

SEASON OF THE WITCH

by

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EXT. COAST OF FRANCE - NIGHT

Dark, foreboding waves. Rising and falling. THUNDERING against rocks.

Out to sea we glimpse something. The prow of a longboat cutting through the waves, struggling against a massive swell, then CRASHING down again with brutal force.

EXT. BOW OF BOAT - CONTINUOUS

TWO MEN man the oars.

LAVEY DE CRECY, a Knight of the Crusades, bears the face of a soldier, chiseled and marked with scars.

Behind him, his loyal companion FELSON, a mountain of a man, 250 lbs from peak to base.

EXT. THE SHALLOWS - MOMENTS LATER

LaVey grabs the bowline and leaps out. Felson close behind. Together, they struggle through the surf, stumbling and dragging the boat behind them.

They reach the shore and collapse in the sand. Exhausted. Both men lie motionless. Utterly spent.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

The storm has passed and the seas are calm again. Water laps at LaVey's ankles. He awakens, squinting in the harsh sun.

EXT. SANDY DUNES - MORNING

LaVey appears over a rise to see Felson approaching. He has a walking stick in hand.

FELSON

I saw a road back that way and a sign for Marseille. Less than a day's ride from here.

LAVEY

And how long by foot?

Felson grimaces at the thought.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Boots tramp across a barren field.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LaVey and Felson keep a brisk pace through the wintry landscape.

They emerge onto a muddy road. Further down the path we see some sheep and cattle, chewing at weeds.

LAVEY
Sheep roaming free? And no
shepherd in sight.

FELSON
Maybe they jumped the pen?

LAVEY
Sheep and cattle alike?

Felson shakes his head, "no." Not likely.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

We find the two men trudging along a sodden countryside. The only sound, the CRUNCH of their feet on the frozen earth.

Felson slaps his hands together to warm them.

FELSON
My belly feels empty. We should
have slaughtered one of those
sheep.

Something gets his attention.

FELSON (CONT'D)
Look there.

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

Just beyond the tree line, there's a small farmhouse.

FELSON (CONT'D)
(his mood brightens)
Surely, a warm meal for two Knights-
brethren is not too much to ask of
one's countrymen.

LaVey points towards the stable, where several gray horses are penned.

LAVEY
Two good horses would do.

They make their way to the house.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

LaVey KNOCKS at the door. It's ajar. He eases it open.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

LAVEY

Hello?

LaVey steps inside.

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

Low rafters in the ceiling. A single wooden table. No fire in the hearth.

LAVEY (CONT'D)

Hello?

No response.

Felson moves over to the hearth, where a cooking pot hangs. He touches it. Cold. He pulls the ladle from it, smells the contents. Turns his nose from the foul smell.

LAVEY (CONT'D)

(louder)

Is anyone here?

Still nothing. LaVey moves to the door on the other side of the room. Partially open. He peers inside. It's very dim. The only window appears to have been covered over.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

LaVey enters. He can barely make out the shape of a bed in the center of the room. Felson follows him in.

FELSON

I don't like this, LaVey.

LaVey steps to the window. Draws back the covering. Sunlight streams into the room. He sees TWO FIGURES lying under the covers of the bed, their backs to him.

LaVey moves around the foot of the bed, where he sees the arm of a man draped over a smaller form. The arm is grotesque; covered with blackened boils and oozing sores.

LaVey continues around to the side, where the man's face comes into view.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gray patches of mottled flesh and festering lesions seem to have all but consumed it. LaVey winces at the sight.

FELSON (CONT'D)
What in the name of God?!

Tucked under the man's arm is the equally disfigured and rotting corpse of what must be his wife. Blood has seeped from her nostrils and ears onto her pillow.

FELSON (CONT'D)
What happened to them?

LAVEY
I don't know. A plague of some kind.

Felson turns away from the sight.

FELSON
I thought the leper colonies of San Lazzaro had shown us the worst that could befall a man, but, I was wrong.

LaVey's eyes still on the corpse...

LAVEY
Let's hope that death came quickly, and long before this.

The woman's eyes open!

Her gangrenous arm reaches out from under the sheets towards LaVey! Startled, he steps back. Stands there. Staring with disbelief into the pleading eyes of the dying woman.

He follows her outstretched arm to... her trembling fingers that reach for... the hilt of his sword. He looks back to her. She tries to speak, but can't. She doesn't have to.

INT./EXT. STABLE - DAY

LaVey and Felson mount the two grays they've saddled. We follow them out of the stable to find the farmhouse ablaze.

Felson makes the sign of the cross in the air. LaVey, with a final solemn glance, turns his horse away.

EXT. ROAD TO MARSEILLE - AFTERNOON

A bitter wind blows. LaVey and Felson plod on, heads tucked in against the cold. They hear a noise growing in the distance. SOUNDS like THUNDER.

...ba-BUM...ba-BUM...ba-BUM...

Gradually, out of the gloom, A PROCESSION OF MEN appear. At the head, The MASTER and his TWO "LIEUTENANTS" carry banners of purple velvet and cloth of gold.

Behind them, barefoot men, clad in rags, march silently to the macabre beat of a DRUMMER.

...ba-BUM...ba-BUM...ba-BUM...

Their heads and faces are hidden. Their eyes focused on the ground before them. Each man carries a heavy leather thong tipped with metal studs.

When the Master starts praying, the men begin beating themselves with the thongs.

LaVey and Felson watch in bewilderment.

LAVEY
 (calling out to the
 marchers)
 What form of lunacy is this!?

The men don't respond. They simply pass silently around them.

VOICE (O.S.)
 They cannot answer you, friend.

Both men jerk around in their saddles to see a DARK FIGURE watching them from the other side of the road. A Knight on horseback.

This is SANCIERRE. A gaunt, older Knight whose fingers rest lightly on the pommel of his sword.

SANCIERRE
 They have taken a vow of silence.

LAVEY
 What in God's name are they doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANCIERRE

Penance. They believe it is the only way to regain God's favor, through mortification of the flesh.

FELSON

They're mad!

SANCIERRE

Perhaps. Who can say? The Black Death drives men to desperate deeds.

LAVEY

It's true then. There is a plague.

SANCIERRE

A plague like no other. A pestilence over all the land.

(beat)

But how do you come through this region untouched? The plague is known to have killed most between here and Bourdeaux.

FELSON

We came by sea, from Constantinople.

The Knight reacts with mild surprise.

SANCIERRE

Ah. Crusaders.

(beat)

Then you have not heard the Cardinal's decree?

LAVEY

Decree?

SANCIERRE

All Knights of the land have been called to Avignon.

LAVEY

For what?

SANCIERRE

That I do not know.

LaVey and Felson share a look.

EXT. ROAD TO AVIGNON - AFTERNOON

The three Knights ride in silence along the banks of a river. Felson turns in his saddle to watch as several bloated forms float by with the current. Dead cattle, a wagon and horse, and several unmistakably human shapes.

SANCIERRE

The first to die were along the coast. They say the plague struck so quickly that the stricken fell dead within a night.

(beat)

They were the fortunate ones. For the rest death came slowly. First the headaches, then the fever, which renders those stricken so weak they are forced to lie in bed. Within a day or two, the swellings appear. They infect the entire body. Soon after, the internal bleeding and vomiting of blood follows. And, in a matter of days, two maybe three... the victim succumbs.

LAVEY

And there is no remedy?

SANCIERRE

None.

FELSON

How long has it been over the land?

SANCIERRE

Two years and a season.

Felson and LaVey react. Staggered.

LAVEY

How many dead?

SANCIERRE

Some say so many as three in four.

FELSON

Three in four!?

SANCIERRE

Believe it. Entire towns have been put to the torch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He gestures towards a passing road sign. The name of a town, VASCON, with a red "X" through it. Felson and LaVey stare at it as they pass.

EXT. WINDY HILLOCK - AFTERNOON

The riders reach the top of a ridge and stop to take in the sight of...

LE PALAIS DE PAPES. The seat of the Catholic Church in France, it rises majestically from the hillside. Massive stone walls, parapets, turrets. Commanding the high ground for miles around.

EXT. PALACE GATE - MOMENTS LATER

With a SOUND of unseen GEARS and WHEELLOCKS, it begins to rise.

INT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

The Knights pass through the gate into a cobbled courtyard.

A PRIEST is already approaching through one of the vaulted entries to greet them. This is FRA' DeBELZAO, advisor to the Cardinal. He is dressed in a simple brown robe, bound at the waist with the traditional rosaries of his order. He studies the Knights.

DEBELZAO

You are Knights of the order of
Saint John the Baptist?

LaVey gives a terse nod.

DeBelzaq sizes him up. Then, with a sudden flourish, spins and leads the way across the courtyard.

DEBELZAO (CONT'D)

Follow me.

INT. THE GREAT HALL - PALACE - EVENING

DeBelzaq leads the Knights down the magnificent hall with its rib vaulted ceiling. A ghostly quiet has replaced the laughter and excitement of the ceremonial banquets and jousting tournaments once held here. Only the ECHO of FOOTSTEPS breaks the eerie silence.

LAVEY

Tell me, Fra DeBelzaq, has Avignon
been spared the plague?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEBELZAQ

Spared? Hardly. Four hundred die daily. The sick are dying too fast for the living to bury.

FELSON

And the king's reaction to this epidemic?

DEBELZAQ

He asked the doctors at the university for their help.

LAVEY

And, did they propose a remedy?

DEBELZAQ

(embarrassed to admit)
Broth. Seasoned with ground pepper, ginger and cloves. Panic spread soon after.

Dubious looks between the Knights.

FELSON

And the town authorities?

DEBELZAQ

They banned all gambling and swearing, and demanded that everyone living in sin get married immediately.

LAVEY

And?

DEBELZAQ

The number of marriages increased considerably, and gambling declined so much that dice makers turned to making rosaries.

(beat)

And in this newly virtuous place, twenty-five thousand citizens have since died of the plague and are buried in large pits on the outskirts of town.

DeBelzaq brings them to a halt in front of a tall gilded doorway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)

It was then that our king and the local authorities turned to the church for an answer.

He open the doors and leads them into...

INT. CARDINAL'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

At one end, seated on a darkened dais surrounded by PHYSICIANS, is CARDINAL D'AMBROISE.

DEBELZAQ

Gentlemen, the Cardinal D'Ambroise.
(by way of introduction)
Your eminence, the Knights.

The Cardinal leans forward, squinting to see them. As he leans into the torchlight, we see he is deathly pale, almost ghostlike.

CARDINAL

(weakly)
How many... have come?

DEBELZAQ

Three, your eminence.

CARDINAL

(disappointed)
So few?

LaVey steps forward.

LAVEY

Your eminence. Why is it that we've been summoned?

CARDINAL

Please! Come no closer. I am stricken.

(COUGHING)

The Black Death is in me.

He glances sidelong at his physicians, who are hovering just out of arm's reach.

CARDINAL (CONT'D)

Leave us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHYSICIAN

But your eminence... you grow weaker.

CARDINAL

No. I die. And your leeches and ointments are of no use. Now go!

The physicians share a quick look, pack up their jars and beat a hasty exit.

Once they've left, though it pains him to speak, the Cardinal turns to LaVey...

CARDINAL (CONT'D)

France is in the grip of a terrible evil. The King has fled his kingdom, and left his subjects to die.

He is interrupted by a sudden COUGHING FIT that wracks his entire body. He tries to stifle it with a handkerchief. When he draws his hand away, we glimpse the white silk, flecked red with blood.

CARDINAL (CONT'D)

(recovering a bit)
Judicum Universale.

LAVEY

Last Judgement?

He looks up, as if to gauge the Knights' reactions. LaVey is the only one who takes it all in stoic silence.

The Cardinal looks to him, curiously.

CARDINAL

Do you not believe this to be true?

LAVEY

I believe that we live in dark times.

CARDINAL

A guarded response.

LAVEY

I'm a Knight, not a priest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARDINAL

And as a Knight, as a soldier of
God, you hold no belief?

LAVEY

What would you have me believe?

CARDINAL

(straining to continue)
The plague is a curse, called up
from Hell. Brought upon us by the
Black Witch.

LAVEY

The "Black Witch?"

DeBelzaq intercedes for the flagging Cardinal.

DEBELZAQ

Several weeks ago, a girl was found
wandering in the forest on the
outskirts of the city. She said
she'd come from the village of
Louresse.

CARDINAL

That place is gone now. Wiped out
by the plague.

DEBELZAQ

From there she traveled west to
Marseille. From there, here, to
Avignon. And everywhere she went
it was the same.

CARDINAL

In her footsteps followed death.

LAVEY

I don't understand, wh...

DEBELZAQ

(hastening to add)
There is a holy place, where our
Benedictine brothers possess an
ancient book. A book of rituals
that will destroy the witch's
powers.

CARDINAL

The Abbey Severac.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SANCIERRE

Severac? That's many leagues from here, in the gray mountains.

(aside, to LaVey)

A desolate place.

CARDINAL

Only there can her curse be lifted.

LAVEY

Why are you telling us this?

CARDINAL

Because you must deliver her there.

LaVey's eyes darken, but he says nothing.

INT. DUNGEON STAIRS - NIGHT

The Knights descend a flight of dank, stone steps that wind in circles downward. DeBelzaq leads the way with a torch.

DEBELZAQ

Be careful, the witch may attempt to question you. Do not answer. She will mingle truth with lies. She will try to turn one man against the other.

(he pauses, glances back)

Also, don't get too close. She almost killed one of our jailors.

At the bottom, he unbolts a heavy steel door.

INT. DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

A BURLY JAILOR rises as DeBelzaq and the Knights enter.

LaVey looks around and sees that they are circled on all sides by thick cell doors. But one of the doors stands out. It has been reinforced with steel bars and braced by a thick oaken beam.

DeBelzaq moves towards it.

DEBELZAQ

(to the Jailor)

Open it.

The jailor moves forward with a ring of keys, unlocks the door, and pushes the beam away with both hands. He pulls the door open. It swings wide, like the vault of some dark tomb.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LaVey takes a torch from the wall.

INT. DUNGEON CELL - CONTINUOUS

He enters the darkened interior. The others follow. LaVey raises his torch for a better view, and WHIRLS suddenly as he hears a noise. There's a SHADOWY FIGURE on the ground, in the corner.

LaVey takes a step forward. The flickering light of his torch illuminates the cowering form of a PEASANT GIRL. She turns away.

