

A photograph of a long, narrow hallway with a strong red color cast. The walls are dark, and the floor is also dark. Several ornate chandeliers with multiple lit bulbs hang from the ceiling. At the far end of the hallway, a doorway is brightly lit, creating a strong contrast with the dark surroundings. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and dramatic.

THE NIGHTS THAT WERE

ERNESTO KOVACS

For Mary;

The girl who got away.

We disagreed on almost everything.

We did agree on love.

But love was not enough.

We could have been great together.

It wasn't meant to be.

Prologue

Everything ends and it's always sad.

The wallpaper was coloured oddly. It was a type of red mixed with hints of yellow for good measure. The wallpaper itself existed out of various shapes. Some were triangles while others were just lines. The hallway which the wallpaper was located in was not too wide, three humans could walk next to each other but they would knock over all the plants and small tables so two humans wide would perhaps be better said. Would not want to upset the hotel by knocking things over. It has a terrible temper.

But that was for later. The hallway and in turn the hotel itself were built from a time before. Well built was in very loose terms, this place was not exactly built by traditional means. Rather by untraditional means.

Then out of nowhere at all, a man dressed in black. He ran as if his life depended on it. Which made sense because it in fact did. The man's clothes consisted of a black suit, a black tie and you guessed it black shoes. His hair was sadly not coloured black, it was yellow.

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The man in black was chased by something which you cannot understand. It had no name, it had no form, it had no colour. All that was known about The Entity was that if it caught you, terrible things would happen. I thought so at least I was not sure.

The man in black continued to evade The Entity by running, he's fast but so the thing that is chasing him. The man was already out of breath, sweat was dripping down his face. And soaked in his clothes. This is what happened when you run for days on days.

His hand reached for a door, only to find it being locked. In vain he tried another door which unfortunately was also locked. This happened four or five more times before the man truly became desperate. What if all the doors in the hotel were locked? What would happen then? He could not run forever. He would have to let The Entity take him. Which would be the last thing he would want.

With his frustration and desperation increased he tried another door. Again nothing new happened. All that happened was that The Entity nearly caught him this time. And that his breathing became worse, heavier. His time would soon end. No more running.

Then his worst fears.... A dead end. With one sole door at the end of it. He glanced back over his shoulder. It was close. This was it. All or nothing since going back made no sense at all and would prove impossible due to the fact that It was wider than two humans. The man ran with everything that he had. The door was reached. His hand on the handle, sweating hand mind you. The door opened. The man in black stepped inside and shut the door closed, locking The Entity outside. It was staring at the room number. Number 66...

The hotel room looked ordinary, if you happened to be a citizen of Dirt in the early twenties. The wallpaper, the carpet, the closed drapes which hid no windows, hell even the bed

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itself. All of it screamed the roaring twenties. All but one object. The television set appeared to be from the year something future. It was a flatscreen which I believe did not exist back then.

Queer.

The door was locked, the man in black made sure of it. He could finally breath like an ordinary human being. He was safe, for now... The man dropped to the floor exhausted beyond comprehension. His back against the door, as if that could hold The Entity back somehow. His face paler then before. There was not much life left in his face, his eyes showed what was about to happen.

‘I cannot play this game for much longer. Either I find my room or The Darkness gets me. Two ways out of this hell hole, both of them having their own downsides.’ The man’s eyes became fear. ‘I do not want to find my room.’ The unnamed man’s voice showed the fear in his eyes.

Suddenly he jolted upward back onto both his feet which were nearly death.

‘Well I’m done! You hear me! I’m fucking done you crazy motherfuckers! I’m no longer playing this sick game of yours!’ The man screamed at the top of his lungs.

Then right after he calmed down, straightened his tie. ‘But perhaps, before I go I can give the next ones a better shot. Making them go through what I went through with no information would be cruel.’

The man in black calmly sat down on the bed, he took a tape recorder out of his pocket. Old school, worn. It had been through fire, literally. The man in black pressed record. The tape rolled.

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‘To whoever is listening to this. I am terribly sorry for not starting with the time and date but those no longer seem to apply in these walls. About me. I Gordon Cooper am of sound mind, or as sound mind as you can be here. I shall tell you the truth and nothing but the truth about this place. If god existed I would swear on him but if you are inside these walls then you know there is no such thing as god. To whoever is listening I know that you have no reason to believe a word I say but I am all that you have. So kindly listen very carefully to my words,’ Gordon said, exhausted. He took a deep breath before continuing on.

‘From my estimated guess it has been over two months since I first stepped foot inside of this hotel of utter insanity. During that amount of time I have learned how to survive the madness. Please listen closely. These are the rules to surviving your stay in The UnDying Craven.’

Chapter One

Two different junctures in life.

The library was empty. It was always empty at night but it was never closed. There was not much interest in nightly library visits which was unfortunately. This library was like no other. The bookcases went on forever with no end in sight, no end that the human eye could detect. There is nothing but books in every single direction. There is no exit or walls that can be seen. Sadly there is nobody inside either.

That last part was a lie, expect to see more of those popping up.

There was one soul inside, he moved his fingers over the spines of the numerous rows of novels. He did not find what he was looking for in this particular bookcase and moved on. Determination was in his eyes. The man looked to be in his early forties. His raven black hair was well kept and he sported no facial hair of any kind. To add to that he appeared to be in good health.

The raven man carried seven novels in one arm, it was as terrible as it sounded. The raven man moved from bookcase to bookcase, he stopped only for brief moments, he inspected

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everything and moved on right after. He was clearly looking for something specific, luck however was not on his side that night.

The raven man left the comfort of the bookcases and made his way over to the centre of the library. There was a desk with a light, a cat and a person behind it. Receptionist desk as it has been called before, not by me but by others.

As I have gone over already another human sat behind the receptionist desk. This one looked bored out of her mind. She was around the same age as the raven man. That was where the similarities ended. Her hair was yellow, her eyes coloured blue. And she wore glasses, not that has any importance to the story. An odd thing, I probably should have started with this. The receptionist woman did not appear to be moving, yet both her eyes were open. Before that beehive was stung another crucial detail. There was a chair right next to her, slightly smaller and cheaper. On that chair laid a golden retriever puppy, she was sleeping soundly.

The raven man stopped before the desk, questioning if the woman before him was still alive. 'Excuse me, but you do not happen to be dead by any chance?'

The receptionist woman jolted awake from her not so deep slumber. 'I'm very much alive, just sleeping.'

The raven man chuckled. 'Sleeping with one's eyes open. Never did figure that one out, would have helped greatly with all those teacher meetings I've had to sit through. Countless hours wasted that could have,' - The raven man realized he had started his mumbling. 'Terribly sorry did not mean to wake you. And apologies for the mumbling as well.'

She looked unbothered by his little rant of words. 'It's fine.'

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He smiles at her, happy that it was not too big of an disturbance. Then the raven man slowly put the seven books that he was still carrying on the desk, careful not to damage them.

‘So these the ones you wanna check out? Anything else?’

‘No. Well yes, well no actually. I have had some trouble locating the other novels I need.’

The raven man pulled out a note, folded it open and handed it over to the receptionist. She reacted to the list with absolute shock.

‘There are over thirty novels on this list. All scattered around the library.’ She inspected the list with a closer look, then proceeded to glance at the stack of books the raven man had put on the desk. ‘You know with the knowledge inside of these you could write your own novel.’

‘That was my idea, yes. I wanted to learn before I started, after all you do not assemble a car without first learning how to assemble one.’

‘Interesting, another writer to add to the list. Teaching not working out then?’ the receptionist asked as her eyes were still on the list.

‘Well I’ve been doing it for quite a while you see and after a certain amount time passes your opinion on things start to differ from what they originally were. So I,’ - the raven paused. ‘apologies it is a rather long story. You probably do not have the time,’ the raven man said, sounding rather defeated.

‘We have all the time in the world here. Go on.’

‘I understand that not everyone enjoys every subject, but I feel like I am wasting my time teaching to those who do not want to be taught. I want to do something that people actually like.

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Something which you seek out instead of being forced to do. If it's not too much to ask I would like to spread joy.' The raven man could not help but shine when he said that last sentence.

'Writing is one of the finest things one could choose to do. But it won't be easy I'll tell you that,' the receptionist said rather bluntly.

'I am counting on the most enormous challenge I have ever faced in my life.'

The receptionist was unconvinced. 'You wouldn't believe the amount of people who came in here saying they are the next Tolkien. And then stopped the very next week.'

The raven man took a small step forward. It was hardly noticeable. 'If everything in life was easy nothing would be worth doing.'

'Saying things is easier than doing things,' the receptionist said without looking in his eyes. The eyes...

'I am well aware of that fact. Now forgive me for pointing it out but it seems you do not have much faith in me.'

The receptionist sighed, this was clearly not the first time she had this argument with a stranger. It would not be the last either. 'I just want you to understand what it is you're getting yourself into.'

'I understand.'

'Well then let's get started with this list shall we?' she asked with a hint of exactness that was buried under her barely awake state.

The Receptionist got off her chair. Then the worst possible scenario happened right before their eyes. The Golden Retriever puppy moved. The Receptionist immediately put her

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finger on her mouth. The raven man understood and silence followed. Both stared at the little creature, fearing the worst. The puppy did not wake up. A true crisis was averted. For now...

‘That was close,’ the receptionist said full of relief.

‘Light sleeper is she? The raven man asked.

‘She is the weirdest when it comes to sleep. You could be shouting your lungs out and she would not wake up. But when something inhuman moves she wakes up almost right away.’

The raven man smiled. ‘It is better to be a little bit odd when the alternative is being just like everybody else.’

‘If you keep forming your sentences like that you might convince me you can do it.’

‘I will try to keep the quality consistent.’ He turned his gaze to the puppy.’ May I ask what her name is?

‘Oh it's Aurora.’

The raven man shined once more. ‘Dawn, what a beautiful name.’

The receptionist stared him, confusion in her eyes. I'm sorry?’

‘Dawn, it the translation of Aurora in Latin,’ he said as if it was an obvious fact.

‘You speak Latin?’

‘A little bit, yes. I was taught to.’

The Receptionist leaned on the desk, she was quite a bit closer to him ‘What does my name mean in Latin then writer?’

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‘Well to answer that question I would first have to know your name.’

‘Luna.’

The raven man’s smile showed itself again. ‘Another beautiful name, but if I didn't know otherwise I would say you chose Aurora on purpose.’”

A flicker, something changed in Luna. Her expression wasn’t as playful anymore. To make matters worse she slightly leaned back, away from the raven man. ‘Oh I didn't choose her name. She is my. She was my sisters. I took her in after she...,’-

The raven man interrupted, seeing Luna’s discomfort with ease. ‘Please. There is no need to explain anything that you are not comfortable with.’

Luna smiled for the very first time. ‘Thank you.’

The raven man kept the smile he had been showing. How long could a human keep it’s smile? Was there a finite amount of time for that?

‘So what does my name mean in Latin?’

‘Moon.’

She did not buy that one bit, her expression turned sceptical. ‘Did you just make that up to sound clever? Cause it’s very clever.’

‘I did not, no.’

‘Hmmmmm.’ The doubt had not left Luna. How could it? It sounded to perfect to be real.

‘Why would I lie? We are in a library you can look it right up and declare me a fool. Why would I make myself out as a fool?’

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‘There is a possibility you act nice innocent and well mannered to convince me of the fact that you are not capable of lying. Which would mean that I would trust your word because of that,’ Luna said.

The raven man smirked. ‘Please Luna. I am not close to being that clever. Otherwise I would have never became a teacher in the first place.’

‘That remains to be seen writer. That remains to be seen.’ What followed was a brief moment of silence, both of them resting their throats. Simply gazing at one another. Then something popped up in her mind. ‘What's the meaning of your name in Latin?’ Luna asked.

‘I wish I could give you an answer. But a Latin translation unfortunately does not exist. Seeing as my first name is Italian and my last name is Spanish.’

‘Italian and Spanish, well then what might this mysterious name be?’ Luna asked.

‘Ezio. Ezio Castellanos.’

Luna wrote it down. Her eyes almost sparkling. ‘Castellanos..... as last names go I say that suits you very well. Latin translation or not.’

‘You're too kind. I'm sure your last name suits you equally as well. May I ask what it is? While we're on the subject?’ Castellanos asked.

Her eyes were back on the list again, double checking. ‘It's Luna Castellanos.’

Castellanos turned surprised. The man glowed soon after. ‘I was building up the courage to ask you out after my work for today was finished but you seem to be moving rather fast.’

Luna looked up, into Castellanos' eyes. It took a couple of seconds to fully realize what she just said. Once that was done red she turned. Almost the exact second she understood.

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‘Shut up. It was a mistake, just a simple mistake that’s all,’ Luna said completely flustered.

‘Luna Castellanos does sound good, you sure you don't want it?’

She grabbed the list and walked towards the bookcases full of mystery. ‘Shut up!’ she screamed, even more flustered.

Castellanos followed her, still smiling.

Castellanos has never told anyone this, he merely thought about it. If he was given the chance to travel back in time to this exact moment, no, rather a bit before this exact moment.. If he had that opportunity... He was not sure what he would do, the greater part of him would want to seize this entire meeting from happening, saving himself from the future heartbreak, then the other part, the softer, kinder part. It was just glad to be here. See all of this happening again. See the both of them happy, happy together.

II

There were no buildings in sight, there were no people in sight. All that was in sight was the one road and the one car driving on it. The night made it hard to see but the car was worn down quite a bit. An old muscle car that was barely hanging on, dust and mud all over the poor thing. The car had seen serious stuff. So had the person driving it.

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From the inside it was not any better. It was littered with trash, empty coffee cups, empty noodle cups and empty gum packs. all over the floor of the car.

The driver's hair was overgrown, grey locks showing. His eyes were aimed at the road but he was not looking at it, his thoughts were somewhere else entirely. It was not of any importance as of yet but he was chewing bubble gum. The driver's phone rang. He turned to the passenger seat where it laid. The caller ID read the following name: Rian The Cunt. With reluctantly the driver grabbed the phone, there was a wedding ring on his hand. He answered.

'What the fuck do you want?' His voice sounded rough, dark but most of all it sounded tired. Not tired from lack of sleep but tired from still being alive.

'I was just calling my favourite person in the world! You see I haven't exactly heard from you for a while now. How you doing?'

If the driver were able to beat Rian within an inch from his life at this moment in time he would have a hard time not doing it. But it was not possible. 'I'm going to be the bigger man here and pretend you didn't just ask me that.'

Rian (the Cunt) took his time to respond. He was clearly thinking of something else to say but this time with more care. Think before you talk was common enough so that everyone had at least heard it once in their lives. That however did not mean that everyone understood it. 'So eh.... I called because I went to your home and you weren't there. Where are you man?'

The driver's expression was stone cold, not because he had no emotion quite the contrary. He had all the emotions but hid them, he hid his response from himself. 'My home no longer exist.'

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Right, I went to the hotel room you've been staying in for the last few months. But you weren't there,' Rian said.

'You've already said that Rian. Worst thing you can possibly do is repeat what has already been said,' the driver said with irritation bleeding through his voice.

'I'm sorry okay? Jeez... Now where are you?'

'Like you care. Fuck off Rian. Seriously what are you even doing?'

'Hey! I care about you! I'm your agent of course I care about you.'

'Do not ever think that someone like you is capable of lying to me. You're dirt Rian, nothing more then dirt.'

'What the hell are you talking about now? Sometimes I really can't understand anything you say. Just speak like normal people seriously.'

'You're thick now as well it seems. Do not pretend to care about anything other then the money that comes from my novels. Don't lie, it's very easy to not lie.'

'So does that mean you have started writing again?'

You finally see his face. There is no ounce of joy to be found on it. Castellanos looks like a different person. Older, meaner. Overgrown black hair, grey locks are showing through. Beard could use a trim. Hasn't slept well in three months. It shows on his face.

The microphone dropped. 'And the curtain drops. That wasn't so hard now was it?' the driver's question was followed by another long stretch of silence, pure nothingness as if you will. Until of course the silence was seized.

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‘Hey are you still there? Hello?’ Rian screamed through the phone.

‘Unfortunately I am still here. But fear not. I'll be starting my writing again soon.’

‘Good, that's good you know. Helps your mind get off things.’

The driver wished nothing more then this pointless conversation stopping as soon as possible. There was nothing worse then talking with someone who did not have anything to say.

He switched gears, put his foot down and increased the speed by almost double. He never had something with cars but going at this speed over this lone road in the middle of nowhere....

There were not a whole lot of things that could bring the driver peace, but this was one of them.

As we all know peaceful moments cannot last for long periods of time without being interrupted.

‘Wait! Are you in a car?! Please tell me you’re not driving!’

He could not help but smile at his distress, knowing that Rian was not at ease made him feel better, even if it was just a slight amount. ‘Perceptive today aren't we. Don't tire that one brain cell out.’

‘Are you driving a car!?’

‘I am indeed. What’s it to you?’

Rian began hyperventilating over the phone. ‘So?! You don't have a license!’

‘Well I do not see how that is an issue, I know perfectly well how to drive,’ the driver said nonchalantly.

‘That is not the point!’ Rain screamed over the phone in vain.

‘And what is the bigger picture here according to you?’

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‘You might drive off the road and die!’

The drive shrugged. ‘It is certainly a thing that is currently happening in one of the alternate timelines. But I have just as much of a chance of driving off a cliff as anybody else.’

‘Is this all a joke to you?’

‘What life?’

‘Yes life!’ Rian screamed at an uncomfortable level.

‘Yeah. Only in a joke can things take such a dark turn so suddenly. Great stuff for some character development for a future story. A man who had everything suddenly had nothing at all.’

‘Listen to me you are not well! Stop that car right now! I order you to stop that car right now!’ Rian screamed once more, soon his voice would tire. Hopefully very soon.

Shouting has never accomplished anything,’ he said taking one deep breath. He could not take much more of this. ‘Well it gave the word shouting a meaning but apart from that nothing.’

‘Could you at least tell me where you are going?’

‘Because you asked so nicely I will. Kovacs' told be about this place that helped him write Asylum of Insanity It opened his mind up, so he told me. Going there now.’

‘And you trusted him like that?’

‘Unlike you he has always been honest with me. So yes I did trust him on this.’

‘Where is this hotel!? I'm coming to pick you up. Castellanos were is this hotel?’ Rian screamed once more in vain.

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‘You will do no such thing. Do not try to find me, I’ll speak to you if I want.’ Castellanos lowered his window and threw out his phone, it shattered on impact. Shattered into a dozen pieces.

Castellanos continued his drive in complete silence. Peacefulness returned to him, which naturally did not last for very long. Fear lit up in his eyes. Quite literally. Fire appeared in his eyes. And fire appeared on the road before him. Everything that was in his sight was fire. There was nothing else to see or feel then the fire. People do not always associate smell with fire, but fire has potent smell one which I cannot help but love.

Castellanos closed his eyes but did not stop the car. He was driving blind through the fire.

‘What the Doctor told you. The fire is not there. There is no fire, everything you see is merely in your own head. The fire is not there it is merely in your own head. Please see it. The fire is not there, it is merely in your own head.’

Castellanos opened his eyes. He was still driving, but the fire was no more. It had never been there in the first place. ‘I do not know how many more times I can endure this torture.’ Since there was nothing to be gained from that sentence Castellanos did the sole thing he could. He drove further until he reached the only building for hundreds of miles. A gigantic Gothic Hotel. The colour it possessed could not be called black, it was darker than that, it possessed more nothingness in the colour. But perhaps that could be due to the night. The windows were simply put a ridiculous size, oddly however there was no light from the inside bleeding out, none that could be seen.

The car stopped. Castellanos stepped out nearly losing his footing as he did. He turned towards the doors of the place. ‘Well this might do. Yes I think it will do very well. Everyone

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loves a creepy hotel tale.’ Castellanos gaze turned to the beautifully handcrafted sign above the door which read : The UnDying Craven. It was a lovely name for a hotel. The hotel itself however looked quite death from the outside, was it even open? No light coming from the inside is never a good sign in these cases. But strangely enough that was not what Castellanos was thinking off at the moment.

‘You would have absolutely loved to see this place, the perfect amount of Gothic style without going overboard, hell you would have bought the place.’ Castellanos turned sad knowing what could have happened instead of what did happen. Best not to dwell on it too much, he’ll think about her again in a couple of minutes no doubt. Still the bad thoughts do not simply vanish because you do not want to think of them.

Castellanos got a suitcase out of the trunk, locked it and stepped through the doors of The UnDying Craven.

It let him inside.

Chapter Two

The UnDying Craven welcomes you.

Good news at last, there were lights on inside! They were just no visible from the outside which was bizarre.. The lobby which Castellanos found himself in was fancy to say the least, looked bigger on the inside. On the right side was the reception desk, on the on side were a bunch of tables and chairs along with the bar. All of it incredibly fancy, yet old schooled. The place appeared to be from a different time entirely. As if he stepped back in the eighties, or a time before that. One of the many things that went through his mind was the Overlook, although this hotel was not located on a mountain it didn't even look like it one bit. But the mind goes where the mind goes. He focussed his attention back to this particular hotel. Castellanos was impressed with the quality of it all. His eyes went all over the place, there was a lot of fine craftsmanship to observe. But that would be a waste of time that could be spend writing.

He moved over to the reception desk. Sadly he found no one to be there. What a queer phenomenon. Was there even a person alive between these walls or had they all mysteriously disappeared?

