

TWILIGHT MERIDIAN

"One Light in The Darkness"

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Based on the story by

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EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

FX: Wind whips up the waves from the nearby sea. They crash against the shore with intent.

FX: We become gradually aware of a set of voices, united in a single low note, not quite words, slowly building in intensity.

FX: The air crackles with electricity. Almost audibly sparking.

FX: Then we hear the sound of footsteps approaching.

Three men. Lanternmen. We'll meet them again before too long.

FX: Metal lanterns swing in the wind.

LANTERNMAN 1
Can he be trusted?

LANTERNMAN 2
It matters not. His desperation drives him. He will do what is necessary.

LANTERNMAN 3
And if he falters?

LANTERNMAN 1
He shall meet the same fate as all who fall from the shadow's embrace.

FX: The voices are louder now. And closer.

LANTERMAN 2
(almost having to shout over the noise)
For now, bear witness. It begins.

FX: The voices reach a crescendo and we hard cut to:

EXT. STREET - LATE AFTERNOON 1937

FX: A busy, 1930s street. Period cars. Rain pounding the street. Honking of horns. Good-natured shouting - a general ambience of a city full of life.

And somewhere in the mix, a single typewriter, fingers flying over its keys.

REBECCA (V.O)
How did we come to be, in the
beginning, so afraid of the dark?
For it was in darkness, where we
were hidden, harbored and grown.
Twas the light that profaned our
eyes, showing us things too
terrible to behold. And so we shun
the shadow ever after, lest we lose
our way.

We pull focus to:

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON - 1937

FX: The street noise is now heard faintly through the open window of the detective's office. The Detective (50s) strides across the small room where we catch the end of a radio commercial playing on a small transistor radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

...So come. Bring your family, and
enjoy the calm cool waters, here at
shell beach.

FX: The radio is switched off. A bottle is lifted and opened. A glass picked up. Liquor poured.

FX: The glass drops with a crash.

DETECTIVE

Goddamn it! (calling off) Irene!

FX: A door opens. Irene is the Detective's secretary. She's young, keen, but no nonsense.

IRENE

(matter-of-fact)

What is it, boss? (a beat, as she takes in the scene) Another one?
I'd say you had the DTs if you ever sobered up long enough.

DETECTIVE

(irritated)

Just get me a broom.

IRENE

I'll do you one better. I got you a client.

DETECTIVE
(suddenly interested)
Rebecca Sullivan.

IRENE
You should have told me you could
read minds. I'd have put our prices
up.

DETECTIVE
I've been expecting her.

IRENE
You won't say that when you see
her. Nobody's expecting her.

DETECTIVE
Just show her in.

Irene opens the door and leans back out into the hallway.

IRENE
The Detective will see you now.
Right this way.

REBECCA SULLIVAN, a well dressed woman in her early thirties,
enters.

DETECTIVE
Mrs Sullivan.

REBECCA
Detective.

DETECTIVE
Irene?

IRENE
Yes, boss.

DETECTIVE
Fetch me a cup of joe.

IRENE
(to Rebecca)
Can I get you anything?

REBECCA
I don't suppose you have tea?

IRENE
Not since the party in Boston.

REBECCA
Black coffee will be lovely.

IRENE
You haven't tasted it yet.

DETECTIVE
Irene...

IRENE
I'm going, I'm going.

FX: Irene exits, the door shutting behind her.

DETECTIVE
Please, take a weight off.

FX: A small squeak as Rebecca pulls out the wooden chair in front of the detective's desk and sits.

FX: The detective walks across the room, and sits behind his desk. Opens a drawer. Retrieves a cigar and a lighter. Lights one with the other. A deep breath of satisfaction. Then a beat.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. Do you mind?

REBECCA
The cigar? No. In fact...

FX: A purse is unclasped. A cigarette case removed and opened.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
...might I trouble you for a light?

DETECTIVE
All part of the service.

The Detective stands and reaches across his deck to light Rebecca's cigarette. Rebecca takes a long drag. He sits again.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Are you looking for small talk to ease us in, or shall we get down to business?

REBECCA
(hesitantly)
Detective, I need your help.

DETECTIVE
Your husband is missing.

REBECCA
(trying to remain
unflustered)
You're remarkably well-informed.

DETECTIVE
I spoke with Chief McCluskey, he
filled me in.

REBECCA
Then you know who my husband is.

DETECTIVE
I do.

REBECCA
Does that mean you'll help me?