FELSON
(surprised)
She's just a girl.

LAVEY
What is your name?

She doesn't answer. LaVey steps closer.

LAVEY (CONT'D)
Your name, girl. Can't you speak?

Still nothing. LaVey steps around to see her face.

She draws her legs in tight. We hear the chain around her ankle rattle.

LAVEY (CONT'D)
You've been accused of witchcraft.
Do you understand what that means?

DEBELZAQ
You're wasting your time. She
has already confessed to this.

LaVey moves his torch about the cell.

LAVEY
I see no plate of food. No water.
Is she not fed?

DeBelzaq's silence is answer enough. LaVey turns back to the Girl.

LAVEY (CONT'D)
Are you hungry?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Girl suddenly lunges at LaVey, wild-eyed, her fingers clawing for his neck. But the chain around her ankle jerks taut at the last instant, stopping her just inches from him.

GIRL

Come closer. I'll show you how hungry I am! You sonofabitch!

The Girl struggles in vain to reach him. The chains snapping and jerking.

LaVey holds his ground.

INT. DUNGEON - MOMENTS LATER

The men exit and make their way out of the dank surroundings.

DEBELZAQ

(to LaVey)
Satisfied?

LAVEY

(to DeBelzaq)
That she is half-starved and delirious? Yes.

INT. GUEST HALL - LATER

A blazing fire. Embers smoke and glow.

FELSON (O.S.)

You mean you don't believe it?

Felson paces back and forth. LaVey stands before the fire, staring at the flames. A goblet of wine in his hand.

LAVEY

That she is a witch? Certainly not.

FELSON

But she confessed.

LAVEY

Oh, that I do not doubt. The church can be...
(choosing his words carefully)
Very persuasive.

Felson considers this, falls silent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANCIERRE
Then you would refuse the
Cardinal's request?

LaVey nods.

FELSON
Is this wise of you?

SANCIERRE
I have my doubts as well, but
one does not lightly disobey
the church, LaVey.

LaVey slams his goblet down. The red wine flies out of it,
spilling onto his hand.

LAVEY
I will not have the blood of
an innocent girl on my hands!
No matter how mad she is.

LaVey wipes the wine from his hand. Stops, as he sees
DeBelzaq, standing in the entrance. An awkward moment.

DEBELZAQ
You believe she is innocent.
But you are deceived. She is
the very embodiment of evil.

LAVEY
(low, tense)
I've seen evil, priest. Do not
presume I am so easily deceived.

He pushes past, leaving the others to stare after him mutely.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF HAUNTING IMAGES

The steel-clad forms of CRUSADER KNIGHTS on horseback gallop
out of the shadows like horrific metallic demons. They wield
their swords high.

TURK PEASANTS: MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN fleeing to and fro...

COMMANDER DRAGONET (V.O.)
They are a godless people. Infidels.
Who have killed our brethren.
They must not go unpunished! We
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COMMANDER DRAGONET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
must wipe them out! All of them!
Spare no one!

KNIGHT'S P.O.V.

We single out A GIRL on the run. She wheels around in terror. Freezes as we make eye contact. Her face streaked with tears.

We ride towards her. She screams, a soundless cry, and flees. We wield our sword left and right, hacking down anything in our path. We're gaining on the Girl, our sword rising, coming down, slashing her across the back. She goes stumbling, falling to the ground.

Blood seeps through the clothing on her back as she struggles to get to her feet. But, before she can, our shadow falls over her. She looks up with wide, terrified eyes. For an odd moment we regard one another, her eyes imploring ours. Mercilessly, we raise our sword. The Girl SCREAMS!

INT. PALACE BEDROOM - NIGHT

LaVey jerks awake. His forehead is glistening with sweat. It takes his shattered senses a moment to register where he is.

He climbs out of bed, pulls on his tunic.

EXT. PALACE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

LaVey walks down the hall. It's ghostly quiet at this hour, just the SOUND of his FEET on the marble floor.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

LaVey descends with a torch.

Half way down the steps, he falters at a SOUND from below. A pitiable WEEPING that ECHOES up the staircase.

INT. DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

LaVey enters.

He looks around and sees the Jailor asleep, cotton plugs jammed into his ears. He follows the WEEPING to the peasant girl's cell and opens a small observation window to peer through...

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

Moonlight filters through the cell's only window illuminating the Girl huddled on the floor. CRYING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She's been stripped to her waist, her back bloodied from fresh wounds that she's suffered.

Lavey wants to speak out, say something, when...

Suddenly, there's a scurrying motion on the floor. A rat races across the stones. The girl lunges out and snatches it up. There's a sickening SNAP as she breaks it in her hands. Ravenous, she hunches over... and slowly begins to eat it.

Torn between pity and disgust, LaVey closes the window.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. DINING HALL - DAWN

LaVey enters to find Felson, Sancierre and DeBelzaq already seated around the breakfast table.

LAVEY

You can tell the Cardinal I have made my decision.

DeBelzaq and the others glance up from their food.

LAVEY (CONT'D)

I will take the girl to Severac on one condition: that she be given a fair trial. I want to see the evidence with my own eyes.

DEBELZAQ

But, as I've told you, she has already confessed.

LaVey remains stone-faced.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)

(frustrated)

I must discuss this with the Cardinal. He will not be pleased.

LAVEY

Perhaps not. But the offer is final.

DEBELZAQ

Very well.

DeBelzaq leaves the table.

LAVEY

DeBelzaq.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The priest looks back to LaVey.

LAVEY (CONT'D)
 Tell his eminence that we will
 need fresh horses. And for my
 companions, full blessings and
 remissions from sin.

DEBELZAQ
 And as for yourself?

LAVEY
 I require nothing from the church.

An awkward moment. DeBelzaq exits.

EXT. PALACE - DAY

Rain PATTERS against a stained glass window of the palace.
 From within, a warm glow is visible.

INT. CARDINAL'S BED CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

The Cardinal is huddled in his bed, his forehead feverish
 with sweat. DeBelzaq kneels by the bedside, having just
 conveyed LaVey's "terms."

CARDINAL
 Under the circumstances, we have
 little choice but to agree.

DEBELZAQ
 Very well. Then, with your
 approval, I shall prepare the
 documents that the Abbot will
 require.

CARDINAL
 God's will be done.

DeBelzaq looks up with an expression of uncertainty. Clearly
 something more he wants to say.

CARDINAL (CONT'D)
 Speak your mind, DeBelzaq.

DEBELZAQ
 It's LaVey, your eminence.

CARDINAL
 What about him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEBELZAQ
 (with difficulty)
 I fear that he has lost his
 faith... if ever he possessed it.

CARDINAL
 (after some consideration)
 All the more reason why it's
 essential that you accompany them
 on their journey.

DEBELZAQ
 Me? But, but I am no Knight.
 Of what use would I be?

CARDINAL
 LaVey is the sword. You are
 the cross. Where he is weak,
 you must be strong. And when
 he loses his way...
 (beat)
 ...you must stay the course.

DeBelzaq stares for a moment, a little stunned. Then with
 quiet dignity, and though he is not pleased by the prospect,
 his head drops in a gesture of acquiescence.

DEBELZAQ
 As you will.

INT. MAPROOM - AFTERNOON

A map being unfurled across a table. A finger points to a
 spot on the chart.

DEBELZAQ
 We are here.
 (indicating another spot)
 The abbey is here.

DeBelzaq stands over a long mahogany table across which
 several charts have been spread.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
 The distance is nearly four hundred
 leagues. Roughly six days travel.
 As you can see, I've charted a
 course that should...

LAVEY
 (indicating)
 You would lead us through here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEBELZAQ

It's the shortest way. The most direct route.

LAVEY

Tell me, priest, have you ever made the journey?

DEBELZAQ

No. But these charts are the most accurate in the land.

LAVEY

Yes. I can see that. And, accurately enough, this area here...

(indicating)

...has been identified as Wormwood Forest. And, it is not a place to be trifled with. Men have lost their way in it, never to be seen again.

SANCIERRE

LaVey is right. Maps are fine, but it would be wise to have a guide. Someone who knows the region.

They turn to DeBelzaq for some suggestion. The priest looks up slowly.

DEBELZAQ

(reluctantly)

There is one. Though I cannot sing his praises.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD - AFTERNOON

LaVey, Felson and Sancierre approach the stocks, where we see a man locked up.

This is HAGAMAN. His head and hands protrude through holes in the pillory, so that he can't lift up or look around. All he can do is stare at the ground.

HAGAMAN

(he hears their footsteps)

Ah, visitors! What can I do for you, gentlemen? Perhaps you'd like to pelt me with fruit? Or kick me in the groin?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAGAMAN'S P.O.V.

LaVey kneels into view.

LAVEY

You are Hagaman? The swindler?

HAGAMAN

No! I mean, yes. I am Hagaman.
But I never swindled anyone. I
sold relics. Genuine relics.

LAVEY

Where did you sell your trinkets?

HAGAMAN

Everywhere. I have happy customers
from here to Prague.

LAVEY

And Severac?

Hagaman thinks for a second.

HAGAMAN

Yes, the monks. I sold them the
tail of an ass ridden in the flight
from Egypt.

LAVEY

So it's safe to assume you know
the way to the abbey?

HAGAMAN

Like the back of my hand. I'd be
happy to draw you a map, but, as
you can see...

He wiggles his hands in the stocks.

LaVey throws his hand over Hagaman's mouth.

LAVEY

Shut up and listen to me. The
magistrate is prepared to offer you
an early release, on one condition:
that you serve as a guide to myself
and four others who have matters of
importance in Severac.

LaVey removes his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HAGAMAN

Condition accepted. Now, if you would be so kind as to unlock...

LAVEY

But, if I were to release you...
(resting his hand on his sword)
...and you attempt to flee...

HAGAMAN

Sir. Release me from this embarrassment and I will guide you anywhere you so desire.

LaVey studies him. Unconvinced, he stands up. A desperate Hagaman strains his neck to see LaVey.

HAGAMAN (CONT'D)

(pleading)
I swear by all the saints! May they strike me dead if I tell a lie!

LAVEY

If you do...

LaVey draws his sword, lifts it to strike...

HAGAMAN

Wh-what are you doing? No. Please!

LAVEY

They'll have to get in line behind me.

WHAM! LaVey brings the sword down on top of the block, slicing the lock in half. Hagaman SCREAMS!

LaVey swings open the block. Hagaman opens his eyes. Stands, clutches his throat, surprised it's still there.

LAVEY (CONT'D)

Do we understand one another?

Hagaman nods timidly.

LAVEY (CONT'D)

Good.

EXT. PALACE - DAWN

The first rays of the sun creep over the ramparts.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

LaVey, Felson and Sancierre emerge from their chambers, led by DeBelzaq. They are each carrying a long staff with a noose of thick leather at the end.

DEBELZAQ

The witch is drugged. She was given a powerful remedy in her food last night.

LAVEY

(re: staff)

Then what are these for?

DEBELZAQ

A precaution. That's all.

INT. DUNGEON - MOMENTS LATER

The jailor rises as the men enter. DeBelzaq gestures towards the Girl's cell door.

The jailor unlocks it, and swings the heavy door open. LaVey, Felson and Sancierre share a look, and silently enter the cell. The jailor seals the door shut behind them.

INT. DUNGEON CELL - CONTINUOUS

There sprawled on the floor unconscious, is the Girl.

LaVey, Felson and Sancierre take up positions around her.

DeBelzaq crosses to the far wall where the shackle chain is fastened to a heavy steel ring in the stone.

The three Knights quietly maneuver their staffs and slip the nooses over her head. Once all three are in place, LaVey gives a nod to DeBelzaq.

The priest takes one of the keys that hang from around his neck and sticks it into the lock...

An anxious Sancierre takes a step back. His foot CLINKS against something on the floor. He and the others look, to see the Girl's plate of food sitting there... untouched!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANCIERRE
 (turning to DeBelzaq)
 Wait!

Too late! DeBelzaq turns the key, unlocking the chain. It slips out of the ring...

And suddenly the girl comes alive!

GIRL
 (to DeBelzaq)
 Murderous priest! Why have you
 poisoned my food?!

The Girl hurls herself at the priest. DeBelzaq scrambles back, trying to get away from her.

LaVey yanks on his staff. The Girl flails at it. CRACK! It splinters apart and whips free.

The Girl scuttles after DeBelzaq.

Felson and Sancierre, who hold the remaining two poles, are jerked after her. DeBelzaq finds himself cornered. In a mad rage, the Girl lunges at the priest.

LaVey manages to snatch up the remaining half of his staff and wrench her back just in time. She turns on LaVey, grabs hold of his staff.

LaVey, surprised by her strength, and too close by half, is about to be pounced upon, when...

Felson charges at her. Ramming the end of his staff into her throat. Driving her back against the wall.

LaVey and Sancierre seize the moment to cinch their nooses tight around the Girl's neck and force her to the ground. She continues to struggle as DeBelzaq steps over to her.

DEBELZAQ
 Struggle, if you like, but it
 has been decided that you are
 to be taken to Severac, and...

Threateningly, he reveals the other half of LaVey's staff clutched in his fist.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
 ...one way or another, to Severac
 you will go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The Girl ceases struggling and slumps back against the cell wall with a sigh of defeat.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Hagaman and Felson wait on horseback, as the heavy stable doors before them swing open.

LaVey leads the way for a horse drawn wagon. Sancierre is at the reigns, DeBelzaq is seated next to him. The rear of the wagon has A cage atop it. A portable prison cell, built of re-enforced lead bars.

HAGAMAN
(to Felson)
Something someone forgot to tell
me?

Hagaman peers at the cage as it passes, sees the imprisoned Girl within, shackled to the floor.

Hagaman calls out to LaVey...

HAGAMAN (CONT'D)
Who is she?!

LAVEY
She's the reason we go to Severac.

Hagaman looks to Felson, confused.

FELSON
She's a witch. Or so they say.

Felson rides off to join LaVey.

HAGAMAN
A what? No one said anything about
witches!

Hagaman takes off to catch up to the others.

THE PALACE GATE

RUMBLES open. The wagon rolls out.

HIGH ABOVE - A PALACE WINDOW

The Cardinal watches solemnly as they diminish in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARDINAL
 (makes the sign of the
 cross)
 Christophori sancti speciem
 quicumque tuetur.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

The wagon rattles down a narrow dirt lane.