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Castellanos had hoped to get a room right away, all of this was simply stealing away time that he needed for his next novel. Then again he had been doing close to nothing for so long. What would worrying about a couple of more minutes do? Nothing, nothing at all...

He made his way over to the reception desk, a weird sense of déjà vu hitting him. How much time had passed since that day? Castellanos could not remember anymore. It had been too long, not just that reminiscing about that night would do nothing but drag down the past, yet it was all he could think about when walking to the reception desk. Somethings you don't easily forgot.

Castellanos put down his suitcase, leaned on the desk and turned to the left, all that was there was a solid wall. On his right however was a door which had a sign on the door. It read: This is Not an Exit. Odd sign to put up but who was Castellanos to question what was odd and what wasn't. Should people even be allowed to say what was and what was not odd? Question for another time. Castellanos fear began to increase, what if there was no one here? What would he do then? Take a key and leave a couple of hundred dollar bills on the counter? It wasn't the worst possible idea. Then Castellanos noticed a bell on the reception desk he had not noticed before. He dinged the bell. Yet no one showed up.

A sound was heard, something fell, something heavy, or someone... It came from the door with the sign, at least there was another person in this hotel that was something. Castellanos' mind told him to run away as fast as possible, you do not investigate strange noises in stranger places. Not if you wanted yourself to end up death. Castellanos was barely alive as it was so he did not bother running away. 'You alright in there friend?'

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‘Yeah I’m fine, be with you in a sec,’ a young voice said behind the door with the sign. It was another human being after all, that was comforting. What wasn’t all that nice was that the voice sounded tired. Everyone is very tired. There is no rest for the wicked after all.

Castellanos focussed his attention back on the beauty of the lobby, there wasn’t much else to do then stare at things. Perhaps he shouldn’t have thrown his phone out of the car. You live and you learn, unless you die.

The door opened a young man stepped out looking worse for wear, worse then Castellanos even. What kind of people do they let work in this hotel? I thought it was supposed to be a fancy place. There was a deep sadness in the kid’s eyes. As his heart was broken mere moments ago. Speaking about his hair he could use a haircut, or several mind you. The kid moved forward towards the desk, he could barely manage the small amount of steps, he was either drunk or high, or hell he was both who knew? The kid managed to make it to desk. Put his arms down on it to make sure he didn’t fall. That would be embarrassing. ‘Sorry for the delay mister, how can I be of help?’

Castellanos stares at the state of the kid, he wasn’t much different then himself, he wondered what his story was. Questions for another time. ‘Would like a room.’

‘Of course mister, please write your name and the date in the sheet here.’ The kid pulled out a sign sheet and a pencil, handed it over to Castellanos. The writer looked down at the other names written down:

-RANDY CAMPBELL 10-30

-DEAN FLETCHER 10-30

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-JESSICA CASH 10-30

-SIDNEY WILLIAMS 10-30

-MATTHEW BARKER 10-30

Castellanos wrote something down something and put the sign sheet back on the desk. The kid handed him a key, number thirteen. Castellanos cannot help but smile at seeing the number, this was going to be fun.

‘Where is this?’ Castellanos asked.

‘Hallway to the left, follow it and you'll find it.’

‘Thanks.’

Castellanos turned away from the kid, ready to leave. He didn’t leave, instead he turned back to the kid an interesting look was in his eyes. Everything was in the eyes. ‘Didn't catch your name kid.’

‘Gregory Harris,’ the half asleep kid said.

Castellanos extended his hand, Gregory shook is. ‘Nice to meet you Gregory Harris.’ The hands stopped being shook. Gregory pulls the sign sheet up to his face, blinding the rest of his vision.

‘Nice to meet you....’ Gregory’s eyes are fixed upon the last written name on the list. ‘Wes Craven.’ He pulled the sign sheet down. Castellanos was gone, so was his suitcase. Gregory cannot help but laugh.

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The hallway, the wallpaper was a type of red mixed with hints of yellow for good measure. The same hallway as before. It appeared to be a different style then the lobby, it looked older yet still beautiful. Perhaps the lobby had been redecorated in the past, Castellanos did not give it much thought. There were little lanterns on the wall, they were the only light sources.

Castellanos stood still in the middle of the hallway in his hands was his notebook. It was worn to hell, pages sticking out of it, a dozen more folded inside of it. He was writing like crazy:

GREGORY HARRIS, 20 - 25 years old. Unshaven, looks worse then me. A deep sadness in his eyes, there is a story there. Something happened to him not long ago. He was on something, alcohol drugs I don't know. Could be an interesting start for a character.

Castellanos put his notebook away, he moved over to room thirteen. But he froze before the door. Somehow scared to enter room. Although there was no logical reason for him to be scared he was. It was similar to the feeling one gets when one stands atop of a mountain and the urge to jump finds said one.

Back to Castellanos, he remained before the door. Once he would enter it another chapter of his life would start, although one could argue that it already had started. He could still back out. There was no reason for him to write, he had enough money saved up. He could retire if he wanted to. Seclude himself to a nice cabin in the middle of nowhere.

But no. The events were already set in motion, he would enter room thirteen, he would write a new novel. 'Well then.' He unlocked the door, pushed it open. 'Here we go.' Castellanos disappeared into the darkness that was room 13.

Room thirteen was nothing but darkness, the sole light available was bleeding inside from the hallway. After a minute of searching he flipped a switch and the room was lit. It was an

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rather ordinary hotel room, bed, desk, closet and door what presumable was the bathroom. Things looked pretty but nothing was special. Castellanos locked the door behind him. Proceeded to put his suitcase on the bed, he took a step back. His eyes never left the suitcase. Castellanos' eyes were filled with hate, but terror was there as well. He heard the fire. Everything seemed fine, nothing was happening in the room but Castellanos heard fire. He always heard fire. There was nothing else to hear then the fire. It appeared in his eyes and looked like it was going to spread to the rest from of his body. But the fire did not spread. It seized. Gone from his eyes it was replaced by something else, determination. The same determination that he possessed when he was just starting out. When he was starting out in the library....

'I cannot end my career on a whimper, I will not allow it.' Castellanos moved back to his suitcase and opened it. Inside lay a newspaper, some blank papers and most importantly his typewriter. I'll get back to the typewriter later. The newspaper possessed the following headline:

Ezio Castellanos' new novel NOMIS debuted today. Critics and fans think alike for once and call it the worst novel every written.

Castellanos held the newspaper in his hand. No writer deserved a headline like that. They could have just said it was bad, not as good as his other work but no they specifically had to say it was the worst novel ever written.

'I wrote a story that I would have liked to see. That's all I did. Could it have been better? Sure of course it have been better. There is no such thing as the perfect novel, everything can better,' Castellanos said to no one and everyone at the same time.

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‘That’s all I’ve ever done. Written stories I would like to see myself. Just this time it didn’t work out. I wasn’t focussed enough. But I will be.’ Castellanos crushed the newspaper into a small ball and tossed it into the corner. He wasn’t going to let it bother him anymore.

‘One last time. Then I’m done. That’s all I want to do here.’ Castellanos pulled the typewriter out of his suitcase, dropped it down on the desk and put some paper in it. And it was ready to go, now only himself needed to become ready to write. Castellanos took off his coat, dropped it on the bed and sat down before the typewriter. It was like before all over again. The same feeling, the same heartbeat. He took out a piece of gum and began to chew. How else would he write but with gum in his mouth?

‘The wallpaper was coloured oddly,’ Castellanos said as he typed the words down.

II

Several empty gum wrappers lay on the desk. Hours had passed, had there been something to show for that amount of time? Yes and no. There were numerous pages written but all of them were in a different physical state. Some were simply turned into paper balls others were in pieces. Different parts of the story were lying around the room, Castellanos was happy with none of them. He sat in the same chair rather depressed. ‘Nothing more to tell. I shouldn’t have written Nomis to begin with,’ he said rather quiet.

A long silence loomed over the failed writer. Until he spoke again. ‘Perhaps it is time to accept that this isn’t my thing anymore. Perhaps it’s time to finally end everything once and for

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hell. Join her. wherever she may be.' Castellanos grabbed the typewriter with both hands, aimed it at the wall. He was ready to throw the thing, smash it into oblivion. But he did not throw it.

He merely stood in the middle of the room holding the typewriter above his head, it was a laughable sight.

'Destroying the last thing that reminds me of her. If this is gone from my life she will be gone from my life as well.' Castellanos put the typewriter back on the desk. Then he took the chair and threw it at the wall in a fit of rage. Nothing was accomplished. Everything that was wrong before still was wrong. Anger does nothing. It had never solved anything. And it never will.

Castellanos took deep breath after deep breath, he dropped himself against the wall. Shock? Or something much graver? Of course. The fire. The whole room was on fire, everything was burning, the smoke blinded him. All he could see was hints of the fire moving, burning. Burning everything in sight. Then it happened. Castellanos himself was on fire, but he did not scream. He did not move either. The writer merely sat on the floor being feeling rather sad while thinking of better days. All of that was in the past, nothing good would befall upon him ever again.

Then there was a knock on the door. Castellanos turned his head towards the door and the fire was gone.

Chapter Three

An unexpected conversation.

Castellanos eyes were fixed upon the door which had just received a knock. 'What is it?' he asked rather bitter.

'Are you alright in there?' Someone asked behind the door, the voice was young. She couldn't be older then twenty at most. Had Castellanos really made that much noise?

'I know that one is expected to answer with the sociable acceptable answer when asked that question but no I am not alright.'

'You wanna talk about it?'

Castellanos stood up, he got closer to the door. Why was a stranger showing care to him? 'What's in it for you? Listening to a stranger complaining about everything that's wrong? Doesn't seem like such a fun activity.'

'A stranger is just a friend you haven't met yet.'

'Even then?'

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‘I also can’t sleep and really want something to drink.’

‘I am not buying alcohol for a single soul, find someone else.’

‘Actually I was hoping for some chocolate milk.’

This surprised Castellanos a great deal, he had never once heard someone request chocolate milk out of all options available. ‘Chocolate milk?’

‘Yeah you know, nobody's sad after drinking chocolate milk.’

‘I'm not sad,’ Castellanos lied.

‘I think you’re lying there.’

Castellanos response to that was silence. He was supposed to not lie, then why did he? ‘It isn’t a lie.’ Castellanos’ mind could be considered brilliant but even a brilliant mind is stupid half the time.

‘That’s another lie there. Look I don’t know you, but I do know that something is wrong and that you shouldn’t be alone right now. Are you coming outside?’

Castellanos unlocked the door, opened it up. Outside stood the girl. She was just a kid, his assessment had been correct. She possessed black curly hair, wore a simply hoodie, jeans combo. Odd thing was that both were a size to big. Her eyes were reddish, if that was from smoking weed or crying was unknown. Castellanos was caught staring.

‘Something wrong there?’

‘Sorry, it was just... How old are you?...

‘Old enough to drink chocolate milk,’ the girl said as she descended into the hallway.

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‘Wait, aren't we doing to introduce ourselves?’ he asked as he followed the girl further down the hallway.

‘I don’t mean to come of disrespectful but just thinking logically I’m gonna be gone tomorrow. We’ll most likely never see each other again.

‘Cannot argue with that logic.’ Both humans disappeared into the hallway.

Only to reappear into the lobby. Once again it was empty.

‘It’s odd isn’t it? No one else here? Or is it just me?’

‘Have you seen the location of this place? Not many people around to stop.’

‘You make a fair enough point.’

‘You sound familiar, famous by any chance?’

Castellanos became defensive. It was best not to let her know who he actually was. ‘You said we shouldn't do names.’

‘Touché.’

They sat down at the bar, once again it was abandoned, no bartender nothing. The girl dinged the bell before Castellanos had even noticed it. he had gotten slow. Or perhaps merely tired. Gregory the receptionist showed up right away this time, he looked more alive, as if he had more energy since last time Castellanos encountered him. Yet his appearance had not changed, merely his facial expression.

‘Hello there, what can I get you on this fine night?’

‘Are you only one that works here kid?’ Castellanos asked.

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‘I am indeed mister, saves money.’

‘Doesn’t matter. Good sir we would like two bottles of chocolate milk please,’ the girl asked.

Gregory disappeared below the bar, a freezer opened and two bottles of chocolate milk found their place on the bar. Castellanos handed the kid a twenty. ‘Keep the rest.’

‘Thank you mister! Seriously thank you, if you need anything else please do not hesitate to ding the bell.’

‘I will, thank you,’ Castellanos said. Greg nodded in response and left them to be.

The girl was already drinking the chocolate milk. Castellanos raised his bottle of chocolate milk, the girl does the same with her half full one. ‘To another day.’ Castellanos took a sip, it was quite good. Much better then the crap he used to drink when he was a kid.

‘Well then, I don’t know where to start with this. I’m not going to ask you how you are because well I can see you’re not all that okay. May I ask what you were doing?’ the girl asked.

‘I was writing,’ Castellanos said with a somber tone.

‘You’re a writer?! Groovy! Seriously that’s like the coolest thing ever, I cannot imagine how you guys put all those words on paper.’

‘I decided to stop a couple of hours before you knocked on my door. I think my writing days are over I think.’

The girl turned serious. Which was hard to do with a chocolate milk moustache on her face. She did so anyway. ‘No.’

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‘No?’ Castellanos asked in response.

‘No one just stops doing what they do, unless they're forced. And you don't seem like the type of guy that can be forced so you stopped yourself. Never stop doing what you love.’

‘Well done Sherlock.’

The girl tipped her hat which she did not wear. ‘I do try my best.’ Another sip of chocolate milk was taken, soon it would be gone. ‘So is it true that good writers are able to read people?’ she asked full of exactment.

‘Not necessarily no. Depends on the person really.’

‘So are you able to read people?’ she clearly was not going to let this go.

‘I can, I am not the very best at it but I can do it decently.’ He said trying to humble himself. Humble is a good thing, only one must be able to realize one’s mastery. Otherwise it’s just sad.

‘Oh! Do me. Do me!’ the girl asked. Castellanos stared at her with a shocked expression. She had not realized what she had said. Then realization followed by embarrassment. ‘I didn’t mean it like that.’

‘I know,’ Castellanos said smiling.

‘Good. So read me writer. Do not hold anything back.’ Castellanos took another sip of the chocolate milk then fully turned towards her. You could tell a persons interested by the direction their feet are aimed, if they did not wish to talk you their feet would often point away from you. Castellanos’ feet were facing the girl. He stared into her eyes. The truth was always in the eyes. Always. Seconds passed with ease. Time seized to have meaning, a full minute had passed. The

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girl would not admit it but she had started to become a tiny bit uncomfortable. Any sane person would but that was not important right now. The eyes held the truth, and the eyes could not be deceived by the mind. She was smiling at him yes but there was a great sadness inside of her, hiding behind the fake smile. He could see right through it since he knew how to do it.

‘You followed the dream you've had since you were five, which was being a famous actress in Hollywood. Against everyone’s wishes you left home but your money ran out and now your going back home with your tail between your legs.’

Jessica turned emotional. ‘How the hell did you do that? that’s serious magic.’ She said as her eyes turned more red.

‘Your clothes are a size too big, you've lost weight because you didn't have the money to afford the fancy food you got at home. On top of that the sadness in your eyes is a dead give away something went horribly wrong.’

‘I could also be on my way to Hollywood just now,’ the girl said, desperate to not face the truth.

‘Not the case. You've been crying. Or smoking, but that is not important you have no money to spend otherwise you wouldn't ask a stranger for chocolate milk so you can't have been smoking. Which brings us back to crying. Crying because things didn't work out.’

The girl turned to what was left of her chocolate milk. ‘I don't want to play this game anymore if all you're gonna do is call me failure.’

‘I never said the word failure, you did.’

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I said it because it's true. I am a failure. Biggest one there is.' She drank the last of her chocolate milk. And then it was gone completely. How sad.

'You're not a failure you just had bad luck that is all.'

'What makes you say that?'

'About ninety percent any job in the film industry is connections. It does not even matter if you are any good or not. If you know the right people and they like you, you're in.'

'And that is how the people for the Star Wars sequels were chosen.'

'Exactly my point little padawan,' Castellanos said jokingly.

'You think there are alternative timeline or a parallel earths were they were actually good?' The sadness in her eyes was still there but it was in the back for now. Good.

'I believe there is a parallel earth for every possibility. So yes, even one where sequels were good.'

'Still made under Disney right?' Both humans cannot hold their laughter back, the joke was simply too much.

There was a genuine smile on Castellanos face, it hadn't been there for so long. He forgot how it felt like to smile with another person. Laugh about something stupid. 'I know it has been ages since then but I can still remember the smile on her face when the head of Disney announced to the public that they went bankrupt. To this day it is still hilarious.'

'Sorry who are you talking about?' Who's she?'

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Castellanos face turned serious as if there was a switch being flipped in his head, he should not have shared that story. Tell me did you know anybody in the industry?’

The girl wanted to know who he was talking about, if she did she would come closer to finding out what exactly was wrong. But she did not push for an answer, not yet. ‘Never realized how hard it actually is to make connections with people in power without selling your soul. All I did were some very small things, that's basically my career.’

‘Life is never fair.’

‘I'll drink to that.’ the girl drank the very last drops of the chocolate milk. What Castellanos had said was true. Life was never fair, it simply did not know how to be fair. But sometimes, very rarely but sometimes life brings two people together at their lowest points. Castellanos took out his notebook, he wrote a number and a name down and teared the page out.

‘Tomorrow morning you will call this number. Tell them I told you, you were the best actress I've ever seen. Then tell them were you are that they need to pick you up. They're shooting this new Halloween film, been bugging me about doing some rewriters. Stress them that I want you in the film.’

The girl sat flabbergasted, nothing moved because everything was simply not prepared to handle this type of situation. Castellanos put the note in her hand. And closed it for her.

‘Are you serious right now?’ the girl asked while still feeling completely flabbergasted.

‘I am. Just do that and you'll be fine. You won't even have to audition or anything.’

‘Dude I don't even know what to say... I...’ Her eyes turned reddish once more.

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Castellanos placed his hand on her shoulder. 'Then don't say anything. It's okay.'

Castellanos finished his drink, stood up, he was ready to get back to his room. Before he could do that however he found himself to be in the process of being hugged. The writer had no idea how to react to that, much like how the girl had no idea how to react to the information being given to her. You could say Castellanos had never been hugged before. Then the hug ended. The

'I am so incredibly sorry if that was uncomfortable for you. I just.. Nobody has ever done something nice for just because. You have no idea.'

Castellanos put on a smile. 'Don't worry about it. Good night little one.' He tried to leave once again, once again he was stopped.

'Wait!' the girl screamed. Castellanos stopped once more, turned back around. 'I don't know your name. Who do I say gave me the number?'

'I'll tell you my name if you tell me yours.'

'Jessica Cash.'

'Nice to meet you Jessica Cash.'

'Nice to meet you mister stranger.'

'It's Ezio Castellanos.' Jessica's flabbergasted expression from mere moments ago was nothing compared to the shock she was currently experiencing.

'No fucking way.' Jessica stepped closer to the writer. 'You wrote The Forsaken Phantom series, More Than Meets The Eye and Cavolon... Never been seen in public before, never had his picture taken.... Honestly I thought you would be older.'

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Castellanos put his smile on his face once more. 'Thank you for the compliments and trust me I'm old enough, about the not seen in public and no picture taken part, I would very much appreciate it if it remained that way.'

'Nothing to worry about here dude. My lips are sealed, so are my,' - Jessica interrupted herself by a sudden change of utter sadness. 'You can't quit writing. I don't know what's going on with you. But please don't quit. You've no idea what you've given people.'

'Nomis,' Castellanos said bluntly.

Confusion washed on her face. 'What about it?'

'Haven't you read it?'

'I'm so sorry I didn't have the money to buy it yet but I will as soon as I,' -

Castellanos interrupted her. 'No, no. It's fine that wasn't my point at all.'

'Then what was your point?'

'Everyone hated it, I haven't come across a single review that said something positive about the damn novel. I promised myself I would stop writing if people didn't like reading no more,' Castellanos said. His hate was bleeding through his voice. His last work universally hated. What a joke.

'Stop being stupid.'

'I beg your pardon,' Castellanos said.

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‘Why do you hell care what people think?’ Jessica asked. ‘Caring about what other people think of you is simply wasting valuable time that could be spent elsewhere. Who wrote that?’

‘I wrote that,’ Castellanos said. Feeling a sense... It was difficult to explain but his writing had done it for him before. He wrote something ages ago and then they turned out to be the perfect words he needed in a situation. It was uncanny with a hint of the supernatural.

‘I can’t imagine that you’ve forgotten this but was the very first sentence of your first novel?’

‘You should be writing a story for one person and one person only. Yourself.’

A sense of warmth, as if a fire was lit inside of him. The words he wrote, being spoken by a girl who was a complete stranger an hour ago, was that enough for things to go back how they used to be? Or be similar?

‘Hey,’ Jessica said as she took another step closer. Castellanos had not realized he had taken several steps backwards already. Was that a conscious move? No it couldn’t be. ‘You wrote a story you wanted to read, you cannot do any better than that, please don’t beat yourself over it. Who the hell cares what they think?’

Where the hell did this girl sprung from, you could almost say that she was dropped here specifically to talk to Castellanos. It would be something he would do had he written this story himself. His mind wondered away at the question while time played out as it was supposed to play out. ‘Thanks kid,’ Castellanos said sincerely. ‘I mean really it.’

