

MARCUS

Love you more.

She closes her eyes, draws a deep breath. Savors it.

DAPHNE
It's not a competition.

PRE-LAP: BANG! BANG! BANG!

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAWN

Marcus wakes with a start, still holding Daphne's hand.

The sun has risen. The sky is a vibrant robin's egg blue.

And blood has seeped through the scarf and left a huge, dark red circle across Marcus' bright white t-shirt.

MARCUS
The fuck. What the--

From down below: BANG. BANG. BANG.

Marcus gently places Daphne's hand by her side, stands, looks around in a daze.

ARTURO (O.S.)
(from down below)
Signore e signora!

Marcus' bloodshot eyes dart from the empty wine bottles to the open hatch and then back to Daphne.

She looks so peaceful. Totally content. At home.

ARTURO (O.S.)
(subtitled Italian)
It is time to go, yes?

Marcus scrambles across the rooftop, grabs the top rung of the ladder with his good hand, descends quickly.

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

Marcus throws open the front door to find Arturo again, standing on the stoop with his arms crossed.

ARTURO
(subtitled Italian)
You leave now, yes?

Marcus STAMMERS.

MARCUS
I'm sorry, I don't speak--

Arturo sees the blood, steps back.

ARTURO
Oh, no. No, no!

Marcus looks to his bloody, bandaged hand (and his shirt).
 Seems equally surprised.

MARCUS
 It's okay, I just--

ARTURO
 (strident)
*You go home NOW. Return to America.
 There is no place for you here.*

MARCUS
 I really don't... I don't speak
 Italian. *Mi dispiace.*

ARTURO
*If you value your life in the
 slightest, I insist that you--*

Arturo cuts himself off at the sight of Daphne padding
 across the debris-strewn floor behind Marcus.

It's as if he's never seen her. Didn't get a good look at
 her in the rain and the dark.

He immediately drops to one knee.

ARTURO (CONT'D)
 (to the floor)
*I am so sorry, madam. I did not
 recognize you, your grace...*

Daphne cocks her head, not quite understanding what sounds
 more like an obscure, ancient Emilian dialect.

ARTURO (CONT'D)
*I had no idea you were intending to
 return to us after all these...*

She reaches out, places a hand on his shoulder. He recoils.

DAPHNE
Mi dispiace. Non capisco bene.

Arturo stands, keeps his eyes averted.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
 I don't quite understand.

ARTURO
 (back to Italian)
*Please, please. Forgive me for not
 preparing for your arrival.*

DAPHNE
 It's alright. *Va bene.*

Arturo finally looks up. Marvels at her. Recognizes her.

ARTURO
*Go, please. See to him. I will
 handle all else, m'lady.*

She smiles, looks to a stunned and perplexed Marcus.

ARTURO (CONT'D)
On my honor I swear it.

DAPHNE
 Tabac?

Arturo steps back, waves one hand through the air as if signaling the route, turn by turn by flight.

ARTURO
Now, go. Please. When you return...

He smacks his hands together. *Done and dusted.*

But his eyes are still averted. Shamefully. Fearfully?

Daphne pulls a still discombobulated Marcus out the door with her and out into the brilliant daylight.

EXT. VILLAGE STREETS - MORNING

Together, Daphne and Marcus amble down the narrow cobblestone streets that wind through this once picturesque, now ruined and deserted, Medieval village.

Every window appears to be closed and violently barred.

And the only sound is BIRDSONG over the CLOMP CLOMP CLOP of their still damp shoes as they walk.

MARCUS
 What the hell was that all about?

DAPHNE
 I dunno. It sounded like Italian, but I couldn't get a word of it. Sounded so... formal. Old-school.

MARCUS

When I came down, he seemed pissed.
But then when you showed up...

She grins, pulls him with her around a tight corner.

No cars. No people. Not even cats.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

How do you know where you're--

She mimics Arturo's crazy hand gestures.

DAPHNE

Can't be that far.

MARCUS

Yeah, but how're we gonna find our
way back to the...

Finally. A person.

An OLD WOMAN (90s) sweeping the steps up to her place with a
thatched broom. Her face is deeply lined. Weary.

DAPHNE

Buongiorno!

The woman looks up, scowls, keeps sweeping.

OLD WOMAN

Arriva sangue fresco.

The woman crosses herself, HISSES more under her breath.

DAPHNE

(to herself)

Fresh blood?

The woman bats a hand her way.

OLD WOMAN

Addio giovinezza.

Daphne just stares, more confused than wounded.

MARCUS

(under his breath)

Well, okay then.

Up ahead: two equally GERIATRIC MEN (90s) approach on the
opposite side of the street.

Daphne waves to them. They eye her with alarm. Or disdain.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
 (terrible accent)
Buongiorno.

Both men stare at his bloody shirt with a odd combination of hunger and resentment.

GERIATRIC MAN
 (subtitled Italian)
Blood enters. Blood leaves.

Marcus looks down.

MARCUS
 Oh, yeah. Shit. Guess I should've
 changed my--

Daphne having missed the old man's comment, points to a broken neon sign in the shape of a cross up ahead.

DAPHNE
 There we go. Tabac.

Marcus nods, looks back toward the men they just passed.

They're both gone. Vanished. Disappeared entirely.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
 You stay here. I'll get what we
 need. And maybe something sweet.

Marcus draws a breath, hesitates.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
 If you're lucky.

INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Both clutching melting Cornettos, Daphne and Marcus step back into their former wreck of a house. Mouths agape.

MARCUS
 Wait. What?

Somehow, most of the debris on the ground floor has been miraculously removed or swept to one corner.

The red velvet furniture has been uncovered and hastily cleaned. Even the soot smudged walls seem almost white.

Almost dry once again.

Dust still hangs in the air. But it's a miracle.

DAPHNE

No. Way.

She spins with her arms out amid the dust motes.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

It's so beautiful!

Marcus seems more suspicious than thrilled.

MARCUS

I wouldn't go that--

DAPHNE

Just like I always imagined.

She takes a greedy bite of her melting ice cream cone.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

Arturo?

From upstairs:

ARTURO (O.S.)

*Si, sì. Sì, mia signora. Aspetta
per favore.*

Daphne charges toward the stairwell.

ARTURO (O.S.)

Wait.

As she disappears, Marcus finally notices the melted ice cream running down his arm.

MARCUS

I think he said...

DAPHNE (O.S.)

C'mon!

EXT. HOUSE, ROOFTOP - DAY

Daphne tumbles out into the brilliant daylight to find Arturo sweeping muddy water toward the drain spouts.

The deck chairs now have thick sun-faded cushions and are shaded by a red and white umbrella.

ARTURO

(subtitled Italian)

Work that never ceases.

Something about his tone seems bitter. Resentful. Pained.

DAPHNE
Arturo! Cos'hai fatto?

ARTURO
 (subtitled Italian)
It is never finished. Ever.

Marcus finally steps cautiously out after Daphne, looks to Arturo's bare forearms.

They're both covered in what appear to be scarred-over slashes and puncture wounds. Decades old.

Arturo catches him looking, pulls both sleeves quickly down while glaring at Marcus scornfully. Almost menacingly.

ARTURO (CONT'D)
*Enough. Today you rest. Tomorrow we
 imagine the work ahead, yes?*

Wielding his broom handle like a sword, Arturo weaves past Daphne and Marcus, disappears back down the stairs.

MARCUS
 I don't think he likes me.

Daphne beams. Swirls her tongue around her cone.

DAPHNE
 Told you to take some Italian.

Marcus finally lifts what's left of his Cornetto, SUCKS.

MARCUS
 (his mouth full)
 And, ice cream? For breakfast?

DAPHNE
Colazione dei campioni.

Looking transformed, Daphne gazes out across the valley toward the castle in the distance.

In the daylight it appears wrecked. An abandoned ruin.

MARCUS
 Know what's weird?

DAPHNE
 You?

MARCUS
 Those two dudes. They just, like,
totally disappeared.

DAPHNE

Did you really do no research
before coming here?

MARCUS

Well...

DAPHNE

All the men in the village have
their own, like, limestone man-
caves carved into the cliffs below
the wall. Just like Pitigliano.
God, I wonder if we can flip this
and buy something bigger there. So
gorgeous! Like, literally postcard
gorgeous. But rammed with tourists
all summer long.

MARCUS

Well, at least we wouldn't be the
only people under eighty for a
hundred miles.

DAPHNE

Kilometers. C'mon.

She surges back past him toward the stairs and down.

INT. HOUSE, KITCHEN - DUSK

Now wearing a pair of dusty overalls and a dirty bandana
over her head, Daphne gestures toward the far wall.

DAPHNE

We bust that out, build another
deck, replace the wall with glass.
So that we can look out onto the
valley, toward that castle. Indoor
outdoor dining. *Al fresco. Capisci?*

Also covered in grime and dust, Marcus wears a ratty gray
henley and tattered 501s as he scrubs the kitchen cabinets
with a scavenged sponge.

MARCUS

I'm sure *that'll* be cheap.

DAPHNE

Put skylights into both bedrooms.
Bring in the daylight. Lighten
things up wherever we can.

MARCUS

And who exactly is going to do all this work?

DAPHNE

Why, we are. Or, you are. With Arturo's help. He's supposed to have, like, local connections. Craftsmen who know how to deal with the stonework. The plaster. The...

She trails off as, through one of the open windows, we hear what sounds like FAINT MUSIC.

An old song. From the 50s. Something lively. Jaunty.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

You hear that?

Marcus nods, dumps his sponge back into a frothy metal pail, doesn't recognize the tune: "L'HAREM" by Nino Rota.

MARCUS

Uh-huh. Listen, I found--

Daphne pushes the window further open. The MUSIC grows louder. She knows the song like the back of her hand.

DAPHNE

Wait a minute. Nino Rota?

Through the window, the formerly decimated castle now appears to be fully intact and artfully lit.

Boisterous VOICES echo across the valley from beyond its tall stone walls.

Like a mirage.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

What were you saying about being the only people under eighty?

She YANKS off her bandana, shakes the paint and plaster chips from her hair, dusts her bare arms.

MARCUS

What're you...

With a puckish smile, Daphne grabs Marcus' sponge, wrings it out, uses it to brush schmutz from his face.

DAPHNE

This is the best decision we ever made. Like, literally ever.

EXT. FOREST - SUNSET

Daphne and Marcus sprint/walk though a lush stand of trees somewhere in the valley below.

She's wearing a chic but rumpled black cocktail dress and her battered boots. And he's dressed in the same dusty jeans and a rumpled, vintage tweed blazer.

MARCUS

What do you mean? I don't know *anything* about carpentry.

DAPHNE

Can't call it sweat equity if you don't break a sweat.

Something about the forest seems familiar. It's almost exactly like the forest from Daphne's dream/nightmare.

But, this time, with foliage. And no wolves.

MARCUS

And why didn't you tell me you were gonna get so... fancy?

As he bobs and weaves through the underbrush, Marcus clutches a dusty bottle of wine in one hand.

DAPHNE

What, this old thing?

Beyond them both, the MUSIC echoes on. But now it's slightly different. Less jaunty. More modern. Something acoustic.

Possibly even "PINK MOON" by Nick Drake.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

Can't believe you brought that dusty-ass bottle of wine.

MARCUS

Never crash a spooky freaking castle empty-handed.

Daphne skids to a stop, spins, tries to get her bearings.

DAPHNE

God, it's, like, so familiar.

MARCUS

Really? You look *totally* lost.

Playing a hunch, Daphne turns, bolts again.

Marcus reluctantly follows.

DAPHNE

It's like I've *been* here before. In a dream or something.