Hagaman is riding alongside the wagon. He glances toward the cage.

HAGAMAN'S P.O.V.

The Girl is peering at him. Her head lolling with the motion of the wagon.

Disturbed, Hagaman turns away. Rides up alongside DeBelzaq...

HAGAMAN
 She's staring at me.

DEBELZAQ
 Pay no attention to her.

SANCIERRE
 Look elsewhere.

Hagaman looks to his left, there's a rotten, gnarled tree. He looks to his right, a cemetery, filled with headstones.

HAGAMAN
 Lovely.

Felson and LaVey are riding along, at the rear of the wagon.

The Girl sits on the floor in the center of the cage, her back to them.

FELSON
 (eye on the Girl)
 I felt her strength. And I must
 confess, it did not feel like the
 strength of a girl.

LAVEY
 She's mad, Felson. And madness
 lends strength. That is all.

Felson considers this. Doesn't seem convinced.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FELSON
What if you are wrong?

LAVEY
(musing)
If she is truly a servant of the
Devil...

The Girl turns an ear to their conversation.

LAVEY (CONT'D)
...then I should think her powers
are beyond all of us and we needn't
give it another thought.

Not exactly what Felson wanted to hear. He happens to look
back over his shoulder and notices something.

FELSON
We're being followed.

LaVey doesn't react.

LAVEY
How many?

SANCIERRE
One. Behind us, on the ridge.

LaVey casts a disinterested glance over his shoulder.

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

A lone RIDER on horseback.

EXT. TREE-LINED ROAD - AFTERNOON

The Rider rounds the next bend and stops in surprise.

RIDER'S P.O.V.

The wagon is sitting still in the road. The Knights who were
escorting it are nowhere in sight.

The Rider looks perplexed. Suddenly there's a sharp WHISTLE
from behind him. He turns back to see...

LaVey, Felson and Sancierre emerging from the trees. Felson
has him in his crossbow sights.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lavey rides up to the Rider.

LAVEY
And who have we here?

The hooded Rider offers no response. LaVey inches his horse closer, reaches up and yanks back the cowl. It's a boy, barely eighteen.

LAVEY (CONT'D)
I asked you a question, boy.

KAYLAN
My, my name is Kaylan.

LAVEY
Why are you following us?

KAYLAN
I want to join you on your journey to Severac.

LAVEY
How do you know of our destination?

KAYLAN
I was an altar boy in the service of the Cardinal. It was whispered that Knights were coming to take the witch to Severac. I came to offer you my services.

FELSON
And what services, pray tell, might those be?

KAYLAN
Those of a Knight.

Felson lets out a harsh BARK of LAUGHTER.

KAYLAN (CONT'D)
In exchange for which, I ask your word as gentlemen and Knights, that you vouch for me upon our return, so that I may be Knighted.

LaVey looks to Felson in whimsical disbelief, then back to the boy.

LAVEY
An altar boy, did you say?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Felson squelches another outburst.

KAYLAN

Yes, but I'll have you know, I've ridden twice in the lists and won flags for valor!

FELSON

This is no tournament, boy. Go home to your mother.

He motions Kaylan away.

KAYLAN

The road is free, old man. You cannot stop me from traveling it.

Ouch! LaVey winces, knowing the boy has just pushed Felson's button.

LAVEY

If I were you, boy, I'd offer my apology to this gentleman, and do as he says.

KAYLAN

I'll do neither.

Incensed, Felson turns to LaVey...

FELSON

Do you mind?

LaVey motions 'be my guest.'

Felson dismounts. Draws his sword. Beckons to Kaylan...

FELSON (CONT'D)

Get down from there, boy. You want to be a Knight, allow me the honor of teaching you your first lesson.

He WHIPS his sword in a quick WHISTLING arc. Kaylan nods, climbs down, drawing his sword.

LAVEY (O.S.)

Felson.

Felson looks back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LAVEY (CONT'D)

The other hand. And, don't kill
him. Just send him on his way.

Felson nods, switches the sword to his left hand. He and Kaylan begin circling each other warily, hefting their blades, warming up. And then, KLANG! Felson delivers a blow.

Surprisingly, Kaylan deflects it.

And they're circling again.

KLANG! Another blow from Felson, also deflected. And this time, Ker-KLANG! Kaylan comes right back with one of his own.

Felson parries. But the blow was quick and well-placed and it earns notice.

SANCIERRE

Not bad, for an altar boy.

The others LAUGH.

Felson, no longer toying, moves rapidly, KLANG! KLONG! Kaylan dodges the third blow, stepping around a tree. Felson's sword WHISTLES through the air, sending him off balance. He staggers a bit.

FELSON

What the hell was that?! Stand and
fight like a man, you jackrabbit!

Felson circles the tree and the fight continues. A series of rapid blows, which are deflected and parried with increasing speed, back and forth.

Until Felson begins to truly lose his temper. He is about to switch the sword to his right hand, when...

LAVEY

That's enough!

Both men stop, and look to LaVey, who oddly, is smiling.

LAVEY (CONT'D)

(to Kaylan)

Perhaps you can be of service,
after all.

Pleased with himself, Kaylan grins.

EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

Kaylan has been relegated to gathering firewood. The would-be-Knight keeps his complaints to himself.

Nearby, the wagon has been unhitched and set in the shelter of a large elm tree, directly opposite the open doors of...

INT. ABANDONED BARN - CONTINUOUS

The men are gathered around a small fire, eating a meal. They are in mid-debate...

SANCIERRE

I tell you, the plague travels
by touch! Not through the air.

HAGAMAN

I tell you it can! I have seen
Knights stricken, even in full
armor.

DEBELZAQ

And what cure have you for that?
A relic? Some worthless bauble?

HAGAMAN

I have both relics and indulgences.
The rarest between here and Rome.
Some of them offer protection from
the plague.

He reaches for his satchel, a heavy burlap bag, and rummages inside.

HAGAMAN (CONT'D)

For a paltry price, I might be
willing to part with this stone,
the very same one that slew
Goliath!

Sancierre rolls his eyes. Felson SNORTS with scepticism.

FELSON

Selling false relics is a sin.
Have you no shame!?

LAVEY

Ah. Now listen closely gentlemen.
For this is a subject in which my
friend is well versed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAUGHTER.

LAVEY (CONT'D)

In fact, if it weren't for his sins, the two of us might never have met.

(to Felson)

Shall I tell the story?

FELSON

I doubt they'd find it amusing.

SANCIERRE

Allow us to be the judge of that.

Felson rolls his eyes in dismay. Sancierre and the others encourage LaVey to continue.

LAVEY

(to the others)

Soon after becoming a Knight, as is customary with the newest members, I was enlisted to accompany a priest whose job it was to recruit future prospects from the neighboring villages.

(beat)

One afternoon, the priest was explaining to the young men of the village that whoever went on crusade would receive blessings from the church and full remission from their sins. It was the part about sin that perked young Felson's interest.

LAUGHTER.

FELSON

Not true!

LAVEY

(ignoring him)

So much so, in fact, that he asks of the priest, precisely which sins would be forgiven. Would they, for instance, forgive adultery?

Felson is gradually turning red with humiliation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAVEY (CONT'D)

The priest thinks about it for a moment, and says, "Yes. For a two year pledge."

(beat)

"What about theft?" Felson asks. The priest gives it some thought, and again, says, "Yes. But, for no less than a three year pledge."

(beat)

So Felson thinks it over, and finally says to the priest...

(imitating Felson)

"Well, if it's alright with you, father, why don't you sign me up for ten to start."

The men burst into LAUGHTER at Felson's expense. Slapping him heartily on the back.

EXT. ABANDONED BARN - MOMENTS LATER

LaVey exits with a plate of food in hand.

THE WAGON

LaVey finds the Girl awake and seated on the floor in the center of the cage.

LAVEY

I brought you some food.

LaVey slides the plate through an opening between the crossbar and the floor. Pushes it towards her.

GIRL

Why do you bother?

LAVEY

One has to eat.

The Girl crawls the short distance to retrieve it. As she does, we see that her ankle is shackled to a short length of chain secured to the floor, that prevents her reaching the sides of the cage. She pulls the plate to her. Smells it.

LAVEY (CONT'D)

It's soup. And bread. Nothing more.

She tastes it. Eats.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIRL

This place you're taking me...
what will happen to me there?

LAVEY

Your innocence or guilt will be
decided.

She stops eating.

GIRL

There was a girl in my village who
was suspected of being a witch.

(beat)

They put stones in her pockets and
cast her into the lake. If she had
drowned... they would have known
she was human. But she didn't.
She lived. They called it proof of
magic and burned her at the stake.

LAVEY

Nothing of the kind will happen to
you. You will be judged fairly. I
give you my word.

CUT TO:

PHOOSH! The flames of the campfire are stoked.

Kaylan adds some wood to the fire.

INT. ABANDONED BARN - CONTINUOUS

Felson, Sancierre and Hagaman are having a laugh and passing
the wineskin amongst themselves. Sancierre regards Kaylan.
Passes the wineskin to him.

Kaylan takes it, uncertainly.

SANCIERRE

Go on, boy. It won't kill you.

Kaylan takes a long pull and GASPS when he's done.

LAUGHTER amongst the others. Kaylan sits down and joins them.

LaVey returns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KAYLAN

(gaining courage)
Tell me about the crusades. I
want to know all about...

LAVEY

(interrupting)
Another time, boy. It's late,
and we've an early start.

The men rise.

DEBELZAQ

(to LaVey)
I suggest that I and another take
the first watch of the witch.

LAVEY

Two men to watch one girl, who's
shackled and locked in a cage.
Nonsense. Sancierre, you have the
first watch. When you tire, wake
DeBelzaq here to relieve you.

Sancierre nods, picks up his scabbard and makes his way to
the wagon.

DEBELZAQ

Be watchful, Sancierre.

SANCIERRE

Always.

EXT. CAMPSITE - LATER

Sancierre is seated by the wagon. He's awake, watching the
Girl.

HIS P.O.V.

She's asleep. In the pale moonlight her features appear
softer.

A TAP on Sancierre's shoulder catches him off guard. It's
DeBelzaq.

DEBELZAQ

I'm sorry. Forgive me. I came
to relieve you. I thought you'd
fallen asleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANCIERRE
No. Just daydreaming.

DeBelzaq takes a seat next to Sancierre.

DEBELZAQ
(making light)
"Daydreaming" in the middle of the
night, no less.

SANCIERRE
I was thinking about how much the
girl reminds me of my own daughter.

DEBELZAQ
You have a daughter?

SANCIERRE
I did.
(beat)
She died. Seven years ago. She
would have been her age...

An awkward silence.

DEBELZAQ
I'm sorry.

Sancierre shrugs to mask the pain. His eyes still on the
Girl.

SANCIERRE
She's someone's daughter, as well.
(beat)
Tell me, Father. You say the
Cardinal has given his word that
she'll get a fair trial, but, has
he not also given his word to end
this plague?

DeBelzaq's expression hardens...

DEBELZAQ
What are you suggesting?

SANCIERRE
Can you imagine the reaction of
the people, if she were not to
be found guilty of witchcraft?
(beat)
Then what? What would they do?
What god might they turn to?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SANCIERRE (CONT'D)

(beat)

No father. You know as well as I, that the church cannot afford to fail its people. Not now.

Sancierre rises.

SANCIERRE (CONT'D)

I will not be a party to this. Nor will the others, hopefully, when they've heard what I have to say.

GIRL (O.S.)

Wait!

Sancierre and DeBelzaq turn to see...

THE CAGE

The frightened face and pleading eyes of an innocent young girl looking at him. Tears streaming down her cheeks.

GIRL (CONT'D)

Is it true, what you say? That I am damned?

Sancierre looks away, he cannot face her with the truth.

GIRL (CONT'D)

(growing more upset)

If you let this happen, you will have my innocent blood on your hands for the rest of your life! Does that mean nothing to you?!

She collapses to the floor. SOBBING.

Sancierre steps towards the cage...

DEBELZAQ

Sancierre. Don't listen to her. She plays upon your sympathies.

Ignoring the priest, Sancierre steps up to the bars...

SANCIERRE

Listen to me. I will not let them...

The Girl lunges at Sancierre! There is no shackle on her ankle to stop her from reaching him!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She reaches through the bars, grabs him with both hands and yanks him violently against the cage. Slamming his head into the bars!

DeBelzaq rushes to help Sancierre. Tries to pull him loose from the Girl's grip.

The Girl seizes the moment to rip the chain (that holds a cross and the key to the cage door) from around the priest's neck. She plunges the crucifix through the back of DeBelzaq's hand, pinning it to the floor of the wagon.

The priest lets loose a CRY of AGONY!

EXT. CAMPFIRE - CONTINUOUS

LaVey and the others are awakened by it.

EXT. WAGON - MOMENTS LATER

LaVey, Felson, Kaylan and Hagaman come rushing to the wagon, to find Sancierre sprawled in the dirt. DeBelzaq, still pinned to the wagon, SCREAMING in pain. The cage open. And the Girl gone.

Hagaman helps the shaken Sancierre to his feet.

LaVey pulls the cross out of DeBelzaq's hand. He collapses to the ground, clutching the hand.

LAVEY

What happened? How did she escape?!

DEBELZAQ

She took the key from around my neck.

LaVey shoots a look to the cage door, the key still inserted in the lock.

KAYLAN (O.S.)

LaVey!

Lavey looks to Kaylan inside the cage. The unlocked shackle in his hand.

KAYLAN (CONT'D)

She picked the lock.

LAVEY

(to DeBelzaq)
Which way did she go?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The priest is in too much pain to recall. He shakes his head uncertainly.

FELSON (O.S.)

This way.

LaVey sees Felson kneeling by a trampled patch of grass at the edge of the glade.

LAVEY

Kaylan. Saddle the horses.
Hagaman. Tend to the priest's
hand, then follow with the wagon.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

On horseback, torches in hand, LaVey, Felson, Sancierre and Kaylan make their way through a wooded area in search of the Girl.

A WINDY RIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

The Knights arrive on a hillock, overlooking the VILLAGE OF GIVAUDON. LaVey reins to a stop. Peers into the dark...

LAVEY (CONT'D)

Where is she? We should have
passed her by now.

A CRACK of LIGHTNING brightens the sky. Felson sees something.