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‘Friends are supposed to make each other feel better. I think that’s like a requirement in the job description.’ The gears inside her head turned, a thought appeared in her mind and Jessica turned red.

‘Something wrong there?’ the writer asked with concern.

‘Not really no,’ she lied. A blind fellow could see that something new was up with the girl. That’s not correct no, I suppose he would hear something was wrong.

‘Come on now, what’s up? You can tell me.’

Jessica was moving her feet around, playing with the ring on her finger, not looking Castellanos in the eyes as she had done previously. In other words she was nervous. ‘So I know you don't like questions about your stories.’

‘And that is exactly where everybody is wrong. I adore questions. What I hate is answers. And you wanna know an answer don't you?’

‘Girl's gotta try.’

‘Try indeed! Otherwise nothing would ever be done. Shoot your shot Jess.’ Castellanos had not realized it yet but a full minute had now passed were he did not think once of what happened before, about the fire...

Jessica’s question could no longer be hold it back, it wanted to get out. And get out it did. ‘Who's The Smoker? I know you said you would never reveal his identity but you cannot just have a guy be vague and mysterious in over 20 novels and not tell anybody who he actually is or what he wants. I promise I won't tell.’

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Castellanos grinned an almost evil grin. No answer would be given that was clear as night. 'Tell me have you played Alan Wake?'

The youngling sparked up at once. 'Only about seven hundred times.'

'What was the very last thing Alan Wake tells you before he introduces himself to you, the player?'

She took a moment to think about that, right before he introduced himself.... Anger found her the second realization found her. 'Hey that's not fair!'

'I thought we had already established that life is not fair little one.'

The anger inside young Jessica increased. It was not downright hate because I might be overplaying it a little, it was like annoyance. Like being stung by a fly. 'Tell me then, what did he tell you?'

'The unanswered mystery is what stays with us the longest and it's what we'll remember in the end,' Jessica answered reluctantly, still very much annoyed that no answer was given, but she was slowly coming to terms with, incredibly slow but it was happening.

'Exactly, I could not have put the words better together myself. Now it's time for bed. Important day for the both of us tomorrow.' Castellanos strolled back to his room. Jessica followed.

The hallway to the room was darker then before, neither Castellanos nor Jessica gave it much thought. Both minds were occupied by other thoughts. Before they knew it they had reached their rooms. A farewell was incoming, always terribly sobby affairs.

'You think you'll be able to sleep okay?' Castellanos asked.

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Jessica let herself rest against the wall. ‘I think I should be the one asking you that question,’ she said.

‘I’ll be fine Jessica. But seriously first impressions are important. Better to get some good rest.’

The girl was shining, mostly her eyes or hell it could have been the trick of the light, there were a lot of those little lanterns on the wall, I wasn’t sure. But something lit up inside of her eyes. ‘I met Ezio Castellanos tonight and he gave me a shot at acting in something that people will actually watch. I will literally not be able to sleep for days. I’ll never be able to thank you enough.’

‘Right back at you kid. I really needed to hear what you said. Even if it were my own words.’

Jessica flashed the writer a smile, hers was genuine. He needed to relearn how to do that. Been too long. You gonna be here tomorrow morning? I would love to pick your brain for a bit more. If that’s alright.’

‘I’ll be here until you’re picked up. Promise.’

‘Pinkie promise?’ for a single moment she was a little girl again, just a single moment however. It could not be longer.

‘Sure thing,’ Castellanos said. The both of them took part in the sacred ritual known as the pinkie promise. This bond could never be broken. It was followed by one of them yawning, then the other followed, not sure which one started but both were very tired at this point. Sleep was awaiting them both. But one last thing needed to be said.

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‘Meeting you tonight was the greatest thing that has happened to me in years, please never forgot that,’ Jessica said.

‘I’ll try not to.’

‘Good night,’ Jessica said while in the process of another yawn, how long had she been awake for? Or perhaps she didn’t sleep all that well the last night could be numerous of things.

‘Night Jess.’ Castellanos watched Jessica enter her room before he stepped inside room thirteen again.

Castellanos locked the door behind him. He found himself standing in the room motionlessly, he grinned like an idiot. His mind once more occupied. ‘I did something right.... It has been ages since I’ve done something like that. I should do more.’ His grin faded away into nothingness. ‘She would have liked her a lot, there is more than meets the eyes with that girl.’ The writer turned around to the typewriter. The page inside of the machine was white. It couldn’t remain that way. It was simply not allowed to remain that way.

His hand reached into his pocket and out came the notebook, he turned the page about Gregory to a blank one. He wrote the following: Jessica Cash, young girl. Most likely 18 or 19. Chatty, seems fun. Spend time in Los Angeles, hoping to get a career in acting going, be famous and everything. Hopes shattered when she ran out of money. Then she met some famous dickhead that gave her a shot. A bit cliché perhaps but could be interesting to explore. Need to know more about her.

Castellanos put his notebook away, dropped himself on the bed, tired, too tired to remove his clothes. He slept in them before it wasn’t a problem. His head turned to the left side of the bed, sadly it was empty, the left side of his bed would forever be empty.

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He stared at the ceiling, not because the ceiling was all that interesting or anything, no he stared at it because he could look at the empty left side of the bed no longer. 'I really wish you were here tonight, with me. but I guess if you were still with me then I would never have come here. It's funny how these things work,' Castellanos said before succumbing to slumber

Chapter Four

*Not everything is quite what it appears to be
at first glance.*

Castellanos found himself in the library once more. He sat right in the middle of it. His attire was different the last time, this was clearly not the same memory. The writer was surrounded by books of all kind, I am not talking about the bookcases mind you. The table at which he was working from was littered with every single one you could imagine. All of them were fiction, because those were the most fun. And yes this included the bible.

The writer was busy taking notes, hard at work but very quiet, it was a library after all. Even though nobody but Castellanos seemed to visit it.

Luna dropped another stack of books on the table seizing all silence from the building at once. This human was possessed different attire as well. numerous famous ones in the pile yet one was the most interesting of the bunch. In fact it was very the first novel young Castellanos read. I believe he was younger then six, but I'm getting ahead of myself here.

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Luna held The Shining before Castellanos' face.

Luna holds it in front of Castellanos.

'Your opinion?' She asked.

Castellanos smiled at seeing the old novel again, it had been too long. The novel is such an interesting story, specifically because it has so much of King in it. I mean the alcoholic writer? Torrance might as well have been called King. And where do I begin with the ending? A broken man after being haunted by actual ghost but worse his past. After the torture he brought on Wendy and Dannay, he still has enough good inside of him. He rejects his complete descent into madness and refuses to die a monster. He instead sacrifices his own life to save his family. It's an incredibly powerful ending. Was he a bad man? Yes I think so but no one is ever truly bad. Jack Torrance died a hero's death.'

Luna was stood impressed with Castellanos' knowledge on the novel. 'Well you clearly know all about that one.' She already turned to the other novels, searching for something else that might be of interest to Castellanos.

'Read it when I was six, was the first thing I ever read.'

'Bullshit,' Luna bluntly said.

'No bullshit here, just the truth. One of my teachers was reading it and while she didn't loan it to be for obvious reasons I got a copy anyway. There is nothing anyone can do against the curiosity of a child, nothing. It would be like fighting the wind.' He continued on with his notes, well I shouldn't say notes. He was in the process of drawing a map, easier to write if you yourself know where things are. Instead of guessing all the time.

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‘What do you think of the movie? Luna asked.

Castellanos first reaction to that question was to dramatically drop his pencil on the table. As he just heard his father had been killed, not that he had a father but it was similar to that.

‘The Shining is a beautifully shot film. With an amazing score. That is where the praise ends. Everything else about is laughable. The film is one of the worst adaptations of a novel ever made. It completely throws the whole message of the novel right down in the toilet. On it’s own it’s a solid piece of horror, perhaps a little boring places. But as an adaptations it’s hollow.’

‘I’m guessing this question has been asked many times.’

‘You guess correct dear I just do not find it to be scary either, but perhaps that is just me,’ the writer said.

‘Old horror doesn’t scare you?’

A small smile. ‘No, no. Quite the contrary, I adore the older horror films. It was just this one in particular that I do not enjoy. Have you ever seen Nosferatu?’

‘Quite a film to pick out, one of the earliest right?’

‘Right indeed! And still so effective, quite terrifying even to this day.’

‘Anyway how is the Forsaken Phantom doing? Anything change since yesterday?’ Luna placed her hand on his shoulder, peeking over it as his notes. It caught Castellanos off guard. It was not that he did not like to be touched. Rather that he had close to no humans touch him. It was a lengthy story which boiled down to the fact that being touched by another human felt alien to him. Yet he did not say a word to Luna. The writer stared at his notes, distracting himself from

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the touch of another human. It worked because he got lost once more in his notes that he forgot to answer the question. 'World to Ezio? Helooo?' Luna asked.

The writer shot conscious to the world around him. 'Sorry about that, no not all that much changed I'm afraid.'

'Not all that much still accounts for something, spit it out.' A deep sigh escaped Castellanos. Things were not looking good for his current work of fiction. Things never look good when writing, yet the drive to continue needs to be found. How hard it is does not actually matter. Nobody cares about the struggle you face, about how though it is to put words on paper, not a single soul will give a shit. All everyone cares about is the end product. The struggle is not important because you will wake up tomorrow and do it all over again.

This was something which Castellanos did not yet understand, he came to learn it in time. A lot of time can pass between a library and a hotel.

'Hey Lun?' her hand left his shoulder. It not being there anymore felt wrong. Something to think about for another time. Luna moved to the side of the table, so they could look each other in the eyes. 'Listen I think you may have been right about me not being cut out for this. I mean it's only been a couple of weeks and I'm already having problems. None of this makes any sense whatsoever.'

'Tell me Ezio. Are you ever too old to fall in love?'

It was something which he never considered thinking about before. Love. What a wonderfully strange phenomenon. 'I don't believe so, no,' Castellanos said. 'But look Luna.... What if I'm no good? I've never done anything like this before. What if it's just something which I am unable to perform correctly? No matter if I want to do it or not.'

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Luna got a villainous grin on her face. Something shocking was about to happen I bet, I certainly hope so. From what seemed to be the void of utter nothingness a book was pulled out. The cover pictured an old horror director wearing a glove with knives. The Man and His Nightmares. ‘Wes Craven was raised as a Baptist. A fucking Baptist. He was not allowed to see a single film in his childhood that wasn’t a Disney one. He taught English until he was thirty! There was no logical sense that a man like that turned out to be one of the greatest horror directors that ever lived.’

Castellanos eyes said it all, they were full of scepticism. Luna dropped the book before his eyes. They were instantly fixated upon it. the cover could simply not be looked away from.

‘It’s heart breaking to know you don’t believe me you know?’

‘There is a possibility that you gave me the novel to convince me of the fact that you are not lying. Which would mean that I would trust your word because of that,’ Castellanos said.

Luna smirked. ‘Please Ezio. I am not close to being that clever.’

A queer sense of déjà vu washed over the writer, had this conversation already happened? It might have he could not recall correctly. It was better to forget and simply respond. ‘You are that clever dear.’

Luna did not respond to the compliment, instead she continued on with the point that she was in the process of making. ‘Did you know he was in his thirty three when he made Last House?’

‘I do now.’

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‘As I said he was a college teacher before all that, this mad lad quit his only job to start his career in filmmaking. He was laughed at by the headmaster when he left. His family basically disowned him after Last House released.’

‘What convinced him to continue?’

Luna laughed. She moved closer towards Castellanos. Took his hand. Again he did not know how to react to this so he proceed to not react. She guided his hand to his heart, placed right on top of it. ‘It was what his heart wanted. And he did not care what anyone thought about him. The man did what he wanted to do and died a legend.’

Castellanos said speechless, wondering how many others had lived lives similar to the horror master. ‘Someone should write his story, film, novel something,’ he said, trying to move on because he knew what she wanted to tell him. Still the writer did not believe.

‘Kindly shut up. You know what I’m trying to tell you here, right?’

‘I believe I do yes. It’s a powerful message.’

‘The only person who can achieve your goals is you. It's gonna be incredibly hard and you will reach moments where you just wanna give everything up. But you can't. Never under any circumstances give up on your dream.’

Castellanos placed his other hand on Luna’s ‘I really needed to hear that. Thank you love.’ Something in her face twitched, something was off...

‘Can I just say that I still find it very weird how you British call everyone love.’

‘Can I just say that I still find it very weird how you American’s use everything except the metric system?’

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Luna stared at the writer. 'Touché, you win this round. Now tell me what it is you're struggling with.' She finally joined the table and sat next to Castellanos.

'I still want the novel to consist of seven short stories. Anthology's if you will. Completely different tales that take on place on wildly different planets.. What I'm struggling with here is that I have trouble making the side characters stand out. I write them to be almost the exact same. How can you show someone is different with such little words?'

Luna's eyes widened. She expected a tough question, just not this one. 'That is a lengthy conversation to have. Lemme just but this pile back and I'll help you.' Luna left the table and grabbed the pile of books.

'Of course. Need any help with those?' Castellanos asked.

'Been doing this job for ages. I'll be fine love,' She said. Funnily she had not even realized what slipped out there at the end. Castellanos did, but he remained quiet on. Quiet on the outside that was. His mind was jumping around the place.

Luna disappeared beyond the endless maze that consisted of the bookshelves. Yet before she had disappeared to far. 'Hey Luna?' the writer asked.

'Yes?' She screamed from somewhere behind the cases.

'Would you like to watch the new Peter Jackson film together?' Castellanos asked. If she said yes it would be the very first time they would spend time outside the library. Asking someone out was not an easy task to perform, people seem to underestimate that. After a small amount of time passed Luna appeared in the flesh again.

'New one? Already? Return of the King just came out, didn't it?'

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‘My thoughts are the same as yours. Apparently this one was filmed long before but there were some troubles with the effects. A secret film if you will. Nobody could ever confirm that it was in fact filmed.’

‘Sounds like a interesting story, even the behind the scenes alone I mean. What’s the title of the movie?’ she asked full to the brim with curiosity.

‘The Dream Lover,’ Castellanos said as mysteriously as he humanly could.

Luna stood still, completely flabbergasted. Had the books she was holding been here own they would have dropped to the floor already. She could not afford to do that with these library books. ‘Peter Jackson's The Dream Lover is coming out in? Hell it was actually filmed?’

‘It was indeed, want to come with?’

‘I would love to come,’ Luna said.

The writer did not realize it at the time but this right here was one of the happiest moments of his entire existence. He would never again feel the way he did here. It could not be topped.

II

Castellanos awoke in room thirteen, Luna was gone. He was alone again, he had always been alone and always will be. Sometimes there were small doses of time where he was not alone, but those would only last for short bursts. His eyes were open, aimed at the ceiling. He was staring at nothing. His mind was doing everything as of now. Trying to come up with

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answers as to why he felt such a crippling loneliness. There was no rational explanation for his feelings. Well one could say that there were but he was not about to discuss those. He did not even want to think about it. Castellanos checked the time, not that it mattered much, he could see it was dark outside and he knew he should sleep. But the mortal man could not sleep. After so many nights of sleeping next to her, how he could be expected to sleep without her next to him?

‘Hello there love,’ Luna said.

Castellanos turned around, the left side on the bed was empty no more. There was Luna Castellanos clear as day, she looked exactly how he remembered her, this was no mind trick because everything about her was the same. The little freckles on her face were all in the exact same spots. She could only have appeared here because his mind brought her here.

‘I wish you were really here dear. I’ve missed you so much.’ Castellanos could not help himself, he shed a tear, which was followed by another tear.

‘I am really here my love,’ she said sounding... The poor woman sounded dead. As if her voice had been rotting the same way human flesh does after time.

Without even realizing the writer moved away from his loved one. ‘You are not real, a mere figment of my imagination, nothing more,’ he said while more tears escaped. Luna raised her hand, closer and closer to the face of the writer. She touched his face. He felt her hand. The warmth that once came with this action was replaced by the cold of the death.

‘Doesn’t this feel real Ezio?’ asked the ghost of Luna?

Castellanos turned horrified. This could simply not be. He moved back as far as he could, then he went farther and dropped out of the bed onto the floor. The writer got up from the floor

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with great haste, his eyes fixated on the left side of the bed. She was gone. Ezio Castellanos just saw a ghost of the past. He was very sure this would not be the last encounter.

‘This is the beginning of your end. Good luck Ezio,’ the voice of Luna said. The ghost appeared next to Castellanos before he could see her she kissed him on the cheek and vanished... For now...

The writer stood in the middle of the room, frozen in place. Until he rushed out.

Castellanos closed the door still not sure about what he saw. He was sure that he saw her again mind you. The poor fellow was simply not sure how she came to appear before him like that. It was not possible yet it happened. ‘Simply insanity? Could that be the case?’ He asked himself. He took several steps away from the door, never letting it out of his sight however. ‘Insanity could be a possibly. But why now? That does not make any sense whatsoever. If I descended into madness would it not make sense to happen very shortly after the tragedy? Instead of several months later? It would. Meaning that insanity could be ruled out for now.’ Castellanos could breath normally once more. He was not insane, not yet that was something good to keep in his mind. Not there were a whole lot of those thoughts. He could use some positive thoughts.

The writer moved one door to the left, or was it the right? Room fourteen was before him. The room which held the one person he could consider a friend. His fist was inches away from the door, ready to knock. But no knock ever came. ‘I barely know the girl. There is no need to unload this on her. She needs to think about tomorrow.’ Castellanos removed his fist from the door. Then it happened. The hairs on his neck stood up right. There was something nearby..

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His face turned to the left, the rest of his body followed. The very end of the hallway. A shady figure standing in the dark, Castellanos could not make out a shape, all he could see was a mere glimpse of something which could not be considered human, or mortal.

Another happy moment for the writer. This may sound queer so let me explain. Just pulling your leg here. Something which could not be explained? There was nothing more fun on the world then that.

‘The young and handsome writer caught a glimpse of something which his eyes could not describe. It was a figure of pure darkness. Something which could not be classified as human. The writer was curious and stupid, he had not choice but to follow the creature down the corridor. A new tale lied behind the corner. Were would it bring him? The writer asked himself.’

Then from the right side: A loud scream, it was ear shattering. Clearly female but... but it sounded wrong? Could a voice sound wrong? Yes it could. This voice was trying to imitate a human’s voice. Or was it? Who knew. Castellanos knew that something was wrong, yet he wanted to explore it. He wanted to explore everything. Before he could go ahead and run down the corridor a door opened up. Room fourteen. Jessica got out of the room in a state of panic. Bumped right into Castellanos. Both share a look. ‘You heard that scream as well I presume?’

‘Screaming? Yeah of course I heard it.’

‘We better get a move on it then, she might be injured, in pain.’ Castellanos already started to walk in the direction the scream came from. He was stopped by Jessica, she had taken hold his arm. The writer looked at his friend, confused.

‘Dude? I heard a man screaming,’ Jessica said, less panic in her, it had been replaced with utter confusion. This sentence was followed by solid silence.

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The joy of exploring the unknown faded away from him, seriousness took its place. ‘You heard a man screaming?’

‘Yeah a dude. You're sure you heard a woman?’

‘Very positive, you?’ Jessica nodded, silence followed once again. Both mortals turned to the direction of the scream. Neither of them could explain it but the hallway was staring back.

‘You want to investigate it don't you?’ Jessica asked.

‘I have no choice but to investigate, man, woman, whatever I cannot leave an injured person alone. You however are going back to your room I shall see this alone,’ Castellanos said, having declared himself the leader of this fellowship. Or he was just trying to protect someone he cared about.

Her reaction was... Well it was her reaction. ‘What?! No. Fuck that, fucking no. I'm not a kid! I'm an adult, same as you!. We are going to investigate the strange noise in the dark together. Safety in numbers.’

Castellanos stood before his friend, her stubbornness was strangely inspiring. She knew what she wanted. That was more than could be said for most of the human population.

‘Your mind seems set.’

‘It never been more set,’ Jessica said.

‘Well then, a scream in dark, follow me.’

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Every single hallway in this hotel of utter weirdness appeared to be identical in appearance. One could get lost easily, for some it might be more difficult to navigate than a actual hedge maze. Not important, I apologize for getting off track. Castellanos walked front, Jessica a bit behind. Every door in this hallway was closed, the source of the scream was unknown. How would they possibly know which room to pick?

Castellanos wanted to comment on not being sure how to proceed. Then he saw it, a door that was not fully open and not fully closed either. A small bit of light bled out in the hallway. It was room sixty six. The writer stopped first, Jessica followed.

‘Should we go in?’ she asked.

‘No.’

Castellanos pushed the door open and stepped inside. Again Jessica followed him. Unbeknownst to both of them the same shady figure in the dark was moving around. There are no new details that will be provided about the creature. We’ll run into it again later.

Room sixty six was nothing like room thirteen, or fourteen for that matter. The room appeared to be moulded after hotel rooms you would find in the seventies. The wallpaper was dreadful and it was best we left it at that. The sheets and curtains were even worse and the carpet would make any sane person vomit at the first sight of it. Then there was the television set, it was playing a film from the twenties. Relatively unknown film nobody ever heard about before. Nosferatu, sadly there was no sound coming from the television. Proper shame that was.

The death body lay in the middle of the room, in a pool of it’s own dried up blood.

