

Nightmare

By

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INT. DARK ROOM, SORT OF FUZZY GRAY

The room resolves and it's a gray living room. There are people sitting in chairs, looking very sad. All the mirrors are covered with cloths and in the back ground people mull around, whispering.

Itzak walks up to one of the women sitting in the chair with a veil over her face. She looks up, it's his daughter.

ITZAK

Who are you sitting Shiva for,
Judith?

She wipes her eyes.

JUDITH

For my papa...

ITZAK

But I'm right here.

Behind Judith he sees a woman looking frail and gaunt. She is wearing a striped dress which is filthy and torn. Her face is hollow and gaunt. She stands next to the mirror and reaches over, begins to draw the curtain aside. He moves to stop her. As she opens the curtain he sees a muddy yard, it's a concentration camp and people are walking around, dying. He hears in the background the cries of the people in the showers.

He is now standing in the muddy yard. A soldier approaches him.

SOLDIER

To the right, Juden.

ITZAK

I've done this before.

SOLDIER

Then you know the procedure.

ITZAK

What is that line?

SOLDIER

It's for survivors.

ITZAK

Is this real?

As he asked the question the light begins to flicker, a buzzing like a hundred people talking all at once incoherently fills the room.

FADE TO BLACK. THE ROOM SLOWLY RESOLVES

He is standing in a room, gray again, a bedroom and there is only the ticking of a clock. He feels a hand on him, he turns and a woman is there, she smiles at him. He pulls away from her

ITZAK

Is this real?

Again the room dissolves around him, he hears children laughing around him and suddenly he is standing on a playground, children gathered around him, laughing, pointing. He glares at them and one throws a rock. It hits him in the forehead.

ITZAK

This isn't real.

The children turn into dogs with glowing red eyes. He turns and runs, trips and falls. The woman is in front of him again, she reaches for him. He pulls away. Blood drips into his eyes, to the ground. When it hits the ground, it pools and begins to move of it's own accord. It moves into a pattern, words. "Is it real?" it spells out.

Itzak rises to his feet. He moves through the streets of Berlin after the blitz. He sees a dead cat and a child with gaunt eyes. When the child smiles at him, he sees evil in her face. The eyes are black pits.

He runs from the child and is caught by a soldier. He doesn't know what conflict the uniform is from but the man has hard eyes. He pushes Itzak to the ground and puts a revolver to his head and pulls the trigger. Click. He does it again and another click. Itzak hits the man. The man falls back and Itzak gets up and runs again.

ITZAK (WITH CONVICTION)

This is not REAL.

The images fade and he is again in the gray Shiva room. He is alone this time. In the mirror are all the people from the dream. In front of the window, there is a rocking chair. In it sits a woman with the head of a horse. She is nude, but bares none of the signs of humanity. No nipples, pubic hair or belly button. The horse head glares at him. It rocks keeping cadence with the ticking of a clock.

(CONTINUED)

ITZAK
You aren't real.

It nods to him. It stands and walks toward him. He tries to back away but there is no place to go. She comes up and touches him. He looks into the mirror. He sees himself.

REFLECTION
How many did you leave behind? In your fear? How many people died so you could live? How many did you sell?

ITZAK
This isn't real.

REFLECTION
Do you see them, Itzak?

Itzak steps back. He begins to weep.

ITZAK
It was a war. We all did what we could to...

REFLECTION
Is it real?

He turns to the girl with the horses head. She turns and walks away. She picks up a gun off the floor next to the rocking chair. She turns and points it at him. She pulls the trigger and the gun fires... We hear an electronic drone.

INT. A NURSING HOME - NIGHT

Itzak is on the bed, flat lined. We see a few flashes of things in his room, a picture of his wife (the woman who pulled back the curtain from the mirror) in a frame by the bed, an Israeli flag by the bedside. On the wall photos of the liberation of Auschwitz.

Two nurses rush to his bed. They check him. One looks at the clipboard.

NURSE LYNNLYNN
No code.

NURSE CAROL
Full moon.

(CONTINUED)

NURSE LYNNLYNN

You don't believe that crap do you?

NURSE CAROL

I believe what I experience.

NURSE LYNNLYNN

Where the hell is Terry?

BLACK SCREEN - TITLE - MARON

There is a slow resolve to gray, a room comes almost completely into focus. It is bare, gray and has a concrete floor. There is a chair in the center of it. The image flips and breaks, like old film. We hear the voice of TERRY, an orderly.

TERRY (VO)

Do you know what happens to a person who burns to death?

INT. THE ROOM

The room fully resolves and there is a man sitting in the chair. The scene flickers and shifts as if the film is old. The man is wearing a hospital gown and is strapped into a chair.

TERRY (VO)

First, the skin senses the heat, the pain. And the sensations fills the whole body, not slowly but all at once. It flares in the brain like searing metal and a glass shattering scream. It's blinding.

INT. THE ROOM

The man begins to smoke and writhe in the chair. He strains against his bonds. He moans at first, then screams. He bursts into flames.

TERRY (VO)

Fairly quickly though, the exterior nervous system shuts down. All the nerves are destroyed. First, second, third degree and pain subsides as it moves through the body. Convulsions are brought about by shock.

INT THE ROOM

The man stops screaming but his body moves more and more quickly with a jerky motion.

TERRY (VO)

You continue to breath, though. That is involuntary. Superheated air scotches the lungs. Eventually they cease to take in oxygen. Your fat melts and becomes a fuel for the fire which burns hotter and hotter. Your organs bake.

INT THE ROOM

The flesh on the body turns black. The face looks mummified. The corpse stops moving, staring out with a hollow eyed grin.

TERRY (VO)

Liquid is sapped from the body. If the victim is lucky, they pass out. The fire can burn for hours under the right circumstances, causing the myth of SHC. Spontaneous Human Combustion. It can reach in excess of a thousand degrees and completely immolate the body. Usually, though, the fire burns itself out pretty quickly.

INT. THE ROOM

The body is sitting still in the chair. It is still smoking.