DETECTIVE
That depends.

REBECCA
On what?

DETECTIVE
The answer to my next question.
When did you last see your husband?

REBECCA
(brief hesitation)
Three days ago. Max and I were just
finishing dinner...

MUSIC CUE: Flashback

INT. DINING ROOM - ANDENER ESTATE - EVENING - FLASHBACK

FX: The sound of silverware, clattering on plates. There's an echo to the space - the room is far too big for its two occupants - Rebecca and MAXIMUS SULLIVAN. They sit either end of a long dining table. Rebecca pours a drink and takes a sip.

REBECCA
...I was thinking it might be nice
to take a trip upstate this spring.
(a beat) We could stop at that fish
place. What was it called? Remember
they had that sandwich you liked?

A beat. Maximus is miles away.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
Honey?

MAXIMUS
Hmmm? Oh, sorry. Yes, that sounds fine.

Another beat.

REBECCA
(sighs)
Is everything all right?

MAXIMUS
Of course.

A beat.

MAXIMUS (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, darling. Work. You know how it is.

REBECCA
(softening)
No, I'm sorry. You must be absolutely exhausted and here I am, prattling on like...

MAXIMUS
Rebecca, my dearest, you are many things. But a prattler is not one of them.

FX: A hesitant tap on the door. It creaks open.

MEREDITH, the young housemaid - timid, mouse like - enters.

MEREDITH
Begging your pardon.

REBECCA
(kindly)
Don't be silly, Meredith. It's fine. Come in.

MAXIMUS
What is it?

MEREDITH
A telegram for Mr Sullivan. Marked urgent.

REBECCA
(not wanting work to
interrupt)
Can it wait until after dinner?

MAXIMUS
(urgently)
I don't think it can. Meredith?

FX: Meredith scuttles across the room and hands over the telegram.

Maximus mutters under his breath, then stifles a gasp.

REBECCA
(worried)
Is something wrong?

MAXIMUS
(ignoring the question)
I'm sorry, dear. Please excuse me
for a moment.

FX: His chair is thrust back and he walks into an adjoining room.

FX: In the near distance, a rotary phone is dialed.

MEREDITH
Will there be anything else, ma'am?

REBECCA
(distracted, listening)
No, thank you.

MEREDITH
Would you like me to clear...?

REBECCA
(coming round)
That can wait until morning. In
fact, take the rest of the evening
off. You... look tired.

MEREDITH
(confused)
Thank you, Mrs Sullivan.

Meredith exits before Rebecca changes her mind.

FX: Door shuts, and Rebecca stands.

Maximus' call connects.

MAXIMUS

(into phone)

Roark? Yes, it's me. Listen, it's Aurora, they've agreed to meet... That's right... Yes, tonight. Meet me at the tower in two hours time. Good.

He hangs up the phone and walks back into the dining room. He is noticeably brighter - and speaks with more purpose.

MAXIMUS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about that, dear. It's...

REBECCA

I heard. You're going back to Jericho tonight?

MAXIMUS

You must understand. This changes everything.

A beat.

REBECCA

Everything?

MAXIMUS

There's nothing to worry about. I'll be back tomorrow and then...

Rebecca moves into a close embrace with him.

REBECCA

(affectionately, but disappointed)

You'll be back when you're back and we both know it.

MAXIMUS

(wryly)

There is such a thing as too understanding, my dear.

REBECCA

If it's any consolation, I'll still be furious when you're late.

MAXIMUS

It is. (quietly) I love you, Rebecca.

REBECCA
I love you too.

MUSIC CUE: The flashback crossfades into the sounds of the Detective's office.

CUT TO:

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

DETECTIVE
Came the day, but *not* the man, I
take it.

REBECCA
Which, as I say, wasn't so unusual.
He's never been what you might call
punctual.

DETECTIVE
I wouldn't have taken him for a
disorganized man.

REBECCA
Not disorganized, Detective.
Important. The world tends to
rearrange itself around him. I
doubt he even notices. Still, when
he hadn't come home the next day,
OR the day after, I started making
calls.

DETECTIVE
And you're sure he said Aurora?

REBECCA
Entirely sure. Oh and here...

She starts digging in her purse

REBECCA (CONT'D)
I called the telegram office and
got a transcript.

She pulls out the telegram and hands it to him.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
Here.

A beat as the Detective scans the telegram. Then he gives a low whistle.

DETECTIVE
Your husband was right.