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Castellanos and Jessica were both too stunned to speak, yet both were smart enough not to yell like so many others did before them. Yelling would as we all know make a death body no longer death. The writer moved in closer. Not that he had any idea how to proceed with a death body, but he was the sole adult in the room. Was this a murder or a suicide? Hell was he even qualified to tell? Of course not. Better to get started.

He crouched before the body. The left wrist was slid to what seemed like bone, the other right wrist was untouched, the right hand however held the murder weapon. A knife. And then there was what lay on top of the body. A tape recorder, bloody fingerprints were all over it. He took it. Before he joined Jessica's side once more he closed the poor sod's eyelids.

'I think it would be for the best if we were to call the police Jessica.'

Jessica was unable to break her stare at the death body. She had never seen one of those before. First time for everything. Dealing with death bodies in particular was though. Physically there is nothing different, everything that once was there is still very much there. Only the death part. Most of humanity is greatly bothered by the inconvenience of it, while a small percentage could not care less. If they're still alive then everything is well.

'Jessica are you alright?' Castellanos moved in front of her, might as well not have done that since it changed nothing. She still stared in the same direction as before. Until she finally snapped out of it.

'Sorry about that sometimes I just freeze when seeing things I shouldn't. I'm sorry I'll call the police.' Before Castellanos could respond to that comment she was already calling nine-one-one. Jess' phone was flip phone, not that it had any significance to the story at hand. There was no one on answering her call. 'I've got no signal,' she said defeated.

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Best head for the lobby, ask Gregory for a landline.'

Jessica did not move a muscle. 'I'm not going alone with a killer out there.'

Castellanos had forgotten to tell her, of course he had. 'Smart move. But the this was no murder, rather a suicide.' He looked at the man, wondering what his story was. 'Poor fellow, no one should have to go out like that.' Castellanos put the tape recorder in his pocket, best not to hang around here.

They left room sixty six and naturally the party of two were back in the hallway that was were the normal sticks seemed to end. The lanterns on the wall began to flicker, the speed of said flickering increasing by the second. Footsteps were heard, neither Castellanos nor Jessica was walking, someone else was coming. How could they possible explain this? Best not to. Castellanos put his finger on his lips, she nodded to him and pointed at the room, Castellanos nods in response. Both head back into the room they just came from, both remaining as quiet as they humanly can.

The footsteps come closer, Castellanos moves the door, not fully closing it, he looks through the peephole.

You look through the peephole. The footsteps come closer and closer and closer.

The footsteps stop. Someone stands before the door of room 66.

It's Greg. He stops before room 66, turns only his head to the open door.

GREG

Is there anybody there? Hello you left you door open!

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Castellanos opens the door. Greg looks surprised.

CASTELLANOS

How many people are currently in this hotel?

GREG (CONFUSED)

That's not your room.

CASTELLANOS

Answer the question.

GREG

Why should I?

Jessica appears behind Castellanos.

JESSICA

Because you now got one guest less.

She opens the door further, revealing the death body. Shock bleeds over Greg's face.

CASTELLANOS

I'll ask again, how many people are in this hotel?

Jessica crouches down next to the body.

GREG

I need to check the sign in sheet for that but I saw some of them at the bar.

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JESSICA (O.S.)

We got another problem.

Both guys turn to Jessica, she's holding a CIA badge.

The name on the badge is: GORDON COOPER.

CASTELLANOS

That does complicate things.

JESSICA

What's the plan?

CASTELLANOS

Lobby.

21 - INT. LOBBY - NIGHT.

Castellanos, Jessica and Greg stand in front of the bar. Before them are the rest of the guest. Greg is holding the sign in sheet.

DEAN FLETCHER (67) White hair, Texan. Veteran. Tired, hate in his eyes. Doesn't have his left arm. Army tattoo on his right hand.

SIDNEY WILLIAMS (36) Blond. Business suit. No-nonsense type, emotionless. Smoking a cigarette. No desire to be here.

MATTHEW BARKER (43) Every man. British, simply boring clothes and overall look. He's bored. Cannot sit still, ever. Always moving a bit.

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DEAN

All of us here, sitting in a fucking circle. Now would you kindly tell me what was so goddamn important that you needed to drag me out of my room for in the middle of the night?

MATTHEW

Calm down old timer, I'm sure these nice folk have a perfectly good explanation for why they did what they did. They certainly look the part.

SIDNEY

Could you both just shut up so we can get this over with already?

Matthew mimes to lock his lips and throws the key away.

CASTELLANOS

Well then. I really don't know how to say this...

DEAN

Don't make me get up and get that look of your face you look like you've seen a dead body.

SIDNEY

Or a ghost.

MATTHEW

Or a rabbit fucking a donkey while riding a unicorn.

Matthew is the only that laughs at his joke, the rest is just confused.

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MATTHEW

What? Ghost, dead body. All such serious and boring answers. Now a rabbit fucking a donkey while riding a unicorn that's something you don't see everyday.

CASTELLANOS

If you could focus.

MATTHEW

Don't mind me here.

DEAN

Exactly, don't mind the joker there. Tell us what traumatized you three.

Greg and Jessica are waiting for Castellanos to speak.

CASTELLANOS

A dead body.

Silence.

MATTHEW

You're fucking with us here aren't you? Yeah you're just fucking with us here.

GREG

We are not fucking with you here. I saw the body. I saw the blood.

MATTHEW

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Hmmm... Six strangers in a hotel, dead body. Isn't there a brilliant detective that's supposed to jump out of the crowd and solve this mystery?

JESSICA

He's lying in room 66 with his wrist slid. CIA if you're curious.

MATTHEW (SERIOUS)

Oh I see. How unfortunate.

SIDNEY

So?! What the hell are you people waiting on? Call the police!

GREG

The police can't reach us here.

SIDNEY

Why the fuck not?

CASTELLANOS

Yeah Greg, why not?

GREG

The snowstorm of course.

Heads turn to the nearest window. The snow is already covering a third of the window and not stopping.

Castellanos moves closer and inspects.

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CASTELLANOS

This isn't possible.

He turns back to the guests.

CASTELLANOS

I was on the road just a couple of hours ago, snow does not drop out of the sky with that much speed.

GREG

I dunno what to tell you man, Cali winters are a bitch.

CASTELLANOS (EXTREMELY CONFUSED)

What? California winters are not extreme in the slightest.

JESSICA

Sure, they are. Why else do you think everyone's spending the summers in Alaska? They like the sun and the beach.

CASTELLANOS

None of you are making any sense here.

Dean rises from his chair.

DEAN

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Alright, alright! Enough talk about the fucking weather here. There is a dead CIA agent in this hotel! Now I'm going to go out on a limb here and say he didn't trip and fall onto the knife?

Everyone agrees.

SIDNEY

We are not talking about this, we need to call the authorizes!

DEAN

Lady are you crazy?! No man is making it through that cold!

CASTELLANOS

He's right, we're on our own here.

Jessica turns worried.

DEAN

Exactly! Just us against the murderer. We need to band together and find him.

GREG

What if the murderer is in this room? What if the murderer is one of us?

Silence.

CASTELLANOS

Let's not go there, not now at least.

MATTHEW

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Excuse me but where exactly are we going then? I mean everyone that's signed in is in this room here.

CASTELLANOS

If we turn on each other then everything will fall apart.

MATTHEW

So we are just supposed to trust each other?

SIDNEY

I don't trust anyone. You don't make it far in live if you are stupid enough to trust people.

DEAN

Stick up her ass lady is right, we cannot trust anyone.

CASTELLANOS

Everybody shut up here. Nobody is saying we should trust each other. We just gotta work together.

Jessica slowly backs up in a corner.

She reaches into her pocket and pulls out the tape recorder.

DEAN

What you got there little girl?

JESSICA

I'm not a little girl you old bastard.

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Matthew laughs his ass off.

DEAN

Millennials. No fucking manners anymore.

CASTELLANOS

All of you shut up. Jess, where did you get tape recorder from?

JESSICA

It was in his hand, the dead guy's hand. Cooper or something.

SIDNEY

CIA agent called Cooper? What's next? Coffee and cherry pie?

MATTHEW

Cooper was a FBI agent in the show.

SIDNEY

FBI, CIA all the same.

DEAN

Please stop talking.

CASTELLANOS

All of you who got nothing useful to say kindly shut the fuck up.

Everyone turns silent.

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CASTELLANOS

Now Jess, come hear and play the tape. Everyone come closer.

Everyone forms into a circle, expect Matthew.

CASTELLANOS

You aren't going to listen to this man's last words?

MATTHEW

I'm good thank you.

CASTELLANOS

You don't want to know why he cut his own wrists?

MATTHEW

I'm sure the chap had a good reason for doing what he did. I am simply not bothered by dead. It comes for us all.

JESSICA

Don't respond to him, British.

Castellanos focuses on the tape, Matthew gets out a paperback and starts reading: The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy.

Jessica plays the tape.

22 - INT. ROOM 66 - NIGHT.

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Room 66 is back to looking like a room of the 20's. Gordon Cooper sits on the bed, holding the tape recorder.

GORDON

There is something in this hotel is that is made of pure darkness. In the time that I've been here I have come no closer to learning what it is, or what it wants from us. It will kill you with a single touch, that much I know for certain.

Gordon's eyes waver to the door, the light from under the door gets blocked. The darkness is waiting for him.

GORDON

The Darkness in itself is not fast, outrunning it should be no problem in the first few days. But it will never stop following you. Never.

Gordon's grows more scared the more he looks at the door.

GORDON

Now I do have some good news for you. The Darkness cannot enter any rooms when the door is closed, locked is not necessary. You can use the rooms to hide for as long as you want. But food and water run out fast.

Pause, Gordon wipes his forehead free of sweat.

GORDON

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Once everybody alive has entered and left a room it will lock down for good. No soul will be able to enter it again. I also believe the room move around, that nothing stays the same. But I am not sure on it.

Gordon pulls out his knife, puts it next to him on the bed. He looks at it in silence, then resumes.

GORDON

Every single one of you has a specific room in this hotel. Finding and entering your room is the only way to survive this hotel, sadly not everyone survives there own room. The screaming.....

Gordon looks at the knife again, this time with more fear.

GORDON

Now if a room is not yours it will look normal to you. Well relatively normal. What happens if you find your room and survive it is something which I do not know. I will not enter my room. I refuse. I refuse to go back to that night.

GORDON

The last rule. Do not under any circumstances try to break out of the hotel using physical force, the hotel will break you if you try.

23 - INT. LOBBY - NIGHT.

Everyone still stands the same way. Matthew still sits.

GORDON (O.S.)

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If any of you find your way out, would you kindly tell my wife Claire that I love her very much. Her number is: 555-2368.

The tape ends. Silence follows.

DEAN

That's got to be the biggest load of bullshit I've ever seen.

CASTELLANOS

The man killed himself because of this entity.

DEAN

So?

JESSICA

So?

DEAN

For all we know he might have been mentally ill.

GREG

Gramps, you don't know that. None of us knows that.

DEAN

I know what's real. People are real. People killing other people because one country wants to show they have the biggest dick. That is real. No such thing as monsters or ghosts.

CASTELLANOS

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I saw something in the corridors. In the corner of my eye for a brief second it was there.

SIDNEY

Why didn't you follow it?

CASTELLANOS

I was a little distracted by a dead body.

JESSICA

I've never seen eyes like that, eyes without life.

CASTELLANOS

Hey it's okay Jess, you're okay.

Castellanos comforts Jess.

SIDNEY

Well then what did you see then?

CASTELLANOS

Darkness.

DEAN

Horse crap.

GREG

Gramps you don't know everything!

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DEAN

Stop calling me gramps kid.

GREG

I'll stop calling you gramps when you start aging younger.

Silence.

GREG

That's what I thought.

MATTHEW

Oh would all of you take it down a notch. A man killed himself. That is all we know for certain. That is the one fact.

CASTELLANOS

But what if he was right about it?

JESSICA

Right about The Darkness?

MATTHEW

Well I guess he was right then. And I guess we all die then.

SIDNEY

You must be fun at parties.

MATTHEW

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Since it's my job, yes I am funny at parties. Matthew Barker stand up comedian.

He extends his hand out, then takes it back.

CASTELLANOS

We should all know each others names.

DEAN

There is no need because nothing is happening here.

JESSICA

You don't know if nothing is happening, you don't know anything.

DEAN

Do you see something happening? NO. Because nothing is happening.

CASTELLANOS

Old cynical bastard, kindly shut the fuck up and let me take charge here or else we all die.

Silence.

CASTELLANOS

We might all die in this seemingly supernatural hotel, or we might not. Better safe then
sorry right?

Pause.

CASTELLANOS

Right. I thought so. Now listen to me.

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DEAN

Why should we listen to you?

SIDNEY

I'm with the old guy here, why you?

CASTELLANOS

Quite simple really. Process of elimination. Jessica and Greg are far too young to lead this bunch of emotional folks. British bloke doesn't care about his own life so why should he care about us? Old fella here is too cynical for his own good. Nobody wants a hopeless leader. And you milady..... I haven't pinned you just yet. Do you wanna lead?

Jessica is amazed by Castellanos sudden overcome of joy. The rest is just speechless.

SIDNEY

Not particularly no.

CASTELLANOS

Splendid. And do not worry. I shall come back to you later.

Castellanos turns to Greg.

CASTELLANOS

Are you sure this is everyone? 100% sure?

GREG

Yeah I'm sure, all the guests that checked in are here.

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JESSICA

Well what about the other staff?

CASTELLANOS

Good point about the staff. What about the staff, where are they Greg?

GREG

They're not anywhere. I'm the only staff. Only been on the job since yesterday.

CASTELLANOS

Odd. Curious, unlikely. Might be important even.

GREG

Important?

CASTELLANOS

Of course, everything and everyone is important in some way to something. Unless you're a beach. I hate beaches, so boring.

Castellanos grabs the sign in sheet out of Greg's hand, looks at it.

CASTELLANOS

Now then Gordon Cooper is sadly no longer with us. Dean Fletcher?!

Castellanos looks around.

DEAN

That's me. You don't need to shout.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

Well I don't know you are old you might be deaf in one ear from the same grenade explosion that also took your arm.

DEAN

How the hell did you know a grenade took my arm?

CASTELLANOS

Just a guess really, but it does make me seem awfully clever doesn't it?

JESSICA

Kinda.

CASTELLANOS

Thank you Jessica. Everyone this is Jessica, third one on the list.

She waves hi.

CASTELLANOS

Since he's staff he isn't on the list but this is Gregory Harris everyone.

GREG

Just Greg is fine.

CASTELLANOS

What's the point of having a name if you take bits off it? I'm sounds incredibly hypercritical I have been calling Jessica, Jess all day. It may possible by because shorter names

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are easier to shout in crisis. Romanadvoratrelundar for example is not particular easy to shout in a crisis.

Sidney's eyes widen.

CASTELLANOS

I take my point on shorter names back Greg. My apologizes.

Castellanos resumes on the sign in sheet.

But suddenly Sidney steps forward, closer to Castellanos.

SIDNEY

You know Romana?

CASTELLANOS

Of course I do, one of my favourite companions the show ever had, shame she hasn't returned yet, but her a..

SIDNEY (INTERRUPTING)

Audio stuff is quite great.

Castellanos smiles. The rest are clueless.

CASTELLANOS

Yes indeed it is Sidney Williams.

SIDNEY

Sid is just fine.

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CASTELLANOS

Of course Sid. Talk more later?

SIDNEY (VERY EAGER.

Yes.

Castellanos gives her smile and moves on.

CASTELLANOS

Now lastly on the list, Matthew Barker. A complete shot in the dark but I presume the name belongs to the English man who doesn't seem to care about dead.

MATTHEW

You guess correct.

Short pause.

MATTHEW

Wait who the hell put you in charge?

CASTELLANOS

We went over this a little under two minutes ago but you weren't paying attention then.

Matthew stands up, puts the paperback away.

MATTHEW

Well I'm paying attention now.

Sidney in the background completely zones out and holds the same pose.

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CASTELLANOS

Well now is to late I'm afraid.

MATTHEW

Well I don't believe that to be case.

Matthew steps over to Castellanos.

MATTHEW

You know who we are but we don't know you. Care to introduce yourself mystery man?

CASTELLANOS

Castellanos.

MATTHEW

Castellanos what?

CASTELLANOS

Just Castellanos.

MATTHEW

Profession?

CASTELLANOS

Writer.

MATTHEW

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Oh a writer, lovely. You write anything good?

CASTELLANOS

Well that depends on who you ask, opinions differ.

MATTHEW

Well I'm asking you here.

CASTELLANOS

Then yes.

MATTHEW

Wonderful, now this Darkness entity the CIA agent spoke of. If it's true. Where is it?

The start to lights flicker. Speed will increase.

MATTHEW

Bloody hell.

CASTELLANOS

Everyone we need to move into the nearest room right now.

DEAN

Then what?

CASTELLANOS

We can worry about the library on fire after everybody is out of the library okay!? Get moving!

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Jessica turns sad towards Castellanos by the mere mention of the word library.

Dean, Matthew, Greg rush away.

Sidney remains frozen.

CASTELLANOS

Sid are you okay? We need to leave now?

Jessica walks up to her and touches her shoulder. By the mere touch she jolts awake in fear and jumps away.

SIDNEY

Don't touch me. Please never touch me again.

Sidney rushes off.

Castellanos and Jessica give each other an acknowledged nod. Then they rush out of there as well.

24 - INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT.

Castellanos and Jessica are now walking in front. They look back and see the rest.

Fear is everyone's eyes.

Castellanos goes for the first door he sees.

Jessica stops him.

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JESSICA

What if this is someone's room?

CASTELLANOS

The next room might be someone's room, or the one after that, we don't know.

The lights in the hallway start to flicker.

DEAN

Stop arguing and open that door!

Castellanos and Jessica stare at one another.

JESSICA

Let's go.

Castellanos opens the door, everyone gets inside. He doesn't. Not right away.

He stares at you. He stares into the heart of The Darkness. Castellanos turns terrified.

Then he rushes inside and closes the door.

The Darkness moves past the door. You can't see any details.

BLACK SCREEN.

Text on screen.

CHAPTER THREE

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Everyone acquainted then?

25 - INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT.

Castellanos is back behind the usual table. Luna is putting some books back on their shelves.

There are multiple piles of books on the table.

CASTELLANOS

So I've been doing some background work on him.

LUNA

Ronin?

CASTELLANOS

No the side character I told you about.

LUNA

Ah but of course. The Smoker. The mysterious stranger that appears everywhere. Tell me about him.

CASTELLANOS

Well I've figured out who he is.

LUNA

And you aren't going to tell me, are you?

CASTELLANOS

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Would you do otherwise?

LUNA

I would not. But listen. You need to know everything about him, that way you can slowly tease about him. Because if you don't your continuity won't match up, details that contradict each other. Character's like these only work if you plan them out.

CASTELLANOS

Planning doesn't go all that well with a Pantzer.

LUNA

I know. But if you don't plan him out, your readers will be disappointed at the eventual reveal. People have already been disappointed by so many lame reveals, don't add your story to that pile of shit.

CASTELLANOS

I won't. Well I'll try my best not to.

LUNA

And what do you need to do to accomplish that?

Castellanos takes a deep sigh.

CASTELLANOS

Make an outline for him.

LUNA

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Good. Now give me a second to put these books away.

CASTELLANOS

Of course, work first.

Luna takes another pile of books from the table and moves away.

Castellanos turns his attention to Aurora who has been sitting at the same table the entire them.

He smiles at Aurora.

CASTELLANOS

How are you doing Dawn? Still together with the wicked stepmother who forces people to use an outline?

Aurora doesn't react.

LUNA (O.S.)

I heard that!

Castellanos turns to Luna's direction.

CASTELLANOS

Just kidding!

Castellanos turn back to Aurora. He shakes his head no at her.

Luna comes back in no time.

LUNA

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What are you doing?

CASTELLANOS

Nothing at all.

LUNA

It seems to me you were telling Aurora that you weren't kidding.

CASTELLANOS

Tell me dear why did you and your previous boyfriend break up?

Luna is caught off guard. She takes a small step back.

LUNA

That is a story that is going to take a lot of time to tell.

CASTELLANOS

You're in luck then that time is all I've got. Sit down tell me about it.

LUNA

You're really interested?

CASTELLANOS

Knowing the mistakes that fool made which resulted with you and him splitting? I don't see how that would be off use to me.

LUNA

Don't get ahead of yourself.

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CASTELLANOS

Tell me the story and I won't.

LUNA

It's actually not such a long story.

Luna sits down at the table.

LUNA

I just felt like I was more of a mother to him then a girlfriend. Always coming to me with problems. Always needing to listen to his shit. I know that's basically all there is to a relationship. But it goes both ways. I never felt I could really tell him something. Even when I did he never listened. It was all him. His problems.

You look back at Castellanos and seems he's writing it all down in his notebook.

LUNA

Are you writing this down?

CASTELLANOS

I believe everything that is useful for the future should be written down.

LUNA

What else have you written down about me?

CASTELLANOS

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Everything you've ever told me is written down. My memory isn't the greatest there is but if you trusted me enough to tell me something I should be able to recall it.

LUNA

You don't need to do that you know. I'm sure half of the stuff I tell you is not worth being remembered.

CASTELLANOS

Agree to disagree it is then.

LUNA

That's sweet. Now how about you?