TERRY (VO)

How do I know this? I've burned to death every night since I started working for the Mercy Care Nursing Center.

INT. THE ROOM

The body sits in the chair, looking vacantly out at the screen. Suddenly, it convulses violently.

ECU TERRY'S FACE

Terry's eyes are closed and suddenly open. He shudders and screams a little. He begins to shiver and looks like he might be sick.

INT. MERCY CARE NURSING CENTER - NIGHT

Terry looks around and takes a deep breath. He is alone on the ward, only sleeping patients in their room. He looks around, takes out a joint and lights it, inhaling deeply then stubbing out the joint. He sits, waiting for the pot to take effect. When he exhales, almost nothing comes out.

TERRY (VO)

It's called self medicating.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

He rubs his eyes and goes into the bathroom across the hall, washes his face and then dries it on a towel. He looks into the mirror and the face that looks back at him is haggard, exhausted. He takes a deep breath and looks at his watch. The LED says 2:05. He sighs and leaves the bathroom.

TERRY (VO)

It's always the same time. I wonder if it's just that I go to break same time every night. Fortunately I am good at forgetting traumatic things. Like most of my life up to this point.

INT. THE HALL

As he enters the hall, there is a movement down the hall behind our vision of him. It quickly moves into a room.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE NURSING HOME - DAY

Terry is headed home after a long nights work. He looks absolutely exhausted. He goes out to his old car and opens the door. Dr. Christian Morgan appears at the door of the home and moves quickly toward Terry's car. he is an older doctor, Distinguished and int eh twilight of his career. He might be as old as seventy.

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DR. MORGAN

Terry, Terry! Can I speak to you?

Terry rolls his eyes. He stops and sighs. Morgan approaches him. He stops, smiles.

DR. MORGAN

Hey, I wanted to talk to you.

TERRY

So?

DR. MORGAN

I was just concerned. The nurses say, well, they say you've been sleeping on your break.

TERRY

Is that a problem? It's my break.

DR. MORGAN

No, not at all. Just. Well, they say you've been having nightmares. Screaming yourself awake.

TERRY

Sorry, I didn't want to disturb the patients.

DR. MORGAN

No, look. I just wanted to offer you some help. I know a lot of people are uncomfortable talking to a Psychiatrist.

TERRY

I'm fine. Thanks.

DR. MORGAN

Well, ok. If you change your mind, you know where I am.

Terry nods and climbs into his car.

TERRY (VO)

Sanctimonious Prick.

INT. TERRY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Terry takes off his shirt and drops onto the bed. He falls almost immediately asleep. The clock beside his bed says 8:25.

EXT. (CUT TO) A MIDWESTERN STREET CORNER - DAY

The scene has a cinematic or dreamlike quality. A boy exits a small hovel. He looks exhausted. As people walk past him, they make the sign of the evil eye. He ignores them and walks down to the local well. The child's hair is a mess, twisted into mats in places. He doesn't seem to see that, either.

INT. (CUT TO) TERRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

He opens his eyes. Looks at the clock. He seems to have gotten no rest though he seems to have been sleeping quite soundly.

He looks at the clock. it says 8:25.

He looks puzzled, disoriented. He looks out the window. It's dark out. He stands, goes into the bathroom and looks in the mirror. His hair is twisted into knots almost like a dread lock. He turns on the shower.

TERRY (VO)

I was never much of a sleeper but now, I sleep and sleep and never get any rest. It's a black, vacuous pit of sleep, too. I used to dream but now...

INT. MERCY CARE NURSING CENTER - NIGHT

Terry is pushing a cart of dirty laundry down the hall. As he passes one of the patients rooms, we hear muffled noises. He pushed the door open just enough to get a glimpse of Mary Crawford in her wheel chair, apparently terrified. Terry stops, goes to the door and puts his ear to it.

Inside we hear an old woman pleading and another woman berating her. We hear a slap and the old woman cries.

NURSE LYNN

I said, Get into bed, damnit!

(CONTINUED)

OLD WOMAN

I'm not tired.

NURSE LYNN

I got things to do and you're going
to bed.

There is another slap. The old woman wails. There is the sound of a struggle with the old woman whimpering and weeping and the Nurse Lynnscreaming obscenities.

Terry listens for a moment more and moves on down the hall as if nothing has happened.

TERRY (VO)

Life is easier if you don't see
things.

INT. A DARK ROOM.

We can see only the shadows of furniture, get little feeling for what this room is used for. We hear Mary Crawford breathing heavily. She moves around a little feeling for something.

We hear her almost trip over a chair. Finally, after reaching around blind in the darkness, she reaches the door. She tries the handle. It doesn't open. She makes a sound like a garbled moan.

She moves back in the other direction, seemingly looking for a window. She gets to the wall after falling over several pieces of furniture.

She reaches up and touches the windowpane and feels inside it. It's bricked up. She screams.

She turns and moves back toward the bed. There is great trepidation in her movement. She reaches out across the bed and her hand touches a dead body. This time she doesn't scream, she makes a choking noise.

MARY

Edgar?

The body lays prone. A tiny bit of light filters into the room and can see him now, laying on the bed with his arms crossed on his chest.

MARY

Edgar, please. Don't.

He sits bolt upright in bed, she shrieks. He puts his hands around her throat and we hear the gagging as her life slips away. The room is filled with an electronic beeping.

INT. MARY CRAWFORD'S ROOM

We see flashes of her room - A picture of her husband's funeral. Her wedding rings hanging on a chain from the lamp, flowers on the table. We see a framed article headline "Local man dies mysteriously in sleep" subtitle (foul play suspected)

The nurses enter look at the chart.

NURSE LYNN

No code.

NURSE CAROL

That's one a night, every night.

NURSE LYNN

Old people die. it's what they do.
Call the wagon, hum?

Nurse Carol nods. A shadow flits behind them.

INT. THE NURSES STATION

Terry lays his head on the table, the clock behind him reads "1:45". He falls asleep almost immediately.