REBECCA
What do you mean?

DETECTIVE
This does change everything.

EXT. STREET - NEWS STAND - DAY

A small transistor radio chirps from a news stand, as JAKE HANLON, a young police officer, chats with its proprietor, ARNIE, while the latter eats from a bag of peanuts.

RADIO ANNOUNCER
...Sullivan Industries announced the acquisition of Stygian Transatlantic. This marks the third utilities acquisition by the conglomerate over the last six months. President and Founder and Maximus Sullivan was not immediately available for comment.

FX: The radio fades as we focus on the conversation.

ARNIE
One copy of the Times, hot off the presses, that'll be a nickel.

FX: A coin is flipped onto the counter.

ARNIE (CONT'D)
Much obliged. Now, what's with the street clothes, Jake? They chuck you out of the precinct?

JAKE
(lightly)
Special assignment. Been leant out to the Detective for a spell.

ARNIE
(with a whistle)
You really must have pissed somebody off.

JAKE
What do you mean?

ARNIE
Guy's a nut.

JAKE

We're all a little nutty, Arnie.
Where's the harm in it?

ARNIE

I prefer my nuts sober and unarmed
is all.

JAKE

Well, then you're lucky I'm there
to keep things in check.

ARNIE

That ain't as reassuring as you
seem to think it is.

Jake laughs.

FX: A newspaper is folded up and thrust under Jake's arm.

JAKE

Keep smiling, Arnie. I've got to
see a nut about a job.

ARNIE

Yeh yeh yeh...

INT. DETECTIVES OFFICE - DAY

FX: The detective pours another glass and paces as he reads aloud from the telegram.

DETECTIVE

*Its ray of hope no longer shines
Look the path that's lost to time
Guarded secrets still concealed
Hide in letters yet revealed
Held in hand, a truth to clasp
The answer lies, within your grasp
Up and down, they will align
Order shifts but pairs must rhyme
Seek us out atop her lattice
Ex luce veritatis!*

He breaks off.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Paying by the word, that's an
expensive love letter. They should
have just sent flowers.

REBECCA

You said my husband was right. I took that to mean you understood the message.

DETECTIVE

I wouldn't go that far. But take it from me, once they start chucking Latin about, you know things are about to get heavy.

REBECCA

(ignoring)

I think it's some sort of riddle.

DETECTIVE

It ain't a knitting pattern. A riddle that tells us what, that's the question.

REBECCA

Where this Aurora wanted to meet, I imagine. Max seemed to understand it immediately. In fact, it seemed to bring him back to life, in a strange way. I'd not seen him so... engaged since...

There is a long, awkward pause.

DETECTIVE

Since?

REBECCA

No. Sorry, it's nothing.

FX: A knock, followed by an opening door and an Irene.

IRENE

One coffee...

FX: One cup is set down on the desk.

IRENE (CONT'D)

...and one tea.

FX: She hands the other cup to Rebecca.

REBECCA

(mild surprise)

You're a miracle worker.

IRENE

From your lips to the boss' ears.

Rebecca takes a sip. Then lets out the tension with a sigh.

REBECCA
I don't think even I realized how much I needed that.

IRENE
I found an old tin in one of the cupboards. I'll tell you the truth, I'm relieved to discover it is tea.

REBECCA
Thank you, Irene.

IRENE
You see, boss? That's called gratitude. You want to try it some time.

DETECTIVE
(sarcastically)
Thank you, Irene. (a beat) Oh and don't forget to clean up that glass. We want our guest to think we run a classy joint.

REBECCA
(under her breath)
Sorry.

IRENE
(under her breath)
It's all right. I'm not sure if it's coffee, either.

FX: The door shuts as she exits.

FX: The detective takes a sip of coffee. Spits it out immediately.

DETECTIVE
(to himself)
Damn it, Irene.

He recovers. Begins to pace.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
So let's get this straight. Your husband gets a mysterious telegram. It lights a fire under him and he runs off to meet this Aurora.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
You wait a couple days, radio
silence all round, then you decide
to take it to the police. Have I
missed anything?

REBECCA
That's the gist of it. But...

DETECTIVE
But?

REBECCA
(hesitantly)
I have an idea about 'this Aurora'
but I'm afraid you'll think me mad.

DETECTIVE
And what would that be?

REBECCA
The Aurora Society, Detective.

DETECTIVE
Lets pretend I know what that is.