CASTELLANOS

What about me?

LUNA

Previous relationships? Anything you wanna tell me?

CASTELLANOS

Haven't had a single relationship longer then three months. And every single one ends the same.

LUNA

Why is that?

CASTELLANOS

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There wasn't a single thing wrong with the woman I previously dated. Smart, funny, lovely to talk to. But they all missed one thing.

Castellanos turns uneasy.

LUNA

You don't have to tell me if you don't want to.

CASTELLANOS

I want to.

Luna takes his hand.

CASTELLANOS

I never loved any of them.

Luna's taken back by this.

LUNA

You've never been in love?

CASTELLANOS

Don't get me wrong, I've liked plenty. It's just no. I suppose I haven't love before.

LUNA

You don't, don't believe in it right? You told you believed.

CASTELLANOS

Oh I believe in love yes, just hasn't happened for me I suppose.

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Luna opens, her mouth ready to say something. Then her eyes catch a clock.

LUNA

Shit fuck.

CASTELLANOS

Pardon me?

LUNA

No, no. Sorry I was supposed to be home already. It's so easy to lose track of time. Can we pick this conversation up tomorrow?

CASTELLANOS

Of course. There is no rush.

LUNA (SMILING)

Thanks.

26 - EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT.

From the outside the library looks like something you would find in Gotham City. Centuries old, Gothic architecture and towering over every other building.

Castellanos and Luna step outside. Both in long winter coats.

CASTELLANOS

Are you positive?

LUNA

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It's just a little walk to the train station.

CASTELLANOS

Driving through this city in the night by car is not the same as walking through it. It's dangerous.

LUNA

I'll be perfectly fine Ezio.

CASTELLANOS

Again are you sure? It's no trouble for me.

LUNA

Walking to the other side of the city is no trouble for you?

CASTELLANOS

Not if it concerns you.

LUNA

I really, really appreciate it but it's just a 30 minute walk to the station. I'll be just fine.

CASTELLANOS

Famous last words.

LUNA

Truly I'll be fine.

CASTELLANOS

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Well then. Your mind seems to be set.

LUNA

It is.

CASTELLANOS

I will see you tomorrow then.

LUNA

See you tomorrow then.

They share one last smile and turn in opposite directions to walk away.

Castellanos turns back.

CASTELLANOS

Wait.

Luna stops, Castellanos moves in front of her.

He gets out a piece of paper and writes his number down.

CASTELLANOS

Call me when your home safe.

Luna takes the paper.

LUNA

I will okay?

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Castellanos smiles.

CASTELLANOS

Fantastic. I will await your call.

With that Castellanos leaves. You stay on Luna. She gazes at the paper for a couple of seconds before putting it away and moving to the train station.

27 - EXT. STREET - NIGHT.

Luna is the sole human on the streets, still walking to the train station. Nothing else is happening.

You follow her, but never get to close.

Music starts to play. But the music you hear does not ease your mind. It's the distorted sound of a lighthouse horn.

With every step Luna takes the volume increases until it becomes deafening for your ears.

Luna suddenly stops, the music suddenly stops. You stop.

She looks up.

Sign that says: CLEARAN FALLS STATION 0.5 KM.

She continues and the music resumes. Slowly building again in volume.

You suddenly hear the string of a violin. Before Luna stands a shady looking guy in a trench coat and a fedora.

Luna sees him, he sees her. They both move.

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The volume increases again, only for it to completely die down as she gets close to the stranger before. Her breathing slows down as well.

Time slows down, she looks at his face and sees nothing but darkness.

The stranger doesn't look at her continuous his walk.

She makes it to the end of the street save and sound.

Sound is returned to you as Luna stops and starts to breath normally again.

She looks at the stranger leaving. He's no threat.

Then she turns around and sees Castellanos standing behind her.

Luna jumps back in fear.

LUNA

Jesus Christ. You sure know how to scare the life out of somebody.

CASTELLANOS

Please forgive me. It wasn't my intention to startle you.

LUNA

It's fine Ezio.

CASTELLANOS

Are you positive you are alright?

LUNA

I am.

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CASTELLANOS

Splendid.

LUNA

Did want to ask me something or do just like scaring people in the dark?

CASTELLANOS

Yes.

LUNA

Yes to the first option or the second?

CASTELLANOS

Yes.

Luna laughs.

LUNA

What am I gonna do with you?

CASTELLANOS

Join me for dinner?

Luna turns flabbergasted.

LUNA

I'm supposed to be getting home to Aurora, sitter has already gone home.

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CASTELLANOS

Whenever is most convenient for you will work for me.

LUNA

Tomorrow night?

CASTELLANOS

Tomorrow night will be perfect.

LUNA

I'll see you tomorrow then, but I really need to get home right now.

Luna turns back to the station, ready to leave.

But Castellanos takes her hand, pulls her hand and kisses her. Luna kisses him back.

28 - INT. ROOM 7 - NIGHT.

Room is an exact copy of Castellanos' room, except there are two beds instead of one, also two chairs.

Everyone stares at the door. The Darkness is behind it, no light coming from below the door.

You hear Heavy Breathing but it doesn't even sound close to a human.

The breathing dies down, light under the door comes back. Everyone else breathes for the first time.

Matthew takes seat in the back and continuous reading.

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Castellanos turns to Dean.

CASTELLANOS

You still think nothing supernatural is going on?

DEAN

Could still be another human being.

JESSICA

Are you fucking kidding me Fletcher?!

SIDNEY

Whatever it was outside it wasn't human.

DEAN

What is it with you people. Lights start to flicker, some weird noises. It can be scary yes,
but that doesn't mean ghost suddenly exist.

CASTELLANOS

We were chased by darkness itself.

DEAN

No we weren't. Probably just some guys having a laugh.

GREG

Go out there then.

DEAN

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What?

GREG

If you seriously think that nothing mystical is happening, step outside and wait.

JESSICA

Yeah Fletcher, why don't you go outside and prove us wrong.

CASTELLANOS

NO!

Everyone's taken back by that, expect Matthew.

CASTELLANOS

We're not doing any of that. We will not turn on each other, because each other is all we got. All of us are staying in this room together.

DEAN

And how long will that be?

CASTELLANOS

Until I've thought off something clever that gets everyone out.

SIDNEY

I've got a meeting to catch tomorrow.

CASTELLANOS

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Consider it cancelled, all that we'll be focusing on is survival. Everything else is secondary.

SIDNEY

You don't understand the importance of this meeting.

CASTELLANOS

I probably don't no. But I take it your business meeting is less important then your life?

SIDNEY

My dad is going to kill me for missing the meeting.

CASTELLANOS

Well he can do that after I've made sure you survive this hotel.

Sidney leaves the group, sits on the bed.

JESSICA

So what are you going to do?

CASTELLANOS

Something clever and unexpected hopefully. Still have the tape recorder?

Jessica hands it to him.

JESSICA

Going to write the rules?

CASTELLANOS

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Yeah, we can't forget these.

DEAN

Those rules are just a bunch of horseshit. That fella was delusional.

CASTELLANOS

I value your opinion, but I am not going to do anything with it Dean.

GREG

Anything I can do?

CASTELLANOS

Not really no. I think all that everyone can do is just get comfortable for the time being.

JESSICA

We won't last long without food or water.

CASTELLANOS

We'll last long without food, does the tap in the bathroom still work?

Greg goes to the bathroom to check, he shuts the door.

DEAN

Why shouldn't?

CASTELLANOS

I don't Dean, because maybe whatever stalking it has turned it off. I don't know. I don't know anything about this works.

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GREG (O.S.)

Water still works!

CASTELLANOS

Well good, we have time to think that's good.

JESSICA

Food may become a problem.

DEAN

People can survive without food for a month, I know.

JESSICA

It's not that they can't. Morale is going to plumed after two or three days of no food. I don't know who, but someone will leave to search for food.

DEAN

Can't disagree with that.

CASTELLANOS

Agreed, we might need to step out for a supply run. But not now.

JESSICA

So we're staying in this room then? Only two beds, double sized but still.

DEAN

We can sleep in shifts, not ideal, but doable.

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CASTELLANOS

So you believe in The Darkness.

DEAN

No, I still don't. But I do know that something is out there. And if it had wanted to come inside it could have so already. So I know we are safe here. I just can't believe anything without proof.

CASTELLANOS

Fair enough, I can respect that.

JESSICA

So who sleeps first?

Greg joins the conversation again.

GREG

What are we talking about?

CASTELLANOS

Sleep schedule.

GREG

Ah smart, and good thing we ended up in a room with two beds. Think there are only like three of those in the hotel.

CASTELLANOS

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Luck? Or fate?

JESSICA

Interesting.

DEAN

Don't. Just don't.

JESSICA

Very well cranky. You get first sleep.

DEAN

Fine by me.

Dean heads off to bed.

JESSICA

You want sleep to?

GREG

I really, really do.

CASTELLANOS

Go at it Greg, not like I can stay awake with all this anyway.

Castellanos turns to Jessica.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

How about you? Ready for sleep?

JESSICA

I seem to have the same problem as you unfortunately.

He gives her a smile and steps over to Sidney and Matthew.

CASTELLANOS

You two, time to sleep.

SIDNEY

Fine.

CASTELLANOS

Matt you to.

MATTHEW

I'm kinda busy here.

CASTELLANOS

You sure you don't want the bed Jess?

JESSICA

I mean I can try to get some shuteye.

CASTELLANOS

Nothing would have been achieved if nobody tried.

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All four get into bed, Castellanos turns the main light off. Only lets the desk light shine as he joins Matt at the desk.

He gets out his notebook and writes down:

THE UNDYING CRAVEN.

Everything we currently know.

He writes page 1 on the top right corner. You look at it closer.

MATCH CUT:

29 - INT. ROOM 7 - LATER.

The number 1 has changed to 20.

Nothing has changed. Same four asleep. Matt and Castellanos sitting at the desk together.

Matthew can't seem to sit still.

He closes his notebook. There is a sadness on his face that wasn't there before.

MATTHEW

What's gotten into you all of a sudden?

He's still reading the novel, not looking at Castellanos.

CASTELLANOS

You care?

MATTHEW

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Not particularly no, but you writer. looking sad with all this inspiration around you is odd.

CASTELLANOS

It's nothing.

MATTHEW

It's not nothing, I can see nothing. What's going on with your face isn't nothing.

CASTELLANOS

I just wish she was here with me, she would have loved to see a place like this.

Matthew glances off his book, spots the wedding ring on Castellanos.

MATTHEW

I know I wouldn't wish anyone in this place. Since we're you know, probably all going to die a very violent dead. so this woman must be just as crazy as you.

CASTELLANOS

You could say that. And we're not going to die here.

MATTHEW

You just keep telling yourself that writer.

Silence. Castellanos puts his hand on his notebook, ready to open it.

MATTHEW

She isn't with us anymore is she?

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Matthew has put his book away and is looking Castellanos right in the eye.

Castellanos takes a long time to answer, his face goes dead.

CASTELLANOS

No.

MATTHEW

How long were you two together?

CASTELLANOS

Does it matter?

MATTHEW

No. It doesn't, no.

Long pause.

MATTHEW

I don't know the circumstances or what your faith is. But I can promise you. Wherever she is, it's better than here.

CASTELLANOS

I appreciate what you're trying to do here but don't. She's nowhere because she's dead. And I would like to stop talking about it.

MATTHEW

I understand writer.

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CASTELLANOS

You could start to call me by my name.

MATTHEW

I don't believe in names. I'm also certain we shan't be together long enough for names.

CASTELLANOS

And you're okay with that?

MATTHEW

With what?

CASTELLANOS

Dead?

MATTHEW

I'm perfectly okay with it yes.

CASTELLANOS

How?

MATTHEW

Once gets used to things after a certain amount of time passes. But that's not the issue we should be focusing on here.

Short pause.

MATTHEW

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We heard the same tape. The only way is if we find our rooms.

CASTELLANOS

We shouldn't rush things, we can stay here for a while.

MATTHEW

Then what? Then we have to go on food runs to the kitchen and back and sooner or later that food is going to run out and eventually we're gonna starve.

CASTELLANOS

Not if we come up with something clever.

MATTHEW

Doing and talking are two entirely different things. You should know this writer.

Matthew yawns.

MATTHEW

Think about this, while I take a nap on this lovely chair. But don't take too long. You need some rest as well.

Matthew gets all comfortable on the chair and is asleep in no time.

Castellanos stares at him, then stares at the others in bed.

CASTELLANOS

As if I can sleep while being every writers dream place. I'll sleep if I get out of here.

Castellanos gazes at his notebook.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

He gets two gums out of his pocket puts the wrapping on the desk and throws the gums in his mouth.

The notebook opens by his hand, Castellanos starts writing.

You look back at the gum wrapping.

MATCH CUT TO:

30 - INT. ROOM 7 - LATER.

Sixteen gum wrappers with chewed gum is what you're looking at now.

Castellanos hasn't stopped writing, he's about 20 pages further in his notebook.

Suddenly you find yourself all the way in the back of the room. A dark shape is approaching Castellanos.

No footsteps are heard yet the figure contentions to move at a snail's pace.

Instead of footsteps you hear nothing. There is no sound, it's been taken away from you.

The figure stops inches before Castellanos.

You move back to Castellanos but never get a good look at the shape.

Castellanos doesn't seem to know anybody's behind him. The dark figure doesn't move.

CASTELLANOS

Couldn't sleep either?

The dark figure moves forward, revealing herself to be Sidney.

SIDNEY

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Can you blame me?

CASTELLANOS

Not really no.

Sidney stares at the amount of gum on the table.

SIDNEY

What's with the gum?

CASTELLANOS

I cannot sit still and do nothing. I end biting the skin off my lips. Gum helps with it.

Sidney grabs the empty pack of gums, inspects it.

SIDNEY

This brand is terrible.

CASTELLANOS

I know. But I'm used to it and I don't like change.

SIDNEY

Can definitely relate to that last bit.

Short pause.

SIDNEY

Any luck getting us out of here?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

The rules we have been given were pretty clear.

Sidney turns disappointed.

SIDNEY

Thought you might say that.

CASTELLANOS

Sorry to disappoint, but the only way to leave this place without facing our rooms is death.

SIDNEY

I know what the man on the tape told us. But we can break out the windows, can't we?

The desk lights starts to flicker.

Castellanos and Sidney lock their eyes on the light.

CASTELLANOS

Do you want to risk it?

Sidney turns silent.

CASTELLANOS

Me neither.

The desk light stops flickering.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Sidney moves away from Castellanos and drops herself on the floor, leans against the wall. Not looking any better.

SIDNEY

We're all going to die in this place.

Castellanos closes his notebook, puts the gum in his mouth with the rest on the desk.

He turns towards Sidney.

CASTELLANOS

We might.

Sidney looks up in disbelief.

SIDNEY

What?

CASTELLANOS

We might all die in here.

SIDNEY

When someone tells you something like that you are supposed to tell them that everything is going to be okay.

CASTELLANOS

That would be lying. I don't lie. I promised my wi...

Castellanos stops. He gazes at his wedding ring. Sidney spots this.

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CASTELLANOS

Anyway, no lives are saved by comforting lies. The painful truth is what we need to hear right now.

SIDNEY

Agree to disagree.

CASTELLANOS

No. You should not feel comfortable right now. You should be afraid. This is a very scary place. You should be very afraid. Fear is the one thing that will keep you alive in places like these.

SIDNEY

You are talking like you have stepped foot into places like this before.

CASTELLANOS

I've written about places like this before. Same thing.

SIDNEY

Is it though?

CASTELLANOS (SMILING)

Not really no. It's quite the experience to witness the supernatural for yourself.

SIDNEY

You believe everything here is real?

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The smile fades of his face.

CASTELLANOS

None of you saw what was chasing us.

SIDNEY

You did?

Castellanos nods.

SIDNEY

What did it look like?

Castellanos has the same expression on his face as he did in the hallway. Pure terror.

CASTELLANOS

Like something out of a nightmare.

Silence.

SIDNEY

Are you okay?

Castellanos laughs to himself.

CASTELLANOS

I haven't been okay for a very long time now. But we're gonna talk about me.

Castellanos get off his chair. Sidney reacts incredibly uneasy as he gets close to her.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

He stops at the first sign of her uneasy look, holds his hands before himself.

CASTELLANOS

Don't worry I won't touch you, I promise.

SIDNEY

Thank you.

CASTELLANOS

But I do want to continue talking with you for a bit, is that okay?

SIDNEY

Talking about what?

CASTELLANOS

One of the best TV shows ever created of course.

Sidney raises her eyebrow.

SIDNEY

One of the best?

CASTELLANOS

Lot of good TV out there Sidney.

Castellanos drops down next to her.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

So which one is your favourite? Which incarnation?

She instantly lights up.

SIDNEY

11. I love all of them for different reasons but Eleven is just so.... His joyful and excited manner of life is just so incredible to watch. His darker side is something which I also enjoy but in small doses. I don't like him when he's too dark.

Pause of breath.

SIDNEY

But what about yours?

CASTELLANOS

12. I'm classic. Don't get me wrong love probably all of them but I'm really glad they went back to an old man. He also really sells it.

SIDNEY

12 was amazing as well. I'm really glad he stayed for 7 series.

CASTELLANOS

Yeah imagine if he only stayed for 3 series like the others.

Short pause.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Onto more important questions...

Favourite episode?

Sidney turns uncomfortable.

SIDNEY

Yeah I am probably going to change that one really fast.

CASTELLANOS

How come? What's changed in such a short amount of time?

SIDNEY

Well....

CASTELLANOS

It's okay you can tell me. Or tell me which episode you were thinking of choosing.

SIDNEY

The God Complex.

CASTELLANOS

Oh yes I see. Creepy hotel. Strange beast chasing everyone inside. Everybody needs to find their room. Quite the funny coincidence.

SIDNEY

Don't believe in coincidence.

CASTELLANOS

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Neither do I, wonder where I got that from.

SIDNEY

Such a mystery.

Sidney remains joyful. Castellanos turns serious.

CASTELLANOS

I met a lot of people like you Sidney.

SIDNEY

What do you mean by that?

CASTELLANOS

Haphephobia. Not common, no one known cause. Born with it possibly? But no. Some traumatic experience from your past.

Sidney looks away, moves away as much as she can.

CASTELLANOS

I know that you will not want to talk about what happened. I understand that. But you need understand that you will have to face it to leave here.

SIDNEY

What?

CASTELLANOS

I refuse to go back to that night. It was one of the last things said on the tape.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

SIDNEY

I'm not following.

CASTELLANOS

Cooper knew what he needed to do to leave. Yet he didn't. He needed to get back to a specific point in his past and would rather die then go there.

SIDNEY

You're saying I have to... I have to go back to?... To the days were I....

CASTELLANOS (INTERRUPTING)

Yes. I believe that for any of us to leave we have face our darkest memory. The one memory we've been avoiding for far to long.

SIDNEY

I would rather die then relive that again.

CASTELLANOS

No. You will not take the easy way out of here.

SIDNEY

Dying is easy?

CASTELLANOS

But of course any old fool can die. But living. To keep going everyday even when don't want to. That's though.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

SIDNEY

I'm doing just fine.

CASTELLANOS

Are you?

SIDNEY

Yes.

CASTELLANOS

You're a terrible liar.

SIDNEY

So what, not like anything gonna change.

CASTELLANOS

Do you want to die alone Sid?

SIDNEY

I'm afraid of dying alone. But I cannot touch another human being ever again

Castellanos. I just cannot.

CASTELLANOS

But why?

SIDNEY

I'm going back to sleep.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

Sid come on, you can tell me.

SIDNEY

Maybe tomorrow.

Sidney leaves Castellanos and gets back on the bed, falls asleep right away.

CASTELLANOS

I'll get up in a minute. Just gotta rest my eyes for a sec.

You stare at Castellanos as he closes his eyes and falls asleep.

MATCH CUT TO:

31 - INT. ROOM 7 - LATER.

Same shot of Castellanos asleep only all the lights are on.

Jessica crouches down before Castellanos, she puts her hand on him and wakes him.

JESSICA

Castellanos? We need you to wake up. There's a problem with the water.

Castellanos awakes from a nightmare. Confused he looks around the room to see that everyone's awake and staring at him.

Matthew is still sitting in the chair reading his book.

JESSICA

Nightmare?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

Memory. Nightmares aren't real.

Castellanos stands up.

CASTELLANOS

What's going on?

Jessica also stands up.

DEAN

Water's been cut off.

CASTELLANOS

We can check the next room?

GREG

Already done that. And the room next to it and the other one.

CASTELLANOS

All the water has been cut off? Even the toilet?

SIDNEY

Even that.

CASTELLANOS

Something does not want us to stay and hide in the rooms.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

DEAN

Horse shit.

CASTELLANOS

What other explanation could there possibly be then?

DEAN

Place is old, plumbing is most likely shit. Could head downstairs and take a look at it.

JESSICA

We are in a creepy Gothic hotel and you want to head down in the basement? Sure go get yourself killed.

CASTELLANOS

Jessica is right, we are not going down in the basement.

MATTHEW

Never thought lack of water would be my cause of dead. Funny.

SIDNEY

Shut up.

MATTHEW

Yes ma'am.

Matthew for some reason salutes at her.

JESSICA

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

So what's the plan?

MATTHEW

Yeah writer what's the plan?

CASTELLANOS

We can last two days without water. But nothing will change in those two days. The outcome will be same if we wait.