MARCUS

That's so you. Always flitting around in your perfect little will-o'-the-wisp dream world.

DAPHNE

At least I'm not some gloomy, safety-seeking, obviously OCD perfectionist.

MARCUS

Obviously?

She slows again, but only slightly.

DAPHNE

Next time, at least change your shirt, huh?

Marcus veers away from her, SIGHS. A tad wounded.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

How's your hand by the way?

Nothing from Marcus.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. That was--

Marcus, on the run, seems momentarily stunned that he's clutching the bottle of wine in his bad hand.

MARCUS

Fine. It's... actually fine.

He switches hands, flashes her his palm.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Weird, right?

DAPHNE

Nope.

She takes off running again as the MUSIC grows louder.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
That's just Italy, babe.

EXT. CASTLE, GATE - EVENING

With sunset painting the forest behind them a lush crimson, Daphne and Marcus stand before the massive wooden door to the crumbling stone castle.

It must be centuries old. Battered and fire scarred.

And, beyond it, more MUSIC. And VOICES.

DAPHNE
See, it's not dead here.

MARCUS
Yeah, just haunted.

People inside speak a blend of Italian and something more Slavic. An older language.

Less floral. More cutting.

DAPHNE
Go on...

MARCUS
What? Just, like, knock?

DAPHNE
I dunno, dummy.

She searches the stone wall for a doorbell or --

Suddenly a SCREAM echoes from beyond the hulking door.

MARCUS
Alright. That's just--

The scream crumbles into CACKLING LAUGHTER.

Daphne lifts a fist, readies to pound. But, before she can, the door magically CREAKS open.

ENZO
(thick Italian accent)
Well, there you are.

And there he is: ENZO BERNADINI (60s), the castle's louche but debonaire owner.

ENZO (CONT'D)

At last.

The man from Daphne's nightmare.

Imagine a strange blend of Christopher Walken, Marcello Mastroianni, and Alain Delon.

Deeply tan. Impeccably dressed. Puckish. Rakish. Wild.

Silk ascot. Lit cigarette.

A man not unlike the man in the *Giallo* movie Daphne based her collection on way back at the beginning.

DAPHNE

I... I... I...

Daphne seems to recognize him immediately, tries to convince herself otherwise, instantly fails.

Enzo bows deeply, steps back, gestures.

Beyond him: a lavish spread inside a colonnaded courtyard open to the swiftly darkening sky.

Elaborately set communal tables. Fancy hors d'oeuvres.

Seemingly infinite bottles of wine and champagne on ice.

ENZO

Welcome to my humble abode. Enter freely, of your own free will...

(eyes on Daphne)

...and grace us again with the happiness you bring.

From the bell of an ancient Victrola on a wicker table beneath vines and glinting string lights: more MUSIC.

"ÉTRANGER AU PARADIS" by French chanteuse Gloria Lasso.

Suave PARTY GOERS (mostly middle-aged and all clearly off-the-charts wealthy) sway to the music clutching cocktails and making furtive passes in multiple languages.

Silk Gowns. Black tuxedos. Venetian masks. Velvet loafers.

One by one, heads turn toward Daphne, not Marcus. As if something rare, something precious, just entered.

ENZO (CONT'D)

(not subtitled)

Per favore, siate miei ospiti.

Marcus, out of his league, looks to Daphne. She seems frozen in-place. Magnetically drawn, but resistant.

Enzo lifts an arm, gestures toward his haughty, monied, drunken coterie of guests.

ENZO (CONT'D)

Mangia bene, ridi spesso, ama molto.

(beat)

That, my dear, is the secret to a long, long, long, very long life.

He turns, heads back into the crowd in time with the MUSIC.

ENZO (CONT'D)

That, and wine of course. Come!

Marcus looks to the bottle in his hand. Strangely, it's no longer dusty. The label is no longer soiled and tattered.

It's as if, inside the castle, all is preserved. Kept young.
Restored.

MARCUS

(under his breath)

The ffff...

Daphne steps over the threshold, reaches back, grabs Marcus by his miraculously healed hand.

DAPHNE

When in Rome...

EXT. CASTLE, MAIN COURTYARD - EVENING

Enzo wafts away toward a tall, well-stocked bar shaded from the night air by a blood red canvas awning.

Beyond him, a ghostly FEMALE FIGURE in a form-fitting all-black gown studies Marcus hungrily.

Like a butcher examining a cut of meat.

ENZO

You are the Americans, no?

Now every eye in the place traces both Marcus and Daphne as they follow Enzo, unawares, across the courtyard.

Along one towering stone wall, Antonioni's L'AVVENTURA flickers and dances - cast by an old projector propped near an open window CLACKING away over the music.

Daphne sees it, beams.

DAPHNE
L'Avventura! I love this--

Enzo cuts her off, continues:

ENZO
The ones with the good fortune to
have acquired the Viscount's
mistresses' ancestral home for...

He grabs a bottle of Prosecco from a silver champagne
bucket, wheels back around toward them.

The light of the projector casts strange shadows which dance
all over his deeply lined face.

ENZO (CONT'D)
...a single, pitiful Euro?

Marcus and Daphne, STAMMER, defensive.

Big, mesmerizing smile from Enzo.

ENZO (CONT'D)
No, no. You needn't worry.

He reaches back without looking, grabs two crystal flutes,
lowers his voice:

ENZO (CONT'D)
I've been funding the entire
program's budget personally from
the very beginning. Wealth, love,
blood. It's all the same. To take
is to live. To give is to die.
(beat)
Prosecco?

All Daphne can think to do is nod.

ENZO (CONT'D)
The only way, it seems, to bring
fresh blood back to the villages.

DAPHNE
That's exactly what I--

He thrusts her a full flute.

ENZO
I hope I am safe in assuming you
have already met your charge?

MARCUS
I'm sorry, our what now?

ENZO
Servitore.

He stops pouring, looks to Daphne.

DAPHNE
Arturo? Yes. We--

ENZO
(not subtitled)
*Bene, bene. È giusto che tu parli
la tua lingua madre.*

Marcus does a slow, confused double-take.

Enzo stabs the second full flute his way.

ENZO (CONT'D)
(still toward Daphne)
It's a marvel, how much you do
indeed resemble her. Fate. Such a
strange force of nature.

Daphne blinks, blushes, equal parts enthralled and
perplexed. Guard up. But barely.

MARCUS
Her?

ENZO
Cin, cin. Alla nostra.

Marcus looks to Daphne, hesitates. She lifts her flute.

DAPHNE
(to Enzo)
Salute.

Enzo turns, crushes the Prosecco bottle back into the ice,
finds his half-empty, bright red Negroni in a crystal rocks
glass next to the bucket, raises it toward Daphne.

ENZO
(to Daphne)
It is my honor you are here.

CLINK. CLINK.

ENZO (CONT'D)
At long last.

CLINK.

He cheers Marcus without breaking eye contact with Daphne.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 Drink. Drink.
 (guzzling)
 The night is young. So young.

As Marcus finally lifts his glass, Enzo quickly snatches away the bottle they brought.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 I see you found the cellar. No
 proper home should be without one.

He sets his empty glass down gestures to the shadows, SNAPS his fingers for a refill.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 Now, what are your plans? You are
 from San Francisco, no?

DAPHNE
 How'd you--

ENZO
 News travels fast in the village.
 Horrible place. San Francisco, not
 the village. It is right that you
 left, and not a moment too soon.

A ghostly MANSERVANT (40s) in a stiffly starched, jet-black uniform materializes as if from the ether baring a second, ice-cold Negroni on a silver platter.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 Used to be such a beautiful city,
 full of mystery. Intrigue. Drama.

Enzo snatches his refill, shoos the man away.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 And now? Overrun with soulless, how
 do you say? Tech bros?

Daphne cracks a smile, takes another sip, looks to Marcus.

DAPHNE
 (into her drink)
 Speak of the devil.

Enzo doesn't hear this. But Marcus does. His face hardens.

ENZO
Meticulously planning the demise of
humanity one pixel at a time.

MARCUS
I'm sorry, sir, but...

ENZO
You should be.

DAPHNE
Ah, yep.

Marcus spins toward her.

MARCUS
What're you even--

Enzo reaches out, squeezes Marcus' bicep with his free hand.

MARCUS
Ouch. The heck are you--

ENZO
(to Daphne)
So, this is what they look like?

She nods, still grinning.

DAPHNE
That's what seven years on the
Alignment and Interpretibility team
at Synapse does to you.

ENZO
Artificial intelligence? I miss the
days of genuine stupidity.

MARCUS
Wait. You seem to know an *awful* lot
about us.

ENZO
Well, *someone* had to approve your
application paperwork.

Over Marcus' shoulder, the same FEMALE FIGURE dressed in
form-fitting all-black veers their way. Predatory.

DAPHNE
Grazie mille.

ENZO
Prego.

Enzo lets go of Marcus' arm, guzzles his second Negroni.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 Mark my words, a technology that
 steals the will to dream, to fear,
 to imagine... That will be the
 death of humanity. And humanity?

He looks past Marcus, toward the woman on approach.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 That is our lifeblood. Our vital
 nourishment. Our fuel, is it not?

MARCUS
 Uh...

The woman behind Marcus lifts a bone-white hand to Marcus' shoulder, squeezes.

Marcus nearly jumps out of his skin.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
 Jesusfucking...

ENZO
 ...antichrist.

Daphne, for some reason, barely reacts. Still entranced.
 Almost drugged.

MARCUS
 (panic-stricken)
 WHAT THE--

ENZO
 (puckish grin)
 Allow me to introduce my ex wife.

Enzo reaches a hand out, draws his former better half,
 CHARLOTTE (40s) between Marcus and Daphne.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 Charlotte, meet Marcus and Daphne.
 The Californians. At long last.

Her alabaster skin, jagged jet-black bob, and witch-y black
 shift dress match her sultry smoker's CROAK to a 't':

CHARLOTTE
 (heavy French accent)
 So jumpy.

With a martini in one hand, she casts her gaze up and down Marcus' body like she's assessing every tendon and vein.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Delicious. Come.

She punches one arm around Marcus' torso, drags him reluctantly backward across the courtyard.

MARCUS
Wait. Wait.

Enzo just waves.

ENZO
Show him the tapestries, my dear.
See if he can fix the Wi-Fi.

Daphne finally snaps out of it, looks to Marcus.

DAPHNE
Babe?

ENZO
He'll be fine. I have so much to
show you...

Daphne STUTTERS, flabbergasted, as Charlotte and Marcus disappear into the crowd and away.

And, as Charlotte disappears, we finally clock it: her resemblance to the woman in the film at the very start.

ENZO (CONT'D)
Don't worry, dear. Her bark is
worse than her bite.

DAPHNE
But...

ENZO
(not subtitled)
l'avventura sta per iniziare.

He suavely turns her away, leads her toward another archway just below the flickering film.

She looks over her shoulder, alarmed. There's no sign of Marcus anywhere.

ENZO (CONT'D)
I can feel your heart beating so.

Daphne tries to pull herself free, can't.

ENZO
Don't be frightened.

DAPHNE
Frightened? We just wanted to--

Enzo tightens his grip, switches back to Italian:

ENZO (CONT'D)
(subtitled Italian)
*Funny how a woman can convince you
to sacrifice everything in the
entire world, pledge your eternal
allegiance. And then turn around
and leave you high and dry for a
younger man.*

As Daphne continues to try (and fail) to pull herself free, they awkwardly pass through the archway and into --

EXT. CASTLE, BAILEY - EVENING

The MUSIC in the distance behind them fades and gives away to the faint BURBLING of a fountain across what appears to be a smaller, more rustic courtyard.