ECU TERRY'S FACE

At first his face is calm, peaceful. A woman's hand touches his cheek, strokes it sensually, then rests on the cheek. His eyes begin to twitch back and forth in REM sleep. He struggles vaguely.

ECU THE CLOCK ON THE WALL

The second hand ticks by.

ECU TERRY'S FACE

His face begins to cast of a small amount of smoke.

ECU THE CLOCK ON THE WALL

It is now 2:05. As the second hand hits the twelve announcing 2:05 we cut back to

ECU TERRY'S FACE

His eyes flash open and he sits up.

INT. THE NURSES STATION

Terry. screams, sits up and looks around. He is breathing deeply. He's sweating.

With trembling hands he reaches into his pocket. He goes into the bathroom for his nightly hit off a joint.

INT. THE BATHROOM

Terry turns on the water and rinses his face. He looks in the mirror and takes a hit off his joint. He stares at himself in the mirror for a long moment. A shadow flashes across the back of the bathroom, he watches it, blinks and it is gone. He rubs his face and exhales.

TERRY (VO)

I've seen it before. I know it's there. Crazy right? Like a man who burns to death every night in his sleep isn't already fucking whacked.

He pushes away from the sink and walks to the door. He turns again, scans for the shadow but he is alone with the white porcelain and the florescent buzz of the lights.

EXT THE DARKENED HALL

Terry exits the bathroom. As he does, Nurse Carol passes pushing a medicine cart. Terry stumbles out looking disheveled.

NURSE CAROL

Bad dream?

TERRY

Yeah, you ever have them?

(CONTINUED)

NURSE CAROL
I never dream.

TERRY
Everybody dreams, maybe you just
don't remember.

NURSE CAROL
Then I don't remember.

She turns and wanders off down the hall, the sound of her
cart's wheels making an ominous, hollow sound in the empty
dark hall.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE NURSING HOME - DAY

Terry is walking to his car. He sees Dr. Morgan. The doctor
smiles at him brightly.

TERRY(VO)
Fucking guidance councilor. Ever
meet someone and at first look you
wanted to shove their nose down
their throat.

Morgan approaches. Terry stiffens, drops his lunchbox in the
front seat of his car.

MORGAN
Did you think about my offer?

TERRY
Thanks but no thanks.

MORGAN
I just...

TERRY
Why me? Do you offer your services
to everyone in the hospital? Or is
it something about me, you just
like annoying me...

MORGAN
Sorry I didn't mean to be
intrusive. It's your dreams. I had
horrible nightmares as a child and
ever since I've been fascinated by
them.

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TERRY
Your fucking kidding me?

MORGAN
No, I'm not and you look like hell,
could use some sleep I take it?

TERRY
I sleep all the time.

MORGAN
Really? You look like you've been
awake for days.

Terry eyes Morgan.

MORGAN
There are all different kinds of
prescriptions. Maybe some kind of
serotonin blocker or...

TERRY
I got to go.

Terry gets into the car and closes the door ending the
conversation.

INT TERRY'S APARTMENT

Terry enters, drops his bags on the floor and stumbles to
the bed and collapses, sleep before he hits the covers. The
clock behind him reads 8:25

EXT. A MIDWESTERN STREET CORNER - DAY

The scene has a cinematic or dreamlike quality. A boy exits
a small hovel. He looks exhausted. As people walk past him,
they make the sign of the evil eye. He ignores them and
walks down to the local well. The child's hair is a mess,
twisted into mats in places. He doesn't seem to see that,
either.

A woman approaches him. She seems out of place, very golden
and clean unlike all the people around him. She is dressed
in fine clothing and smiles at him. He cringes from her and
weeps.

INT. (CUT TO) TERRY'S APARTMENT

Terry is in bed, he's asleep. The clock beside his bed clicks over to 8:25.

He wakes suddenly sits bolt upright in the bed and wipes his face. He seems disoriented.

TERRY (VO)
Did I dream?

INT. A NURSING HOME - NIGHT

Nurse Lynn is pushing MARVIN JONAS to his room in a wheelchair. The old man looks at Terry with pleading in his eyes. Terry stares at him. He is impassive. The old man reaches for Terry vaguely. Terry turns away. The old man looks away resigned to his fate.

A moment later we hear his door close and a scuffle. Terry grabs a file and walks down the hall in the other direction.

INT. A SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

The day is gray and over cast. Marvin Jonas is standing in the middle of the street. The neighborhood seems abandon.

Behind him is a very dark figure. It seems menacing, wears leather clothing and his face is completely obscured.

Marvin walks up to the first house. He knocks on the door. A woman comes to the door. She looks very gray, sallow as if she is a corpse. She looks past him somberly at the man in black. She shakes her head and closes the door.

He turns and cuts across the yard to the next door. He looks over his shoulder. The man is there again. He is closer. Marvin knocks on the door. An old man comes to the door. He similarly seems like an animate corpse. He too looks at the old man, shakes his head and closes the door.

Marvin now looks panicked. He moves much more quickly to the next door. He sees the the man moving behind him, matching his pace.

He knocks on the third door. A child answers this time, he smiles a lecherous, black tooth smile. He looks at the man and nods, then closes the door. He goes to the window.

Marvin runs to the next door, the dark figure gets ever closer. Marvin slams against the door, Terror in his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

He screams. The door doesn't open. He is trapped in the doorway. The dark man with no face is right on him now. He reaches out and touches Marvin's chest. Marvin thrashes and screams. The dark figure moves his hand back and forth on Marvin's chest - the hand goes into the chest.

The dark figure holds up a bloody heart.

Marvin stops screaming, his eyes wild. He slides down the door as the dark figure moves into a squat in front of him, holding out the heart. We hear the electronic drone of the flatline.

INT. MARVIN'S ROOM

On the walls we see the remains of his life. A picture of him standing in the middle of a sub-division, a plaque as Housing developer of the year. Another picture beside it, the Headline "4 People Dead in House Collapse."