JESSICA

Wait? Wait for what?

MATTHEW

It would be nice if you could speak English here mate and not in riddles.

CASTELLANOS

What I am about to say shall be controversial to say the least but it is the only way. Just hear me out. Okay?

Nobody says anything.

CASTELLANOS

A couple of us need to go on a supply run.

JESSICA

Are you completely out of your mind? Splitting up means certain dead have you never watch....

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS (INTERRUPTING)

Yes Jessica. I have watched my fair share of horror. I know that most of the time people end up dead when they split up.

JESSICA

Then why risk such a thing?

DEAN

The girl is right, why risk it?

JESSICA

My name Jess grampa.

DEAN

Don't care.

SIDNEY

Shut up both of you. Let Castellanos speak.

Silence.

CASTELLANOS

Thank you Sid. Now. I take it you all understand basic biology. We have no water. If we do not drink we die of thirst. Does everyone agree on that?

Everyone reluctantly agrees.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Okay good, common ground. Now do you also agree that without any kind of food everyone here will start to get cranky?

Everyone reluctantly agrees.

CASTELLANOS

It is decided then. A supply run.

Castellanos turns to Greg.

GREG

There is this cart I was supposed to organize. All of this happened. But it's still there. Packed to the brim with all the food and water we would need for a month.

Matthew looks up from his book.

MATTHEW

Someone said food and drinks? Would kill for a whiskey about now.

CASTELLANOS

Ignore him. You know the location of this cart?

GREG

Sorta.

CASTELLANOS

Sorta is good enough for me. Let's go.

DEAN

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

I will come too. I need to see this Darkness for myself.

CASTELLANOS

The plan is to not see The Darkness.

DEAN

Are you going to stop me from coming?

CASTELLANOS

I suppose not, no. Tag along.

JESSICA

Then I'm coming too.

Castellanos moves closer to her. Dean watches.

CASTELLANOS

Please understand that there is no timeline in the entire multiverse in which I let you out of this room to tag alone.

JESSICA (SHOCKED)

I'm getting benched?

CASTELLANOS

Yes you are indeed. You're just a kid, it's dangerous.

JESSICA

I'm about Greg's age. He gets to go!

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

Greg knows where the cart is. We need him there.

JESSICA

But why can't I come!? Gramps can go but I can't!

CASTELLANOS

That is right.

JESSICA

Why?!

CASTELLANOS

Because you are safe right here, and I would like it very much if you remained safe. You understand?

Jessica turns pissed.

JESSICA

You're not my dad!

Castellanos turns heartbroken, but quickly hides his pain.

CASTELLANOS

I'm not trying to be your dad. I'm just the adult in the situation who makes the decision here.

JESSICA

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

And one of this decisions is putting me on the bench?

CASTELLANOS

Exactly.

JESSICA (SHOUTING)

It's not fair! I'm not a little girl anymore. I can take care of myself!

CASTELLANOS

People who are in the right do not need to shout.

JESSICA

I'm in the right here!

CASTELLANOS

Jessica Cash you are staying in this room until we return with the cart. End of discussion.

JESSICA

Fine. Just leave me alone here with these two. Just leave.

Jessica leaves Castellanos and drops herself on the bed, facing away from him.

DEAN

You ready to leave now?

CASTELLANOS

Yeah, let's move fast.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

DEAN

Just keep following me.

Castellanos looks back to the other three who remain.

CASTELLANOS

No good luck?

SIDNEY

You got this, no need for luck.

MATTHEW

I sincerely hope you do not all die horrible deaths. How's that?

Castellanos looks at Jessica.

CASTELLANOS

We're leaving Jess.

JESSICA

Fine. Go leave then!

The three of them leave the room. Castellanos gives Jess one last gaze.

32 - INT. HALLWAY ROOM 7 - NIGHT.

Castellanos, Dean and Greg step out. Greg closes the door right away.

GREG

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

It's not all that far.

CASTELLANOS

Doesn't matter if it's far or not, we need to rush it.

The men move along.

Only a few seconds of walking pass.

DEAN

You have any kids Castellanos?

For a second he freezes. Then moves along as if nothing happens.

CASTELLANOS

No.

Clearly lying.

CASTELLANOS

Why do you ask?

DEAN

The way you are with the girl, Jessica. How you two talk. You're a natural. She trust you.

CASTELLANOS

She's just a fan of my stuff, also I helped her get a part in this film. She doesn't trust me.

It's nothing special really.

DEAN

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

I would beg to differ. Why you help a random girl you just met?

CASTELLANOS

No reason.

DEAN

No reason?

CASTELLANOS

She needed help.

DEAN

That's all? That can't be all there is too it.

CASTELLANOS

There is nothing special between us. She also had this look. There is always truth in the eyes.

DEAN

You can recognize a look in someone's eyes? Bullshit.

CASTELLANOS

It's not hard to recognize a look if it was on your own face.

DEAN

What's the meaning of this look then?

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

She would have rather died then go back to her parents. Something happened that made her run away. It wasn't just a dream for acting.

DEAN

You talked to her about it?

CASTELLANOS

No, no yet. Wasn't planning on it.

DEAN

You should.

CASTELLANOS

I should not. With this type of stuff you need to wait until someone is comfortable to tell you.

DEAN

But this is serious Castellanos. If you won't talk to her about this I will.

Castellanos pushes Dean to the wall. Arm under his throat.

CASTELLANOS

You will not mention a single word of this conversation to Jessica.

Greg just stands there, shocked.

CASTELLANOS

Do you understand?!

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Dean tries to speak but can't. Castellanos is choking him.

Castellanos realizes what he's doing and lets go of Dean.

Dean laughs to himself.

DEAN

Nothing special between you two ey?

CASTELLANOS

Drop it.

DEAN

You have fire inside of you son.

CASTELLANOS

Drop it.

Castellanos walks to Greg.

CASTELLANOS

Time is a luxury we do not posses currently. We should move. Lead.

GREG

Yes of course, follow me.

Greg leads the way, Castellanos and Dean follow.

33 - INT. LOBBY - NIGHT.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Castellanos, Dean and Greg enter the lobby. They start moving to the bar.

DEAN

How much longer boy?

GREG

Just the door next to the bar.

GREG

Do you think The Darkness can enter the kitchen? I mean it is a room after all?

CASTELLANOS

I am not sure and I do not want to risk such thing. Best thing we can do is just get, get out.

DEAN

We still need to see this Darkness.

CASTELLANOS

We do not need to see this Darkness. If you even think about jeopardizing this supply run because you want to see it then you're on your own. Got that?

DEAN

I do.

CASTELLANOS

Good.

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Everyone enters the kitchen. Dean is last. Looks around the lobby before heading inside.

34 - INT. - KITCHEN - NIGHT.

All three step in. The kitchen is ridiculously large. Expensive looking, however.

DEAN

We are gonna die before we find that damn cart.

CASTELLANOS

With that kind of mood we for sure are.

GREG

I'm sure I saw it here. Won't take long.

Greg moves all the way in the back, out of sight.

Castellanos and Dean search closer by the door.

CASTELLANOS

Married your high school sweetheart before heading off to war filled to brim with excitement?

DEAN

Not every veteran is such an cliché Castellanos. But yes.

Dean takes a deep sigh.

CASTELLANOS

I'm going to continue my assumption and say that you returned a changed man?

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DEAN

Stating the obvious isn't doing anything for anybody.

CASTELLANOS

Just checking everything is correct before I ask the big question.

DEAN

And what big question may that be?

CASTELLANOS

Have any kids yourself?

DEAN

You are not a mind reader by any chance?

CASTELLANOS

I'm just good at reading people.

DEAN

You are not good. You are too good.

CASTELLANOS

So I'm thinking that is a yes on the kid question.

DEAN

One kid, my boy.

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CASTELLANOS

You don't sound that excited talking about your kid. That is odd for a parent. I take it something happened?

DEAN

Something happened alright.

CASTELLANOS

I am going to continue on with my guessing and say you and your kid aren't exactly close anymore? And that you two haven't spoken for quite some time?

DEAN

Why do you care? Why is any of my personal shit important to you?

Castellanos moves in front of Dean.

CASTELLANOS

Because the lives we humans lead are so incredibly short.

Castellanos snaps his fingers.

CASTELLANOS

It's over like that Dean. We don't have the luxury to hold grudges like this.

DEAN (INTERRUPTING)

But you have no idea what he did! What he did to me!

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

I do not give a flying fuck. You probably did something too didn't you?

DEAN (MUMBLING)

Yeah.

CASTELLANOS

That's what I thought. Now as soon as we all get out of here you are going call your only son and apologize. Understood?

DEAN

What gives you the right to tell me what to do?! I'm your senior.

CASTELLANOS

The fact that you are older only shows how little intelligence you actually posses.

Dean turns angry, raises his hand for a punch. Castellanos lowers it for him.

CASTELLANOS

Let me finish here.

DEAN

Continue.

CASTELLANOS

Do you have any idea what it is you are throwing away? Do you have any idea how many parents are out there who have no child anymore? Who's children died horrible deaths? Those parents are willing to do everything and I mean fucking everything for a single minute with their

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child again. They are willing to give over their entire lives to spend a single minute with them again.

Short pause for breath.

CASTELLANOS

But such choice will never, ever present itself to those grieving parents. So get your shit together and call your son when we're all out of here.

There isn't a single sound for the first few seconds. Then Castellanos moves away from Dean, continues the search.

DEAN

Who did you lose Castellanos?

CASTELLANOS

Everyone.

Castellanos is nearly out of sight when:

GREG

I FOUND IT! I FOUND THE CART.

Dean and Castellanos move to Greg.

They all stare at a two meter high cart filled with all kinds of food and drinks.

CASTELLANOS

This will do perfect.

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GREG

I know right? Knew it was around here somewhere.

DEAN

We gonna admire the damn cart until we die or what?

CASTELLANOS

Dean is correct here we should move this instance. Already been out of the room for too long.

All three work together to move the cart out of the kitchen.

35 - INT. LOBBY - NIGHT.

Castellanos, Dean and Greg step back into the lobby, dragging the cart through the bar door. The process goes very slowly.

DEAN

We'll be dead meat before we reach the room.

CASTELLANOS

Could you possibly for a single second think positively?

DEAN

I would think positively if there was something to be positive about.

GREG

How about the fact that we'll not starve of thirst or hunger for at least a month a two?

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CASTELLANOS

Here. Twenty years old and already smarter than you.

DEAN

If you have nothing new to say just shut up already won't you.

GREG

Does everyone turn this bitter around his age?

CASTELLANOS

Not everyone. Not unless you have a good reason.

DEAN

Everyone has a reason for acting the way they do.

CASTELLANOS

What is your reason then? It's not just about the war is it?

DEAN

Not in the mood to play twenty questions with you.

GREG

If it was all about the war he would have said so.

DEAN

Could both of you just shut up and move this card?

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Then out of nowhere a man runs out of the hallway. He's in a state of panic and out of breath. This is THE STRANGER (25)

He is holding a baseball bat in his hand and looks to be a violent type from his eyes.

THE STRANGER

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?

Castellanos is the first to step forward, putting his hand before him, showing he's unarmed.

Dean and Greg can only stare.

CASTELLANOS

Kindly calm down friend. We are all on the same side here. I promise you.

The Stranger calms his breathing.

THE STRANGER

Could you please tell me what the hell is going on here?

CASTELLANOS

I will answer every question you have with the truth.

THE STRANGER

Okay, I can get behind that.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

But not here. The hallways are not safe here. The Darkness resides inside of them, we need to make for room 7 this instant.

THE STRANGER

Hold up there buddy. The Darkness what kind of voodoo bullshit is that?

CASTELLANOS

Please. I will explain everything to you but we are not save here.

The lights start to flicker.

THE STRANGER

What the hell is that? Are you doing that? Tell me!

CASTELLANOS

I am not doing anything friend. It's The Darkness it wants us. But it cannot enter rooms. Please follow us.

THE STRANGER

Fuck all of you. I ain't gonna do none of that.

The Stranger gazes at the nearest window, then back at his baseball bat.

CASTELLANOS

I can see what you are planning to do. But hurting the hotel will result in your death.

The lights start flickering faster.

THE STRANGER

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You all crazy.

The Stranger rushes for the window. Swings his baseball bat at the window with all his might.

Nothing happens.

The window remains unbroken.

Everyone stares in disbelief.

THE STRANGER

What the fuck?

The Stranger explodes from the inside. His blood splatters all over the others. Nothing of him remains.

The three man stand frozen, only for a second.

The light starts flickering even faster. The Darkness is nearly here.

CASTELLANOS

We need to run.

GREG

What about the cart?! We need it!

CASTELLANOS

Forget the cart! Your life is more important! Run!

Greg runs into a hallway as fast as he can.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

No not that way! I meant back to the room.

DEAN

Thank fuck we never had you dealing with hostage situations in nam.

CASTELLANOS

Not the time, not time.

DEAN

Yeah, yeah. Let's try to save our lives.

Castellanos and Dean run for their lives. The Darkness follows. You follow.

36 - INT. ROOM 7 - NIGHT.

Sidney lies on one bed. She looks bored, just staring at the ceiling.

Jessica is sitting on the other bed, she's throwing a ball at the wall.

Matthew is still in the same position as you left him, couple of chapters further in his novel.

THE STRANGER EXPLODES OFF SCREEN.

Sidney and Jessica both rise the second after hearing it, Matthew doesn't give a fuck.

JESSICA

What the fuck.

SIDNEY

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

What kind of explosion was that?

MATTHEW

One that exploded obviously.

JESSICA

Someone might be hurt could you start giving a shit?

MATTHEW

I only give my shits to the toilet.

Jessica rushes at Matthew but Sidney stops her.

SIDNEY

Forget about him, he's not word it.

JESSICA

Someone might be hurt.

SIDNEY

Yes they very well may be.

JESSICA

We should see if they need help.

Sidney does not like that idea at all.

SIDNEY

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Castellanos told us to stay here.

JESSICA

Yeah he did. But I'm pretty sure he didn't expect an explosion.

Silence. Sidney turns more unsure.

JESSICA

If it was you out there, you would want the others to come for help right?

Sidney doesn't answer.

MATTHEW

What an interesting development, Miss boring is also a coward. Who could have foreseen this?

JESSICA

Shut up!

MATTHEW

It's a free country dear, at least it happened to be that way last time I checked.

JESSICA

Could be serious for a single second.

MATTHEW

Nah.

Jessica turns back to Sidney.

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JESSICA

If you're not coming with me then I'm going alone.

Jessica rushes towards the door, hand on the handle.

SIDNEY

WAIT!

JESSICA

Yeah?

SIDNEY

You shouldn't go alone.

JESSICA

Thanks.

SIDNEY

Are you going to be okay alone Matthew?

MATTHEW

Asking if I want the first moment of peace I've had in ages? Oh how could you punish me like that?

JESSICA

He'll be fine let's go.

SIDNEY

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Just don't leave this room, you know what happens if you do.

MATTHEW

Look will you just go? I heard the same tape as you.

JESSICA

Let's go Williams.

Sidney still isn't happy about the idea, but she remains by Jessica.

Jessica opens the door, both woman leave. She closes the door.

You stay on Matthew.

He holds his hand up, five fingers. Slowly he takes them away, one by one.

He smiles.

MATTHEW

Everyone but one in the room. Let's see if really you lock yourself if everyone steps out.

37 - INT. ROOM 84 - NIGHT.

Castellanos and Dean rush into the room. Dean kicks the door shut. They're safe... For now.

About the room. There is nothing in it. The walls are black and the floor red.

Both men are exhausted. They drop to the floor.

DEAN

You think the kid made it out okay?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

He's young, faster than us. I am sure he will be fine.

DEAN

Yeah I thought so to.

Both men go silent, catch their breath.

CASTELLANOS

Say.

DEAN

Yeah?

CASTELLANOS

What brought you out here? To a hotel in the middle of nowhere?

Dean turns cold before answering.

DEAN

My boy.

CASTELLANOS

I recall you two not being close?

DEAN

That's right.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

So you had already taken my advice of burying the hatchet before I told you it?

DEAN

Not exactly. His wife died. Never met her but figured I should be there for him. It will also be the first time meeting my grandchild. He should be about ten years old now.

CASTELLANOS

How come?

DEAN

Well he is my boy after all.

CASTELLANOS

Not that. How come you've never met you're son's wife? And to expand that question. You're own grandson?

DEAN

Let's just figure out how leave this hotel first then I'll perhaps tell you.

Dean stands up.

CASTELLANOS

No.

DEAN

No?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Castellanos stands up.

CASTELLANOS

No.

Silence.

CASTELLANOS

Why have you never met your daughter in law?

DEAN

Cause my boy had to go and marry a fucking crispy critter.

CASTELLANOS

But of course.

Short pause, Castellanos moves away from Dean.

DEAN

Of course what?

CASTELLANOS

The emotionally damaged and PTSD suffering nam veteran cannot accept the fact that his son found his true love. I wrote a character like you once. He died alone.

38 - INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT.

Greg, still covered in blood is running for his life.

You are chasing him.

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He's constantly looking back as he moves further through the hallways.

Every single time he looks back his fear increases tenfold.

He turns a corner and bumps against Jessica. Sidney evades Greg at the speed of light.

JESSICA (SHOCKED)

Jesus Greg what the hell happened?

SIDNEY

Who's blood is that?

GREG (OUT OF BREATH)

It's not mine, there was this guy.. He... He grabbed the thing and he. Look there is no time for this we need to run right fucking no.....

Greg's last word is interrupted as he is pulled away from Jessica and Sidney.

The Darkness grabbed him like he weighted nothing.

Sidney and Jessica stare at the place where Greg was a second ago.

The lights start to flicker at the speed of the light.

Sidney snaps out of her trance with ease. Jessica remains locked in hers.

Sidney waves her hands like crazy before Jessica. No reaction.

SIDNEY

We need to run! Jessica!

JESSICA

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He stood there a second ago.... And now he's gone. A life taken away just like that.

SIDNEY

Jessica, he is dead and gone. You are still here. And you need to run right fucking now.

It's of no use. Jessica remains frozen. The lights flicker faster by the second.

Sidney looks at the oncoming Darkness, scared she turns back to Jessica.

A close of Jessica's hand which is followed by a close of Sidney's doubtful eyes.

Everything around Sidney turns dark, she feels it. Jessica remains frozen.

The lights stop flickering, The Darkness is seconds away from getting them both.

Sidney grabs Jessica's hand and runs off, dragging her along.

39 - INT. ROOM 84 - NIGHT.

Dean turns to the other wall, insulted. His eyes open, intruded.

DEAN

Was that word always there?

Castellanos turns as well. There is a word on the wall. Intrigued he moves closer.

CASTELLANOS

I know saying this after what we just encountered is ludicrous. But this is truly impossible.

DEAN

What?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Dean turns around to see what Castellanos has been staring at. A single word written in what seems to be blood.

DEAN

Is that blood? My smell isn't what it used to be.

CASTELLANOS

It doesn't smell like blood no. But it's a very familiar scent. Oh I almost have it.

Pause. Look of realization.

CASTELLANOS

I'll come back to it later.

DEAN

Forget the smell what does that shit mean?

On the wall written in what seems to be blood: NOMIS...

CASTELLANOS

It's the name of my most recent novel. Nomis.

DEAN

Well how'd that get there on that wall?

CASTELLANOS

Since I happened to be storming in the room at the exact same time as you I have no answer to that question.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

DEAN

Don't get smart.

CASTELLANOS

If I don't get smart we all perish.

DEAN

Whatever smart ass. What does it even mean?

CASTELLANOS

Well you see that is a tricky think to ask a person. Everyone has their own view on life and if it has any meaning of it...

DEAN (INTERRUPTING)

Not life you tool. Nomis! Is there a meaning to the word? Or did you just chose it because it sounded mysterious?

CASTELLANOS

Every word has a meaning. Otherwise the word wouldn't serve it's primary purpose.

DEAN

Simple yes or no would be enough.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

The Nomis is a place outside of the time and space you and I know of. It is a plain of reality where the rules are different than ours. We are not even able to grasp how The Nomis truly works. It's essentially a world of.... Dreams.

Without waiting for a response from the confused Dean, Castellanos turns back to the wall.

CASTELLANOS

The smell.... Oh yes I know it! The subsistence on the wall... Oh how didn't I get that sooner..... Gasoline!

As the words leave his mouth his widen, almost falling out of his eye sockets.

The word catches fire. He was right about it being gasoline.

Castellanos jumps back as far as he can in the room. Terrified he folds himself into a little ball.

Everything goes silent. No noise. No breathing. No sound of the fire that just lit out itself.

Castellanos frees himself from his ball of protection and looks at Dean next to him. He's frozen. Frozen in time.

Castellanos stands up and turns frozen. Not from something supernatural but because of simple shock.

He doesn't blink, he can't blink. What he sees before him should be impossible. Yet it is there.

A dark silhouette stands before the words on frozen fire.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

You.

The Dark silhouette steps forward.

THE SMOKER. Looks to be in his forties but isn't. He wears a white suit with a black shirt underneath. The Smoker sports no shoes. Dark red socks. His hair is raven black, on top of that he wears a white fedora. Lit cigarette in his mouth. You never see his face.

THE SMOKER

Me?

The Smoker points at himself.

CASTELLANOS

Yes you.

The Smoker pulls a chair out of nowhere, sits down. Continuous to smoke.