ENZO
Age. It's just a construct.

He finally lets go of her.

And she stumbles sideways toward the fountain.

ENZO (CONT'D)
Two things every new visitor to the
valley must do...

He gestures toward the fountain with his now nearly empty rocks glass. Same slick grin.

ENZO (CONT'D)
...sample the waters and view the
tapestries. Learn our history, and
move beyond it.

DAPHNE
I'm sorry. Please, I don't mean to
be rude, but--

She looks back to the fountain.

Clear water animated by silvery moonlight flows from the mouth of an ornately carved head of Medusa.

ENZO

Of course you don't. You Americans,
you can't seem to help it.

DAPHNE

We only came because--

ENZO

Because your lives had lost their
meaning, I know.

DAPHNE

What? No. I mean--

ENZO

It's okay, my dear. Admit it.

DAPHNE

Admit what?

ENZO

Existence without ownership is
meaningless. Empty.

DAPHNE

Could be. Or maybe owning things
just makes people cruel.

Daphne finally backs into the fountain's edge, can't move.

ENZO

An itinerant life is a life devoid
of purpose. But a life lived fully,
a life of pleasure, *that* is a life
worth living. Here.

He reaches out, swipes away her champagne flute, dumps the
wine onto the cobbles, thrusts the glass into the stream of
water, hands it back full.

ENZO (CONT'D)

My ancestors settled here centuries
ago, struggled to carve out an
existence, thrive. And then they
discovered this.

The crystal flute seems to have instantly fogged up, almost
frozen over. The water must be frigid.

ENZO (CONT'D)

From the center of the Earth, an
unending source of vitality.

Daphne narrows her eyes, readies to run.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 (subtitled Italian)
*I'm only kidding. It's just water.
 But it is delicious.*

Daphne's shoulders fall ever so slightly. Her face says it all: *Maybe I'm overreacting?*

ENZO (CONT'D)
 Seriously. He's just fine.

MARCUS (PRE-LAP)
 What the hell?

INT. CASTLE, GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Alone with Charlotte dancing down the moonlit floor ahead of him, Marcus gazes up at a series of enormous wool tapestries that run the entire length of a grand marble hall.

The scenes on the tapestries are ghastly. Terrifying. Gory.

Amour-clad armies clashing across battlefields strewn with the dead and dying. Winged demons ripping the entrails out of headless torsos, bathed in blood.

Marcus reaches out, touches an edge, recoils. Looks to his fingers. Dark red liquid. Fresh blood from the weave.

MARCUS
 How is that still wet?

CHARLOTTE
 You of all people should understand such things.

MARCUS
 I'm sorry. What?

CHARLOTTE
 Run of the mill empire building. Just like your country pretends you stand against until it is no longer convenient. Or, more importantly, conveniently profitable.

Marcus wipes his hand on his pants, stares at a towering, vengeful figure in silver armor slathered in gore.

His face is identical to Enzo's, if slightly younger.

MARCUS
 These are, like, his... ancestors?

Charlotte slows, turns back around, veers toward him again.

CHARLOTTE

In a sense, yes.

Marcus leans closer, squints harder, sees a young woman seated in silhouette astride a regal stallion, bareback.

Her profile matches Daphne's verbatim.

MARCUS

Daphne? I don't...

While he stares, Charlotte lifts a hand, runs one finger over his shoulder blade, then across his bare neck.

CHARLOTTE

Centuries ago, he first arrived from Istria, drawn by the purity of the waters. The bounty of the land. He tried to show them there was another way than the water. A path to true agelessness. But her father doubted him, refused him her hand. Told him she had miscarried their child conceived out of wedlock.

Her eyes lift too to the violent tapestry looming above.

Pure Medieval carnage.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

It was only generations later, after his one true love had succumbed to the plague and their illegitimate spawn was spirited away to who knows where that he finally discovered he indeed had a living heir, someone to pass his legacy onto, set him free from his responsibilities at long last. Free to succumb. Move on. Pass.

Marcus narrows his eyes at a woven rendition of what appears to be the catacombs below the castle. Where vast cisterns of blood stand flanked by row after row of coffins.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

But, back then, centuries ago, his presence fueled panic among the villagers. Violent reprisal when all he wished was to lift the veil. Help them see *beyond* mortality.

As she slows in front of him, Marcus's eyes fall back to her nervously. Like a rat in a cage circled by a ravenous snake.

She smiles slyly, tiptoes back around behind him once more.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Persecution and strife driven by
nothing more than fear of the
unknown. Otherness. Foreigners.

Marcus grips his empty champagne flute like a knife.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Until he decided to *take* what he
deserved. And *possess* it.

She slithers her arm around his torso again, grips him firmly, licks her lips, leans close to his neck.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Sound familiar?

She moves in for kiss.

But as her glistening lips touch Marcus' neck:

MARCUS
Ouch! The fuck was--

He leaps free. She steps back.

One jagged eyetooth protrudes over her lower lip.

BLOOD GLINTS FROM ITS SURFACE.

DAPHNE (PRE-LAP)
Oh, wow.

EXT. CASTLE, BAILEY - EVENING

Back down at the fountain, Daphne finally lowers her still frosty (now empty) champagne flute.

She looks dizzy. Ecstatic. On the edge of a trance.

DAPHNE
You're right. So...

MEMORY FLASH: A pack of SNARLING WOLVES on the chase.

ENZO
Precisely.

Daphne, momentarily shaken, bends to fill her glass once again. He gently places a hand on her shoulder.

ENZO (CONT'D)

No, no.

She looks to him, perplexed. And parched. Thirsty for more.

ENZO (CONT'D)

One shouldn't be greedy. Eternity
must be savored in small doses.

Another bewitching, destabilizing smile from Enzo.

Back in the main courtyard, we can hear the CRACKLE of another record spinning up on the Victrola.

ENZO (CONT'D)

The myth, in ancient times, was
that this spring was the source of
all life. Eternal life.

(beat)

Too much of a good thing can be...

He trails off as the first few SWINGING BARS of a ring-a-ding American jazz standard kick in.

ENZO (CONT'D)

Speaking of which.

Enzo reaches out, takes her glass, sets it down, lifts her hand to his lips, kisses it demurely.

ENZO

Shall we?

Over the bell in the distance: Frank Sinatra's silky VOICE:

SINATRA (V.O.)

You and the night and the music.

He spins Daphne, draws her close, sashays her artfully (if with undue force) back through the archway and into --

EXT. CASTLE, COURTYARD - EVENING

Everyone else, formerly drunken and listless are now up on the cobbles, dancing in time to the music (as if compelled).

SINATRA (V.O.)

*Fill me with flaming desire /
Setting my being / completely on
fire.*

It's as if Daphne both can't resist and doesn't want to. As if she's willingly trapped herself in a fever dream she'd always imagined succumbing to.

SINATRA (V.O.)
*You and the night and the music /
 Thrill me but will we be one?*

Enzo dips her.

She spins free, clasps his hand tight, pulls him closer.

SINATRA (V.O.)
*After the night and the music / Are
 done.*

Above and behind her, we can barely make out Marcus, bleeding as he smashes his palms on the leaded glass.

No one below notices. Or worse. They do and keep dancing.

SINATRA (V.O.)
*Until the pale light of / Dawning
 and daylight / Hearts will be
 throbbing guitars.*

As Enzo clutches Daphne's hips close to his, we see Charlotte's shadow looming up behind Marcus.

Almost as though she's three stories tall now.

SINATRA (V.O.)
*Morning may come without warning /
 And take away the stars.*

Marcus turns, sees her, runs for his life.

SINATRA (V.O.)
*If we must live for the moment /
 Love till the moment is through /
 After the night and the music die /
 Will I have you?*

Clearly ignoring the lyrics, Daphne, enraptured, whirls across the courtyard firmly in Enzo's clutches.

ENZO
 Thank you, my darling, for coming.

She looks up, wary and dizzy (and stunned by her own grace under his guidance).

Behind her, Marcus finally staggers out into the moonlight of the courtyard, winded and with one hand to his neck.

ENZO (CONT'D)
Il sangue chiama il sangue.

The words from her nightmare, from the movie, rip her back into the moment, fill her face with dread, not bliss.

Enzo freezes, releases her as the MUSIC plays on.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 Blood calls to blood.

Marcus wipes red from his neck, speeds toward them.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 (still to Daphne, calmly)
 This is the land of your ancestors.
 You belong here. Forever.

Her face shifts again. *That's true, but...*

SINATRA (V.O.)
*You and the night and the music /
 Thrill me but will we be one?*

MARCUS
 Fuck this shit.

Marcus grabs Daphne's hand, pulls her away.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
 We're outta here.

SINATRA (V.O.)
*After the night and the music /
 Are done...*

Enzo just watches them go as the rest of his revelers continue dancing around him like high-class marionettes.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Marcus and Daphne, no longer holding hands, CHARGE through the underbrush in a dead sprint.

DAPHNE
 What do you mean she tried to
 flipping kiss you?!

MARCUS
 Not kiss. Bite! The crazy bitch bit
 me. And then there you are *dancing*
 with him? I didn't know you could
 dance like that.

DAPHNE
Me... neither.

MARCUS
The fuck, Daphne?

DAPHNE
Oh, so this is my fault? You probably hit on her first!

The trees all around them, formerly verdant and welcoming are now seemingly leafless and dead.

It much more resembles Daphne's nightmare now.

And she knows it.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
I saw the way you looked at her.

MARCUS
I saw the way you looked at HIM!

DAPHNE
He's, like, eighty years old.

MARCUS
Exactly. Fucking Eurotrash one-percenters in their piece of shit castle. This was a mistake.

DAPHNE
Hold on. Wait. Wait.

MARCUS
I saw you. Or someone who looked like... In the--

Marcus slows, looks around, completely lost.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I never should've come here.

He lifts a hand to his neck. No more blood now, just a hint of a swollen (but healed) tiny puncture wound.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Should've just found another stupid job. Stayed on the rat wheel.

Daphne tries to get her bearings, her heart THUMPING.

DAPHNE
What do you mean you saw someone?

Marcus' face falls, knows it sounds crazy, changes tact:

MARCUS
Why'd you have to go and bust on me
for being a knowledge worker?

DAPHNE
A what?

MARCUS
A coder. A programmer. A tech...

DAPHNE
...bro?

MARCUS
At least I don't design overpriced
disposable fashion for people who
can't afford it anyway.

DAPHNE
Hey--

MARCUS
Plus, what the fuck does all that
gibberish mean...
(butchering it)
Sangue chiama sangue.

DAPHNE
(distantly)
Blood calls to blood.

MARCUS
FUCK ME.

She turns around, reaches for his hand.

DAPHNE
It's okay. It's alright. It's just
a saying. An Italian saying. Means
that the place will always call you
back one day. Italy, you know?

MARCUS
No.

DAPHNE
Listen, I don't care if some goth
French cougar tried to make out
with you in a fourteenth century
castle in the middle of Tuscany.

His face shifts slightly. *When you say it like that...*

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

And I don't care if you're jealous
I danced my ass off in the fucking
moonlight with a smarmy zillionaire
three times my age high on Prosecco
and Antonioni.

MARCUS

Antonioni?

DAPHNE

(exasperated)

The film on the wall. L'Avventura.
Michelangelo Antonioni.

MARCUS

You and your--

DAPHNE

It *literally* translates to The
Adventure. That's what we're
supposed to be on here. Right?
That's what happened tonight. A
fucking adventure.

She tries for his hand once again. This time he relents.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

Lemme see your neck.

She pulls him closer, looks at his neck. In the silver light
it just seems (slightly) swollen.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

Bummer. No hickey.