FELSON

(pointing)
There!

The men look. A second BOLT of LIGHTNING reveals the Girl ducking into one of the alleyways of the hamlet.

The men race after her.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The Knights arrive amid a clatter of hooves. They spill into the narrow cobbled lane.

LaVey leads the pack as they gallop between the small stone houses.

LAVEY'S POV

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Up ahead, a CLOAKED FIGURE on the run. A BURST of LIGHTNING! It's the Girl! Her cloak flapping behind her as she vanishes into an alley to the right. LaVey motions for Felson and Sancierre to follow her, while he races for the mouth of the alley, with Kaylan close behind.

LaVey and Kaylan cross another alleyway. LaVey shoots a look to his right, sees someone moving across it, one lane over. He signals Kaylan to take the right.

Felson catches a fleeting glimpse of someone on the move, just ahead. He gestures for Sancierre to circle around to the left.

All four men are closing in...

EXT. VILLAGE CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The men spill out of the alleyways, converging on the village center.

LAVEY
(pointing)
There!

They see the Girl attempting to enter one of the houses. In a blur, Kaylan and Sancierre are out of their saddles and chasing after her. LaVey close behind.

She tries to run, but Felson appears on horseback to block her escape.

Kaylan and Sancierre grab hold of her. As they turn her around to face LaVey, the flame of his torch illuminates the plague ravaged face of an OLD WOMAN! The sight of her stops LaVey in his tracks. Sancierre and Kaylan recoil.

A sudden CLATTER sends LaVey whirling around, to see a death cart making its way slowly through the square.

The CART WORKERS, masked men who collect the bodies of the dead, are piling them into the back of the cart, when, their team of horses rear back!

LaVey sees the Girl streak past the horses and disappear into the alley beside them. LaVey and his men continue the pursuit on foot.

EXT. MOUTH OF THE ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

LaVey and his men funnel out of a narrow pathway. The dark and shadowy terrain of A VALLEY extends before them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A BURST of LIGHTNING illuminates mounds of displaced earth and trenches dug in the hard cold ground.

WHOOOMP! From one of the distant trenches, flames erupt high into the night sky!

Before any of the men can even voice their reaction, a shape is seen silhouetted by the flames. It's the Girl! She descends into one of the trenches.

LAVEY
Quickly. After her!

EXT./INT. TRENCH - MOMENTS LATER

The men scramble down the makeshift steps into the trench. It runs both directions.

LAVEY
(to Sancierre)
You and Kaylan go that way.

Torch in hand, Sancierre leads the way. LaVey and Felson take off in the other direction.

Kaylan and Sancierre slog through the muck. The walls of the trench waver this way and that, preventing a view of any distance.

As they continue, the trench begins to slope downhill. Soon, they're sloshing through an 18 inch deep pool of slimey liquid. The footing becoming more and more precarious.

Kaylan trips over something and goes down.

Sancierre turns back, lowers his torch to find Kaylan on all fours.

SANCIERRE
You alright, boy?

KAYLAN
Yes. And, I'd be even better,
if you'd stop calling me "boy."

Sancierre reaches down to give him a hand. Kaylan lifts his hand from the murky liquid, it comes out black.

KAYLAN (CONT'D)
What in the?

He smells his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAYLAN (CONT'D)
 (surprised)
 Smells like oil.

SANCIERRE
 What?

Kaylan looks down at the muck he finds himself in, and there just beneath the surface, he sees FACES OF THE DEAD! He gasps, stumbles back and up onto his feet, eyes wide with fear!

SANCIERRE (CONT'D)
 What is it?!

KAYLAN
 (fighting a wave of panic)
 The dead! The dead are beneath us!
 (his eyes dart back down
 to what lies underfoot)
 Everywhere!

SANCIERRE
 What?!

KAYLAN
 This is a grave! It's a mass grave
 we stand upon!!

Sancierre lowers his torch to see for himself, then stops.

SANCIERRE
 Did you say oil?

Kaylan manages a nod. Sancierre raises the torch up away from the highly combustible fluid.

He hears something. Shoots a look into the darkness ahead. Listens. Turns back to Kaylan.

SANCIERRE (CONT'D)
 Stay here.

Sancierre turns and rushes off through the knee-deep muck. His torchlight disappearing with him into the darkness.

Sancierre comes to a split, veers left, follows it a distance, stops. Listens. Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Behind him, A FORM darts past, barely glimpsed.

Sancierre hears the PATTERN of feet SPLASHING through the water. He whirls around.

CUT TO:

Lavey and Felson hear something. A RUSTLING SOUND coming from somewhere ahead. They inch forward quietly. The sound continues. Closer. Until, it's coming from just around the bend. LaVey motions for Felson to stop. A hand signal, and they swing around the corner...

To come face to face with a PLAGUE DOG! Its face a bleeding, oozing mess. It snaps and growls at the intruders. Foam frothing over its teeth. It's feeding on something it doesn't want to share. Could be the Girl!

LaVey rushes at the animal, torch first. Puts the flame to it. The rabid dog lets out with a WAIL and races off.

LaVey sheds some light on the dog's victim, to find that it's a diseased corpse. One of dozens that make up the mound the two men stand upon!

CUT TO:

LIGHTNING FLASHES! Reveal the plague dog careening through the trenches!

CUT TO:

LIGHTNING FLASHES! Reveal Kaylan, alone in the dark, still frozen in his tracks. He hears something.

KAYLAN

Sancierre?

Nothing. He draws his sword. His eyes darting amidst the shadows.

KAYLAN (CONT'D)

Sancierre?! Is that you?

He hears movement behind him. Spins around...

CUT TO:

Sancierre bursts around the bend, to find nothing. Just more trench. Suddenly there's a PEAL of CHILDLIKE LAUGHTER. He whirls back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SANCIERRE

Anna?

VOICE (O.S.)

Papa?

Sancierre freezes at the sound. Like a ghost just brushed through him.

SANCIERRE

Anna!

He chases after her VOICE.

Sancierre, rushes in abandon through the winding trenches. Walls of mud blurring past, faster and faster. He twists left and right and left and runs right into Kaylan!

They stare at each other with shocked expressions.

Sancierre winces in pain. His eyes take on a glassy expression. He looks down to see the hilt of a sword protruding from his abdomen! Realizes he's run headlong into Kaylan's sword and impaled himself!

The two men stand eye to eye. Kaylan is frozen in disbelief. A confused expression comes over Sancierre's face...

SANCIERRE (CONT'D)

Anna?

He lets out a sharp GASP and pitches forward. Kaylan catches him as he falls.

KAYLAN

Oh, God! No, no, no!

(calling out)

LaVey! Felson! Help me!

LaVey and Felson stop in their tracks, turn around and race back through the trench.

Kaylan is on his knees, holding Sancierre, SCREAMING for help.

KAYLAN (CONT'D)

LaVey! LaVey! Where are you?!

OUTSIDE THE TRENCHES

Hagaman brings the wagon to a halt. He and DeBelzaq hear Kaylan's cry for help and make their way to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

INSIDE THE TRENCHES

LaVey and Felson arrive to find Kaylan holding Sancierre.

KAYLAN (CONT'D)

He came running out of nowhere.
Why didn't he stop? Why didn't
he see me? Dear God. What have
I done?!

LaVey drops to Sancierre's side. Sees the blood spurting
from his wound. There's nothing he can do.

FELSON

(to Kaylan)

It was dark. It's not your fault,
boy. It was an accident.

(Felson takes his arm)

Come on.

Felson helps Kaylan to his feet.

DeBelzaq and Hagaman reach the trenches in time to see...
Sancierre shudder and die.

KAYLAN

(pained and bewildered)

Why didn't he see me? He looked
me in the eye... but, he called me
Anna. Why?

There's a RUSTLING sound.

LaVey turns, thrusting his torch into the dark, to illuminate
the Girl cowering against the muddy wall of the trench.

LAVEY

(to Felson)

Take her back to the wagon.

GIRL

Don't hurt me.

Felson reaches for the Girl. She hammers her foot into his
groin! The unsuspecting Knight drops to his knees in pain.
A heel to his face sends him splashing back into the muck.
The Girl leaps on top of him. Forces Felson's head under
the muddy oil!

THOOMP! A boot to the jaw, sends her reeling into the muck,
face first. Out cold.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

LaVey helps Felson to his feet. Steps over to the Girl, grabs her by the back of her tunic and lift her torso out of the muck. Stops short, at something he sees...

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

Her tunic is pulled away, revealing her bare back. The wounds he saw there the night before are gone! Her skin is unbroken. Untouched.

LaVey is shocked. He lets go of her. Her head plops back into the muck. He stands there, doubting his own eyes.

Someone touches his shoulder. Startled, LaVey snaps a look behind him, to see Felson standing there. Felson sees the look in LaVey's eyes.

FELSON

You all right?

LaVey nods unconvincingly.

LAVEY

Get her back to the wagon.

Felson moves to the Girl.

EXT. GRAVEMOUND - DAWN

A makeshift cross. Two pieces of wood tied together, thrust into the earth. A lonely sight.

LaVey, DeBelzaq and the others are standing over the grave.

DEBELZAQ

We pray Thee, take thy servant
Sancierre Bertrand into the
heavenly realm for he was a
soldier of the cross and fought
in thy name, and in the name of
thy only son, Jesus Christ.

(beat)

And thus did he die for the
glory of God. Amen.

A few whispered 'amens' from the group.

All but LaVey, who simply looks up into the rain swept skies.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)

Would anyone else care to offer
some words?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

No response. Finally, LaVey breaks the silence...

LAVEY

Let his sacrifice not be in vain.

EXT. CAMPSITE - MOMENTS LATER

LaVey and Hagaman are saddling their horses, when DeBelzaq approaches LaVey...

DEBELZAQ

We must warn the others to be diligent in her presence and not to discuss personal matters, things she might...

LAVEY

Please. Just say what's on your mind.

DEBELZAQ

I believe Sancierre's death was no accident.

Hagaman is all ears.

LAVEY

Are you suggesting that Kaylan intended to do him harm?

DEBELZAQ

No. The witch!

(beat)

You heard what he said. Sancierre called him by his daughter's name, Anna.

(beat)

It was the witch who lured him to his death.

LAVEY

Why? What reason did she have?

DEBELZAQ

Evil needn't a reason, merely the opportunity.

Dismissing the remark, LaVey turns to mount his horse. DeBelzaq stops him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)

She can see the darkness that lurks
in our hearts. And what she sees
there, she will use against us.

The ring of truth in his words strikes a nerve in LaVey.
He looks to the wagon, and finds the Girl watching them.

He strides over to the wagon, pulls a rain tarp from behind
the bench seat and drapes it over the cage.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. FOREST - AFTERNOON

Imposing rock formations are creeping into the landscape.

EXT. WAGON - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

The Knights have resumed their journey. Hagaman is in the
lead. Kaylan is at the reigns of the wagon. DeBelzaq is
seated alongside him.

DEBELZAQ

It was not your fault.

Kaylan doesn't bother to respond to the remark.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)

You may take comfort in the fact
you did not kill him. It was the
witch. No one else.

KAYLAN

He died by my sword.

DEBELZAQ

It could just as easily have been
Felson's or LaVey's.

KAYLAN

But it wasn't! It was mine.
I killed him!

HAGAMAN (O.S.)

LaVey!

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

LaVey and Felson come galloping up to find Hagaman looking out over the BROKEN REMAINS OF A BRIDGE. The raging currents below have washed away everything but a few stubborn pylons that jut out of the water.

FELSON
Wonderful. What do we do now,
swim?

HAGAMAN
We could go back.

LAVEY
(snaps at Hagaman)
Back to the stockades, you mean?

LaVey glares at Hagaman, daring him to pursue his remark further.

HAGAMAN
(reconsidering)
I've heard tell of another bridge
to the North.

LaVey looks to Felson for his reaction.

FELSON
(shrugs)
What choice do we have?

LAVEY
(to Hagaman)
Lead the way.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - AFTERNOON

The wagon winds its way further up into the mountains. Steep canyon walls close in on the trail.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL - MOMENTS LATER

At the rear of the wagon, LaVey and Felson are riding together, when the wagon comes to a stop.

FELSON
Why are we stopping?

LAVEY
Now what is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The two men spur their horses forward to see what's caused the delay.

ROPE BRIDGE

LaVey and Felson ride up to find a frustrated Hagaman kicking the dirt around him. And for good reason. Ahead of them, a DECREPIT OLD ROPE BRIDGE hangs suspended across the canyon.

The Knights stare at it distrustfully.

FELSON
(accusingly, to Hagaman)
You call that a bridge?

HAGAMAN
I said, I'd heard tell of it,
not that I'd seen it myself.

FELSON
(in disgust)
This is what we get for taking a
criminal as our guide!

HAGAMAN
You're blaming me for the bridge?!

FELSON
Damn right, I am!

While they continue to argue, LaVey swings down from his saddle and leads his horse towards...

ROPE BRIDGE

LaVey peers down through the weathered planks to the canyon below. It's a thousand foot drop if it's an inch, with death beckoning from every ragged outcropping along the way.

Felson's focus shifts past Hagaman to LaVey, as...

LaVey steps gingerly onto the bridge surface, testing it. The planks CREAK softly beneath him.

FELSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
LaVey! Are you mad?!

LaVey's not listening. He takes another step. And another. Draws his horse behind him onto the bridge. The planks GROAN. The animal doesn't like this one bit and WHINNIES in protest, but LaVey tightens the reins and coaxes it along.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

In the background, the others gather to watch.

LaVey passes the mid-way point. No turning back now. He continues to make his way across, slowly and methodically.

The only sound he can hear is the WIND HOWLING off the canyon walls. A SUDDEN GUST causes the bridge to sway...

LaVey braces himself. His horse WHINNIES. Together, they take the remaining paces to reach...

THE OTHER SIDE

LaVey looks back with relief.

LAVEY
 (cupping his hands, to
 shout)
 Take everything off the wagon!
 Bring the horses across! One
 by one!

Hagaman swallowing hard.

HAGAMAN
 Dear God. He's going to make us
 try it.

EXT. ROPE BRIDGE - A WHILE LATER

The horses have all been brought across. All that remains now is the wagon itself.

The men are circled around it, glancing nervously back and forth between it and the rickety bridge.

HAGAMAN
 This is insanity.