Castellanos cannot decide what to stare at. The Smoker or the fire behind him, his eyes switch back and forth, as he leans against the wall.

CASTELLANOS

You cannot possibly be here.

THE SMOKER

Why not? You're here. I can be here to.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

I'm real.

THE SMOKER

So?

CASTELLANOS

You're not.

THE SMOKER

Words can cut just as deep as knives you know Ezio?

CASTELLANOS

Don't use my first name.

THE SMOKER

But of course, you detest being called by your first name. Only one person is allowed to do that. Or should I say was? I never quite understood how you humans use those tenses.

CASTELLANOS

You can't be here.

THE SMOKER

We've been over this Ezio. I am currently here. Just like yourself.

CASTELLANOS

But I am not a work of fiction.

THE SMOKER

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

That's funny, neither am I.

CASTELLANOS

You are.

THE SMOKER

No I'm not.

CASTELLANOS

I made you up! You are not real! You are a work of fiction! My fiction!

THE SMOKER

And yet I am everywhere, every when even. Funny how that works isn't?

CASTELLANOS

Nothing about this is funny. I'm clearly losing my mind here.

THE SMOKER

We'll get back to that later Ezio but first I have to ask. Why did you put me in every single story of yours?

CASTELLANOS

I'm not having this conversation. I'm clearly going mad here.

THE SMOKER

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Apart from The Forsaken Phantom series you don't do sequels. Sure some people and place pop up here and there, but not that often. Yet I appear in every single novel or screenplay that you write. Why is that?

CASTELLANOS

Seeing as you are here and breathing I think you know your own motivation.

THE SMOKER

Of course I know the reason, I just want to know that you know it.

CASTELLANOS

Believe me I know it Smoker. Or do you want me to use your real name?

THE SMOKER

I'm afraid you cannot do that. It may appear we are alone but there are eyes and ears everywhere. Watching us. Always watching us, never interfering, but always watching us. It's enough to drive you mad. Some even have sweet popcorn.

CASTELLANOS

Skip the clown act, what do you need to tell me?

THE SMOKER

You moved to the accepting stage quite fast there Ezio. I'm impressed.

CASTELLANOS

I highly doubt I accept any of this. I'm just having fun with the hotel scenario.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

THE SMOKER

As you should. Man should enjoy things in life.

CASTELLANOS

But before you tell me why. Am I going insane here?

THE SMOKER

Ezio Castellanos. You are more sane then most of the people I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. And I have met a lot of people. You would know.

CASTELLANOS

Listen, only two options here. Either you're fan playing a joke in which case haha, or you're from my imagination which means I've gone crazy.

More smoke.

THE SMOKER

Third option. It's always the third.

CASTELLANOS

There is no third option here!

THE SMOKER

Life wouldn't be the same if there wasn't always a third option.

CASTELLANOS

You're going to tell a third option aren't you?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

THE SMOKER

Catching on quick, splendid.

More smoke.

THE SMOKER

I am just as real as you Ezio.

CASTELLANOS

I created you! You are not real here!

THE SMOKER

Would you kindly stop shouting. Shouting has never accomplished anything before. No I tell a lie. Apologizes. It accomplished in giving the word shouting a meaning. Or did the meaning give the word?

CASTELLANOS

Can you give me a straight answer here?

THE SMOKER

You say you created me but perhaps I created you so that in turn you could create me. Who knows what really happened? Anyway the past is the past, it isn't interesting to discuss.

CASTELLANOS

I'm insane. I'm fucking insane.

THE SMOKER

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

You are not insane calm down, take a seat we have some matters to discuss here.

The Smoker snaps his fingers and another chair appears in the room. Castellanos sits down.

THE SMOKER

Why am I here?

CASTELLANOS

Why are you asking me?

THE SMOKER

Because you know the reason why I show up when I show up.

CASTELLANOS

You appear when a crossroad presents itself for a character's life. A place in time where everything can happen for them.

THE SMOKER

And what do I do when I arrive at the crossroads of someone?

CASTELLANOS

This is insane.

THE SMOKER

Would you kindly stop using the word insane? You are using it wrong. Just answer the question here.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

You don't like the outcome, it doesn't suit your goal. Which makes you nudge people into a direction which has a outcome you prefer. For some reason you need a certain outcome to happen.

THE SMOKER

I would applaud but you wrote me this way so it's not amazing that you remember.

Short pause, more smoke.

CASTELLANOS

So you admit to me creating you?

THE SMOKER

Now we need to wrap this up, what can't I do?

CASTELLANOS

Intervene directly. But you do bend the rules. What information do you have?

THE SMOKER

You have fun with the mystery, with the darkness. I do not want the fun to stop but the CIA agent was telling the truth as far as he knew that is. You do not have an unlimited amount of time. in this place. All of you need to find your rooms before the time's up.

CASTELLANOS

How much time do we have?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

THE SMOKER

Specifics, specifics Ezio.

CASTELLANOS

Got it.

THE SMOKER

Now not everyone will make it out alive. And that is okay. Not everyone should. You cannot change that. Only they can.

CASTELLANOS

Understood. Anything else?

THE SMOKER

Of course. Everything comes in threes.

More smoke.

THE SMOKER

Have fun.

CASTELLANOS

Wait. You can't leave yet, I've so many questions about this.

THE SMOKER

Ever man has questions Ezio. Start becoming the man that has the answers.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Like you?

THE SMOKER

Like me.

CASTELLANOS

But you're not telling them.

THE SMOKER

Telling answers wouldn't be nearly as much fun as you discovering them for yourself.

The light goes out.

THE SMOKER

See you around Castellanos.

The lights turns on again, Castellanos sits on the floor, both chairs are on the floor.

Dean is unfrozen.

DEAN

What the fuck are you doing on the floor?

CASTELLANOS

I have no idea.

DEAN

What just happened?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS (SMILING)

I have no idea.

BLACK SCREEN.

Text on screen.

CHAPTER FOUR

If life went by as expected it would be rather dull. Welcome the unexpected.

40 - INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT.

The table is empty. Nothing is changed about it, except that Castellanos isn't behind it.

He is on his feet, standing before Luna. Neither of them are happy.

CASTELLANOS

If you would just listen to me I could perhaps...

LUNA (INTERRUPTING)

No! Okay?! All I've done is listen to you! It's time for you to listen to what I'm saying!

CASTELLANOS

I have listened to every single thing you've ever told me. Am I not allowed to have an opinion of my own? Is that not....

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

LUNA (INTERRUPTING)

Of course that is allowed but even you have to agree that you took things to far.

CASTELLANOS

No. I would even go as far as saying I did not took things far enough. If I had remained in that room for a minute longer then I....

LUNA (INTERRUPTING)

Then what? Then what Ezio!? Please enlighten me?!

CASTELLANOS

Why are you so upset about this? I did the ring thing. That is all I did. The right...

LUNA (INTERRUPTING)

It's not what you did don't you see that?! It's about how you did it. That is what's wrong!

CASTELLANOS

First of all pardon my French. But bullshit. Second of all shouting has never solved a thing in this world so you could seize doing that?

LUNA

Are you saying I'm not allowed to be angry? I can be angry whenever I want to be!

CASTELLANOS

Of course you can. I have never said you couldn't be angry. All I'm asking is to stop shouting at 200 decibel and talk this out in a civilized manner.

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LUNA

Civilized? Are you talking to be about civilized?

CASTELLANOS

I am indeed.

LUNA

What you did out there was anything but civilized.

CASTELLANOS

That is the truth, yes. But sometimes in life you have to use uncivilized methods to get done what needs to be done.

Luna takes Castellanos' hands.

Moment of silence.

CASTELLANOS

Look forget it.

Castellanos turns around, heads for the door.

LUNA

Where are you going?!

CASTELLANOS

Away.

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Castellanos leaves.

Luna and Aurora remain, staring at where he just was.

41 - INT. HALLWAY ROOM 63 - NIGHT.

Sidney and Jessica are still running. Her hand never leaves Jessica's hand.

They suddenly stop.

Both stare flabbergasted at what is in front of them.

The hallway looks the same, expect there are no room doors on the side of the walls and the hallway looks to be several kilometres long.

Sidney looks back, she looks right at you.

You look back. The fear inside of her increases.

She quickly loses her heels, and contentious running.

The Darkness follows them, you follow them.

The end of the hallway is in sight. A door, room number 63.

They reach the door, Sidney quickly opens it and pushes Jessica inside. She follows and shuts the door in your face.

You stare at the door, then move back through the hallway.

42 - INT. ROOM 63 - NIGHT.

Jessica and Sidney both stand in the middle of an enormous room.

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There is no door anymore. There are no walls anymore, only dark red curtains. The room is enormous. A weird zigzag pattern on the floor. The Waiting Room is empty apart from three black chairs and two tall lamps.

Sidney stands frozen.

SIDNEY HAD PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ANOTHER PERSON SHE IS FUCKED
UP MENTALLY!

Sidney looks stares at the hand she used to touch Jessica.

JESSICA

I don't want to keep repeating that this shouldn't be possible but holy shit.

Jessica continuous to gaze at their surrounding. Eventually she turns back to Sidney.

She's still staring at her hand.

JESSICA

Fuck me. Sidney are you okay?

Jessica moves closer, she remains frozen.

JESSICA

Sidney please tell me you didn't break because you saved me.

She gets closer.

JESSICA

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I'm so sorry you had to do that. I can't imagine what that was like. Are you hurt physically anywhere?

No reaction.

JESSICA

Sidney please talk to me. Please say something.

Sidney doesn't say anything.

She moves her hand onto Jessica's cheek.

Jessica can't respond.

Tears are streaming down Sidney's face.

SIDNEY

Thank you.

Sidney lets go Jessica and hugs her. Jessica hugs her back.

JESSICA

Are you okay?

SIDNEY

I've never felt better.

The hug last long enough. Sidney lets go first.

JESSICA

Are you really okay?

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SIDNEY

I am.

Sidney wipes her tears away and looks at her surroundings for the first time.

SIDNEY

Nothing at this hotel has made any sense. But seeing this room.... It feels like that time I tried acid.

Jessica turns towards Sid like a concerned mother.

JESSICA

You've taken acid?

SIDNEY

I've tried every known and unknown drug at least once.

JESSICA

How come?

SIDNEY

I didn't want to feel so bad anymore.

JESSICA

Did it work?

SIDNEY

No. None of them made me feel any better. Just worse.

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VOICE (O.S.)

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?

Jessica and Sidney freeze, they turn towards the voice.

An older woman in a old business suit suddenly stands with them in The Waiting Room.
This type of person is what you would call an abusive parent. In this case a mother.

Before the mother stands a little girl with black hair (6).

She looks adorable as she's drawing on some papers on the floor. Looks like a young Jessica.

YOUNG GIRL

I'm drawing mommy.

Her work is really good for her age. It's a TARDIS, right next to it is man with a fez and a mop.

MOMMY

But what did mommy tell you to do dear?

The young girl turns sad.

YOUNG GIRL

That I should not waste my time drawing and focus on learning how the family business works.

MOMMY

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That's very good, now why are you not doing that?

YOUNG GIRL

Because I don't wanna do that mommy.

MOMMY

What you want isn't important. You're too young to have an opinion dear, haven't I told you that?

YOUNG GIRL

Yes.....

MOMMY

And what else did mommy tell you?

YOUNG GIRL

That I should stop dreaming like a little girl because I'm not going to succeed in anything anyway. I can only succeed in life if I do everything that mommy tells me.

MOMMY

Good you remembered. Now throw that thing in the trash and continue studying.

Mom turns away, ready to leave.

YOUNG GIRL

But I wanna draw.

She stands in there, frozen.

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MOMMY

Did you just disobey me?

YOUNG GIRL

Mommy, why do I have to have the same job as you? Why can't I choose what I want?

Mommy turns around, her eyes are black. She rushes at the little girl, she backs away with haste.

Mommy rips the drawing apart into a million pieces. Then she turns to the little girl. The black in her eyes has spread to around her eyes. It's haunting to look at.

MOMMY

Before I do this I want you to know you brought this on yourself.

Mommy takes off her belt.

YOUNG GIRL

Mommy no! Please no!

MOMMY

Shut up. Just shut the fuck up!

Mommy starts hitting Young Girl with the belt. And again, and again.

You turn to Jessica. She looks disgusted, but not broken.

Jessica turns to Sidney, she's crying her eyes out.

It takes a second for Jessica to realize what's going on.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

JESSICA

Save her.

Dead itself is in Sidney eyes.

She jumps at Mommy. Tackles her to the floor and starts beating the living shit out of her.

Her knuckles turn bloody, Mommy's face turns bloody.

SIDNEY

I WAS A FUCKING CHILD YOU PSYCHOPATH.

The beating continuous. Jessica takes Little Sidney away, hugs her. Shielding her eyes from the carnage.

Sidney grabs the belt, wraps it around Mommy's throat and pulls.

The blackness in Mommy's eyes fades away. Her normal eyes return.

MOMMY (GASPING

Sidney... Please..

SIDNEY

You should have swallowed me you pathetic whore.

Sidney gives one last pull and holds it. Mommy stops breathing. She's dead.

Sidney let's go of the belt. Her entire face is covered in blood, it's slowly dripping off her.

She turns around, stares at Jessica and Little Sidney.

Little Sidney turns around and sees her future self.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Jessica lets Little Sidney go. She walks over to her future self.

Sidney crouches down before Little Sidney.

SIDNEY

Hello there.

LITTLE SIDNEY

Are you a friend of mommy?

SIDNEY

No. She doesn't have any friends. But I can be your friend if you want.

LITTLE SIDNEY

Mommy says I'm not allowed to have any friends.

SIDNEY

Mommy doesn't make the rules anymore.

LITTLE SIDNEY

Then I wanna be your friend.

Sidney smiles.

SIDNEY

Friends help each other, did you know that?

Little Sidney nods her head no.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

SIDNEY

I'm going to tell you something very important. Something every child should hear from their parents. Something I wish you would have heard, I want you to remember it okay? Can you do that?

Little Sidney nods.

LITTLE SIDNEY

I will remember.

Sidney strokes the hair of Little Sidney, moving it away from her face.

SIDNEY

You are perfect just the way you are Sidney. You do whatever it is you wanna do. Never let anyone tell you otherwise. You just do you. If someone has a problem with that fuck them. Do what makes you happy.

Sidney hugs Little Sidney. Jessica's happy for them.

Then both of them disappear right before Jessica.

She quickly moves over to where they were. Nothing.

A door appears in the middle of the red curtain, she opens it.

43 - INT. HALLWAY ROOM 84 - NIGHT.

The door opens, Castellanos and Dean slowly step out. Looking at all directions to make sure there is nothing.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

DEAN

Where to?

CASTELLANOS

Back to room 7. Greg must also be heading there.

DEAN

This hotel is a fucking maze. There is no way we're gonna find that room before that thing catches us.

CASTELLANOS

Finally a believer of the supernatural?

DEAN

A man exploded before me. That's proof enough for me. Now which way.

You get closer to Castellanos, so close you cannot see Dean anymore.

CASTELLANOS

I am not entirely certain but I think left.

You move away from Castellanos, giving him some space.

CASTELLANOS

The others must be worried. We should move Dean.

Castellanos turns around. Dean is gone. Where he stood now stands a wall.

He is amazed.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

If I had time to be amazed I would. But I do not possess such luxury as of this moment.

Castellanos touches the wall.

CASTELLANOS

Dean I hope you find safety.

Castellanos moves away from the wall. Goes left.

44 - INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT.

Castellanos stands in the middle of the hallway, writing notes. You don't get to see what.

He closes the notebook and continues his walk through the hallway.

CASTELLANOS

The writer had grown weary of this night. If it was still the same night that is. All he could do was hope the end would show itself to him soon. He would see her again for the first time since the fire.

Castellanos stops talking, realizes something, hears something. You cannot hear anything.

CASTELLANOS

Music to my ears. Quite literally. It sounds like it is not too far away.

Short pause.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

A supernatural hotel, a man exploding before me. Meeting a demon of my own creation.
And now music.

Castellanos contentious his walk.

45 - INT. LOBBY - NIGHT.

(Chromatics Shadow is playing)

Castellanos steps foot in the lobby.

Matthew is drinking scotch at the other side of the room. On the table is a glass, a bottle
and the gun of Gordon Cooper.

CASTELLANOS

Matthew?

Matthew raises his glass to him.

MATTHEW

Writer.

CASTELLANOS

What are you doing?

MATTHEW

Drinking.

Matthews weird movements get more out of control as time passes. He can barely drink
normally.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

MATTHEW

Trying to at least.

He laughs at himself.

CASTELLANOS

Care to enlighten me about the joke?

MATTHEW

I just figured out why we're all here. Well you all at least. Still not sure what it is I'm doing here.

It about our past. The past we all have living with for too long. Find your room accept your past and you get out.

CASTELLANOS

Then what's the trouble? Why have you not located your room yet?

MATTHEW

Because it doesn't matter if I accept my past or not. I'll still end up dead and alone.

CASTELLANOS

What are you talking about Matthew? Anyone can move on from their past. I'll help you.

MATTHEW

That's where you're wrong Writer.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

I beg your pardon.

MATTHEW

You see all of you cry babies have a past where you can move on from. But not me. I think someone put me in here as a joke.

CASTELLANOS

Matthew please let me help you. I know it may seem like I am asking you to do the impossible but I assure you that....

MATTHEW (INTERRUPTING)

Please stop talking Writer. Stop talking and look at me.

Castellanos goes quiet. Looks at Matthew. At his movements. He's not in control of most of them. He hasn't been for a long time.

Matthew drinks some more scotch.

Castellanos starts moving towards Matthew.

MATTHEW

You see what my situation is here Writer?

CASTELLANOS

I do now. I am so terribly sorry I Matthew my mind was preoccupied. I didn't realize.

MATTHEW

It's fine Writer. Truly it's fine.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Castellanos sits down before Matthew.

CASTELLANOS

How bad is it?

Matthew chugs down the entire glass, his body contentious to move unnaturally.

MATTHEW

Doctors have been saying my Huntington's symptoms have been mild. They even say I'm lucky. Fucking cocksuckers.

CASTELLANOS

How long have you left?

MATTHEW

Three years. They said that two years ago.

CASTELLANOS

You can still do amazing things in one year. I promise you.

MATTHEW

Nahh. I'm good Writer.

CASTELLANOS

If you are dealing with something so serious, then how can you still laugh at everything?

MATTHEW

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

I laugh at everything because it because it keeps me distracted. It keeps the voice in my head away. The voice I hate with every cell inside of me, but the voice that's part of me, nonetheless. If I turns serious for one single second, stop getting distracted the voice shows up and speaks the same word. Always the same word. my whole fucking life. One word.

Matthew holds back his tears.

MATTHEW

Death. Death. Death. Death. Death. I'm scared shitless of what will happen when that day comes. I've never found a woman, never had kids. I can't pass this curse on. I refuse to. If all the people with Huntington's would just stop having kids then we might have a chance at actually stopping this. But people are stupid and continue to pass it on. If I could go back in time and kick some sense in my dad I would. This is no way to live.

Matthew grabs the bottle and drinks some more scotch.

MATTHEW

What about the rest are they okay? Did they make out?

CASTELLANOS

You tell me, why did you leave the room?

MATTHEW

Girls heard a explosion of some kind, wanted to check it out. Told me to stay behind so the room wouldn't lock.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

And you stepped outside to see if it would actually looked.

MATTHEW

Curiosity kills. Not a bad way to die.

Matthew takes another sip.

MATTHEW

What about the old man and the kid?

CASTELLANOS

We were split up.

MATTHEW

What's with the blood?

Matthew gazes at the blood of the exploded human being.

CASTELLANOS

Another person was in the hotel after all. Tried to calm him down.

MATTHEW

Well you failed miserably at that.

Matthew sees Castellanos look.

MATTHEW

Sorry. Old habits.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

Matthew. There is still time to find your room.

MATTHEW

No Writer. Look I'm happy thinking that some of us are going to make it out but I am really done. You just get yourself out. I hope you'll be able to have a normal life. I wish you the best of luck, but I'm done here.

CASTELLANOS

Matthew they may possibly find a cure for your condition this year.

MATTHEW

You know that's bullshit Writer.

CASTELLANOS

We cannot see what the future brings us.

MATTHEW

Spend my whole life around doctors and hospitals. This disease has controlled the majority of my life. It's time I take some control.

CASTELLANOS

Don't. Matthew don't.

Matthew grabs the gun from the table.

MATTHEW

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

It's funny you know. One bullet in the chamber. One suicidal comedian. It's the beginning of a perfect joke.

Matthew puts the gun to his head. Castellanos tries to rush over to him.

CASTELLANOS

MATTHEW DON'T!

Matthew the comedian shoots himself. But his Huntington's causes him to miss.

Castellanos stands frozen once more.

MATTHEW

Can't even shoot myself properly. Can't do anything right.

CASTELLANOS

Take this as a sign.

MATTHEW

From who? God?

CASTELLANOS

No. Don't be ridiculous.

MATTHEW

Shoot me.

CASTELLANOS

What?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

MATTHEW

You heard me all right. Pick up that gun and shoot me. Please.

CASTELLANOS

I am not going to kill you.

MATTHEW

I would do it myself if I could. But I can't.

CASTELLANOS

I will not take a human being's life.