MARCUS

That's not funny. It actually hurt.

He rubs at it. Gingerly.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Still does. Sorta.

(beat)

Plus, you shoulda seen the fucking
tapestries up there. Goriest shit
I've seen since Saw 7.

She SIGHS, turns, drags him with her through the forest.

DAPHNE

Philistine.

(MORE)

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
 (coy smile)
 Now, c'mon. Let's get some rest.
 Busy day tomorrow. Busy day...

FADE TO:

INT. HOUSE, GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Still in their clothes for warmth, Daphne and Marcus lie asleep together atop a tangle of salvaged cushions and blankets in the smaller (and less drafty) second bedroom.

She's dead-to-the-world content after a night full of decidedly weird (but definitely memorable) adventure.

He twitches semi-feverishly.

His eyes dart side-to-side behind his heavy lids as his lips stifle urgent garbled nonsensical syllables.

Stuck in a dream, or a nightmare, until he bolts board upright with a HEAVY GASP.

Wild-eyed and full of startled panic, Marcus looks all around the room in a daze.

Daphne MOANS lightly, rolls over.

Marcus' eyes fall to her, then to the enameled portrait of the young girl mounted the headboard.

Again, the resemblance is uncanny. Impossible to miss.

Something stirs above and behind Marcus. And he cants his gaze to the darkened hallway. Squints.

There's nothing there.

From above, a DISEMBODIED VOICE:

CHARLOTTE
 And others, too. Innocents.

Marcus looks up, sees a GHOSTLY CHARLOTTE clinging to the bare wood of the ceiling like a bloodthirsty bat.

He LEAPS out of bed, STUMBLES across the room, STABS at the light switch with all his terrified might.

Nothing happens.

He looks again and she's gone. All that dangles over the bed is the same bare bulb from earlier. Evidently now dead.

MARCUS
(under his breath)
Fucking hell.

He unconsciously lifts his bad hand to his neck, rubs. It's hot to the touch and clearly still hurts.

Marcus CLICKS his jaw, runs the back of his hand over his sweat-glazed forehead.

By the looks of his shirt, he must be burning up. Saturated with sweat. Even though it's freezing out.

Daphne, deep in a more pleasant dream, pulls their pile of paint covered drop cloths closer, MOANS again.

Instead of climbing back into bed, Marcus turns and not so quietly RUMBLES down the stairs.

KITCHEN:

Moving slowly, almost painfully, Marcus hits the bottom of the stairs, turns, crosses the kitchen, heads for the door.

His eyes are empty now. Oddly blank. Lifeless.

Like those of a sleepwalker. Or a corpse.

LIVING ROOM:

Instead of pausing for his jacket draped over a tall stack of cement bags, Marcus steps over the abandoned Polaroid, opens the door, shambles out into the night.

He doesn't even bother closing the door behind himself.

EXT. VILLAGE STREETS - NIGHT

Alone, Marcus shuffles down the narrow cobblestone streets of the decrepit, deserted village.

Every window is closed and barred once again. And a milky white fog has settled low over the cobbles.

His every halting, barefoot step echoes through the deathly still air and into the night.

We can see his breath, but he's still sweating, still roasting, still feverish.

Marcus slows at the claustrophobic intersection where the two old men disappeared the day before.

Blank-faced, he bends down the same street, keeps walking.

STAIRS:

The narrow street dead-ends into to steeply pitched set of rusted steel stairs that twist down what must be the edge of the cliff atop which the village sits.

Marcus, still sweating, still zombie-like, descends the stairs unhurriedly - just one foot after the other like a man on autopilot.

Like a marionette on strings.

CAVERN:

The stairs lead to an open door, beyond which we can barely make out what appears to be a long, hand-carved limestone cavern (that almost resembles their new wine cellar).

Marcus ducks his head, enters, continues slowly deeper into the the dark as the moonlit fog wafts and fades at his feet.

Then, up ahead, a faint light. It casts strange, angular shadows that slice across the stone walls.

On Marcus lurches, dragging his bad hand along the jagged rock wall and leaving a bloody smear.

Or is it another shadow?

GROTTO:

The narrow cavern gives way to a larger space, lit from above by what appears to be a gas lantern hanging from a rusty iron hook anchored to the ceiling.

A meat hook?

His eyes still adjusting, Marcus steps into the space, slowly turns, hears what sound like faint WHISPERS.

The walls are wet, glistening.

And, at precise intervals lining the entire subterranean grotto, OLD MEN lie slumped and chained.

Their bare wrists have been violently slashed. Blood oozes in rivulets to the floor all around them.

Where it slowly disappears like spilled wine into a sponge.

Over Marcus' shoulder, another GHOSTLY VOICE:

ARTURO
 (now in English)
 He feeds forever.

Marcus spins to see Arturo standing right behind him, chained to floor with bloody manacles.

All of his clothes are saturated. Heavy with crimson.

ARTURO (CONT'D)
Per sempre...

SMASH TO:

INT. HOUSE, GUEST BEDROOM - MORNING

Marcus JOLTS again with a start. Back in the same bed with the same enamel portrait in the headboard.

Drenched in sweat.

DAPHNE (O.S.)
 (from the roof)
 Wake up sleepyhead. It's demo day!

Marcus pads his chest, his forehead, his face.

Doesn't notice his bleeding neck.

Pushes himself to his feet. It takes effort.

KITCHEN:

Still bathed in sweat, his face pale, his neck smeared with his own blood, Marcus stands in the kitchen, staring.

As far as the eye can see: battered power tools, supplies, and building equipment.

Sledgehammers. Jackhammers. An arc welder. Crowbars. Pneumatic demolition drivers. A nail gun. Bags of plaster.

And a single rusty propane tank attached to what looks like a hand-held blowtorch.

Attached by a string tied to the hose: an old-school flint striker. The kind you'd use to light a Bunsen burner.

Marcus falls to his knees, searches for the Polaroid.

From up above: SMASH. SMASH. SMASH.

Daphne, elated, HOOTS as we hear the THUDDING of shattered bricks falling onto the roof one by one.

DAPHNE (O.S.)
 (ecstatic)
 You want an omelet, you gotta break
 a few fucking eggs!

The front door swings open. And in steps Arturo again.

His forearms, just as they were in the cave (and earlier as well), are covered in heavily scarred lacerations.

Marcus stands again, empty-handed. The Polaroid is gone.

ARTURO
 (under his breath)
 You can own something. You can't
 escape debt. Can't start over.

It's the most English we've heard from Arturo from moment one. Strangely articulate. And knowing. Conspiratorial.

Marcus stares at him, rubbing puss and blood from his neck.

Arturo steps up, hands him a heavy iron digging bar with a newly-sharpened chisel point.

ARTURO (CONT'D)
 If you don't own your own labor.
 You don't own your own future.

Marcus grips the bar, can barely hold it aloft.

ARTURO (CONT'D)
 And neither will I, my friend,
 until you do.

SLOW FADE TO:

INT. HOUSE, ROOFTOP - DUSK

With most of the roof now missing behind them, Daphne and an utterly exhausted Marcus lie slumped amidst a pile of rubble as the dust settles.

The sky beyond, much like it was the night before, is painted a ridiculously picturesque pale pink.

And a half-empty bottle of wine from the cellar sits sweating atop a stack of shattered terracotta bricks.

DAPHNE
 Jesus. I've never felt so... alive.

She sits up, grabs the bottle, takes a heavy swig.

Her face is coated in plaster dust. But, on her, it looks fantastic. Beautiful. Intentional.

As if she's carved of marble. Eternal.

MARCUS
I've never felt so wrecked.

DAPHNE
See, I told you. It means something to do something with your own two hands. I mean, other than pushing pixels around.

Marcus sits up, looks too obliterated to even argue.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
You play it too safe. Gotta take some risks, you know?

She hands him the bottle, he sets it back down.

MARCUS
Uh-huh.

DAPHNE
Dream harder. Trust beauty. Someone will always catch us.

Marcus exhales slowly.

Spent. Oblivious to the beauty all around them.

MARCUS
Sure they will.

DAPHNE
You're too afraid. Risk paralyzes you if you let it.

MARCUS
What do you know about fear?

She reaches for the bottle again but stops. This jolts her.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
(bitterly)
Your blue sky, everything's for the better, all good thinking gets you fucking owned.

DAPHNE
Owned?

Marcus lifts a hand to his temple, rubs his head like it's aching. Like he's never felt a pain this intense.

Instantly regrets saying anything.

MARCUS

I had this, I dunno, dream last night. In the caves. I saw people. Arturo. Chained up like, I dunno, fucking animals down there. Blood everywhere. Just like in all those tapestries. In the--

From across the valley: MUSIC yet again.

Not Nino Rota this time. Something more modern. From the late 70s. American. A Boomer classic.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Oh, hell no.

Daphne's eyes widen. She pushes herself to her feet just as DON HENLEY'S VOCALS kick in:

DON HENLEY (V.O.)

*City girls just seem to find out
early / How to open doors with just
a smile.*

That's right. "YOUR LYIN' EYES" by none other than --

MARCUS

I hate the *fucking* Eagles.

Daphne, a little tipsy already, dash/dances across the rubble toward what's left of the stairs.

Singing along out of key as she goes:

DON HENLEY (V.O.)

*A rich old man, and she won't have
to worry / She'll dress up all in
lace, go in style.*

Marcus, rage simmering, tries to stand. Almost falls.

DAPHNE (O.S.)

(from the stairs)

C'mon, dude. I could eat a horse!

DON HENLEY (V.O.)

*Late at night, a big old house gets
lonely / I guess every form of
refuge has its price.*

MARCUS

Wait...

His voice is like in a dream. Muffled. Weak. Barely audible.
Suffocated.

DON HENLEY (V.O.)

*And it breaks her heart to think
her love is only / Given to a man
with hands as cold as ice.*

EXT. FOREST - SUNSET

As the MUSIC plays on, Marcus (pale as a sheet) chases Daphne through the same verdant forest.

DON HENLEY (V.O.)

*So she tells him she must go out
for the evening / To comfort an old
friend who's feelin' down.*

All of his strength sapped, his energy fully depleted, Marcus struggles to keep up.

Daphne, on the other hand, is elated and oblivious. A manic pixie dashing through the woods in a hastily donned, open-backed party dress with a gossamer skirt.

Her face is still covered in plaster. And her eyes are wild.

DON HENLEY (V.O.)

*But he knows where she's goin' as
she's leavin' / She is headed for
the cheatin' side of town.*

MARCUS

Please, wait...

DON HENLEY (V.O.)

*You can't hide your lyin' eyes /
And your smile is a thin disguise.*

MARCUS

He's not what he seems. None of them are what they...

He stops, hands on his knees. Gasping for air.

DON HENLEY (V.O.)

*I thought by now you'd realize /
There ain't no way to hide your
lyin'--*

PRE-LAP: KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

EXT. CASTLE, GATE - EVENING

The same comically large wooden door CREAKS open to reveal Charlotte standing alone and barefoot just inside.

Behind her, the same revelers (still dressed to the nines) groove in the same courtyard strung with lights.

Two catch our eye: a handsome Black man and a coquettish white woman with a black bob and olive skin.

The couple from the Polaroid Marcus first found?

CHARLOTTE

Well, there you are. What took you so long?

The TUNE now playing over the same Victrola in the distance sounds like an obscure 1960s proto-disco track.

DAPHNE

It was, uh, demo day at the place. We, um, took down most of the roof. Thus the, uh...

Daphne brushes some of the plaster dust from her flushed cheeks, notices Enzo on approach, cocktail in-hand.

ENZO

You look ravishing, my dear.

Marcus spies him, summons the strength to clench his fists.