INT. A NURSING HOME - NIGHT

Terry walks past the shower stall. He stops and looks in. An Evelyn Mercer sits in a shower chair, naked. She is protesting and the Nurse Lynn is turning on the water. She turns it on and doesn't feel for the temperature. The water is clearly hot. She turns the hose on the patient. The woman screams.

The Nurse Lynn touches the water and adjusts the temperature. She turns the hand held shower back on the woman. The woman continues to scream.

NURSE LYNN

Shut up, it isn't too hot.

The woman continues to scream the Nurse Lynn holds the hose in the woman's face. She smiles as the woman chokes under the water. She looks up at Terry, still grinning and reaches over and closes the curtain. Terry moves along.

TERRY (VO)

I don't even want to get old.

EXT. A SYLVAN GLADE

The scene is hyper saturated and the color very vibrant. We are in a Sylvan Glade, draped heavily with colorful foliage. In the center of the glade is a pool and in the pool lies Evelyn Mercer. She is reclining and her eyes are closed, her

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arms stretched out in mock crucifixion. The water in the pool is pristine and the flowers, fruit and trees around her vibrant and lush.

Suddenly, a satyr appears in the trees along the bank of the pool. He watches her for a minute with lust in his eyes. He is carrying a large sword. He steps into the water.

As he does, the pool begins to roil and bubble. Black silt from the bottom of the pool filters up turning the lovely lake muddied and black. The woman sits up alarmed. She looks back at the creature moving toward her.

On the shore we see Nymphs coming out of the trees and moving toward the back, weeping and tearing at their hair.

She screams, tries to flee but he is too fast, he grabs her by the back of the hair and pulls her back. She struggles vainly with him but he is too strong for her. He pulls her into the water and shakes her, shoves her under water. He touches her breast and grins lecherously. He lets her go.

Now completely humiliated, she struggles back toward the shore, but he reaches out again, raises the sword and brings it down. Her blood flood, vivid over saturated red into the water and stains it making it a sick, dark red.

We hear the flat line in the background.

INT EVELYN'S ROOM

Nurse Carol Enters and leans over Evelyn. She brushes the hair out of Evelyn's face and then moves the cover over her head. In the room we see artworks painted and signed Evelyn Mercer. We see a newspaper article "Artist charged with sexual liason with underaged model."

INT THE BREAK ROOM - NIGHT

Nurse Lynn is sitting in front on the tv, trying to focus on some late night infomercial. She is sipping coffee. She dozes

EXT A PLAYGROUND

Nurse Lynn walks onto the playground? There are lots of children there. They all stop playing and look up at her as she enters the gate. She smiles a bit.

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She moves forward and as she does, they all back away. She smiles more. She continues pressing forward in a more and more sinister way. Finally, she jumps at a group of smaller children, growling and throwing her hands up, making them jump and whimper.

She stops just short of striking them. SHE laughs.

Just then a teacher walks up.

TEACHER

Lynn! Stop that this instant!

Nurse Lynn looks at her a bit chagrined. WHEN then something dawns on her face and the smile returns.

NURSE LYNN

Wait a minute. I'm not a child any more... I don't have to listen to you if I don't want to.

TEACHER

See here young lady...

NURSE LYNN

Shut up old woman!

Nurse Lynn strike the teacher knocking her to the ground. She then begins to kick her wildly. The whole time she has this horrible satisfied look on her face.

After a moment a child's hand rests on her arm. She looks over to see a somber, dark haired child with large eyes.

CHILD

Why are you like this?

The child morphs into the teacher.

TEACHER

What is wrong with you?

Again, the teacher morphs this time into a woman with a horses head. A group of children gather behind her, glaring at the nurse.

CHILDREN

What is WRONG with you?

Nurse Lynn smiles.

NURSE LYNN

Screw you.

She smiles and the children fall on her like straving wolves, scratching and screaming and biting. She gives back as good as she gets.

INT THE BREAK ROOM - NIGHT

Nurse Lynn wakes. She shudders and looks around disoriented and a bit afraid. Finally, she stands and her face falls into the usually amused expression it usually has.

NURSE LYNN

This place must be getting to me.

She looks at her watch and moves down the hall to continue her rounds.

INT. THE NURSES STATION

Terry looks at the clock. It says 1:42. He starts pacing nervously, chewing at his fingernails. He looks at the clock from time to time and grabs a coffee mug from the desk, downs the rest of it.

ECU THE CLOCK ON THE WALL

10:43

INT THE NURSES STATION

As time passes, Terry becomes more and more agitated. He sits, stands back up and paces some more.

ECU THE CLOCK ON THE WALL

1:44

INT THE NURSES STATION

He sits on the desk. He takes out the joint and walks toward the bathroom. He turns and comes back to the desk. He paces frantically, and slaps himself

ECU THE CLOCK ON THE WALL

1:45

INT THE NURSES STATION

TERRY (VO)
I fucking hate going to sleep.

Terry's eyes roll back into his head and he falls onto the floor. He hits the floor with a sickening thud.

INT THE NURSES STATION

Terry is laying on the floor. He is thrashing wildly. There is a shadow of a woman with a horses head leaning over him. His eyes open suddenly and the shadow disappears.

The clock says 2:05.

TERRY (VO)
I feel the cold of the tile, but only vaguely. There is no other sensation.

He sits up and holds out his hand. It's trembling. He stays on the floor. Nurse Carol walks by sees him. She drops to her knees beside him suddenly. She presses the cloth she is holding next up to his forehead. He winces.

NURSE CAROL
You're bleeding. What happened.

TERRY
I feel asleep.

NURSE CAROL
What? I think you need to see a doctor.

TERRY
I see several of them in the parking lot every day.

NURSE CAROL
Don't move. I'll get some gauze. You're bleeding.

(CONTINUED)

She puts his hand on the cloth and stands, going into the room behind the station. He pulls the cloth away and sees a lot of blood. Nurse Carol returns quickly with some bandages and a bottle of antiseptic. She pushes the towel back against his head as she leans down.

NURSE CAROL

We have to stop the bleeding.