MATTHEW

I'm dead in a year anyway, please Castellanos. Kill me. I don't want to keep suffering like this. End my suffering.

Castellanos stares at the gun.

46 - INT. HALLWAY ROOM 73 - NIGHT.

Dean walks past room 73. You remain still.

Dean walks back, inspects the number closer.

DEAN

Perhaps there really is some voodoo bullshit going around here.

Dean looks around him.

DEAN

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Well I already knew that. Can't say I've ever seen a man blown up before. Also can't say I've had a conversion with myself before. Perhaps I'm just insane.

Dean's hand goes for the handle. But it remains still.

He takes it away.

DEAN

Can I make peace with the fact that my grandchild is half Vietnamese?

Dean opens the door.

DEAN

I really don't know.

He steps inside.

The door closes.

I hope he made it of the hotel but I'm not sure.

47 - INT. HALLWAY ROOM 63 - NIGHT.

Jessica opens the door, before her stands Castellanos. Shock's still in her eyes.

CASTELLANOS

Are you okay Jess?

She nods.

CASTELLANOS

What happened in there?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

JESSICA

Sidney. We were in there together then out of nowhere she just appeared and beat her then she stopped. Blood. There was so much blood. I never knew so much blood could get of a human body. Well no she wasn't human more like a hallucination?

CASTELLANOS (INTERRUPTING)

Jess. Calm down, breath in and out very slowly. Collect your thoughts.

She nods. Slowly breaths.

CASTELLANOS

Are you okay?

JESSICA

I'm fine.

CASTELLANOS

Alright. Tell me what happened.

JESSICA

I think Sidney survived the hotel. It was her room.

She looks back at the closed door.

CASTELLANOS

What was in there?

JESSICA

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Her past. And I thought mine was shit. She was abused Castellanos. Her mom beat her with a fucking belt.

CASTELLANOS

Figured as much.

JESSICA

You knew?

CASTELLANOS

Abuse victims have a tell, everything's easy to spot if you know what you're looking for. But that's not important now. Sidney's okay.

JESSICA

Yeah Sidney's okay. She survived.

CASTELLANOS

Exactly. Now we must find our room if we want that to happen. Sidney's fine repeat.

JESSICA

Sidney's fine.

CASTELLANOS

Good.

JESSICA

I should feel happy right?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

I believe it might be the expected emotion for this scene yes.

JESSICA

I don't. She just killed her own mother. Or some bizarre mirror version of her. She shouldn't be alone right now.

CASTELLANOS

Jessica. Sidney is a grown woman who has issues just like any of us. She got out. You can worry about her when you've survived your room. Deal?

Jessica just stands there.

CASTELLANOS

I'll tell you what happened to Ronin's wife.

She lights up at once.

JESSICA

Ronin was married?! What was her name? Why did they split? Is she dead? No is she still alive? Do they have children?! Will they meet again?

CASTELLANOS

I'll tell you when you survive this hotel.

Jessica flips, turn to full anger in a second.

JESSICA

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

NOT FAIR!

CASTELLANOS

Life's not fair either, thought you already knew that Jess.

Jessica hits him on the shoulder.

CASTELLANOS

I deserved that.

JESSICA

You did. So.... Let's get out of here?

CASTELLANOS

Sounds like a plan.

BLACK SCREEN.

Text on screen.

CHAPTER FIVE

Mistakes are a tricky thing. Nobody wants to make them but without them none of us would human.

48 - EXT. STREET - NIGHT.

Castellanos is walking the streets alone. Chewing gum, hands in his pocket.

He stops for a second, deep breaths.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

Be the adult for once in your life.

Castellanos turns around to head back, just as he does a fire truck passes him. It's followed by three more, all driving at high speed to the library.

Fear strikes inside of him. It fills him until he starts to panic.

He takes out his phone and makes the call. But there isn't anybody answering.

Castellanos runs back.

49 - EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT.

The library is on fire. Fire trucks all around it.

Castellanos tries to rush inside, but he is stopped by two fireman.

CASTELLANOS

Please you gotta let me in there. She's still in there! She's still in there!

The fireman are stronger.

FIREMAN

Sir. If anybody is still in there then they died ten minutes ago. I'm sorry.

Castellanos goes cold and drops to his knees.

He stares at the library as it continuous to burn to nothingness.

50 - INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Castellanos and Jessica are moving through the hotel. Jessica has returned to her sad face.

CASTELLANOS

Still thinking about Sidney? No don't answer that, of course you are.

JESSICA

She saved my life you know.

CASTELLANOS

She did?

JESSICA

I was listening when you and her were talking about her fear of touching people. Physical contact.

CASTELLANOS

Yes it seemed quite severe, I truly hope she can one day trust a person enough to touch them.

JESSICA

Greg died before us.

Castellanos stops.

CASTELLANOS

Sorry what?

JESSICA

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

The Darkness got him. It took him away. And I just froze at the spot. She took my hand dragged me to safety. I haven't even thanked her for that.

CASTELLANOS (SMILING)

She touched you? Sidney? That's amazing. Knew she had in her.

Jessica doesn't look any happier.

CASTELLANOS

Hey, even without knowing you might have pushed her enough in the right direction to touch another human being again. To love another human being again.

Castellanos and Jessica emotions switch. She sees his face.

JESSICA

Talking about those who have passed can help you know?

Castellanos eyes turn red.

CASTELLANOS

I'm fine. Dead is dead, nothing I can do about it.

Castellanos starts walking again.

CASTELLANOS

We should keep moving.

They keep moving.

51 - INT. HALLWAY ROOM 87 - NIGHT.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Jessica stands frozen before door 87. Castellanos looks concerned.

CASTELLANOS

How can you tell?

JESSICA

87. Year of my favourite horror movie.

CASTELLANOS

Groovy choice.

She lights up knowing Castellanos got the reference.

JESSICA

Thanks.

CASTELLANOS

Thought's on the show?

JESSICA

You know if you had told me before it came out that there would a continuation of The MediEvil Dead on TV and that it would have ten seasons and every single second of those ten seasons was incredible, wouldn't have believed you. Would have called you insane for sure.

CASTELLANOS

Magic of Sam Raimi I suppose.

JESSICA

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

You ever gave it any thought?

CASTELLANOS

What?

JESSICA

Directing?

CASTELLANOS

I haven't.

JESSICA

You should.

CASTELLANOS

I'll think about it kid. Would be fun to do something new.

Jessica gazes back at the door and all the joy on her face disappears to nothingness.

CASTELLANOS

You don't want to go in.

JESSICA

What gave it away? Oh wait everything.

CASTELLANOS

I can come with you. That is, if you want that.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

JESSICA

I want that. But I saw Sid's room while I shouldn't have seen it. We should face our fears alone Castellanos, no need to drag anyone else along to see our messed up past.

Jessica turns to Castellanos who is writing the last sentence of hers down in his notebook.

He looks up. Looks back down, finishes and puts the book away.

CASTELLANOS

It's a good line. You don't mind do you?

Jessica smiles.

JESSICA

Not one bit.

She stares back at the door and the smile fades.

CASTELLANOS

I don't know what it is you will find in there but sometimes in these scenarios people want to stay in the room. They want to stay with the pain. I know I will want to stay in mine when I find it. Just don't okay? Don't torture yourself in staying.

JESSICA

I don't know if I'm able to do that.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

It's only natural to feel conflicted Jessica. We're all human after all. Feeling conflicted about choices is practically all we do.

JESSICA

That doesn't exactly make me feel any better.

CASTELLANOS

Sorry, sometimes stating the obvious helps.

Castellanos smiles.

CASTELLANOS

If you don't leave the room you will never find out what my next novel is going to be.

Jessica turns away from the door, crosses her arms.

JESSICA

I'm standing in your next novel.

CASTELLANOS

How right you are.

Jessica gazes back at the door.

JESSICA

I just don't think I'm strong enough to face that night.

Castellanos closes his eyes, takes a deep breath.

JESSICA

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

What are you doing?

No reaction from Castellanos.

JESSICA

Hello?

CASTELLANOS

I was going to kill myself tonight. If this is even still tonight.

Jessica cannot speak a word at first. She's confused. But her confusion turns into compassion.

JESSICA

Why would you do such a horrible thing?

CASTELLANOS

Because I miss her.

Castellanos starts tearing up.

CASTELLANOS

I really miss her Jess. And I don't know if life is worth living without her. I don't believe it is. And I didn't want to find out.

Castellanos sheds a single tear.

JESSICA

Killing yourself is never an option.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

Isn't it? I was feeling sad, I was feeling hurt. I was feeling. Taking my own life would have solved all of those problems.

JESSICA

Well if it's all so logical What stopped you? What stopped you from killing yourself?

CASTELLANOS

I was asked to buy chocolate milk.

Castellanos smiles as Jessica is once more speechless, it slowly turns into happiness.

CASTELLANOS

Shortly after that I learned you happened to be in quite a pickle. So I helped you out. A complete stranger but you were sad as well. Making you smile. Genuinely smile. It showed me what I'd be missing if I left this world.

Castellanos wipes his tear away.

CASTELLANOS

You didn't know it then. But you saved my life Jessica Cash. So please. Let me do the same. Is that okay?

Jessica is the one that's tearing up now.

JESSICA

That's okay.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Brief pause.

CASTELLANOS

Amazing. Now if everything goes according to plan we shan't see each other in here again. You still have that number I gave you?

JESSICA

I have it memorized.

CASTELLANOS

Splendid.

The lights start flickering. Castellanos turns serious.

CASTELLANOS

I think The Darkness is getting impatient with us here, better hurry this up.

Jessica quickly hugs Castellanos..

JESSICA

I wish you were my dad Castellanos.

Without anything else she gets inside her room, leaving Castellanos stunned and frozen.

The lights start flickering faster and faster.

The Darkness sees Castellanos in the distance.

You see him in the distance.

You move towards at the speed of light. Castellanos remains frozen.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Inches apart from each other. Suddenly Castellanos turns around eyes staring in your soul.

CASTELLANOS

You just sod off for a moment and let me process that.

You stop.

CASTELLANOS

I know you want me to find my room. I want to find my room. It will be done. But I need a short moment of peace here. Can you give me that?

You move away from Castellanos.

The Darkness is gone, for now.

CASTELLANOS

Something must have been terribly wrong with her father. Poor thing. Oh I do hope I run into her again sometime soon.

Short pause.

CASTELLANOS

But that's for later. Everything in good time, one thing at a time. Task at hand.

Castellanos laughs to himself.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

I'm the last one left. Of course I am, I am the one who needs to write the ending to this story after all.

Castellanos starts moving away.

CASTELLANOS

Wonder how's it all gonna end.

Castellanos moves out of the hallway.

52 - INT. HALLWAY ROOM 217 - NIGHT.

Castellanos moves past the rooms while looking at the numbers.

He stops. Room 217.

CASTELLANOS

Ah of course.

He turns towards the door.

CASTELLANOS

First novel I ever read. Probably not a recommended read for a seven year old.

He moves his fingers over the room number.

CASTELLANOS

It certainly explains a lot about me.

THE SMOKER (O.S.)

Do you want me to bring you some tea? Table? Couple of chairs perhaps?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Castellanos grins.

CASTELLANOS

Getting impatient are we?

Castellanos turns around. The Smoker stands before him. You still can't see his face.

THE SMOKER

I would just appreciate it if you didn't waste time talking to yourself. It makes you look insane.

CASTELLANOS

I'm way past insane Smokey.

THE SMOKER

Like I told you before Ezio Castellanos. You are more sane than most of the people I have ever had the pleasure of meeting.

CASTELLANOS

Just wanted to hear you say that again. And to respond to your previous comment. Nothing good ever came from a rushed job.

The smoker takes a puff from his cigarette.

THE SMOKER

City of Death.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

City of Death is the exception to the rule.

More smoke.

THE SMOKER

Waiting for something?

CASTELLANOS

Why are you here?

THE SMOKER

You know why I'm here.

CASTELLANOS

No why here. This hallway, before this room. Talking to me. You never show up more then once. Unless you have something else to say.

THE SMOKER

Perhaps you've never written about me meeting with someone of actual significance.

CASTELLANOS

I'm significant for your cause?

THE SMOKER

Maybe. Maybe not. Who knows?

More smoke.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Let me take a complete shot in the dark. Me being of any significance depends on the choice I make right here?

THE SMOKER

Can't answer that, but yes.

CASTELLANOS

What outcome do you need of me?

THE SMOKER

If I tell you, you'll choose the other one just to annoy me.

CASTELLANOS

You know me too well Smokey.

THE SMOKER

I should. I created you after all.

CASTELLANOS

Sure you did.

THE SMOKER

Sure I did.

Castellanos laughs, but a tear rolls down his face at the same time.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

You know it's funny. I know she'll be in there. I want to see her again. Yet I don't want to step inside, but I also want to step inside. Is that confusing?

THE SMOKER

You are asking me if something is confusing?

CASTELLANOS

Strangely enough I am yes.

THE SMOKER

Humans in general are a very confusing species. Moments ago you gave the girl the perfect advice for your own situation. Yet the words seemed to have left your mind.

CASTELLANOS

You were watching me?

THE SMOKER

I'm always watching.

CASTELLANOS

Pervert.

Castellanos and The Smoker share a laugh. Then the lights start to flicker again.

THE SMOKER

Better head inside.

CASTELLANOS

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

What about you? Won't it get you?

THE SMOKER

You know the answer to that question.

CASTELLANOS

I do.

THE SMOKER

Then why ask?

CASTELLANOS

I was curious if you were going to lie.

THE SMOKER

I never lie.

The lights flicker faster.

CASTELLANOS

You just bend the truth sometimes.

THE SMOKER

Precisely.

The flicking reaches the speed of light.

THE SMOKER

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Better head inside now.

Castellanos turns around to the door. The Smoker snaps his fingers and the door to room 217 opens.

CASTELLANOS

Show off.

Castellanos turns to step inside the room but backs off at the last second.

CASTELLANOS

Before I go. I just want to say that out of all my creations over the years. I'm glad it was you that showed up here.

Silence.

THE SMOKER

I'm not going to hug you.

CASTELLANOS

I know.

THE SMOKER

Until the next time Castellanos.

The Smoker tips his hat and Castellanos steps inside room 217.

53 - INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT.

You are once again back in the library. Nothing is burned, as if it was never burned.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

The door is no more. Castellanos stand before bookcases. He looks like he did before.
Clean, healthy and well dressed.

On the other side of the room is his typewriter. At it's usual place.

His face lights up at seeing the typewriter. At seeing this place again.

His hand touches the nearest bookcases. Castellanos' moves along sides the bookcases
and proceeds to run his fingers over the spines. His face drops as he stops.

LUNA (O.S.)

What's wrong Ezio?

CASTELLANOS

This. Running my fingers over the spines off these books. It gives me the exact same
feeling as it used to before.

Luna now stands before Castellanos. Looking like she did in the flashbacks.

LUNA

Don't you want everything to be like before?

CASTELLANOS

I do. I do very much.

She takes a step towards him.

LUNA

Then stay here with me.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

You are not really here Luna. I'm not even really here.

LUNA

Something doesn't need to be real to be good. We can be happy again here. Together. Like we used to be.

CASTELLANOS

Like we used to be. Used is the key word.

LUNA

Don't say things like that. Please don't.

Luna takes another step closer and takes Castellanos hand.

LUNA

Words hurt honey.

CASTELLANOS

Words don't hurt if you are saying them to someone who isn't real.

LUNA

I am better then real. I will never leave you like she left you. I promise you Ezio.

CASTELLANOS

Luna and I had already left each other long before the fire. Somethings are just not meant to be.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Castellanos frees his arm from Luna.

LUNA

I can show you things in here you would have never thought possible. We can go anywhere and any when we want. We don't have to remain in this library.

CASTELLANOS

But none of it will be real.

Luna gets real close.

LUNA

That's the point of all of it. There is no pain here. And I can make you forget the pain of the fire. A place without pain Ezio.

CASTELLANOS

Life is pain. If one were to live without pain he would live without happiness. The fire... What I lost that day it will never leave me. And that is okay. It is okay to feel pain.

LUNA

No it is not! Don't you miss me!? What we had!?

CASTELLANOS

You're right again. I miss you Luna. I miss what we had together. But you are not the one I miss the most.

Castellanos eyes turn red.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

CASTELLANOS

Fire is the worst way to die. No child should have to suffer like that. Where is Dawn?

You stay on Castellanos as he starts to cry. You move around him Luna is gone, replaced by a little girl.

AURORA (5) A little girl with raven black hair.

You continue to move around Castellanos, making a full circle. Castellanos doesn't look his old self anymore. There is nothing clean or healthy about the way he looks. But it is real.

CASTELLANOS

I was wondering when I was going to see you sweetie.

AURORA

Did you miss me Daddy?

CASTELLANOS

I missed you so much.

Castellanos gets closer but Aurora moves away.

AURORA

You weren't there for me daddy.

Castellanos lets a tear escape.

AURORA

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

I was all alone in the library, trapped. I couldn't move. I was so scared daddy. YOU WEREN'T THERE!

CASTELLANOS

I know. I know Dawn. I know. I should never have left.

Aurora turns angrier.

AURORA

You and mommy were shouting at each other again. Hearing you shout made me feel so cold and empty inside.

CASTELLANOS

I am so sorry your last memory of us wasn't a happy one.

AURORA

But you are here now daddy. We can get mommy too. We can be a family again. The three of us.

Castellanos crouches down, opens his arms. Smile on his face as tears flow down.

Aurora runs towards him and hugs him. Castellanos hugs her back.

CASTELLANOS

I want to stay. I really want to.

AURORA

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

So stay with me daddy. You aren't going to leave me again are you? Not when we only just got back together again.

Castellanos stops the hug. Aurora turns sad.

AURORA

Did I do something wrong daddy?

CASTELLANOS

No. You haven't done anything wrong in your entire life. Your death is my fault and mine alone. And that is something which I will have to live with. I will never forget you Dawn.

Castellanos tries hugs her again as fast as he can but it's too late.

53 - EXT. HOTEL - MAGIC HOUR.

Castellanos drops in the snow.

Quickly he gets back on his feet. He turns and stares at the sun. It's beautiful.

Castellanos turns back to the hotel. Drops to his knees and starts crying.

EPILOGUE

But everything begins again too. and that's always happy.

54 - INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT.

The library isn't burned to the ground, it's like before.

Castellanos is at his usual spot, typing away on the typewriter.

Then he stops at once. Hands go away from the typewriter.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

LUNA (O.S.)

What's wrong?

Luna sits at her usual spot as well, as if nothing has happened.

CASTELLANOS

I think I'm done. First draft.

Luna's eyes fill with wonder.

LUNA

You couldn't have timed it better.

Luna gets out a piece of paper out her pocket and shoves it over to Castellanos.

CASTELLANOS

What's this?

LUNA

You said you needed a title for the place. Can't just call it still to be named hotel forever.

Castellanos eagerly folds open the piece of paper. Three words on the paper:

THE UNDYING CRAVEN

He smiles.

CASTELLANOS

It's perfect. How do you even come up with these names?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

LUNA

Everyone has their strengths.

CASTELLANOS

And everyone has their weaknesses.

LUNA

No need to be pessimistic darling.

CASTELLANOS

You would be pessimistic to if you knew the ending.

LUNA

I'll have it finished in the morning.

CASTELLANOS

No rush.

Luna chuckles.

LUNA

No rush? You seriously think I haven't been reading it when you go to sleep?

CASTELLANOS

The thought had crossed my mind, yes.

LUNA

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

No spoilers. But did you end it ambiguous or not?

CASTELLANOS

Now that would be telling.

LUNA

You're no fun.

Suddenly Castellanos turns. looks right in the camera.

CASTELLANOS

Do you wanna help me out here?

There is no reaction. But you can hear footsteps, little ones.

Aurora stops before Castellanos.

CASTELLANOS

Wanna help daddy finish his story?

Aurora nods her head full of excitement.

CASTELLANOS

Well come on then.

Aurora reaches out to Castellanos, he lifts her on his lap.

CASTELLANOS

Can you write The End?

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

Aurora nods her head and types it.

CASTELLANOS

Amazing.

Castellanos kisses her on her head.

AURORA

Daddy?

CASTELLANOS

Yes Dawn?

AURORA

Can I improve it?

Luna chuckles at him.

LUNA

6 years old and already improving your work. You're getting old Ezio.

CASTELLANOS

You're older than me.

LUNA

Shut up honey.

Luna turns to Aurora.

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

LUNA

Improve Daddy's story.

Aurora turns to Castellanos. He nods yes at her.

Her fingers go back to the typewriter. She presses one button, you don't see which one.

Castellanos stares in amazement. Then he kisses her again.

CASTELLANOS

You're gonna be better than me when you grow up.

LUNA

What she write?

CASTELLANOS

Last time I checked honey you appeared to have legs.

LUNA

Didn't I tell you I cut them off yesterday?

AURORA

Daddy? Why did mommy cut her legs off?

CASTELLANOS

She didn't. Your mommy just has a terrible sense of humour.

LUNA

Ernesto Kovacs - The Nights That Were

You are one to talk.

CASTELLANOS

Do you wanna see what your daughter wrote or not?

Luna stands up and moves behind Castellanos and Aurora. She smiles.

LUNA

That is good. Why did you do it honey?

AURORA

No story should ever be fully over.

You finally get to see what's on the paper:

The Smoker laughed.

THE END?

THE END?