Charlotte clocks it, steps closer to Daphne.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

Thank you again for Arturo. He's--

ENZO

A hapless peasant? Yes. Indeed.

This time, Enzo makes a beeline for Marcus.

ENZO (CONT'D)

You though, my boy, look terrible.

MARCUS

Listen, I'm on to--

Enzo lifts his free hand, SNAPS his fingers loudly.

And Marcus falls instantly silent.

ENZO
 (to Marcus)
Guardami.

Marcus' gaze reluctantly locks onto Enzo's. Like he can't help it. Can't look away.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 (subtitled Italian)
Forget about the world beyond this sacred place.

Daphne does a slow, mildly alarmed double-take. Charlotte watches with a lustful hunger.

DAPHNE
 Sacred?

Marcus nods slightly.

MARCUS
 Sacred.

Daphne, taken aback, briefly considers charging between them. Breaking Enzo's hold on her man.

ENZO
 (subtitled Italian)
Your heartbeat is so loud. It tells me everything your lips are too afraid to say.

DAPHNE
 I... I'm sorry, but--

Enzo lifts a hand to Marcus' chin, gives it a firm pinch. He doesn't budge.

ENZO
 (subtitled Italian)
Let the heaviness in your soul become a gift.

He turns, steps away across the cobbles.

Marcus, as if in a heavy trance, follows him immediately.

DAPHNE
 Marcus? What're you--

ENZO
 Come now, don't be so prudish...

Enzo sets his glass down on crowded table, continues on.

ENZO (CONT'D)
...mio caro.

Daphne STUTTERS. Confused and a little offended.

Charlotte smiles, lifts her cigarette, takes a drag.

CHARLOTTE
This was your idea, after all.

Daphne WHEELS around, flummoxed.

Charlotte just dances away to the tune of "DISCO DRACULA" by The Existential Dreadniks.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Don't worry. He's not his type.
(feral grin)
You on the other hand...

Daphne looks to Marcus following Enzo toward a twisting stone stairwell at the foot of the Medieval bell tower.

Charlotte calls back through Enzo's dancing guests:

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Come. You must be... famished.

Daphne swivels her gaze back toward Charlotte.

DAPHNE
I don't understand.

CHARLOTTE
Understanding is overrated.

Charlotte flicks away her cigarette, snatches up a martini, downs it, tosses the glass away.

One of the revelers catches it as if the whole thing was planned. Intricately choreographed.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Plus, your hands were not meant for labor. Like his, yours were meant for pure pleasure.

Daphne, looks back him toward the bell tower. Now no sign of Marcus or Enzo whatsoever.

Charlotte presses on.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
The more a thing is perfect...

Daphne stumbles her way, deeply perplexed.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
...the more it feels pleasure and
pain in equal measure. Come.

She disappears as the song continues:

EXISTENTIAL DEADNIKS (V.O.)
*I love the nightlife / I died to
boogie / Come over to my place /
and let's get spooky-ooky.*

Daphne pauses, bites her lip. But the scene before her is
too on-the-nose ridiculous to be feared.

Just a bunch of monied Eurotrash Boomers dancing over the
cobblestones under the influence of booze and raw entitlement.

EXISTENTIAL DREADNIKS (V.O.)
*You're moving cross the floor /
Swaying with that booty / You're
looking foxy / I'm feeling wolfie.*

Finally, Daphne rolls her eyes, takes off after Charlotte.

EXISTENTIAL DREADNIKS (V.O.)
*You're looking fly / You're looking
fine / I could just drink you up /
You know I don't drink wine.*

Up ahead, Charlotte now grabs a goblet of red wine from a
passing tray, gulps it all down in one.

EXISTENTIAL DREADNIKS (V.O.)
Disco, vampire / Disco Dracula.

Charlotte turns, gestures grandly to a pair of open double
doors. Beyond them: a massive feast laid out on a long
wooden table that could easily seat sixty.

EXISTENTIAL DREADNIKS (V.O.)
Vampire on the dance floor, woooo!

Every imaginable Italian delicacy as far as they eye can
see: prosciutto, carpaccio, porchetta, wild boar.

All manner of classic sweets. Epic vintages.

A cornucopia of delights.

CHARLOTTE
*Pour toi, ma chère, aucun plaisir
 n'est de trop...*

As the stupidly over-the-top DISCO BEAT grinds on in the background, Daphne stutter-steps her way.

Almost as entranced as Marcus was.

Charlotte trails off, knowing full-well she has Daphne firmly in her grasp.

INT. BELL TOWER, STAIRS - NIGHT

Marcus, his neck bleeding again and all color having drained from his face, trudges up the twisting, centuries old wooden stairs to the summit of a claustrophobic stone bell tower.

Enzo, up ahead, leads the way.

ENZO
 Close your eyes and listen only to
 the sound of my breath.

Fully under his command now, Marcus does, keeps climbing.

A thick sisal rope dangles down the center of the dimly lit tower. All the way down to the ground.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 Do you feel that?

Marcus, his eyes still closed, just nods as his neck oozes.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 The way the air grows thick, like
 honey? Sweet and fragrant.

Silver bands of moonlight slash from archers' windows across their faces as they climb.

ENZO (CONT'D)
 Full of promise.

Enzo pauses at a landing, looks up toward a near vertical wooden ladder jutting up into the dark.

Marcus pauses right beside him, eyes empty but chin quivering. Like he's trying to speak, break free.

MARCUS
 (a pained rasp)
 The village. What happened... to
 the others... like us?

Enzo turns to face him, doesn't answer.

ENZO
You are falling, but you are safe.

He reaches out, runs two fingers through the deep scarlet blood bathing Marcus' neck, lifts his fingers to her lips, savors his taste.

ENZO (CONT'D)
There is no past, no future. Only
the heat of my skin.

Marcus, his face locked in a silent battle, only nods again.

ENZO (CONT'D)
And the dark, dark pull of the
ebony night.

Enzo leans forward, parts his lips, bares his teeth, PLUNGES them into Marcus' neck.

Drinks him down. Pulls back, momentarily sated.

ENZO (CONT'D)
(subtitled Italian)
Sleep now.

Marcus' eyelids collapse like heavy iron doors.

Enzo turns away, scales the ladder into the dark.

ENZO (CONT'D)
Sleep, while still awake.

Above him looms a massive iron bell hung from a peaked stone roof open to the night.

EXT. CASTLE, GRAND HALL - NIGHT

Daphne, spellbound and starving, tiptoes table-side opposite Charlotte as another 60s song - "EMOTIONAL RESCUE" by The Rolling Stones echoes faintly from the courtyard.

CHARLOTTE
And you never knew your father, his
side of your family?

Daphne, near drooling, just nods. She can't make up her mind what to sample first.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
The source of your lineage. Of your
history, here in Italy.

DAPHNE

Mom divorced him when I was two. He split. Never heard from him again.

CHARLOTTE

Such a pity.

She pauses, reaches forward, grabs a long knife, expertly carves an impossibly thin, almost lacy slice of pink flesh from a boar's leg slung snugly in an elaborate armature.

Still holding the knife, Charlotte leans across the table, drapes the prosciutto toward Daphne.

Daphne parts her lips, hesitates.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Your soul is such a noisy thing.
Let me quiet it for you.

Charlotte, moonlight glinting in her eyes, leans further.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

(subtitled French)
You know you want it.

Like a fish to the fly, Daphne finally bites.

Her eyes roll back as she chews, savors, swallows.

DAPHNE

Oh, my god-uh.

CHARLOTTE

You could say that.

Charlotte sets the knife down, plucks a hefty green grape from a teaming bunch, places it into Daphne's mouth.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

He's elated you finally came back
to him, after so long.

DAPHNE

(her mouth full)
I'm sorry?

CHARLOTTE

Never apologize.

Charlotte turns, rounds the end of the table, advances toward Daphne to the beat of the distant MUSIC:

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)
*Don't you know promises were never
 meant to keep? / Just like the
 night dissolve off in sleep.*

On the way, she lifts an uncut rosemary foccaccia, violently RIPS it in two hulking pieces.

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)
*I'll be your saviour, steadfast and
 true.*

Charlotte hands her half. Daphne doesn't know what to do.

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)
I'll come to your emotional rescue.

Charlotte tosses her own half away like so much trash.

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)
I'll come to your emotional rescue.

Charlotte leans close. Too close. Dangerously close.

CHARLOTTE
 Our histories are inexplicably
 linked. Wound together.

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)
Ooh-ooh, ooh-ooh, ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh.

CHARLOTTE
 You don't know how long...

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)
Ooh-ooh, ooh-ooh, ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh.

CHARLOTTE
 ...it took him to find you once
 again, *ma chère*.

Daphne drops the bread to the stone floor, blinks hard.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
 Centuries ago, they stole you from
 him. Prevented us from ruling
 together, for all eternity.

DAPHNE
 What are you even--

Charlotte lifts two fingers to Daphne's lips, presses hard.

CHARLOTTE

Look into my eyes and see the centuries you've been thirsting for. You belong to the rhythm of my voice now. Every word I speak is a tether. Every breath you take draws you closer to me. To the destiny you were born to, dreamed of.

Daphne finally begins to pull back. But Charlotte throws her arm around Daphne's waist, YANKS her close.

From behind Charlotte:

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)

...like a child, like a child, like a child, like a child...

Charlotte parts her lips. Ivory fangs glint in the light.

CHARLOTTE

Viens avec moi. Viens.

Daphne's jugular THUDS beneath the skin of her neck.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Come with me. Let go of the shore.

Daphne tries to pull free. Can't.

DAPHNE

Stop it. You're hurting me.

CHARLOTTE

You don't deserve to rule.

DAPHNE

Please...

CHARLOTTE

To endure centuries of mortals trying to extinguish you. Kings, bishops, generals, bankers...

Charlotte rears back, readies to feast.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

All terrified of what they cannot control. Cannot profit from. And now he wants to throw it all away? Pass the torch? To you?

DAPHNE
Stop it. I don't know anything
about any of this.

CHARLOTTE
Mortals fear us. But they crave
precisely what we are.

Thinking fast, Daphne, breathless, spies the knife on the
table, SCREAMS:

DAPHNE
GET THE FUCK OFF ME!

In a quick flurry of motion, she LUNGES for the table, GRABS
the knife, spins, THRUSTS it into Charlotte's chest.

But no blood blooms. Charlotte only smiles. Feral menace.

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)
*You think you're one of a special
breed...*

Charlotte, unamused, grabs the knife handle, YANKS it out,
STABS herself four more times in the chest.

CHARLOTTE
We are untouchable.

Still no blood. Only holes through which moonlight shines.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Unafraid. Unowned.

Daphne, in a panic, lunges forward, GRABS the knife handle,
pulls it out of Charlotte's chest, drops it to the floor.

CLANG.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Unending. Unlike you know who...

Daphne's face shifts. *Oh, shit.*

DAPHNE
(to herself)
Marcus. What have I--

Charlotte steps closer again.

CHARLOTTE
Forget him. He's beneath you.
Always lording it over you, his so-
called education.

That's it: SMACK!

Daphne SLAPS her across the face, turns to run.

Relishing the sting (and the thrill of the hunt), Charlotte drops the knife, watches her go.

EXT. CASTLE, COURTYARD - NIGHT

Still to the near-hypnotic beat of the MUSIC, Daphne bursts from the great hall, skids across the cobbles to see each and every party guest staring up at the tower.

Not dancing. Not drinking. Immobilized. Transfixed.

Daphne looks right, sees the record still spinning on the Victrola. MUSIC still burbling through the bell.

She turns left, sees the fountain from earlier.