LAVEY
 Trust me, the bridge will hold, so
 long as we don't stop. We cannot
 let the weight of the wagon bear
 down on any of those weathered
 planks for long.

FELSON
 Well, I for one, have no interest
 in stopping out there. Do any of
 you?

The others nod in agreement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FELSON (CONT'D)

Good. Then, lets get on with it,
shall we.

LAVEY

Felson, Kaylan and I will take
the rear. Hagaman and DeBelzaq,
man the hitches at the front.

They move to their positions.

FRONT OF THE WAGON

Hagaman takes one of the two hitches under his arm and
secures it with the palm of his other hand. DeBelzaq takes
the other hitch, does the same.

REAR OF THE WAGON

LaVey and Felson each take a corner position behind the rear
wheel. Kaylan inherits the center.

With LaVey giving the commands, the men slowly begin
maneuvering the wagon across the bridge. It takes all of
their strength to move the iron-laden wagon forward.

THE WAGON WHEELS

Roll onto the surface. The planks immediately begin to
GROAN under the excess weight. A round of nervous glances.

ROPE BRIDGE

As the wagon inches it's way across, we can HEAR the ropes
STRAINING and the wood CREAKING.

FRONT OF THE WAGON

DeBelzaq is struggling to keep the wheels straight. His
grip on the hitch so tight, his injured hand is bleeding
through the bandages. The pain is excruciating.

REAR OF THE WAGON

LaVey feels the bridge sway. He looks to the front, sees
that DeBelzaq's hitch has skewed to the right, and is taking
the wagon with it.

LAVEY (CONT'D)

DeBelzaq! Keep the wagon centered
or she'll tip!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Kaylan is leaning into the wagon with everything he's got, when he loses his footing and nearly goes down.

He looks to the plank beneath him. Sees a smear of blood across it, and a fresh trail of blood on the boards ahead of him.

LAVEY (CONT'D)

DeBelzaq! Did you hear me?!
DeBelzaq!!

KAYLAN

LaVey.

Kaylan directs his attention to the bloodied trail.

LaVey calls a halt to their efforts. He has Kaylan take his position, and he makes his way to...

FRONT OF THE WAGON

DeBelzaq has his hand concealed when LaVey reaches him. LaVey takes his arm, revealing the bloodied mess. It's bad.

LAVEY

Take a position ahead. Make sure
we keep the wagon centered.

DeBelzaq is in too much pain to argue, and does as he's told.

The wind HOWLS through the canyon, causing the bridge to sway precariously.

LaVey picks up the bloodied hitch.

HAGAMAN

I suppose it's too late to take you
up on that offer on the stockade,
huh?

LaVey has to laugh. Hagaman too, as he picks up his hitch.

HAGAMAN (CONT'D)

I thought so.

ROPE BRIDGE

The wagon is barely half way across. And, with only two men left to push at the rear, the wagon's movement is no longer a smooth continuous motion, but rather a herky-jerky, start-stop action. With each plank an obstacle to be overcome.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

And, just as the men gather some momentum and get the wagon's wheels rolling again...

CRACK! One of the planks splinters under the weight of a rear wheel. Kaylan drops from sight! Only to be jerked to a stop at the last instant!

Dangling over the abyss, he looks up to see the Girl peering down at him. He realizes she's just reached through the bars of the cage and saved his life!

GIRL

Where do you think you're going?

When Kaylan sees that she's holding him by his wrist, with one hand, HE FREAKS! Starts flailing about!

KAYLAN

Felson! Help!

The rear of the wagon suddenly tips to the left under the added stress!

KAYLAN (CONT'D)

Felson!!

Felson appears. He grabs Kaylan's other hand and pulls him back up.

FRONT OF THE WAGON

Unaware of what's happened, LaVey is SHOUTING to Felson and Kaylan to push the damn wagon!

REAR OF THE WAGON

Felson and Kaylan get back to it, but it's harder than ever to get the wagon moving again. Both men give it everything they've got. When the wheels finally do start to roll, the planks beneath them GROAN and CREAK loudly.

The GROANING and CREAKING sounds suddenly give way to CRACKING sounds, as the planks beneath the wheels begin splintering on contact!

LAVEY

It won't hold! PUSH!

Kaylan and Felson can feel the wood disintegrating beneath their feet!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

GIRL (O.S.)
 Push fools! Or we'll all perish!
Push for your lives!!

THE WAGON

Bumping and clattering along, faster and faster. The far side looming into view. So close. Just a few more yards...

END OF THE BRIDGE

They make it across!

The wagon rolls to a stop. The men collapse to the ground, exhausted.

LAVEY AND DEBELZAQ

LAVEY
 Let's see that hand.

LaVey unwraps the blood-soaked bandage from DeBelzaq's injured hand. Takes a look at the wound. It's bad. He rolls a look to Felson.

FELSON
 (shrugs)
 I've seen worse.

LAVEY
 If it gets infected, he could lose the hand.

FELSON
 No doubt.

LaVey extends his hand to Felson. Begrudgingly, Felson pulls a silver flask from his person, passes it to him. LaVey pours the alcohol on the wound. DeBelzaq winces in pain. Felson too, at the waste of good liquor.

LAVEY
 This needs fresh bandaging.
 Kaylan. Fetch the bag from beneath the seat.

FRONT OF THE WAGON

Kaylan climbs up and grabs the bag. He turns to jump down, but stops, noticing something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAYLAN
(calls out, baffled)
Where are the horses?!

LaVey is first to his feet.

FRONT OF THE WAGON

He joins Kaylan.

KAYLAN (CONT'D)
I could see them from the bridge,
earlier.
(pointing off camera)
They were there. Right there!

Felson and the others catch up.

LAVEY
(eyes straining,
realizing)
They still are.

REVERSE ANGLE

LaVey WHISTLES. We hear the horses NEIGH, but we can't see them.
Because a fog has crept in and enveloped the entire valley ahead.

FELSON
What is this place? Where are we?

LaVey looks into the mist.

LAVEY
(a sinking realization)
If I were to venture a guess, I'd
say precisely where we'd hoped not
to be.
(beat)
Wormwood Forest.

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

The fog continues to descend upon the valley, drifting
between the trees in long tendrils, suffusing everything in
a ghostly pallor.

The road has dwindled to a narrow dirt path barely wide
enough for the wagon. Kaylan now holds the reins. DeBelzaq,
seated next to him, is unnerved by the surroundings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAYLAN

They say there are places in the deepest parts of this forest where the sunlight doesn't penetrate at all, where everything is shrouded forever in gloom.

FELSON (O.S.)

They say worse things than that.

DeBelzaq looks to Felson riding alongside the wagon.

DEBELZAQ

What? What else do they say?

Felson chooses not to answer. He rides ahead to join LaVey.

Off DeBelzaq's worried expression.

EXT. FOREST PATH - CONTINUOUS

Felson rides up alongside LaVey. He finds him eyeing the tree tops high overhead.

LAVEY

It's no wonder they tell stories of those who've entered these woods, never to be seen again.

(beat)

Between the dense tree cover and this fog, days could pass without so much as a glimpse of the sun.

FELSON

(dawning on him)

Without it, or a reliable map, one could easily find oneself traveling in circles. Endlessly.

LAVEY

(looks to Felson)

Not endlessly, my friend. Only until our supplies run out.

Felson finds little consolation in LaVey's remark.

EXT. FOREST PATH - DUSK

The fog has grown thicker. With visibility reduced to a few paltry yards, the silhouetted procession has slowed to a crawl.

Each of the men takes in the ominous surroundings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Felson rides alongside the wagon. He's trying to keep sight of Hagaman up ahead.

EXT. FOREST PATH - CONTINUOUS

Felson comes riding up to join Hagaman, who's squinting into the fog.

HAGAMAN

Damnably fog is like a veil before my eyes.

FELSON

Are you sure we haven't strayed from the main road?

HAGAMAN

How can I be sure of anything, when I can barely see my own hand before my face?!

FELSON

Hardly the reassuring words I'd expect from our guide.

HAGAMAN

Would you prefer I lie to you?

LaVey watches the argument escalate.

FELSON

I'd prefer you do your job.

HAGAMAN

(taking in the surroundings)

The situation only worsens. We should stop and wait for this fog to pass.

FELSON

And, if it doesn't?

HAGAMAN

Then perhaps you should take the lead.

Angered, Felson turns his horse to face Hagaman.

FELSON

(confrontational)

Perhaps I will!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LaVey rides up. Reins his horse to a stop.

LAVEY
 Enough! Both of you!
 (looks around)
 We'll camp here for the night.
 The two of you can take the
 first watch.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The campfire flickers amidst the heavy fog that's settled in for the night.

The men sit around the fire eating. It's cold. We can see their breaths. LaVey rises, grabs a torch, makes his way to...

THE WAGON

He grabs a blanket from the supplies box. Lifts up the tarp to find the Girl huddled at the back of the cage. He tosses the blanket to her.

LAVEY (CONT'D)
 You may need that tonight.

There's something else on LaVey's mind. Finally...

LAVEY (CONT'D)
 Kaylan told me what happened out there on the bridge. Says you saved his life. With one hand, no less. Hard to believe.

The Girl picks up the blanket.

LAVEY (CONT'D)
 Then again, if I hadn't seen the wounds to your back with my own eyes... I wouldn't believe you'd ever suffered them.

She wraps the blanket around her.

GIRL
 We believe what we want to believe.
 (beat)
 Do you believe I'm a witch, LaVey?

He doesn't offer a response.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The flame of his torch suddenly flickers out. LaVey's in darkness for an instant, before the flame flickers back to life.

The Girl's face now pressed against the bars of the cage, only inches from LaVey!

GIRL (CONT'D)

You're not afraid of me, are you?

She reaches through the bars. LaVey backs away. She grabs the tarp, and pulls it down. Laughing to herself.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. CAMPSITE - LATER

Felson is propped against a tree trunk, having dozed off.

A SHADOW crosses his face. It's Hagaman. He appears anxious; sweat beads across his forehead. A crossbow is clutched in his hand.

THE WAGON

The campfire light plays upon the tarp that shrouds the cage.

Hagaman steps up to the cage. He quietly reaches for a corner of the tarp.

LAVEY (O.S.)

Trouble sleeping?

Startled, Hagaman spins around, sees nothing. Until LaVey steps from the dense fog, not fifteen feet from him. Hagaman lowers the crossbow to his side, but there's no concealing his intent.

LAVEY (CONT'D)

Myself as well.

(eyeing the crossbow)

Not sure if it's the fog... the altitude... or just my nerves.

(beat)

And you?

Hagaman just shrugs. LaVey approaches him...

LAVEY (CONT'D)

Although, under the circumstances, nerves would be understandable, even for a Knight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HAGAMAN

Let alone a spineless scoundrel
like myself.

LAVEY

That is not what I meant by it.

HAGAMAN

No?

Hagaman stares at LaVey, as if contemplating the sincerity
of his remark. Finally...

HAGAMAN (CONT'D)

How many more of us are going to
die, LaVey? Before we reach
Severac?

LAVEY

None. If I can help it.

HAGAMAN

And if you can't? Then what?

(beat)

You'll have to forgive me, if I'm
reluctant to put my life in your
hands, but, you see...

(indicating his crossbow)

I have a better solution: We kill
the bitch, here and now, and be
done with it! We tell those back
at Avignon that she tried to
escape. She meant us harm. What
could we do? We had no choice.

(beat)

And who would be the wiser?

FELSON (O.S.)

I, for one.

Surprised, Hagaman turns into FELSON'S FOREARM! It sends him
to the ground. Felson takes the crossbow from him.

LAVEY

Sorry, did we wake you?

FELSON

Forgive me. I was more tired than
I thought.

They are interrupted by a SOUND coming from beneath the tarp.
A strange kind of GIBBERISH. Guttural and harsh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Hagaman gets to his feet, chilled by what he hears.

LaVey grabs the nearest torch and steps to the cage. He lifts the tarp, to find the Girl hunched in the back of the wagon on all fours, like an animal. She arches her neck, cranes her face upwards, and emits an altogether inhuman sound... the BAYING of a WOLF!

It awakens the others.

EXT. DEEP IN THE FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The unholy SOUND ECHOES through the dark, resonating with evil.

The horses stamp their hooves nervously.

EXT. CAMPSITE - CONTINUOUS

Felson moves to the edge of the path and stares out into the fog. Senses something.

DeBelzaq and Kaylan join the others.

DEBELZAQ

What is it? What's going on?
We heard...

FELSON

Shhhh!
(listening)
There's something out there.

KAYLAN

(to Felson)
What is it? What do you hear?

DEBELZAQ

Men on horseback? Thieves perhaps.

Felson shakes his head.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)

What then?

FELSON

Something... hungrier.

Felson draws his sword.

From the depths of the forest comes a chilling sound. The lone CRY of a WOLF.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEBELZAQ
She has summoned wolves!

HAGAMAN
What do we do?

LaVey hands Hagaman back his crossbow.

LAVEY
Kill them. Before they kill us.

LaVey draws his sword. Kaylan too.

In the distance, the HOWLING multiplies. Growing LOUDER.
Nearer.

LaVey joins Felson.

LAVEY (CONT'D)
How many do you make it?

FELSON
(listening)
Three. ...Or four.

LaVey hears some HOWLS off to their right.

LAVEY
More. ...Six. ...Maybe, eight.

Felson picks up still more activity to their left.

FELSON
Ten. ...At least.

Suddenly, the HOWLING stops. The forest goes deathly still.

The men watch as, through the dense fog, DARK HULKING FORMS begin to appear. Gray shapes gathering. Moving within the fog. Closing in... surrounding the campsite!

INSIDE THE CAGE

A thin smile spreads over the Girl's lips. She SNARLS aloud, and...

THE WOLVES CHARGE!

Bristling, monstrous shapes come hurtling out of the fog!

LaVey brings his sword up in a low WHISTLING arc, striking the first wolf in mid-leap, cleaving it in half.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Felson thrusts his blade through the next to show itself, killing the beast instantly.

Hagaman sees the one leaping for his throat! He fires his crossbow.

The arrow hits the wolf in the leg, bringing it down, but not for good.

Hagaman has no more arrows.

The wounded animal gets back on it's feet. Fangs bared, it's about to pounce on the defenseless Hagaman, when...

DeBelzaq plunges a sword into it, killing it.

DEBELZAQ
(horrified)
Pater Noster!

He passes the sword to Hagaman.