REBECCA
My husband's life and reputation
are at stake, Detective. Might we
skip past the repartee.

DETECTIVE
His reputation?

REBECCA
Detective...

DETECTIVE
How do you know they weren't just
raising funds for impoverished
children? This is my job. I'm not
bad at it, either.

REBECCA
All right, Detective. The way Max
was talking, Aurora sounded like a
group, an organization. And the
Latin that caught your attention:
"Ex luce veritatis!" It means:
"From the light of truth".

DETECTIVE
So far, so secret society, I grant
you.

REBECCA

I did a little research. The city library is gratifyingly well-stocked.

DETECTIVE

At the risk of putting myself out of a job, what did you find?

Rebecca sighs.

REBECCA

Not much. The Aurora Society was formed in Finland in 1780... all coded messages and elaborate handshakes. Nothing concrete about their purpose for existing, but whatever they were doing, by 1790 the local authorities had taken issue with it and they were forced underground.

The Detective leans back, he takes another puff, looking almost satisfied.

DETECTIVE

Not sweaters for orphans then. Not popular orphans, anyway.

REBECCA

(annoyed)

Well, this is the book with the most to say about them. See for yourself.

FX: She unfastens her bag. A book slams hard on the desk.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

(sarcasm)

The Secret Teachings of All Ages by Manly P Hall. (*clearly reading from the cover*) An Encyclopaedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy.

DETECTIVE

Ah, the classics.

REBECCA

You know it?

DETECTIVE
That surprises you?

REBECCA
I thought you'd be more of a
Chandler man.

DETECTIVE
I get enough of crime at work.

REBECCA
Then do you believe in all this
nonsense? Zodiacs, Pythagorean
divinity, the Qabalah... alchemy?

DETECTIVE
What I believe, Mrs. Sullivan, is
that the truth often hides in the
unlikely places. And I've an
interest in the esoteric. That's
why McClusky sent you here.

REBECCA
But what would a group like that
want with my husband?

DETECTIVE
Or what he would want with them?
If, of course, we are talking about
the same group.

REBECCA
Detective, my husband is an
engineer not an occultist.

DETECTIVE
Both reside at the crossroads of
science and god. Are you sure you
can't think of any reason he'd been
involved with people like that?
Something he'd been working on?
Something out of the ordinary?

REBECCA
My husband is not an ordinary man.
But he's always been a good one.

DETECTIVE
The claim of many a subsequently
disillusioned spouse.

REBECCA
It's been three days. If
something... untoward...
(MORE)

REBECCA (CONT'D)
has happened to him, I know the
clock is against us.

DETECTIVE
(hesitating)
Mrs. Sullivan...

Suddenly the door bursts open and in walks JAKE HANLON.

JAKE
Hey, I got those pictures from the
cove developed and I think...

He realizes he's interrupted.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Sorry. Didn't realize you were
entertaining.

DETECTIVE
(sourly)
Rebecca Sullivan, this is Jake
Hanlon.

REBECCA
How do you do?

JAKE
(deliberately
misinterpreting)
Oh, I do all right. Most of the
time.

DETECTIVE
Officer Hanlon was kind enough to
take a sabbatical from Jericho PD
to come work for me. Clearly, we
haven't reached the etiquette
portion of his training.

JAKE
Pleasure to meet you, Mrs.
Sullivan.

DETECTIVE
(To Jake)
Mrs. Sullivan believes that her
husband Maximus has gone missing. I
was just about to tell her that,
unfortunately, there isn't anything
we can do for her...

JAKE
Oh, I'm very sorry to hear that.

REBECCA
(shocked)
Wait, what?

REBECCA (CONT'D)
If you weren't going to help...

DETECTIVE
(suddenly very curt)
He'll either come home or he won't.
Nothing I do will change that.

Rebecca shoots up out of her chair and glares at The Detective.

REBECCA
(angry)
So, I'm to be a good little girl
and go on home? Sit and wait for my
husband to just come back whenever
he bloody well pleases?

DETECTIVE
Rebecca, why are you here?

REBECCA
(angry)
Because my husband is missing.

DETECTIVE
Husbands go missing all the time.
Debts. Drink. A little love nest
downtown.

REBECCA
It - he - is not like that.

FX: He suddenly smacks his fist on the desk. Hard.

DETECTIVE
Stop lying to me. Why are you here,
REALLY?

There's a moment where this could go either way. Rebecca could turn and walk away.

She doesn't.