Now though, instead of ice-cold clear water, dark red blood flows from the mouth of Medusa.

Gallons of it. A surfeit of gore.

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)

I'll come to your emotional rescue.

Daphne grits her teeth, runs for the arched portico leading to the entrance to the bell tower.

Not a soul stirs as she runs.

The formerly debonaire elites, now garish and ghastly with their milky eyes and pale flesh, just let her pass.

EXT. CASTLE, PORTICO - NIGHT

As Daphne sprints dead-out down the marble-clad portico, the cracked frescoes of ANCIENT ROYALS in fine dresses and suits of armor weep tears of blood.

Yet it's only now that we notice that all the men resemble Enzo unchanged throughout the ages.

And the women? Yep. You guessed it. Daphne. Forever.

Scarlet soaks terracotta as the *actual* Daphne streaks by, wide-eyed and horrified. Her heart pounding in her chest.

SCREECH.

She skids to a stop at the open archway to the tower, looks right again, sees Charlotte standing in the courtyard with a haughty, self-satisfied grin plastered across her face.

She silently mouths along with Mick as she sways across the cobbles with a glistening green apple in one hand:

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)
Ah-ah, ah-ah, ah-ah-ah-ah...

DAPHNE
 Fuck. You.

Daphne BURSTS through the archway, SPRINTS for the stairs.

INT. BELL TOWER, STAIRS - NIGHT

Daphne, breathless and running on nothing but adrenalin, fear, and true love, takes the worn wooden stairs two at a time while the SONG plays on from down below.

DAPHNE
 Marcus! MARCUS!

No answer from up above.

EXT. CASTLE, COURTYARD - NIGHT

Back down in the courtyard, Charlotte steps in among the stone-still, wraith-like guests, takes a voracious bite of the apple, lets the juice run down her razor-sharp cheeks.

CHARLOTTE
 Why must they always make things so
 bloody difficult?

She casts the apple to the cobbles. It roll end-over-end before coming to a stop in the cascade of blood flowing from the overflowing fountain.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
 (to their guests)
Vous savez tous qu'il faut faire.

They all nod slowly as she steps toward the tower.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
 You know what to do.

INT. BELL TOWER, BELFRY - NIGHT

Daphne SKIDS to a stop across the belfry floor. Blood now runs down the walls in torrents.

Above: the same hulking iron bell.

Below: the thick sisal rope leading to the ground.

Daphne spins, sees the same ladder-steep section of stairs leading even higher.

Moonlight streams through the blood dripping from the archways open to the sky.

From below:

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
Memory. It lives in your bones.

Daphne charges across the space toward the steep stairs.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
When first stepped into this
valley, you did not arrive.
You returned.

Daphne ignores this, starts climbing.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
Now it's time to go home.

EXT. BELL TOWER, ROOF TERRACE - NIGHT

GASPING, Daphne stumbles back out into the night air on the turreted roof of the tower to a grisly sight:

Strung up to what appears to be some sort of, rack-like Medieval torture device, Marcus lies stripped of his clothes and suspended with his limbs bound.

His blood gushes from deep gashes into silver chalices.

And his body is an eerily waxy white. As if he's been carved of alabaster.

MARCUS
(weakly)
Don't. Trust. Them.

Beyond him, Enzo stands with his back to one turret, clasping an overflowing chalice.

His face is bathed in Marcus' blood.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
This whole place runs on people
like us showing up to make it work.

DAPHNE
THE FUCK IS HAPPENING?

Enzo takes another greedy gulp, tosses the empty chalice over the parapet, crosses toward Daphne.

MARCUS
Don't make it work. Burn it down.

Marcus' eyes finally roll back. His chest falls still.

DAPHNE
Stop this! Untie him! Let us GO!

ENZO
Have pity on an old man.

Daphne desperately searches the rooftop for anything that could be used as a weapon. Anything.

ENZO (CONT'D)
Mortals used to fear us. To live in terror. Because they craved what we have. What we are.

DAPHNE
Stop it. STOP.

ENZO
But now...

Enzo pauses, tilts his head, studies Daphne fondly. Almost paternally. Pathetically.

ENZO (CONT'D)
With all the doom scrolling it's a wonder anyone feels anything at all anymore, yes?

DAPHNE
What?

Enzo LUNGES out, grips Daphne by the throat, lifts her up off the ground.

ENZO
Do an old man a solid.

Daphne, her feet flailing, just GURGLES.

ENZO (CONT'D)
Let me rest.

From off:

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
She is unworthy.

Charlotte steps into the light behind Daphne.

CHARLOTTE
Beneath you. Beneath us.

Daphne, in a panic, tears at Enzo's arm while her eyes flutter and roll.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Dépose-la. Je te commande.

Enzo finally obliges, tosses Daphne in a heap toward the gap in the floor leading down to the belfry.

Charlotte, displeased, looks to Marcus bleeding out.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
(still to Enzo)
You said he was to be kept--

Daphne, sucking down air, leaps to her feet.

DAPHNE
(hoarse)
Whosoever the *fuck* you are, let
him... Let Marcus GO!

Enzo turns toward her, grins.

ENZO
Dear, please.

He steps toward Daphne. She panics.

ENZO (CONT'D)
Marcus will die. If not tonight,
then in forty, fifty fragile years.

DAPHNE
Stop it.

ENZO
You will watch him disappear,
molecule by molecule.

Daphne looks down, sees the bell - and the line leading from it to the ground some eight stories below.

ENZO (CONT'D)
You can choose that. Or you can
choose to outlive grief.

He reaches a hand out toward her.

ENZO (CONT'D)
Claim your birthright. Rule. Allow
me to finally pass.

DAPHNE
Nope.

With zero hesitation, perhaps for the first time in her entire life, Daphne turns, throws her body through the gap.

INT. BELL TOWER, BELFRY - NIGHT

Daphne hits the ground below hard, tumbles, lunges toward the sisal rope, spins, looks up.

DAPHNE
No fucking thanks, whoever THE FUCK
you freaks are!

She turns, grips the rope, readies to jump.

But, before she can, a SWIRLING TEMPEST OF BATS gusts upward through the center of the tower, fills the belfry instantly.

They're everywhere, swarming. Blotting out the light.

Daphne SCREAMS, stumbles backward still clutching the rope, tries and fails to smack the bats away.

Instead, they claw, scratch, and tear at her flesh with their jagged white teeth as blood rains down from the roof.

From above:

ENZO (O.S.)
Blood crossed an ocean to find you.

Daphne, in a cloud of bats, grips the rope, yanks more up, turns, staggers toward one of the open arches.

ENZO (O.S.)
Don't make it cross another...

In pure desperation, Daphne LEAPS through the arch, still clutching the rope.

ENZO (O.S.)
...century.

EXT. BELL TOWER - NIGHT

As bats SCREECH and CLICK all around her, Daphne plummets to the ground outside the castle wall with one hand still holding onto the rope.

Lower, lower, lower until:

THWACK!

The rope SNAPS taut. Daphne JOLTS skyward once again, mere inches from hitting the ground.

DONG! DONG!

The bell high above rings twice.

And, with each PEAL, Daphne dangles closer to the dirt, then rockets upward once again.

DONG.

She lets go. Falls to the ground. Takes off running.

EXT. CASTLE, COURTYARD - NIGHT

Back down in the now entirely deserted courtyard, the record on the Victrola slowly grinds to a halt:

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)
Riding across the desert on a fine
Arab charrrrggggeeeerrrrrrr...

Behind it, a cloud of bats pours like smoke from the belfry, descends rapidly down into the forest below.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Just like in her dream oh so many weeks and months ago, Daphne sprints through a claustrophobic stand of tall, leafless trees.

Her dress is torn and spattered with blood.

And her eyes are wild, again. Full of terror.

From behind and above, a tumbling tangle of blood-thirsty winged rodents descends.

And she SCREAMS BLOODY MURDER smacking them desperately out of the air as he runs.

In her mind, A VOICE:

ENZO (V.O.)
Please. Stop. This is beneath you.

DAPHNE
GET OUT OF MY HEAD!

SMACK. SMACK.

She slaps two bats out of the air, leaps over a shallow stream, starts clawing her way up a muddy rise.

EXT. CLIFF FACE, STAIRS - NIGHT

Daphne, the bats still tracking her, emerges from the forest and rushes to the bottom of the cliff below the village.

Her face is ripped and torn by branches and vines.

Up ahead: the same steeply pitched set of rusted steel stairs that Marcus descended earlier.

Smacking at more bats as she runs, she sprints for the stairs, climbs as if her life depends on it.

And it does.

A trail of momentarily stunned creatures dot the ground behind her, twitching violently in the moonlight.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Daphne crests the stairs, finds the entire village eerily abandoned once again.

A lone bat lands on her shoulder, sinks its teeth into her neck. She rips it loose, grips it hard.

SLAMS its head down onto the rusty rail. Ditches its body.

Takes off running again.

Back toward their ravaged wreck of a house.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

SLAM!

Daphne, WHEEZING, throws the thick wooden door to their demolished One-Euro house shut. Locks the deadbolt. Blinks.

SILENCE.

She looks to the garish crucifix opposite the painting of the Madonna and Child, nods.

DAPHNE

That's right, motherfuckers.

But, before she can charge across the dank space full of dusty sacks of plaster and concrete, she catches sight of the heaps of construction equipment.

The nail gun. The blowtorch. The chisel-point digging bar.

And the rusty propane tank attached to an improvised hand-held blowtorch.

Her face brightens, turns feral. Vengeful. Angry.

But then: SCREECHING and the sound of leathery wings SLICING the air from two stories up.

Bats streaming in through the demolished rooftop.

Daphne rushes across the entryway as the bats descend into the space like a waxy, ravenous tornado.

She scoops up the propane tank and blowtorch, runs for the stairs. SCREAMING like a furious banshee.

STAIRS:

With bats SWIRLING all around her in the darkness, Daphne stumbles down the stone stairs desperately trying to twist the propane tank valve open.

WHOOSH.

Finally, gas hisses out. Warps the dark like a mirage.

Daphne spins, tumbles, nearly falls, lifts the torch nozzle, STABS bats out of the air with it.

Attached to the hose, the old-school FLINT STRIKER spins like a pinwheel as propane fills the air.

LANDING:

Daphne snatches up the flint striker, looks over one shoulder, sees the closed door to the wine cellar behind her, knows what to do.

FLICK. FLICK. FLICK.

Sparks fly as she frantically tries to light the striker.

DAPHNE

Get the HELL OFF ME!

Finally: WHOOSH!

A HUGE PLUME OF FIRE fills the stairwell with light.

Bats BURST into flames, THUD into the walls.

The blast sends Daphne backward, nearly knocks her off her feet. But, instead, she stabs the nozzle further forward.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

I said...

She dials the valve all the way up, gusts a five foot plume of vivid blue flames into the cloud of bats.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

...leave me ALONE!

Suddenly, rodent after smoldering winged rodent falls to the ground, shivers and quakes across the terracotta.

And begin to morph back into their original human selves.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

The ffffff--

Still on fire, RESUSCITATED UNDEAD EUROTRASH ELITES stumble toward her like charred and angry zombies.

Too many to count. All MOANING. All full of rage.

Thinking fast, Daphne wheels around, grips the iron knob, throws open the door to the cellar.

A cold wind rushes out, nearly snuffs out the flame.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

See ya, suckers.

She shoves her body inside, SLAMS the door shut.

CELLAR:

With the bent line to the sputtering torch still in one hand, Daphne drags the tank with her into the cellar.

Only days ago it seemed like such a treasure. Their own personal bonanza of liquid loot. A haven. A boozy mirage.

BANG. BANG. BANG.