Kaylan stabs at one of the airborne carnivores, impaling it through the chest. The creature CRASHES to the ground, taking Kaylan's sword with it. Kaylan goes to retrieve it.

FELSON (O.S.)
Kaylan! Look out!!

WHAM! Kaylan is knocked to the ground by a hurtling mass of gray! Buried under a mountain of fur and snapping teeth, he's struggling to keep the creature from his throat!

Suddenly, WHOOT! It's decapitated from behind. Its head tumbles loose, jaws spilling open.

Kaylan looks up to see it's Felson. He saved his life.

The big man spins away without a word.

Kaylan gets to his feet and retrieves his sword.

Wolves attack from every direction.

The men swing their swords, stabbing and thrusting, with every ounce of their strength. Matching ferocity with ferocity.

LaVey, meeting each ravenous beast head-on.

Felson, chopping and hacking with the fervor of a madman!

Until, finally... all is quiet. And a dozen wolves lie dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LaVey, still eyeing the fog, calls out the men's names.

Each responds. The last he calls is Felson's.

FELSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 You know, LaVey, if I'd known that returning to my homeland was going to prove this trying, I'd have remained in Constantinople. At least there, we were only outnumbered three to one.

Absurd, but true. LaVey has to LAUGH. Felson too. The others join in. Until...

They hear it. A SOUND in the distance. One that seems to echo from every corner of the forest. The SOUND of HOWLING. A HUNDRED WOLVES HOWLING!

LAVEY
 Get to the horses! Quickly!

The men take off.

CAMPSITE

The Girl's LAUGHTER echoes in the fog, as the Knights race to their mounts.

All around them, the CACOPHONY OF HOWLING grows louder. Nearer.

LaVey leaps into the wagon and whips the reins! The horses bolt.

Felson, Kaylan and Hagaman spur their horses after the wagon.

FOREST PATH

The wagon and horsemen THUNDER past, racing blindly through the mist.

LaVey risks a glance over his shoulder. Nothing but fog. Then, a glimpse. A dark, sleek shape. And another.

The wolves are tearing through thickets, moving with horrible speed!

LaVey spurs the horses faster!

The wagon careens wildly around a bend!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE REAR OF THE WAGON

Felson and Kaylan glimpse the WOLF PACK gaining on them.

The PACK splits in two, as the wolves begin to overtake the wagon.

Felson and Kaylan split off to flank the wagon on either side.

Hagaman is holding his position, when, suddenly, a great, gray mass explodes from the ridge overlooking the path. Taking Hagaman and his horse crashing to the ground!

Felson catches the action out of the corner of his eye and stops.

Kaylan notices that the pack of wolves that were flanking them have stopped their pursuit. He looks back to see Hagaman on the ground! He slows his horse, and calls out to LaVey to stop.

LaVey brings the wagon to a halt, looks back...

Hagaman is on the ground. He manages to get to his feet. Makes it to where his horse is sprawled. Tries to pull it up, and sees the animal is dead. It's neck, broken by the fall.

GROWL!

Hagaman turns to see the wolf that took him down back on its feet.

Skulking shapes emerge from the fog to join it.

Hagaman spots his sword on the ground. Picks it up.

As the wolves encircle him, he shoots a last look to LaVey. They share a momentary glance.

FELSON
(to LaVey)
We cannot save him.

LaVey finally pulls himself away, spurs the team of horses as...

Hagaman wheels around to face the wolves. He pulls something from his pocket. We recognize it as the small stone he tried to sell Felson. He clutches it tightly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HAGAMAN
 (gripping his sword)
 Come on then. Which of you wants
 to be first?

They all come at once!

EXT. FOREST PATH - DAWN

The fog is beginning to break. Through the canopy of trees, we glimpse the first rays of dawn. Hear the HOWL of a solitary wolf, as it echoes through the forest.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

LaVey brings the wagon to a stop. A troubled look on his face. The events weigh heavily on him. He reaches behind the seat, pulls out a crossbow, jumps down from the wagon, and steps to the back of the cage.

DEBELZAQ
 No. LaVey!

LaVey undoes a corner of the tarp.

DeBelzaq dismounts and rushes to stop him.

LaVey flips the covering back, exposing the Girl.

DeBelzaq throws himself between LaVey and the Girl.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
 What are you doing?!

GIRL
 He's doing what comes naturally.
 Aren't you, LaVey?

DEBELZAQ
 You cannot do this!

LAVEY
 Step away from the cage.
 (training the crossbow on
 DeBelzaq)
Two lives have already been lost.

DEBELZAQ
 And no one grieves more than I
 over that, but...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAVEY

(finger on the trigger)
Then step away. Or so help me,
this arrow will be yours!

DEBELZAQ

If we falter now, then those lives
will have been lost in vain.

LAVEY

Maybe so. But at least all will
not have been lost. At least four
lives will be spared.

DEBELZAQ

And what are four lives compared
to the thousands more that will be
lost if this plague is not ended?

(pleading)

I know there is no room in your
heart for God, LaVey. But in my
heart, I know he would not abandon
us. I believe it is God's will
that we complete...

LAVEY

(exploding with grief)

"God's will!" All of my life has
been spent in service of "God's
will!" No man has spilt more blood
in God's name, than I!

DEBELZAQ

But, if you kill her... you will
not have God to blame... only
yourself.

Realizing DeBelzaq is right, LaVey lowers his crossbow.

LAVEY

(lamenting)

Surely, a benevolent God would
not ask such things of men.

(beat)

And, a malevolent God, is no
God at all.

Debelzaq knows there's no response that he can offer the
faithless Knight.

FELSON (O.S.)

LaVey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LaVey looks to Felson. Felson directs his attention to...

A MOUNTAIN RANGE

FELSON (CONT'D)

The end is in sight.

There looming from the mist, hewn out of the mountainside, is a MONASTERY.

DEBELZAQ

Abbey Severac.

EXT. FOOTHILLS, RISING - DAY

A cold wind blows as the wagon ascends the inhospitable terrain.

EXT. ROCKY PASS - LATER

Felson and LaVey are riding together, behind the wagon. Their tattered cloaks in tight. Felson peers at LaVey.

FELSON

We've come a long way, LaVey.

LaVey nods slowly. Not sure where this is going.

FELSON (CONT'D)

When this is over, I think I would like to see the valley where I was born.

(beat)

And you?

LAVEY

(a shrug)

I have no such yearnings for home.

FELSON

Then come with me. I will show you my home.

(it's settled)

We will sit in the hall where my forefathers sat... and drink ale... and tell tales that few men have lived to tell.

LAVEY

And fewer still will believe are true.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Felson LAUGHS, pulls out his flask.

FELSON
 Ah, but we will know, my friend.
We will know.
 (toasting)
 To your health.

He takes a drink, passes the flask to LaVey.

LAVEY
 (toasting)
 And yours.

LaVey enjoys a drink.

EXT. ROAD TO SEVERAC - AFTERNOON

Through the trees, ABBEY SEVERAC comes into view. The end of the journey is truly in sight.

EXT. THE ABBEY - MOMENTS LATER

LaVey and the others arrive. Before them, the abbey's massive stone walls extend upwards thirty feet. Thick as time. Built to withstand a siege.

LaVey swings down from his horse and approaches the entrance. Two massive oaken doors reinforced with steel. He takes hold of one of the brass knockers and BANGS it. The SOUND echoes faintly within. The men await a response. There is none.

LaVey peers up to the top of the parapet, cups his hands to his mouth and SHOUTS!

LAVEY
 Hello!

No response, except the lonely SOUND of his ECHO. He tries again, louder.

LAVEY (CONT'D)
 Is anyone there?

Still nothing. He looks back at the others, puzzled.

INT. ABBEY COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER

A rope falls into view. Then Kaylan himself. He drops to the ground. Looks around.

The courtyard is deserted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kaylan pushes the heavy bolt aside to open the gates.
The Knights come riding in, taking in the empty space.

DEBELZAQ
Perhaps they're in vespers?

LaVey dismounts. Felson and DeBelzaq do the same.

INT. ABBEY CHAPEL - AFTERNOON

The outer doors are thrust open. LaVey stands framed in the entrance, staring in...

LAVEY
Gentlemen. Could you not hear us
at the gate?!

A handful of BENEDICTINE MONKS are in the pews.

DeBelzaq brushes past LaVey and makes his way into the chapel.

DEBELZAQ
Forgive the intrusion my brothers,
but our journey has been a long
and dif...

DeBelzaq stop abruptly. LaVey knows something's wrong. He makes his way down the aisle to discover that the monks are dead! All of them victims of the plague. Their still forms frozen in the pews, their last moments spent in prayer.

DeBelzaq sinks to his knees. His eyes pressed shut, his lips moving fervently.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
(muttered)
Lord, in Heaven, hallowed be Thy
name...

LAVEY
DeBelzaq. We have to leave.
Every moment in this place brings
us closer to death.

DEBELZAQ
(without looking up)
And go where? This place... the
monks... they were our last hope.
Our fate is in God's hands now.
Prayer is our only salvation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAVEY

Your prayers are wasted.

DEBELZAQ

(ignoring him)

On earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread...

LAVEY

He can't hear you, DeBelzaq.

DEBELZAQ

(louder)

And forgive our trespasses as we...

LAVEY

Get up.

But DeBelzaq just keeps praying.

DEBELZAQ

Forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation, but...

LAVEY

I said, get up!

He hauls the startled priest to his feet!

VOICE (O.S.)

(faint)

Deliver us from evil...

Both men freeze.

VOICE (CONT'D)

Ammmeeeen.

LaVey and DeBelzaq realize the VOICE is coming from behind the altar. They rush forward, galvanized by sudden hope, to find...

A DYING MONK

Lying in a pool of his own blood, his face covered with lesions and boils, it's a miracle he's still alive.

DeBelzaq proceeds to give the dying man the last rites.

DEBELZAQ

In nomine patri spiritu sancti.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The monk struggles to draw the mens' attention to something, gesturing towards the altar.

LaVey steps to the altar. Sees something.

LAVEY

DeBelzaq.

DeBelzaq finishes the prayer over the deceased monk. He wipes the tears from his eyes and joins LaVey.

THE ALTAR

Arrayed atop it are a silver flask, a wooden cross, a purple cassock...

DEBELZAQ

They knew we were coming. All was in readiness.

...and something draped in a velvet cloth.

DeBelzaq removes the cloth to reveal a LARGE LEATHER-BOUND BOOK. Ancient. It's pages, gold-leafed. Embossed on the cover, in Latin, are the words...

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)

El Libre del Vermis.

LAVEY

What is it?

DEBELZAQ

(with awe)

The Book of Solomon. The one the Cardinal spoke of. A book of great wisdom.

(he touches it)

Within these pages are said to be all of the ancient rituals and incantations by which the biblical King, Solomon The Great, cast out evil from the land of the Hebrews.

DeBelzaq opens the book. Begins thumbing through its pages.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

The doors of the chapel swing open. LaVey, Felson, and Kaylan accompany DeBelzaq to...

THE WAGON

GIRL

(cocking her head back)

Ah, yes. And what have we here?

(to LaVey)

Is this the "fair trial" you promised me?

DeBelzaq places the Book of Solomon on a table that's been provided him. He commences by drawing the sign of the cross in the air, and sprinkling some holy water in the direction of the wagon.

DEBELZAQ

Let it be known to all present, and before God Himself, that this woman stands accused of witchcraft. That she has admitted to calling up a plague to destroy every man, woman and child.

GIRL

You give me too much credit. I'm flattered, to be sure, but I must confess... I lied to you. I have called up no plague.

DEBELZAQ

You think you can save yourself by recanting, but, you are wrong. Admit your guilt, witch. Speak the truth now, before God.

GIRL

The truth is that you are fools. All of you. Frightened, ignorant fools. The truth is that this pestilence you accuse me of spreading was brought to your shores by merchant ships from the East.

DEBELZAQ

That is a lie!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIRL

No! A lie is what you've chosen to believe. What you wanted your followers to believe.

DeBelzaq doesn't like where this is going, and proceeds with the reading of the ritual.

DEBELZAQ

(reading, in Latin)

*Ecce crucem domine, fúgite partes
advérsae. Adjúro te, serpens
antíque...*

The Girl looks upon herself with an eerie detachment...

GIRL

You saw this pathetic creature as someone to blame for your problems. Someone you could do away with, and everything would be right again.

LaVey sees that the Girl's derisive remarks are unnerving DeBelzaq. He draws his sword, as if to quiet the Girl. She turns and unleashes her venom on him.

GIRL (CONT'D)

And you, LaVey, you saw me as the innocent child you wanted to protect. Save.

(beat)

Did you really think that saving one would make up for all of those you cut down with that very sword you hold in your hand!

LaVey is stunned by her awareness of his private most thoughts.

DeBelzaq continues to read the ritual.

LAVEY

(defensive)

I did what was asked of me as a Knight.

GIRL

Of course you did. And quickly learned that it's easier to take orders than it is responsibility for your actions.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FELSON

You know not of what you speak!
How could you?! You were not
there!

GIRL

Ah, but I was.
(back to LaVey)
I was there when you attacked the
port of Lajazzo. By your side when
we pillaged the Archipelago.

LaVey and Felson share a look of disbelief at the Girl's
knowledge of these events.

DeBelzaq sees their reactions. He realizes, impossible though
it may seem, the Girl knows of what she speaks. He frantically
begins flipping through the pages of the Book of Solomon.

The Girl steps towards LaVey's side of the cage.

GIRL (CONT'D)

I led the charge on Smyrna that
moonless night.

FELSON

(to DeBelzaq)
Finish the ritual and silence
this witch!

DEBELZAQ

She is no witch!
(still searching the
pages)
No witch can know as she knows.

LAVEY

(to Girl)
You lie! Was Dragonet of Leon led
us that night.

At the bars of the cage, the Girl smiles...

GIRL

(in the voice of Commander
Dragonet)
They are a godless people. Infidels.
Who have killed our brethren. They
must not go unpunished! Wipe them
out! All of them! Spare no one!

LaVey is dumbstruck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

From off-screen, DeBelzaq's VOICE rings out anew:

DEBELZAQ (O.S.)
*Exi ergo, transgressor! Exi
 seductor, plene omni dolo et
 fallácia,...*

The Girl whips around to see the priest, once again, reading from the sacred book. But it's a very different ritual prayer that he now reads...