TERRY

Is it bad?

NURSE CAROL

Head wounds have a tendency to bleed more. I think you'll live. But you hit your head pretty hard. You might have a concussion.

TERRY

Ow...

She smiles at him and begins to clean the wound with the antiseptic. He complains in moans and whines.

NURSE CAROL

Don't be such an baby. How long has this sleep thing been going on?

TERRY

Why want to nark me out to Dr. Morgan again.

NURSE CAROL

(she smiles)

I didn't nark you out, I was concerned. You don't hear how you scream.

He nods, offers her a small smile.

NURSE CAROL

Do you... feel something in here at night?

He stares at her quizzically. She begins to apply the bandage to his forehead.

TERRY

Dark place. Weird noises, you know, pipes and stuff.

She nods. Finishes applying the bandage.

NURSE CAROL

Yeah. Your right. It's just kind of creepy.

TERRY

SO do you feel something here at night?

She gives him her best beside manner.

NURSE CAROL

No. Well, maybe, but like you said creepy place. I think we are all just a little spooked with all the deaths recently and the dark halls and the echos.

He thinks for a minute and nods his head.

TERRY

And you don't have nightmares? Because I think everyone here has nightmares. I hear the patients and...

NURSE CAROL

I don't dream. I never have.

She smiles again.

NURSE CAROL

Go smoke your joint.

She shakes her head and gives him an affectionate smile. He watches her with a very puzzled look on his face.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE NURSING HOME - DAY

Terry is standing on the stairs, his lunchbox in hand. Dr. Morgan gets out of his car and walks toward the front. He sees Terry, smiles curiously. He approaches.

DR. MORGAN

Hey Terry.

Terry looks away for a minute, then looks back.

TERRY

OK, I'll give it a shot.

(CONTINUED)

DR. MORGAN

What?

TERRY

The pills, whatever it is you want to give me. I need some sleep.

DR. MORGAN

OK, let's go to my office. I'll write you a prescription.

Terry nods and follows Morgan back into the building.

INT. - MORGAN'S OFFICE.

It's a small but tidy place and the walls are covered with images of nightmares. There are pictures from Hieronymus Bosch, Dali, Escher but the most prominent piece is Fuceli's "The Nightmare".

Terry regards them all as he enters behind Morgan. Morgan motions to the chair, Terry falls into it and drops the lunchbox on the floor.

MORGAN

You like the pictures?

TERRY

Kind of morbid, but yes.

MORGAN

Told you, sleep is kind of a fascination for me.

TERRY

Sure. Is this gonna take long?

MORGAN

Got to ask a few questions first. AMA expects me to have some ethics. How long has this sleep disorder of yours been going on?

TERRY

As long as I've been working here.

MORGAN

Any issues before hand?

Terry shrugs and looks out the window.

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN

What are the dreams about?

TERRY

Are you going to give me the pills
or not?

MORGAN

Don't I deserve a little tit for
tat here? See that image?

He points to "The Nightmare" hanging on the wall. Terry
rakes his eyes across it and looks away quickly.

MORGAN

The Germans believed that a demon
called a Maron came to people in
their sleep. They weren't horses
originally. They were old woman who
sat on the chests of their victims.
Later legends sprang up about
people forced to ride horses in
their sleep, never getting rest,
eventually wasting away.

TERRY

Cool, a history lesson.

MORGAN

What do you dream about, Terry?

TERRY

Burning to death.

MORGAN

Every night?

Terry nods.

TERRY

But is so real. I feel it, I feel
all of it. And even when I'm just a
husk, just a corpse, I'm still
alive, still present. I wake and
I'm numb, it takes a minute for the
feeling to come back. It's so real.

MORGAN

No wonder you aren't sleeping.

TERRY

No, I sleep, I sleep like the dead.
I lay down and come back to
consciousness 12 hours later.

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN

I'd like to schedule you for an MRI.

TERRY

Do I get my pills or not?

MORGAN

Why are you so afraid of...

TERRY

Let's say I don't have any faith at all in Psychiatry. Pills?

Morgan takes out his pad and writes on it. He tears off the top page and hands it to Terry.

MORGAN

I gave you a weeks worth. Let me know if it works.

Terry nods, stands and grabs his lunch box. He crosses to the door. He stops and turns back.

TERRY

Why?

MORGAN

Why what?

TERRY

Why do they do it? The Mares, I mean.

MORGAN

They steal little pieces of the soul to feed on. They're minor demons. They probably like to steal the whole soul if they can.

TERRY

Do they have a preference for one kind of soul over the other?

MORGAN

I don't know. The legend is very vague about them. Again, they're minor demons.

Terry regards Morgan for a long moment as if to speak again. He turns and moves out of the office.

INT TERRY'S APARTMENT

Terry sits on the edge of his bed. He has a glass of water beside him. He takes one of the pills out of the bottle and downs it, chases it with water. He lays down and immediately passes out. The clock says 8:25

EXT. A MIDWESTERN STREET CORNER - DAY

The scene has a cinematic or dreamlike quality. A boy exits a small hovel. He looks exhausted. As people walk past him, they make the sign of the evil eye. He ignores them and walks down to the local well. The child's hair is a mess, twisted into mats in places. He doesn't seem to see that, either.

A woman approaches him. She seems out of place, very golden and clean unlike all the people around him. She is dressed in fine clothing and smiles at him. He cringes from her and weeps.

She leans down and offers him a piece of candy. He looks at it like it's a snake.

ECU THE BOY

His mother approaches. We see only her hand as she reaches for him, he clutches at her hand desperately. She speaks off camera

MOTHER

Don't be rude, say thank you!.

BOY

She's the one, mother, the one I told you about!

CUT TO: INT TERRY'S APARTMENT

Terry sits bolt upright out of bed. He buries his face in his hands. The clock reads 8:25.

TERRY (VO)

I feel like there is something...I should remember.