The undead pound their un-calloused pale palms against the cellar door with all their might.

Daphne searches for something, anything useful as the cellar door shudders and splinters.

An arm BLASTS through, pulls back. Than another and another.

She rushes to the back of the cramped, cavernous space, grabs two bottles marked 'ALCOOL 95' looks ahead.

Garishly lit from below by the juddering flames.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
WHAT DO YOU EVEN...

The door finally gives way. BANG!

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
...WANT FROM ME?!

No reply.

Daphne hesitates briefly, looks to the glowing blowtorch flame, then back to the bottles.

From beyond the shattered door:

EURO ZOMBIE (O.S.)
Il possedimento.

Finally, a milky-eyed EURO ZOMBIE (seeming 70s) shambles into the space and toward her, arms upraised.

EURO ZOMBIE
Possession.

Daphne HURLS both bottles of clear liquid at him.

The bottles hit the stone walls, SHATTER and spray the floor and ceiling with grain alcohol.

DAPHNE
Fuck that shit.

The hoards briefly recoil, then tumble in. Loads of pinkie rings and dive watches. Silver bangles and pearl strands.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Wait. WAIT.

Surprisingly, they all stop. As if by her command.

Daphne looks to her feet as the pooling alcohol ebbs toward her. Her shoulders slump. Her arms fall slack.

Resigned. Unable to fight further. Defeated.

But then --

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
I'd rather rent.

She taps the lit nozzle to the liquid and BOOM!

The space fills with fire. A blinding inferno that instantly engulfs her milky-eyed pursuers and whips up across the arched ceiling like a violent rainbow.

Amid the carnage and SCREAMING, Daphne falls to her knees, turns, drags herself toward the tiny door at the back of the space, YANKS it open, shimmies inside.

Still pulling the lit torch and tank with her.

Both barely fit though.

CAVERN:

In the deep, damp darkness lit only by the flickering flame of the blowtorch, Daphne pulls her body over the glistening stone until the narrow cavern broadens, gets taller.

She moves from shimmy to crawl to hunched crab walk amid oozing, calcified stalactites.

The space seems oddly similar to the grotto Marcus explored earlier. Just cruder. Less trafficked. More ancient.

From up ahead: a faint, pained MOANING.

The sound of humans suffering in agony.

Daphne raises the torch higher, squints toward the gaping mouth of the cavern before her. Hesitates.

She looks back. No Euro Zombies giving chase.

She looks ahead. Only the steady MOAN. *Could it be wind?*

The torch WHEEZES and nearly goes dark. But instead, Daphne dials the valve open further, presses on toward the sound.

GROTTO:

Amid the muffled WAILING, Daphne finally steps into the very same space Marcus stumbled into previously.

The sight instantly takes her breath away.

Just as before, desiccated OLD MEN line the entire space, chained to the wall, bleeding out.

Their wrists lie splayed open, gurgling blood onto the stone floor where it slowly absorbs. Disappears.

DAPHNE

Oh my god.

From off and to her left, a FAMILIAR VOICE:

ARTURO (O.S.)

(now in English)

You have made a terrible mistake.

Daphne wheels around, lifts the flame, sees his ghostly pale, fully resigned visage.

ARTURO

Coming here.

She drops the tank and torch rushes toward him, falls to her knees before him.

As it was before, Arturo's sweat-stained white shirt is bathed in blood. Saturated.

DAPHNE

Arturo? Arturo!

He would lift his manacled hands to wave her off if he had the strength. Instead, he only wags his head side-to-side.

ARTURO

(subtitled Italian)

It is too late for me. For him. But not for you.

She frantically searches for some way to free him as his blood continues to soak the stone and vanish.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

Fight them, or end up like me. Like all of us.

Daphne follows his gaze to the rest of the chained elders.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

(back to English)

We, the youth, didn't flee the villages. To the cities. No.

Arturo's head JOLTS, like he's about to lose consciousness.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

He and his kind, just as they have for decades, centuries, eons...

(MORE)

ARTURO (CONT'D)

They imprisoned us here, made us
their slaves, their sole source of
sustenance. Of life.

(pained wheeze)

By taking ours, one drop at a time.
Just as they have taken that of the
one you hold most dear.

DAPHNE

No. No. Please, this can't be--

ARTURO

(back to Italian)

Il sangue chiama il sangue.

DAPHNE

I can get you out of here. Get all
of you out of--

Arturo blinks hard, strains to smile. Almost fondly.

ARTURO

You dream without doing. To finally
end our suffering, set us free, you
will need to act. Destroy him.

DAPHNE

But... But... How? How can--

Something changes in Arturo's face. A hint of hope long
snuffed out rekindling once again.

ARTURO

I, too, used to think that
resistance was pointless.

He lifts his chained hands to her face, grips her cheeks
lightly with both bloody palms.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

But, for you, it is not.

DAPHNE

I don't underst--

Arturo lowers his hands to the floor, painfully pushes
himself to his bare feet.

ARTURO

Go. Bring what you need. A stake
through the heart. Decapitation.
Fire. Sunlight as a last resort.

(MORE)

ARTURO (CONT'D)

(deep inhale)

In the cellar, at the castle, they
blend the blood, our blood, with
Strega. A *digestif*. In the vats.

(pained exhale)

Eat, drink, be merry. All in one.

(sharp inhale)

I will rouse the others. Join you.
He wants rest? You shall give him
what he desires.

Every formerly empty eye in the cavernous, darkened space is
locked on him. Hope long lost glimmering once again.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

(subtitled Italian)

For all eternity.

Rusty iron chains JANGLE behind her. And Daphne turns to see
every crepuscular figure in the grotto slowly rise.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

It is up to you and you alone. Now
go. Before the sun rises. GO!

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Back in her construction zone of a house, Daphne stands
clutching the extinguished blowtorch.

As her chest rises and falls, she scans the same scatter-
shot collection of gear with a new-found, rabid focus.

In a dazzling flurry of concerted action, she scoops up the
chisel-point digging bar, the powder-actuated industrial
nail gun, a box of shells.

And two spare magazines of collated framing nails.

Daphne tucks the nail gun into the waistband of her skirt,
straps the blowtorch across her back, pockets the shells and
the mags, spies one more curious tool:

A battery-operated reciprocating saw.

She charges toward it, snatches it up, pulls the trigger:

BUZZZZZAHHHHH!

The blade blurs back-and-forth in the moonlight.

Daphne smiles, clips the caribener at the end of the saw's handle to the blowtorch line wrapped around her chest like a bandoleer, spins around.

No hesitation now. No dreamy wishful thinking.

Just pure, ferocious determination.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Daphne sprints again through the forest, branches tearing at her arms, her body covered in gear.

Her breath is steady. Tenacious.

Moonlight slices through the trees as the castle looms before her.

But, instead of veering toward the gate, she swerves right, heads for the tall stone wall at the foot of the tower.

EXT. CASTLE - NIGHT

Without a sound, she LEAPS. Starts climbing.

Rough stone. No rope. Just cracks in the masonry.

Tools CLANK against her ribs. Fingers and feet strain.

Cresting the castle wall, she pulls herself over a turret, runs hunched to the base of the tower, looks both ways.

Silence. Not a soul.

Her heart racing, she starts climbing higher still.

TOWER, WALL:

About half way up, she reaches her left hand upward for a crag in the stone.

It gives way and her hand slips. Her feet fall from under her. But she doesn't scream, doesn't panic.

Instead, she holds on for dear life, shimmies her feet back into place, finds a better handhold.

Regains. Keeps climbing.

TOWER, BELFRY:

Staying out of sight, she peers briefly into the belfry.

It is as it was before.

Dried blood on the interior walls. A shiny, congealed slick leading down the stairs into the dark.

She doesn't panic. Doesn't give up. Climbs ever higher.

TOWER, ROOF:

Panting, she pauses near the summit. We can see her breath in the moonlight.

Above her, eerie silence. No voices. No breathing.

Daphne closes her eyes, says a silent prayer, looks briefly down to the forest some ninety feet below.

She tightens her grip, draws a slow breath.

Pulls herself up over the lip.

But the rooftop, it's empty.

Marcus is gone.

Only a smear of blood spiraling away down the stairs.

Daphne turns, sees the bell rope swinging slightly. They were here, moments ago.

Someone moved him. Has him. Dead or alive.

INT. BELL TOWER, STAIRS - NIGHT

With the sky seeming to color slightly with what must be the looming approach of dawn, Daphne sprints down the blood-saturated tower stairs.

Her gear smashes her hips and chest as she runs. But she doesn't feel it. Doesn't feel a thing.

Until: MUSIC.

From outside and down below, back out in the courtyard, a record needle SCRATCHES across vinyl.

And a new song, a familiar song, a song from one of her favorite deep-cut *Giallo* classics kicks in.

It's "IL SESSO DEL DIAVOLO" by Stelvio Cipriani. The finale of the movie of the same name.

Daphne slows, doesn't know what to do.

The funky, psychedelic, trance-like homage to Iron Butterfly's "In-A-Godda-Da-Vida" echoes through the tower.

Now, somehow, ear-splittingly loud. Painfully amplified.

All-instinct, Daphne reaches for the nail gun, un-clips it from the back of her dress, grips it with one hand, starts slowly down the stairs.

EXT. CASTLE, MAIN COURTYARD - NIGHT

Daphne SPRINGS from the tower entrance, brandishing her almost ridiculous weapon.

Only to find that the party is back.

Her milky-eyed former pursuers are there yet again, dancing in clusters under the string lights.

A black and white movie again flickers across one wall.

But it's not a Fellini film, not a classic by Antonioni.

It's the same gory film we saw projected across the white walls of the photo studio back in San Francisco.

The film that inspired her entire collection.

DAPHNE
(under her breath)
Oh, snap.

Across the castle wall: the same woman runs through stone corridors, has her throat pierced.

By someone eerily identical to Enzo himself.

Like a moth drawn to a flame, Daphne lowers the nail gun, steps across the cobbles and through the dancing throngs.

This time, they don't even seem to notice her.

They just keep dancing. Feral. Ecstatic.

Pure grotesque, aristocratic euphoria.

Then there he is: Marcus, at the center of the crowd.

Daphne freezes. Can't believe her eyes.

Pale, dried blood crusting his arms, his shirt, his pants. He moves with them like he belongs.

Like Daphne danced with Enzo. One of them.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
(barely audible)

No...

He's not dead. He's been chosen. Taken. Corrupted.

Instead of rushing to him, Daphne looks away. Her face hardens, flushes with rage.

She lifts the nail gun again, grips it tight.

Over the MUSIC: a GUTTURAL WAIL.

And then: BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Daphne charges through the crowd, swiftly empties her first magazine of nails.

Steel rips through flesh, shatters bone, as spent .22 casings CLANG against the cobbles.

Bodies fall like matchsticks as she CHARGES across the courtyard, an avenging angel.

Nearing Marcus, a man steps directly into her path. It's the EURO ZOMBIE from their wine cellar.

His eyebrows are both missing. His hair is now singed. And his face is blistered and burnt.

He SNARLS, half beast.

She switches hands with the nail gun, grabs the saw.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Possess this, asshole.

All rage, she lunges at him, lifts the saw blade to his neck, pulls the trigger:

BUZZZZZAHHHHH-WAHHHH-WAH. KA-THUMP.

He collapses to his knees as his swiftly-severed head rolls away across the cobbles.

Ink-black blood geysers from the stump above his sternum before he topples backward in a heap.

Everyone else still standing just keeps dancing.

The *Giallo* woman on the wall SCREAMS silently, as if shocked by Daphne's ferocity.

Daphne turns, sees Marcus also still dancing.