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
*Virtútis inimici, innocentium
 persecutor!*

GIRL
 Do not utter those words, foul
 hypocrite!

DEBELZAQ
*Recéde ergo nunc adjurátos in
 nomine ejus!*

The Girl writhes and hisses with each phrase spoken.

GIRL
 I'll rip out your tongue!

DEBELZAQ
Ab hómine, quem ipse plasmávit!

The Girl spreads her arms like some malevolent angel of darkness.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
 What manner of demon are you?

A sudden gust of frigid wind buffets the priest.

In her fervent struggle to resist the power of the ritual, the Girl grabs hold of the bars on either side of the cage.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
Durum est tibi velle resistere...

The bars begin rattling. The metal itself seems to GROAN.

The Knights watch in disbelief.

DeBelzaq SHOUTS to be heard!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
YOUR NAME! SPEAK IT!

The Girl is trembling with rage, shuddering, using every ounce of her being to resist the power of the ritual.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
Durum est tibi velle resistere...

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
I COMMAND YOU, SPEAK YOUR NAME!

When she can resist no longer, the Girl whirls to face DeBelzaq.

GIRL
(proclaiming)
I AM LUCIFER, you stinking maggot!

Her fists clench tightly around the bars of the cage, until, the lead itself begins to smoke and smolder. The black iron glows red hot and melts like wax before our eyes, forming molten pools on the floor of the cage. The air fills with smoke, and through it... the Girl walks free!

She stalks towards DeBelzaq.

Terrified, he flees for the refuge of the chapel.

INT. CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

DeBelzaq spills through the doors, with the Girl on his heels!

But, she stops short of entering the sacred place.

Seeing this, DeBelzaq has the wherewithal to find his place in the sacred book and resume reading the ritual.

DEBELZAQ
*Quia quanto tardius exis, tanto
magis tibi supplicium crescit...*

Almost immediately, the ritual again begins having an adverse effect on the Girl.

With an enraged HOWL, she spins away, stirring the dirt and debris of the courtyard into a blinding dust storm.

The Knights shield their eyes from the maelstrom.

By the time it's settled, the Girl has vanished.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEBELZAQ (O.S.)(CONT'D)
God forgive me.

The Knights turn to find a frustrated, and emotionally drained DeBelzaq.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
If I'd only finished the ritual.
Lucifer would be back in hell where
he belongs, and the girl... that
poor girl would be safe. And free
of him.

FELSON
We had our chance. He's gone.

LaVey is wrestling with the thoughts in his head.

LAVEY
I'm not so sure of that.

The others look to him.

LAVEY (CONT'D)
(to DeBelzaq)
You were right, when you said
she could see the darkness in
our hearts.
(beat)
She used it to deceive me into
changing my mind, and agreeing
to deliver her here.

DEBELZAQ
Nonsense. This is the last place
that evil would choose to come.

LAVEY
Is it? Do you recall how she
struggled when we went to collect
her from her cell that morning?

DEBELZAQ
How could I not?!

LAVEY
And, how she suddenly seemed to
concede, when...

Felson picks up the thought...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FELSON
 (to DeBelzaq)
 When you told her she was to be
 taken here.

INT. DUNGEON CELL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

DeBelzaq looks down upon the Girl, still fighting furiously
 to free herself.

DEBELZAQ
 Struggle, if you like, but it
 has been decided that you are
 to be taken to Severac, and...

Threateningly, he reveals the other half of LaVey's staff
 clutched in his fist.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
 ...one way or another, to Severac
 you will go.

The Girl ceases struggling and slumps back against the cell
 wall, head down, her mane of hair covering her face.
We now see something that we didn't see at the time: The Girl
 expresses a sigh of defeat, but through the hair that veils
 her face, we glimpse a devilish grin.

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

DEBELZAQ
 (realizing)
 My God. The night Sancierre died,
 she overheard us arguing.

LAVEY
 Over what?

DEBELZAQ
 He didn't want to bring her here.
 He was convinced she wouldn't
 receive a fair trial.

INT. WAGON CAGE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The Girl appears to be sleeping, but isn't. She's listening
 to the heated exchange between Sancierre and DeBelzaq.

SANCIERRE
 I will not be a party to this.
 Nor will the others, hopefully,
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANCIERRE (CONT'D)
when they've heard what I have
to say.

SEETHING WITH RAGE, the Girl sits up...

GIRL
Wait!

Sancierre turns to find...

The frightened face and pleading eyes of an innocent young girl looking at him. Tears streaming down her cheeks.

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

LAVEY
Sancierre stood between her and
Severac.

FELSON
So she escaped, and we followed.

DEBELZAQ
(to Kaylan)
And Sancierre ran upon your sword.

FELSON
(to LaVey)
And, if you hadn't awakened the
following night, Hagaman would
have killed her in her cage.

EXT. WAGON - CAMPSITE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

End of LaVey and Hagaman exchange.

HAGAMAN
You'll have to forgive me, if
I'm reluctant to put my life in
your hands, but...

INSIDE THE CAGE

The Girl watches Hagaman's crossbow-wielding silhouette play across the tarp...

HAGAMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
...you see, I have a better
solution. We kill the bitch, here
and now! And be done with it!

...while plotting his demise!

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

LAVEY

So she summoned the wolves.

KAYLAN

Dozens of them, and yet only
one of us falls.

FELSON

The one who stood between her
and this place.

LAVEY

She still needed the rest of us
to deliver her here.

(to Kaylan)

Fortunately, for you.

EXT. ROPE BRIDGE - DAY - FLASHBACK

CRACK! One of the planks splinters under the weight of a
rear wheel. Kaylan drops from sight!

Only to be jerked to a stop at the last instant!

Dangling over the abyss, Kaylan looks up to see the Girl's
hand clasped tightly around his wrist!

GIRL

Where do you think you're going?

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

FELSON

And, we know now that she could
have rid herself of that cage at
any time, and yet she did not.
Why? For what reason, if not
because she wanted to come here.

KAYLAN

But, why deceive us into thinking
she was a witch?

FELSON

I don't know. But, LaVey is right.
(looking about)
The Devil is still here. Somewhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAVEY

And, we still have a chance to
finish what was started.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

DeBelzaq places a CRUCIFIX upon the altar, and begins the
prayer for "Solemn Blessing of the Crucifix."

DEBELZAQ

*Ut quoties triumphum divinae
humilitatis, quae superbiam
nostri hostis dejecit...*

INT. STORE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DEBELZAQ (O.S.)

*Dignare respicere, bene + dicere
et Sancti + ficare hanc creatum...*

LaVey and Felson search for torches.

FELSON

I suspect the bad we've done may
well outweigh the good.

LAVEY

We have no one to blame for that,
but ourselves.

They find the torches.

INT. CHAPEL RECTORY - CONTINUOUS

DEBELZAQ (O.S.)

*Atque insidiar inimici, odorem
ejus sentientes, effugiant, et
separatur a plasmate tuo...*

Kaylan locates three small flasks. He fills them at the holy
water stoup.

INT. CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

DeBelzaq finishes the prayer...

DEBELZAQ

*Numquam laedatur a morsu antiqui
derpentis.*

He kisses the crucifix and places it around his neck.

INT. CHAPEL RECTORY - CONTINUOUS

Kaylan is sealing the last flask of holy water. LaVey enters.

KAYLAN
I managed to find three flasks.

LAVEY
You've done well.
(beat)
But now it's time for you to go.

Kaylan stares at him...

KAYLAN
Go? Go where?

LAVEY
Home. To Avignon. This is not
your battle.

KAYLAN
Your battle is my battle.

Through the doorway, we see Felson approaching. He overhears enough to know not to interrupt.

KAYLAN (CONT'D)
Besides, I gave my word that I
would stay until the job was done.
What would those Knights who are
to judge my worthiness think,
if I did not?

LAVEY
And if it costs you your life?

KAYLAN
(cause for pause)
Then that is the price I shall pay.

LaVey is moved by the young man's bravery.

LAVEY
Kneel, Kaylan.

Kaylan slowly sinks to one knee.

DeBelzaq joins Felson in watching as LaVey raises his sword. He taps Kaylan slowly on either side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAVEY (CONT'D)

Speak after me.

(beat)

Grant me courage, oh Lord...

KAYLAN

Grant me courage, oh Lord.

LAVEY

For I am your servant...

KAYLAN

For I am your servant.

LAVEY

And gird me with strength onto
battle...

KAYLAN

(overlapping)

And gird me with strength onto
battle.

LAVEY

That I may crush Thine enemies...
and bring them down, as dust before
the wind...

KAYLAN

That I may crush Thine enemies and
bring them down as dust before the
wind.

LAVEY

(softly)

Amen.

KAYLAN

Amen.

LAVEY

Rise a Knight.

As he does, a wave of uncertainty washes over Kaylan.

LAVEY (CONT'D)

What is it?

KAYLAN

(at a loss for words)

I'm honored... truly honored...
by your gesture, but...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FELSON

(entering)

But what? Do you or do you not
want to be a Knight?! Make up
your mind!

KAYLAN

I do. More than anything.

FELSON

Then what is the problem?

KAYLAN

I know in my heart that I have
not earned this.

FELSON

(leaning in close)

You will.

EXT. THE ABBEY - NIGHT

Still in the night. Like the calm before a storm, the only
SOUND is the wind WHISTLING off the ramparts.

EXT. ABBEY COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

The rectory door opens. DeBelzaq, LaVey, Kaylan and Felson
exit. They make their way across the courtyard.

DEBELZAQ

(to LaVey)

"Grant me courage, oh Lord," sounds
like the words of a man of faith.

LAVEY

I ve just met the Devil...
If the Devil exists, so too must
God.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO THE CENTRAL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Before entering, DeBelzaq sprinkles each of the men with holy
water, then makes the sign of the cross in the air, blessing
them.

DEBELZAQ

May God watch over us all.

INT. A STONE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

With a torch in one hand and a sword in the other, LaVey leads the way through the darkened interiors. Systematically eliminating one room after another in their hunt for the Devil.

LaVey hears something. Signals for the men to stop. From deep within the abbey, the faint sound of CHANTING can be heard. The men share a nervous glance. LaVey follows it.

INT. ABBEY - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

The men ascend a flight of stone steps that spiral upwards.

INT. ABBEY - UPPER CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

They enter the space. From behind one of the doors, they hear the CHANTING.

The Knights move towards it.

INT. THE SCRIPTORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Pitch black. Without windows, even the ambient glow of the moon is absent here. All that can be seen is what the torches illuminate.

The men stop. Listen. The CHANTING seems to have abated.

Kaylan wheels around with his torch, thinking he heard something. He listens. It's nothing. He lowers his torch, and illuminates the DECAYING CORPSE OF A MONK, right beside him!

Startled, Kaylan stumbles back.

The others gather round for a closer look. The dead monk is seated at a table, a quill pen clutched tightly in his grip. He appears to have bound himself to the chair, to prevent himself from toppling over.

Felson steps closer to get a better look, and kicks something with his foot. He lowers his torch to the floor to see that it's a pail. What's in it sickens him.

LAVEY

What is it?

FELSON

(disgusted)

The man's guts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAVEY

What could be so important, that
a dying man would make this kind
of sacrifice of himself?

DeBelzaq moves closer to examine the leather bound manuscript atop the table. The page the monk was writing is unfinished. DeBelzaq reads a portion of it. He turns back through the previously completed pages to the very first. The title reads *THE BOOK OF SOLOMON*.

DEBELZAQ

He was copying it.

FELSON

He must have been mad with
the disease.

KAYLAN (O.S.)

Was he?

They look to see Kaylan standing in the darkness ahead of them. He wields his torch to the left, to illuminate the CORPSE OF A SECOND MONK.

KAYLAN (CONT'D)

And what about him?

Swings the torch to his right, to reveal A THIRD!

KAYLAN (CONT'D)

And him.

Kaylan backs up, illuminating table after table, with DEAD MONKS seated at all of them!

KAYLAN (CONT'D)

Were they all mad?!

DEBELZAQ

What in God's name?

DeBelzaq moves from one table to the next, with LaVey following closely; his torch providing the illumination.

Atop each and every table, DeBelzaq finds a partially completed copy of *THE BOOK OF SOLOMON*.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)

There are scores of them!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KAYLAN

Why?

DEBELZAQ

There can be only one reason.

(beat)

My Benedictine brothers intended
to spread the wisdom of Solomon
to all corners of the earth;
that holy men everywhere might
arm themselves and join in the
battle against evil.

From somewhere in the darkness ahead, the Girl's CHANT can
be heard. Heads turn...

INT. THE AEDIFICUM - CONTINUOUS

Torches in hand, LaVey and the others make their way through
the Scriptorium into a large ROTUNDA SHAPED LIBRARY.

It's a dark cavernous space. On the periphery, barely visible,
are rows and rows of bookshelves, extending from floor to
ceiling. The shelves of which are laden with scrolls and
parchments of all shape and size.

A circular second floor balcony extends out over the main
floor. High above, the domed ceiling is capped with a portal
skylight. A faint trace of moonlight filters through it.

The Knights and DeBelzaq follow the CHANT. They make their
way through the central area, past the study tables and low
circular bookshelves.

LAVEY

DeBelzaq. The ritual.

The priest takes his cue.

DEBELZAQ

*Durum est tibi velle resistere.
Durum est tibi contra stimulum
calcitrare...*

GIRL (O.S.)

Stinking scum!

Suddenly, from the balcony directly above them, an entire
section of bookshelves rips free of the wall, plows through
the railing and brings an avalanche of books toppling down
upon DeBelzaq and the others!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LaVey and Felson leap to avoid being crushed by them.

Kaylan grabs DeBelzaq by the back of the coat and wrenches him out of harm's way.

The THUNDEROUS CRASH sends them stumbling to the ground.

Centuries of dust erupt on impact with the floor, filling the rotunda with an eerie atmospheric haze.

Lavey makes his way to Kaylan and DeBelzaq. He helps the priest to his feet. Kaylan recovers his torch.

Felson rejoins them. And is the first to see it.

FELSON

LaVey!

LaVey turns. Felson directs his attention to

THE SCRIPTORIUM

The tables are ablaze. The copies of The Book of Solomon are going up in flames!

DEBELZAQ

The books! We must save them!