INT. MERCY CARE NURSING CENTER - NIGHT

Nurse Lynn is in Cara Smith's. Terry is walking down the hallway. He hears a woman screaming in her room, then there is quiet. As the Nurse Lynn opens the door and comes out. He hears quiet sobbing from behind her. The door closes.

Nurse Lynn glares at him. She smiles. She walks away. Terry covers his ears as if hiding from a horrible noise. He leans against the wall and slides down it, curling into a fetal position.

TERRY (VO)

Nothing ever changes. Not even me.

He sees the horse head girl entering the old woman's room. It turns and beckons to him. He shakes his head, his face becoming cold and impassive. It turns and enters the room.

INT. CARA SMITH'S ROOM

It's dark and quiet. Cara is sleeping. There is a noise in the room and she wakes, sits up and looks around. Glowing eyes appear in the darkest corner of the room. She shudders goes to get out of bed. Her legs won't move. She is immediately shocked by this.

CARA

No, no...

She reaches down and tries to move her legs with her hands. They don't move. She shakes her left arm suddenly, rubs it with the right hand. The left arm falls, paralyzed.

Again she looks to the corner of the room. They eyes are still watching, hungry.

She struggles vainly to move her left arm, it flops lifelessly. Her right arm falls limp. She moans.

The eyes come a little closer.

She flings her useless arms around. She freaks.

CARA

What are you! Why are you doing this to me?

ECU CARA'S FACE

The old woman's face suddenly freezes in a mask of terror. She falls backwards onto the bed, away from the camera.

INT. CARA SMITH'S ROOM

The old woman now lays on the bed, prone. She is moving her head around looking frantically. The eyes have disappeared from the corner. Suddenly, her head falls back on the pillow. Her eyes begin to tear as her face hold position - only her eyes moving now. She is trapped in her body.

ECU THE BOTTOM OF THE BED

At the foot of Cara's bed, the creature appears. First, gray, mottle fingers creep up the bed. Then the hand and the arm. The head appears, an ancient woman, mummified, the eyes dull husks, toothless and with sparse, white hair. It moves up the bed, climbing like a snake, slithering up the body of the old woman. It is the creature from the Nightmare.

Cara cannot move, only her eyes and the rapid beeping of the EKG tell the story of her fear.

The creature reached her chest and sits up. Cara begins to wheeze under the pressure.

The old woman leans forward, puts her lips close to the old woman's face. It inhales and as it does, the machinery goes wild, beeping and clicking. Alarms wail.

Then there is the slow whine of the EKG. We see in Cara's Room a picture of her as a nursing student, a newspaper clipping "Heroic nurse saves 27 patients in one year." And a book entitled "Death's angels and Munchhausen's - a clinical study" and one fo the nurses in the cover photo is Younger Cara.

INT. CARA SMITH'S ROOM

The nurses enter. Terry is mopping the floor outside, he looks in. Nurse Lynn looks at him.

NURSE LYNN
Wonder whose next?

TERRY
I don't see you, you know.

Nurse Lynn frowns threateningly.

(CONTINUED)

NURSE LYNN

Let's keep it that way, shall we?

She grins and turns back to her work. Terry turns and moves down the hall with his bucket and mop. Nurse carol regards them both darkly.

BLACK SCREEN

There is a slow resolve to gray, a room comes almost completely into focus. It is a bare, gray and has a concrete floor. There is a chair in the center of it. The image flips and breaks, like old film. We hear the voice of TERRY, an orderly.

TERRY (VO)

When I was a kid, they told me my father ran off on us. That was a lie.

INT. THE ROOM

The room fully resolves and there is a man sitting in the chair. The scene flickers and shifts as if the film is old. The man is wearing a hospital gown and is strapped into a chair.

TERRY (VO)

My father was sent to a mental hospital. I guess mom thought it was easier to think of her husband as a bastard then as a fucking insane person.

INT. THE ROOM

The man begins to smoke and writhe in the chair. he strains against his bonds. He moans at first, then screams. He bursts into flames.

TERRY (VO)

He had these dreams, ya see...about a woman, and old woman. She would climb out of the walls and sit on his chest, paralyse him. She'd drink his breath.

INT THE ROOM

The man stops screaming but his body moves more and more quickly with a jerky motion.

TERRY (VO)

He called her Maron. He was scared shitless of her. I didn't find out about it til I was an adult.

INT THE ROOM

The flesh on the body turns black. The face looks mummified. The corpse stops moving, staring out with a hollow eyed grin.

TERRY (VO)

One night in the looney bin, the maron came to him. He woke to find her there, drinking his breath. And orderly must have heard him. He came in an my dad threw a punch at him.

INT. THE ROOM

The body is sitting still in the chair. It is still smoking.

TERRY (VO)

This pissed the orderly off so much he strapped my dad to a chair and doused him with rubbing alcohol then threw lit cigarettes at him til he caught fire. The orderly ended up as a resident in his own facility. If not justice, irony.

INT. THE NURSES STATION

Terry's eyes open and he sits up. Across from him he sees not the shadow, but the Maron itself. It looks at him and runs down the hall. He jumps up and follows, but it is too quick for him. It dashes into a room. He turns the corner, but the room is empty. He stops, shaking with fear. He reaches instinctively into his pocket and pulls out the joint. He lights up and takes a long drag, holds it, exhales and takes another.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE NURSING HOME - DAY

Terry sees Morgan. He approaches the doctor as he gets out of his car. He begins speaking to Morgan even before he approaches.

TERRY

Can it manifest? I mean before someone who isn't sleeping.

MORGAN

What? The Maron? Terry it's just an old wives tale...

TERRY

Could it in the legends, could people see it? Like real, awake people. Or was it just a shadow.

Morgan regards him, relaxes.

MORGAN

When I was a child my Grandmother told me a story. Because of the nightmares. They were German, you see. She said that when she was a child, several people in the village she lived in died in their sleep. Everyone suspected a Maron. One man in town claimed to have seen it.

TERRY

It looked like a woman with a horses head.

MORGAN

Yes, it did, but that image is brought forth in a lot of pictures, even the one I showed you. The one on my wall.