But a hint of a smile washes across his face, even though his eyes are empty.

She RUSHES toward him.

No expression. No recognition. Just the blankest of blank expressions. Like a puppet on strings.

For one horrible second we know. He'll never return.

Then, Daphne drops the saw, grabs him by his shoulders, pulls him close.

Kisses him deeply.

Blood and breath. It's not romantic. It's defiant.

A violent interruption of the trance.

She lets go, steps back. His body JERKS. His hand TWITCHES.

He GASPS.

MARCUS

What took you so long?

A devilish light returns to his eyes.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

The cellar. It's where they--

Daphne, gobsmacked, just nods. A single tear forms.

But, before it falls:

ARTURO (O.S.)

(across the courtyard)

Vai! Finiscila!

Marcus and Daphne turn to see Arturo and his motley band standing, armed to the hilt, just inside the gate.

ARTURO

GO.

Daphne grips Marcus' hand, charges off with him across the courtyard lugging the propane tank in her free hand and the chisel-point pry bar under the same arm.

Along, the way, she violently KICKS OVER the Victrola.

INT. CASTLE, STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Together, Daphne and Marcus sprint down the twisting, deeply worn stone stairs to the castle cellar.

DAPHNE

You were right. I'm a fucking escapist. A dreamer. Nothing but--

MARCUS

No, you were right. I was a coward who mistook safety for living.

As they descend deeper and deeper still, we see up ahead the faint flickering of torchlight.

INT. CASTLE, CELLAR - NIGHT

Daphne hits the last stair, skids across moist stones.

Marcus, breathless but full of purpose, follows her out into a vast, catacomb-like space.

MARCUS

It's okay. We got this.

Vaulted stone ceilings. Massive tapestries of harvest over the ghastly centuries.

And, along both walls: COFFINS. Too many to count.

From up ahead: CLAP. CLAP. CLAP. CLAP.

Daphne lifts a hand protectively to Marcus' chest as the slow, dramatic applause emanates from the shadows.

ENZO (O.S.)

Very nicely done.

Daphne advances toward the sound of his voice, still covered in all manner of potentially deadly gear.

Marcus follows, entirely unarmed.

ENZO (O.S.)

Very nice, indeed.

Finally, he emerges.

And, behind him, we can barely make out vast, cistern like ponds brimming with blood. They look ancient. Roman.

ENZO

This was a test, my dear.

Daphne slows, veers away from Marcus, switches hands with the chisel-point steel bar.

Beyond the cisterns collecting blood as if from a carnal aquifer: an incongruously modern stainless steel tank.

Long, clear rubber hoses snake from the tank to each cistern. Each hose filled with a bright yellow liquid.

Strega, perhaps?

ENZO (CONT'D)

He survived it. You passed it.

Daphne slows, knows what to do.

DAPHNE

This ends now.

Enzo lifts his arms, smiles.

ENZO

But, darling. That's the whole point. Nothing needs to end. Not for you, ever.

DAPHNE

Did you turn him? Did that bitch turn him?!

ENZO

Turn him? That's not how it works. Not in the real world.

He takes a step closer.

ENZO (CONT'D)

True bounty, true wealth, *generational* wealth... That can't be made. It can't be earned. It must be bequeathed. Inherited.

(wicked, entitled grin)

Now, you're stronger than the peasants. You *deserve* to rule.

Daphne, done with this asshole, shoots Marcus a quick wink, then wags her head subtly toward the steel tank.

He narrows his eyes. *Right, but--*

Her eyes flare. *Just follow my lead, for once.*

He nods, edges dutifully further from her.

ENZO (CONT'D)

All of this was meant to be yours,
my dear. You could own the world!

DAPHNE

We tried that. Owning sucks.

Enzo ignores this, lifts his hands toward her.

ENZO

Come to me. Blood of my blood.

She presses past him, circles him as Marcus mirrors her in reverse. Enzo barely bats an eye. Indomitable.

Marcus slows, scans the tank with his eyes. At the center of the face of it: a hefty circular port with a radial dial.

ENZO (CONT'D)

Please, it's my time. Now. To rest.

DAPHNE

I DON'T CARE.

She grips the chisel-point bar like a spear.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

You're ruining this place. These people. They deserve to live.

ENZO

And you deserve to feed off the fruits of their labor. As it has always been and always shall be.

Behind them, Marcus grits his teeth, readies to do what he thinks she wants him to do.

DAPHNE

Yeah. No thanks.

She turns, drops the metal bar, KICKS it across the the stone floor toward Marcus just as he reaches up, and YANKS at the dial on the port.

WHIR! The wheel spins. BANG! The port blows open.

And hundreds of gallons of acid yellow liquid SHOOT out in a broad stream that hits the floor, rushes toward Enzo like a tidal wave, nearly knocks him off his feet.

Cool as a cucumber, Daphne WHIPS the blowtorch line from her shoulders, cranks the valve open, lights it again.

The flame sputters and coughs. Nearly out of gas.

ENZO
Don't be a fool.

DAPHNE
Sorry. Can't help it.

She lowers the weak flame to the river of highly flammable, alcohol-rich *Strega* swirling at their feet.

WHOOSH!

The river of liquor BURSTS into flames.

Enzo looks, sees the fire spread from the floor to the cisterns to the tapestries to the coffins. Blindingly fast.

In a seeming panic, he LUNGES toward Daphne.

ENZO
I CREATED YOU! Summoned you!

Daphne stumbles backward, drops the blowtorch, eyes wide.

But, before Enzo can get his greedy hands around her neck:

THUMP.

Marcus, sporting the chisel-point digging bar like a poor man's pole vault, impales Enzo from behind.

But, instead of gasping, instead of screaming, Enzo LAUGHS.

Of course he does.

Lustfully. Haughtily. Victoriously.

ENZO (CONT'D)
Please. You watch too many movies.

Daphne, over it, ditches the propane tank, YANKS the reciprocating saw from her chest, fires it up:

BUZZZZZAHHHHH!

Enzo looks to Daphne as the fire grows. *You wouldn't.*

Daphne looks to Marcus. *Hold him down.*

Marcus nods. *Of course, dear. Anything you say.*

Behind them, coffins SPLINTER and EXPLODE as flaming tapestries fall to the pools of burning blood in heaps.

It's over. Or is it?

SMASH TO:

EXT. CASTLE, COURTYARD - TWILIGHT

Armed with power tools, now bloodied, Daphne and Marcus step back out into the courtyard amid total carnage.

Twisting tongues of fire leap from every archway and window.

The remaining throngs of Enzo's bloodthirsty coterie lie moaning on the cobbles. Impaled, burnt, and partially dismembered but still very much alive.

And Arturo's entire band of avenging villagers have been reduced to bloody heaps. Most also still breathing.

Ravaged, GROANING bodies dot the blood-soaked cobbles as smoke pours upward into the brightening sky.

On the wall behind Daphne and Marcus, the *Giallo* picture from earlier melts down. Finally disappears.

MARCUS

Well, boss. What do we do now?

And there she is.

Charlotte emerges from smoke at the far end of the courtyard, holding Arturo himself. The last man standing.

Blood courses in thick rivulets from his neck.

ARTURO

(pained, to Daphne)

Mi dispiace, mia cara ragazza.

Charlotte, her own face smeared with blood, casts Arturo aside like an unwanted plaything.

CHARLOTTE

(a ferocious roar)

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!

Daphne looks to Marcus. Marcus nods.

MARCUS

Screw this bitch.

Between them and Charlotte, the undead slowly rise.

And an electronic reinterpretation of Wagner's "RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES" by Klayton and Tom Salta kicks in.

To the thundering, MODERN REMIX of the tune that convinced Marcus to come to Italy in the first place, he and the woman he loves charge across the courtyard.

He with the pry bar. She with the saw.

No longer fearful. No longer at odds. A powerful force working in perfect unison.

Together, they SLASH, STAB, and SMASH their way across the cobbles as the sun slowly begins to crest the nearby hills.

Punished undead bodies crumple and fall yet again (some headless, some pierced through the heart) as Charlotte, no longer regal, falters briefly.

Bands of deadly sunlight cut through the billowing smoke as she, frantic in a way we've never seen her, desperately tries to stay in the shadows.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

STOP. STOP.

Daphne, spattered in blood, wheels around to face her, drops the reciprocating saw, lifts the nail gun.

Smiles.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

You could have been eternal.

DAPHNE

I'd rather just live.

Still to the MUSIC, Daphne takes aim:

BANG. THWAP. BANG. THWAP.

Each nail hits Charlotte like a proper bullet.

THWAP. THWAP. THWAP. THWAP. THWAP.

With each impact, she stumbles backward.

Seeing the shaft of daylight right behind Charlotte, Marcus lowers his bloody steel bar, nods to himself.

MARCUS

That's my girl.

BANG. BANG. BANG.

Like a garish, vampiric Saint Sebastian, Charlotte staggers backward, shot through with nails.

Until: WHOOSH!

Marcus hurls the bar like javelin, pierces her chest.

She staggers backward, SCREAMS deafeningly, hits the daylight, bursts into flames.

Daphne shields her eyes from the heat with the nail gun as Charlotte, HOWLING, swirls into a tempest of fire.

And promptly crumples into a mound of smoldering ash.

Then, one after another, each of her undead minions lying GROANING across the square vaporizes as well.

POOF. POOF. POOF. POOF.

The light of day RUSHES in like a cleansing tide. Like nature restoring its purity once again.

Daphne slowly lowers nail gun, drops it.

PRE-LAP: PLINK. PLINK.

The sound of ice cubes landing in crystal rocks glasses.

SMASH TO:

EXT. HOUSE, ROOFTOP - DUSK

Wearing plaster-coated overalls and a filthy sweatshirt dotted with paint, Daphne COLLAPSES into one of the recently restored chaises on their now fully renovated rooftop.

Behind her, at a gorgeous but by no means ostentatious alfresco kitchen/bar, Marcus, also covered in paint, uncaps a frosty bottle of Campari, pours two negronis, stirs.

DAPHNE

God, I've never felt so wrecked.

Marcus dusts his hands on his jeans, reaches for a pile of orange wedges, twists one into her drink, paints the rim.

MARCUS

I've never felt more alive.

He plunks another hunk of orange into his drink, turns, ambles across the roof to the chaise next to hers.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Just like you said...

He hands her her drink, cheers her: CLINK.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
 Dream harder. Trust beauty. One of
 us will always catch the other.

Daphne narrows her eyes. *Did I sctually say that?*

He turns, lifts his drink, takes a sip, savors it.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
 And you're right. I think we are
 gonna like it here.

In the distance, across the valley, the now definitively
 ruined castle sits like a tumbledown tombstone.

A relic of privilege and willful, brutal self-indulgence
 that was destroyed just in time.

Beyond it, the sun slowly sets, painting the lacy clouds a
 ridiculously vivid crimson that nearly matches their
 matching cocktails.

As Daphne gazes down to the ruins, her face betrays a hint
 of disbelief as if maybe it was all just a dream.

But Marcus finally steps a leg over his chaise, collapses
 down next to her, kicking up a cloud of dust.

Daphne CHUCKLES to herself briefly, finally takes a sip.

DAPHNE
 Love you.

Down below: the sound of VOICES. The bustle of the villagers
 finally back to life. Alive and thriving once again.

MARCUS
 Love you... just the same.

He looks her way, guzzles another greedy gulp.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
 Which is a shit ton. Just to be
 completely clear.

She grins, gives his glass a feisty: CLINK.

SMASH TO BLACK.

ROLL END CREDITS --

To "PERHAPS VAMPIRES IS A BIT STRONG" by ARCTIC MONKEYS.

THE END