REBECCA
(her voice small, a little
broken)
Because there's nothing left to go
back to... First, Grace and now...

The dam breaks. She begins to cry.

JAKE
Jesus, boss.

FX: Jake pulls something from his pocket.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Have a hanky. It's clean this
morning, scout's honor.

Rebecca dabs her eyes. Gathers herself.

REBECCA
Thank you. But I'm fine. In fact,
if there's nothing more to be said,
then I should be on my way.

FX: Her chair squeaks backwards, as she begins to stand.

DETECTIVE
Mrs. Sulliv... Rebecca, wait. There
may be one thing we can try.

REBECCA
And what's that?

FX: The Detective opens and shuts drawers, until he finds
what he's looking for. He sets down a small book and three
coins.

JAKE
Are you serious?

DETECTIVE
Never more so. Take a seat,
Rebecca.

Rebecca sits back down. The Detective hands her the coins

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Here. Toss the coins onto the desk.

REBECCA
So, you do believe in all that
nonsense. This is the i Ching,
right? I toss the coins, you
consult your little book...

JAKE
The woman's husband is missing. She
doesn't have time for your games.

DETECTIVE
(insistent)
Toss the coins, Rebecca.

MUSIC CUE: The tension is palpable. Then, finally

FX: Rebecca tosses the coins and they clatter and settle on the desk.

REBECCA
Tails, tails, heads. What does that get me?

DETECTIVE
Seven. Again.

REBECCA
You want me to...

The detective is increasingly intense with every throw, his focus is entirely on Rebecca.

DETECTIVE
Toss them again.

FX: She tosses the coins again.

REBECCA
Heads, tails, heads.

She barely has time to get the words out.

DETECTIVE
Eight. Do it again.

She shifts in her chair.

REBECCA
For God's sake.

FX: She tosses the coins on the table a third time

REBECCA (CONT'D)
All heads

DETECTIVE
Nine. Again.

FX: The coins fall again.

REBECCA
Heads...he...

DETECTIVE
It's eight. Continue.

FX: And again.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Eight again. One more time.

FX: The final toss.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Six.

FX: Everyone lets out a breath

FX: The Detective begins to flip through the pages of his book.

REBECCA
(unnerved, angry, but
curious)
Well? What does it say?

FX: The Detective stops flipping through the book

DETECTIVE
Here we are. Hexagram 36. (clears
throat)
"The light has sunk into the earth:
Thus does the superior man live with
the great mass: He veils his light,
yet still shines". Fascinating.

REBECCA
And?

DETECTIVE
And there really is nothing more I
can do to help you. Goodnight,
Rebecca.

REBECCA
You're out of your mind.

DETECTIVE
I said *goodnight*, Mrs Sullivan.

FX: The Detective stands and walks to the window. We hear it opened and the sounds of the city seeping in. A lighter is clicked and a cigar lit.

REBECCA

So this is what passes for
detective work these days? Sitting
around flipping coins in the dark?

JAKE

Not exactly. It's just...

REBECCA

This is ridiculous. I should never
have come.

She storms out into the lobby, marching quickly past a surprised Irene and toward the exit. Just as she opens the door to leave Jake briskly walks up behind her.

JAKE

Mrs. Sullivan, wait...

FADE OUT.

ACT 2

FADE IN:

INT. SOMEWHERE - SOMEWHEN

Music cue: light non diegetic piano begins

FX: Light sounds of a typewriter

REBECCA (V.O.)

The city is suffocating. As we wind down its narrow streets, I become lost to it. The tall spires blanket us in darkness. The rain pours incessantly, little daggers from the sky, stalking the few victims foolish enough to venture out. How could one be expected to remain of sound mind amidst these murky thoroughfares, faced with such distrustful gazes and chilled by the constant, icy drip of corruption?

There is a loud DING from the typewriter, jolting us back to reality.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE A MOVING CAR - TWILIGHT

JAKE is driving. REBECCA sits in the back seat staring out the window in thought. The sounds of light rain and traffic can be heard faintly outside. The music on the radio fades out as an announcer begins talking.

MALE ANNOUNCER

(from radio)

Several members of The National Women's League, including Ida Harper, were arrested last night as local police successfully raided the fledgling dissonant organization's headquarters. And, in other news, the Jericho weather service has issued a severe weather warning advising....

Jake quickly turns off the radio

JAKE
Sounds like a big storm coming
tonight

Rebecka's thoughts are clearly elsewhere. Jake looks at her through the rear view mirror and regards her for a moment.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Try not to worry.