DeBelzaq starts toward the Scriptorium. LaVey grabs the priest's arm and stops him.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)

What are you doing!? Unhand me!

LaVey notices the Book of Solomon tucked under DeBelzaq's arm. He looks back to the burning volumes.

LAVEY

(realizing)

It's the book.

DEBELZAQ

What?

LAVEY

That's why he deceived us into thinking the Girl was a witch. He knew a witch would be brought to those who possessed the Book of Solomon.

(beat)

It's the book he wants.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LaVey steps towards the Scriptorium, straining to see through the flames and smoke.

FELSON
What is it?

A feeling of dread washes over LaVey.

LAVEY
Where are they?

FELSON
Who?

From behind DeBelzaq, two gangrenous arms jut out of the shadows.

LAVEY
The monks.

A monk's sash, stretched taut between blue-black fists, wraps around DeBelzaq's throat and wrenches him out of shot!

Felson and Kaylan realize that the corpses of the dead monks have all vanished!

Instinctively, the Knights whirl around to scan the darkness surrounding them... and see that DeBelzaq is gone!

LAVEY (CONT'D)
DeBelzaq?!

Torches in hand, LaVey and Felson rush into the blackness in search of the priest, and come upon ONE of the UNDEAD MONKS in the midst of strangling him!

LaVey drops his torch, two-hands his sword.

LAVEY (CONT'D)
Down!

DeBelzaq tips his head, as LaVey takes the Monk's hood off at the neck!

But the body keeps strangling DeBelzaq! Sonofabitch!!

LaVey's next swing of the sword takes the monk's arm sleeves off at the elbows!

Felson torches its robe, and what's left of the monk goes up in flames!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LaVey hauls DeBelzaq to his feet. The priest clutches for the crucifix around his neck. It's gone!

Felson and Kaylan join LaVey, to form a protective ring around the priest. Each holds a torch in one hand, a weapon in the other. All straining to see into the darkness.

LAVEY (CONT'D)
(to DeBelzaq)
The ritual!

DEBELZAQ
(reading)
*Durum est tibi contra stímulum
calcitráre...*

FROM HIGH OVERHEAD

Three points of light adrift in a predatory sea of darkness.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
*Quia quanto tãrdius exis, tanto
magis tibi supplícium crescit...*

(Note: DeBelzaq continues to read the ritual throughout scene.)

FROM THE SHADOWS BELOW

They come!

Felson catches the glint off the leather cutters before he sees what's wielding them. He skewers the MONK in mid-air and slams it to the ground, pulls his blade out of its chest, and whirls to await the next.

What he doesn't see is the downed monk swing bolt-upright back onto its feet, like some macabre flesh and blood puppet with a demonic force at its strings.

Luckily, Kaylan sees it. He sweeps the monks legs out from under it with his torch, pulls a shelf of books down onto it. And sets them afire.

It's all DeBelzaq can do to stay focused on reading the ritual with all hell breaking loose around him!

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
*Quia non hómines contémnis.
Imperat tibi natus ex Vírgine.*

LaVey back-thrusts his sword through a MONK closing fast from behind. He pins it to the side of a bookcase.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Before he can draw his other sword, a sash is cinched tight around his neck! LaVey looks back over his shoulder, swings his torch up and into the grotesque face of his attacker!

The monk spins away from the flame, and into the pendulous swing of Felson's sword! The decapitated monk is staggered momentarily, then lunges at Felson!

An arrow drives it back against a cabinet, a second keeps it there. Relieved, Felson whips a look to see Kaylan, crossbow in hand. His appreciative look turns to alarm.

FELSON

Behind you!

Kaylan spins around. ONE OF THE UNDEAD leaps at him, knocking him across one of the tables. The torch flies from his hand. Kaylan rolls onto his back, groping for his crossbow. He swings it up, to see the robed figure plunging a binder blade towards his heart!

FWOOMP! Felson's sword takes off the attacker's knife hand at the wrist! Its stump pounds harmlessly into Kaylan's chest. But, its jagged, rotting teeth go for his neck! Kaylan triggers the crossbow at point blank range. The first arrow lifts the monk off of him. The second crucifies it to a nearby pillar, where it continues to thrash wildly!

DEBELZAQ

*Imperat tibi natus ex Virgine.
Imperat tibi Jesus Nazarénus...*

Felson turns back to DeBelzaq, sees that he's about to be blind-sided by ANOTHER OF THE MONKS.

Felson grabs the priest and swings him out of its path. The monk stabs a binder blade into Felson's back! Felson flings the monk over his shoulder. It slams up against a study table. Felson plunges his sword through its chest and into the table, nailing it there. Felson draws his other sword.

Just as a monk is about to skewer LaVey from behind, Kaylan's arrow pins its hooded head to the wall.

LaVey spins around, torches the ghastly thing, its robe goes up in flames.

He turns away, and into the blade of ANOTHER CADAVEROUS MONK. It slashes his forearm. The torch flies from LaVey's hand. LaVey two-hands his sword and slices the attacker in half at the sash!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

In a violent frenzy, the ghastly thing in flames pulls its hooded head off the arrow embedded in the wall. He wrenches the arrow free, fists it and goes after Kaylan.

Kaylan's arrows pass right through the flaming monk.

Kaylan drops the crossbow and reaches for his sword. Too late. It's almost upon him, when...

WHAM! LaVey broadsides the flaming monk with a rolling ladder. Driving it into some bookshelves, that go up in flames with the monk.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Felson holds the last remaining torch. DeBelzaq reads by the light of it.

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
*Elísium atque prostrátum exíre
præcépit ab hómíne...*

Out of nowhere, come TWO MORE of the UNDEAD!

Felson cuts one of them down. The other buries a leather-cutter in his chest! Felson gasps as the air is sucked from his lungs. His attacker wields the leather cutter over its head, two-hands it to deliver the death blow...

WHOOT! Kaylan takes the top half of the monk off at the chest! He plunges his sword into its torso, securing it to the floor.

A shocked DeBelzaq sees Felson stagger and go down.

Kaylan turns back to see the torch fall from his hand.

WHAM! A MONK barrels into Kaylan takes him flying over tables and disappearing from view.

DeBelzaq rushes to Felson's side, desperate to help him.

Felson pushes him away. Points to his torch on the floor, its flame still flickering.

DeBelzaq drops to his knees beside the flame. He sets the unwieldy Book of Solomon down on the floor. With his good hand, he picks up the torch and holds it over the book.

The flame illuminates the Girl looming behind him!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

DEBELZAQ (CONT'D)
 (starts reading)
*Qui te, cum discipulos ejus
 contémneres...*

A ruby red droplet fall to the page. And another. DeBelzaq stops reading. Realizes it's BLOOD. HIS.

GIRL (O.S.)
 I think you've said quite enough.

DeBelzaq's eyes suddenly go wide with pain as he's hoisted backwards into the air!

CUT TO:

LaVey, battered and bloody, manages to finish off THE LAST OF THE MONKS. He hears DeBelzaq's SCREAM!

CUT TO:

The Girl's feet step over DeBelzaq's crumpled body.

She bends down to pick up the Book of Solomon.

A stream of water splashes upon her hands. Burning them!
 The skin blisters.

Across from her, stands LaVey. A flask of holy water in his hand. A sword in the other.

LAVEY
 All of this madness over a book?

With a swipe of his sword, he sends the book sliding across the floor and out of reach.

The Girl looks up to LaVey.

For the first time since entering the Aedificum, we see her face and the effect the exorcism ritual was having on her: A cobweb of blue-black blood vessels throb just beneath the surface of her skin. Her eyes are bloodshot. Her lips, blistered and cracked. Blood trickles from her nose.

GIRL
 A book I've searched from Aragon
 to Jerusalem, and back, to find.
 (beat)
 An accursed book that has interfered
 with my work for far too long.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

She looks to the Scriptorium, where the copies of the Book of Solomon still burn.

GIRL (CONT'D)

The same book that those dedicated servants of God breathed their last breaths to copy.

(beat)

'A' book? No. 'The' book. The one whose pages hold the balance.

LAVEY

The "balance?"

GIRL

Come, LaVey. Surely, you, of all people, can attest to the good and the evil that exists in man.

(looking around at the corpses of the monks)

They, with their books, wanted to shift that balance.

LAVEY

And, you don't?

GIRL

No. No, I intend to destroy it, entirely.

(beat)

And, without the book, all of the crucifixes and holy water in heaven won't save you.

LaVey makes a move to recover the book!

With blinding speed, the Girl lunges out and grabs him by the throat. Slaps the sword from his hand and hoists him up into the air! The flask of holy water falls to the floor and breaks.

GIRL (CONT'D)

And now, I've no further use for you.

She starts to strangle him. LaVey tries to pry her hands from his neck, but she's far too strong.

KAYLAN (O.S.)

*Elisum atque prostratum exire
præcepit ab homine...*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

The Girl snaps a look into the shadows.

GIRL
Is that you, altar boy?

Out steps Kaylan, the Book of Solomon in his hands.

GIRL (CONT'D)
How disappointing. I thought you
were dead.

Aided by the light of the Scriptorium fire behind him, Kaylan continues reading...

KAYLAN
*Quo præsente, cum te ab hómine
separásset...*

The Girl's body spasms as if an electrical charge were running through her.

GIRL
(pained)
Silence! Damn you!

The Girl squeezes tighter around LaVey's neck. He gasps for air.

KAYLAN
LaVey?!

GIRL
Bring me the book and I'll let
him live.

LAVEY
(choking)
She's lying.

GIRL
I said...

She slams LaVey against one of the pillars! He cries out.

GIRL (CONT'D)
Bring me the book! Or I'll squeeze
the last breath from him.

She tightens her grip around his neck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

LAVEY
 (to Kaylan)
 Finish it.

Kaylan forces his eyes back to the book...

KAYLAN
 Nec porcórurur gregem íngredi
 præsumébas...

The Girl slams LaVey against the pillar with even more ferocity! She puts the final squeeze on him, crushing his throat!

Kaylan can't let her do it.

KAYLAN (CONT'D)
 Stop!

Kaylan lowers the book to his side.

The Girl eases her grip on LaVey.

Kaylan approaches the Girl. Stops opposite her.

GIRL
 (extending her hand)
 The book.

Reluctantly, Kaylan passes it to her.

Suddenly, the mortally wounded Felson comes stumbling out of the shadows, sword in hand, and skewers the Girl's outstretched hand to the wall!

THUNK! The Girl HOWLS in pain!

Felson drops to his knees. His clothes soaked with his blood. He looks to Kaylan...

FELSON
 (through gritted teeth)
 Finish it.

He slumps against the wall.

Kaylan looks up to find the Girl glaring at him, all but daring him to finish it.

A defiant Kaylan reopens the sacred book and picks up where he left off...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

KAYLAN
*In nomine Patri, qui dominatur
vivorum et mortuorum...*

Furious, the Girl releases her stranglehold of LaVey.

He falls to the floor, choking and gasping for breath.

A dying Felson looks to his friend. LaVey sees him.
A last look shared between them... Felson dies.

The Girl pulls Felson's sword out of the wall, freeing her hand. She wheels around to face Kaylan, stalks after him.

Kaylan backs away...

KAYLAN (CONT'D)
Qui venturus est iudicare vivos...

The Girl... WRITHING... SNARLING... STAGGERING towards him.

Kaylan backs into a pool of darkness. He can no longer see the words on the page.

A dreadful silence. He looks up from the book...

The Girl smiles, levels her sword for the kill, and lunges towards him!

T I M E... S L O W S... D O W N...

LaVey hurtles into Kaylan, knocking him out of the path of the blade!

Kaylan falls to the floor.

THE GIRL RUNS LAVEY THROUGH!

Kaylan hears his GASP, and looks up...

LaVey stands there, the end of the blade protruding from his back.

Enraged, the Girl looks at LaVey.

His eyes meet hers.

She feels his hands clasp her wrist.

KAYLAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*Qui venturus est iudicare vivos et
mortuos...*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

A sense of dread ripples through her.

LaVey smiles.

She tries to pull the sword from his chest.

LaVey holds on tightly to her wrist.

It takes both hands for her to overpower him and free the sword.

By then... it's too late!

Kaylan finishes the prayer...

KAYLAN (CONT'D)

Et sæculum per ignem! Amen.

The Girl looks to LaVey in horror and disbelief!

The vanquished Devil gives an UNGODLY ROAR!

The sword falls from her hand and through the floor that no longer exists for the bodiless spirit from hell.

The fires that burn share the same fate. Their flames sucked down into a hell far below, as...

The Devil's desperate ROAR finally becomes the Girl's REAWAKENING CRY.

She stands there before LaVey, battered and bruised, but alive.

LaVey has an almost serene look of contentment on his face.

For an odd moment, the two of them seem to regard one another. (It's hauntingly reminiscent of the moment in LaVey's nightmare, in which the injured girl looks into the eyes of the Knight who will decide her fate.)

The Girl's knees suddenly buckle, and she falls to the ground, unconscious.

LaVey collapsing to the floor.

Kaylan rushes to his side.

KAYLAN (CONT'D)

(helpless)

LaVey. What can I do? How can I help. Tell me what to do! Please, LaVey!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (12)

LAVEY
 (struggling to speak)
 There's nothing to be done.
 My time has come.
 (beat)
 The future is in your hands.

His eyes drift down to Kaylan's side.

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

There, clutched in his hand, is The Book of Solomon.

LaVey's eyes close...

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. A WIND SWEPT RIDGE - DAWN

Kaylan is burying LaVey's sword in the top of a grave mound.

The second mound, alongside his, is Felson's.

Nearby, we see the Girl standing over a third mound (DeBelzaq's.)

As Kaylan finishes, she comes over with a bunch of wildflowers in her hand. She kneels and places them atop LaVey's grave. Says a prayer.

When she's done, Kaylan helps her climb onto Felson's horse.

She wipes a tear from her eye.

KAYLAN
 Are you alright?

She nods.

GIRL
 I just don't understand why
 someone who didn't even know me...
 would give his life for me.

KAYLAN
 It's a long story.

GIRL
 I have time.

She looks back to LaVey's grave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIRL (CONT'D)

He gave it to me.

She makes the sign of the cross.

Kaylan mounts his horse.

Protruding from one of the saddlebags, we glimpse a corner of the book whose GOLD LEAF PAGES we recognize.

Together, Kaylan and the Girl turn and ride off, to begin their long journey home.

THE END