TERRY

Where the hell do they come from?

MORGAN

Hell I suppose...

TERRY

No, I mean, how do you get to them, how do you protect yourself...

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN

People used to believe they could come in through windows, doors, cracks in the wall...They would seal them up...

TERRY

What happened to the guy?

MORGAN

I don't know. I didn't think anything of it, I was a kid and my Grandmother was telling me a story.

TERRY

What happened to him?

MORGAN

(forcefully)

I really don't know. My mother caught us talking about it and stopped the conversation.

Terry looks away from the doctor as if thinking about something. He turns to leave. Morgan reaches out and grabs his shoulder. Terry turns back aggressively. Morgan holds his hands up, non-threateningly.

MORGAN

There are no such things as Maron, Terry. I don't like to diagnose with as little as I have, but I think there's something going on in your brain chemistry, or your psyche. Your repressing your dreams. That can cause real problems.

TERRY

I'm not repressing anything.

MORGAN

Doesn't it make more sense your hallucinating all this rather than there really being a demon running around a nursing home?

Terry stops, regards him

TERRY

My father saw the Maron, too. Maybe the rest of you are just exempt.

(CONTINUED)

Terry turns and stalks off to his car. Morgan follows but Terry jumps in his car and slams the door. He locks it and shoves the key in the ignition. Morgan arrives at his car right as Terry backs out, smiling at him.

Morgan stands in the parking lot, frowning after him.

INT TERRY'S APARTMENT

Terry enters and walks over to the bed. He is absolutely manic. He grabs the pill bottle and takes four pills. He downs them dry then goes to the sink, turns on the water and sticks his head under the tap to drink.

He paces the room. He glares at the clock. 8:42. Terry speaks to the walls.

TERRY

Not this time, bitch. Not this time.

He continues pacing, looking at the clock. He watches the doors, the windows. He begins to tremble involuntarily.

8:43

He sees a crack in the wall, becomes obsessed with it. He moves closer, reaches up and touches it. He grins.

TERRY

(leering)

Not today, bitch.

He goes into the bathroom and gets a tube of tooth paste. He begins filling the crack with toothpaste. He giggles insanely as he does.

8:45

A black smoke begins coming from the crack. He panics and begins working faster, He collapses in a deep sleep.

EXT. A MIDWESTERN STREET CORNER - DAY

The scene has a cinematic or dreamlike quality. A boy exits a small hovel. He looks exhausted. As people walk past him, they make the sign of the evil eye. He ignores them and walks down to the local well. The child's hair is a mess, twisted into mats in places. He doesn't seem to see that, either.

(CONTINUED)

A woman approaches him. She seems out of place, very golden and clean unlike all the people around him. She is dressed in fine clothing and smiles at him. He cringes from her and weeps.

She leans down and offers him a piece of candy. He looks at it like it's a snake.

ECU THE BOY

His mother approaches. we see only her hand as she reaches for him, he clutches at her hand desperately. She speaks off camera

MOTHER

Don't be rude, say thank you!.

BOY

She's the one, mother, the one I told you about!

MOTHER

Who is this, Terry? Do you know the pretty lady?

BOY

It's the nightmare, mother.

MOTHER

Oh not this again. Don't be rude...

ECU THE WOMAN'S FACE.

The Maron smiles...

CUT TO INT TERRY'S APARTMENT

Terry is laying on the floor. The clock reads 8:45. His eyes open. He sits up. There is a terrifying determination in his eyes.

INT. MERCY CARE NURSING CENTER - NIGHT

Terry is walking up the hall. He is calm and confident, though he still looks exhausted. In the background we can hear a patient screaming. He doesn't react.

He makes his way down to the doctor's offices and moves into Morgan's office. The shadow flits around him, occasionally we see a glimpse of it's eyes. He just grins at it.

(CONTINUED)

He get's to Morgan's door, tries the handle, the door is locked.

He anticipated this. The creature appears down the hall. He looks at it for a second and reaches into his pocket. He pulls out a nail file and jimmy's the door. It opens easily.

He steps inside the room. He pulls a flashlight out of his pocket and turns it on, looks around. There is a bookshelf on the other side of the room and he goes to it, leans down and scans the titles. He finds a book entitled "German legends and myth" He takes the book and sits down to read.

TERRY (VO)

Morgan is such a fucking liar. I hate liars.

He opens the book to a page marked "Maron" he begins to read.

TERRY (VO)

It wasn't his grandparents that told him the story. It was mine.

He turns the page and sees a woodcut of a horrific beast with a woman's body and a horses head.

TERRY (VO)

And I know now what happens to the guy who sees it...

He closes the book. He leans his head back. He falls asleep

INT THE NURSES STATION

Nurse Lynn looks at the clock. She sees that Terry isn't in the chair like he usually is.

NURSE LYNN

Where the hell is he?

ECU THE CLOCK ON THE WALL

1:45

INT. THE NURSES STATION

Nurse Lynn falls to the floor in a dead faint.

INT THE HALL

Nurse Lynn is standing by the nurses station, looking down the empty halls. The lights flicker on and off several times. They die. Emergency lights come up.

She is in an eerie, red glow. She sees someone moving in the corridor.

It's a patient.

NURSE LYNN
Get back into bed.

The patient ignores her, she stalks up the hall toward them but sees another patient coming out of their room.

NURSE LYNN
I said, go back to bed.

She glares at them.

NURSE LYNN
You stupid fucking people! I said,
go back to bed or there will be
hell to pay. I WILL have order.

The first person she saw is now close to her. She sees his face, it's Marvin.

Her face falls, just a little. She looks confused to the other patient - a third is coming out of his room. It is Mary and Itzak. They move toward her at the slow, stumbling pace of zombies, but they don't stop. Cara and hundreds of others are behind them.

NURSE LYNN
GET - BACK - IN - YOUR - ROOMS!