It takes her a moment to realize he is talking to her.

REBECCA
Sorry?

JAKE
Your husband will turn up.
Everything's going to be fine.

REBECCA
(dryly)
Is that so, Officer Hanlon? Well,
in that case, I feel much better.
(a beat) Do you have a light?

JAKE
Of course.

FX: Jake fumbles for a lighter. Hands it over.

FX: The lighter sparks and Rebecca draws on her cigarette.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Oh, and call me Jake.

REBECCA
Don't fancy your first name, Jake?

JAKE
What do you mean?

REBECCA
The engraving on your lighter. AJH.
I take it there's some hideously
formal first name that ill suits a
big city police officer.

Jake laughs.

JAKE
Alexia.

REBECCA

Ah. Yes, I can see why you went with Jake. Alexia really doesn't inspire fear in the hearts of evildoers.

FX: A car drives through rainy streets.

FX: Rebecca smokes, slowly, deliberately.

JAKE

I'm sorry about the Detective.

REBECCA

So am I.

JAKE

The i Ching and all that. Just so you know, that's his thing, not mine.

Rebecca sighs.

REBECCA

Good to know.

JAKE

Saying that... he's hard work, I won't deny it, but in my short time working with him I've seen him do... remarkable things.

Rebecca laughs in disbelief.

REBECCA

And how does that help me? He won't take the case.

JAKE

Maybe I can talk to him. Convince him to give it another look.

She shrugs.

REBECCA

Why? Why bother? His mind seemed pretty made up.

JAKE

(more conviction)

There's a reason I got into this line of work and it isn't to cast women in need out into the cold.

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)
I'll see it's handled, even if I
have to do it myself.

Rebecca softens slightly.

REBECCA
Do you mean that?

JAKE
Absolutely.

REBECCA
Thank you, Jake. I was truly
beginning to think this was all for
nothing.

JAKE
My pleasure, Mrs. Sullivan.

A beat as she takes a drag, regarding Jake. He's earned it.

REBECCA
Call me Rebecca.

FX: The car pulls to a stop and Jake switches off the engine.

JAKE
Well, here it is. Just as
advertised. La Hotel Pe-nom-bre.

REBECCA
Thank you again, Jake. I appreciate
the ride... and the conversation.

She is clearly hesitant to leave.

JAKE
(picking up on it)
Look, I promised I'd work your
case, so why don't we get started
straight away? You can get me up to
speed. Over a drink. My treat, of
course.

REBECCA
I don't know. It's been a long,
wearying day.

JAKE
I doubt you'll sleep much until you
can put your mind at rest.
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)
 Besides, you weren't just planning
 to steal away with my lighter were
 you?

FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL BAR - EVENING

FX: The quiet bar of *La Penombre* hotel. Not overly occupied, though there are a few isolated conversations buzzing in the background. The odd clink of a glass.

JAKE
 ...and then before I can get the
 cuffs on him, he jumps up and hares
 off down the street...

Rebecca is mid-drink as she starts to laugh

REBECCA
 In the nude?

JAKE
 Naked as the day he was born.
 Although he probably didn't have
 the tattoos back then.

REBECCA
 (teasing, she's actually
 having fun)
 America is truly a land of wonders.

JAKE
 We have our moments.

FX: Jake takes a deep swallow from his glass.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 (a sigh of satisfaction)
 So how did you end up here? The
 good ol' US of A, I mean.

She stares into her glass.

REBECCA
 I'd been studying at Oxford...

JAKE
 Fancy.

REBECCA
 Not as fancy as you'd think.
 Especially not after three years.
 (MORE)

REBECCA (CONT'D)
I needed a break from the place and
decided to take a semester abroad.
Et voila.

JAKE
What was your subject?

FX: Rebecca takes a drink

REBECCA
English Literature.

She sighs

REBECCA (CONT'D)
(nostalgic)
I had dreams of becoming a writer.

JAKE
But?

REBECCA
(nostalgic)
I fell in love and got married. The
twin death knells of Art.

JAKE
Ever thought about going back?

REBECCA
What? To England?

JAKE
No to the writing.

REBECCA
Oh I've thought about it but now
after everything that's happened...

A beat.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
I lost my... spark, you know? My
heart wasn't in it anymore.

JAKE
(offhand)
I know how you feel.

REBECCA
Oh, do you now?