They ignore her and she refuses to break and run. She stands her ground and they overwhelm her. A fourth and fifth patient join them and soon there are people swarming out of the rooms, all the people she has abused over the years. They push her down and hold her. She begins to fight, to punch and kick but there are too many of them. She falls to the floor and they lay on her. She can't breathe under their weight.

(CONTINUED)

Nurse Carol appears from no where. She leans over Nurse Lynn.

NURSE LYNN
(gasping for breath)
Help me!

NURSE CAROL
Oh, I'll help you dear.

NURSE LYNN
Is this real?

NURSE CAROL
You should believe what you
experience. Full moon, you know?
They all come out for a full moon.

Nurse Carol reaches into her pocket. She pulls out a needle and pops the top. She pushed the air out with the plunger.

NURSE LYNN
What is that?

NURSE CAROL
Something for the pain, dear.

Nurse Carol takes Nurse Lynn's arm and jabs in the needle. Nurse Lynn immediately begins to scream.

CU NURSE CAROL

We see her, she turns into the Maron and then back. She smiles.

NURSE CAROL
A dilution of lye. Should be good
for pain.

She pulls out the needle and stabs it in again and again, injecting the lye into the screaming, suffocating Nurse Lynn until we see...

INT THE NURSES STATION

The lights are on. Nurse Lynn struggles on the floor and finally stops, falling dead. Nurse Carol throws off ehr disguise and as the Maron moves down the corridor leaving the empty husk of a cruel woman.

EXT OUTSIDE THE NURSING HOME NIGHT

Morgan leaves his car in the lot and enters the building. He makes his way to his office. When he gets to the door, he finds it open and moves cautiously into the office. He finds Terry sleeping in the chair. He leans over and shakes him awake.

INT DOCTOR MORGAN'S OFFICE.

Terry starts awake and jumps upright in the chair. He takes a moment to get his bearing and then sees Morgan.

TERRY

Go away.

MORGAN

I thought you might want to hear the rest of the story.

Terry considers for a moment. He nods and motions Morgan to his chair.

MORGAN

This used to be a clinic. Not a home. When your father died, you had...issues. I was your doctor.

TERRY

Why didn't you tell me, why the horse shit story.

MORGAN

(sighs)

Your mother was hysterical back then. First her husband, then her son. Seeing the Maron. Honestly, I figured you were well. I never expected you to come back here. Figured there was no need bringing up old unpleasantness.

Terry nods.

TERRY

Why lie about the Maron? Why bring it up.

MORGAN

What was I supposed to do? You were having the night terrors again. I wanted to see if the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN (cont'd)
Maron was coming back to haunt your
psyche...

TERRY
So you believe in the Maron?

MORGAN
No Terry. But I do believe you aer
a very troubled young man and I'd
like to help you. I have a friend
at The Grove, it's a new mental
healthy facility not far from here.
Were could talk...

TERRY
No, I'm not crazy. Why all the
nightmare pictures?

MORGAN
(with utter frankness)
Because you were the most
interesting case I ever had. I've
spent my life since then
investigating dreams.

Morgan stands, walks toward the desk. He grabs the phone
and puts it to his ear.

TERRY
Who are you calling?

MORGAN
Don't worry, Terry, it's going to
be alright.

Terry stands suddenly and picks a large, glass sculpture off
the desk. On impulse he uses it to bash Dr. Morgan's head
in. Morgan falls to the floor with a thump. Terry drops the
sculpture and sits calmly back down.

INT THE HALLWAY NIGHT

An eerie silence descends on the ward. The lights good off
and an eerie emergency lighting takes it place. In the
darkness we see the shadow of the maron, the girl with the
horse head. We hear her evil laughter echo in the hall for a
moment.

CUT TO) INT DOCTOR MORGAN'S OFFICE.

Terry sits and watches the clock. He smiles. Outside he can hear it, moving up the hall, the sound of chimes and fingernails on a chalk board.

The door opens and closes as if a ghost has entered.

TERRY
Show yourself.

It appears, first as Nurse Carol and then in it's true guise, a girl with a horses head, the same grey nightmare as in the picture. She comes to rest across from him, perching daintily on the desk.

TERRY
So, now what?

It reaches a hand to him. He regards the hand.

TERRY (VO)
There is a moment in everyone's
life when they have to choose
between heaven and hell. Well,
almost everyone...

He stands, looks at her. She reverts for a moment back into Nurse Carol, smiling kindly, then back to her true form.

She stands to face him, he reaches out and takes her hand. They both vanish from the room.

FADE TO BLACK -

We hear a scream, a high pitched shriek of pure torment.

There is a slow resolve to gray, a room comes almost completely into focus. It is a bare, gray and has a concrete floor. There is a chair in the center of it. The image flips and breaks, like old film. We hear the voice of TERRY, an orderly.

TERRY (VO)
The Maron doesn't eat souls. It
eats sins. It doesn't have it's own
dreams and so it feeds on the dark
dreams of others.

INT. THE ROOM

The room fully resolves and there is Terry sitting in the chair. The scene flickers and shifts as if the film is old. Terry is wearing a hospital gown and is strapped into a chair.

TERRY (VO)
Heaven was never really an option
for me. Just more of the same.

INT. THE ROOM

Terry begins to smoke and writhe in the chair. he strains against his bonds. He moans at first, then screams. He bursts into flames.

TERRY (VO)
What choice was there really? SHE
claimed me as a child.

INT THE ROOM

Terry stops screaming but his body moves more and more quickly with a jerky motion.

TERRY (VO)
Did you know complacency is a sin?
Despair?

INT THE ROOM

The flesh on the body turns black. The face looks mummified. The corpse stops moving, staring out with a hollow eyed grin.

TERRY (VO)
I guess I did, too. And she wanted
my sin most of all. My sin was the
sweetest, my dreams the deepest.

INT. THE ROOM

The body is sitting still in the chair. It is still smoking.

TERRY (VO)
And now she can eat it... Forever.

INT. THE ROOM

The body sits in the chair, looking vacantly out at the screen. Suddenly, it convulses violently.

FADE TO BLACK - END CREDITS