JAKE

I've lost people too. In my line of work, you come to expect it. But it doesn't make it easier. Death marks people. Changes them. You can see it in their eyes. In the way they hold themselves. (*showing off a little*) Besides, you mentioned someone, back at the office. Someone close to you.

REBECCA

(low, cold)

My daughter.

This smacks Jake down.

JAKE

I'm sorry, I...

REBECCA

(bitter)

You didn't know. That's what you were about to say, isn't it?

JAKE

(chastened)

I didn't.

REBECCA

But you were more than happy to sound off about how much you understand. How we've both felt loss. Well, I don't give a damn what you've lost, it isn't a child. There is nothing like losing a child.

JAKE

I can only imagine...

REBECCA

You can't even do that. But I can tell you what it's like: Every day is a cruel joke. Because every night you dream of her. She's there and she's holding your hand and she's telling you everything is just fine. And you believe her, because the truth is so unutterably awful that it has to be a mistake. Then, of course, you wake up and remember all over again.

JAKE
I'm truly sorry.

But Rebecca isn't finished.

REBECCA
And worse still, you have to
pretend, day after day, that it's
getting better. That you're
healing. Just to stop everyone from
mooning around you with pity in
their eyes.

She catches herself and redirects.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
(sarcastically)
Of course, my beloved husband has
suffered at my side. He hasn't
buried himself in his work or run
off after secret societies, leaving
me even more alone.

JAKE
I don't know what to say.

REBECCA
This was a mistake...

FX: Rebecca grabs a napkin and dabs her eyes

REBECCA (CONT'D)
I think I will be leaving now.

FX: She stands and grabs her bag

JAKE
Rebecca... wait... I'm sorry

REBECCA
Goodnight, Officer Hanlon.

She turns and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY, HOTEL - EVENING

FX: Footsteps across a marble lobby floor.

FX: They stop in front of an elevator. There is a DING and the doors slide open, revealing a young elevator OPERATOR.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

OPERATOR
Good evening, madam.

REBECCA
(slightly curt)
Good evening.

FX: The doors slide shut, the elevator begins to move.

OPERATOR
(chirpily)
Are you enjoying your stay at *La Penombre*?

REBECCA
(distracted)
Sorry?

OPERATOR
(maintaining their optimism)
I asked if you were enjoying your stay.

REBECCA
Not particularly.

OPERATOR
Very good, madam.

FX: A rustle as Rebecca pulls out Jake's lighter and her cigarette case. There's a SNAP, a FLIP, a CLICK and a WHOOSH as she takes out and lights a cigarette. She takes a deep draw and lets out a puff of smoke.

The Operator coughs meaningfully.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, madam. But I'm afraid you can't smoke in here.

But Rebecca isn't listening.

REBECCA
"AJH"

OPERATOR
I'm sorry?

She taps the lighter.

REBECCA
The initials. On the lighter. AJH.

OPERATOR
I see.

He doesn't.

FX: Rebecca scrambles in her bag.

REBECCA
I can't believe I didn't see it
before.

OPERATOR
(bewildered)
The initials?

FX: Rebecca pulls out the telegram.

REBECCA
The telegram!

FX: Her finger runs down the paper.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
It's an acrostic!

She laughs.

OPERATOR
Be that as it may. I really am
going to have to insist that you
extinguish your cigarette.

Rebecca's mood has done a complete 180.

REBECCA
Yes, yes. Of course.

FX: She drops the cigarette and grinds it out with her foot.

OPERATOR
Thank you.

REBECCA

Now, could you take me back to the
lobby, please?

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY, HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

FX: DING! The elevator arrives in the lobby. The doors open and Rebecca RUNS out.

FX: She slows as she reaches the reception desk.

FX: A smaller, tinnier, ding-ding-ding as she rings the reception bell.

A receptionist appears.

RECEPTIONIST

Ah, Mrs Sullivan, isn't it?

REBECCA

That's right.

RECEPTIONIST

Are you enjoying your stay at *La
Penombre*?

REBECCA

(excited)

It's improving by the moment. Now,
do you have a pen and paper I might
use?

RECEPTIONIST

(unfazed)

Of course.

FX: A piece of paper is slid across the desk. A pen set down.

FX: Rebecca lines up the fresh paper with the telegram and begins to write frantically.

REBECCA

(under breath)

"Its rays" that's "I" then "L"...
then "G". No, no, that's not right.

RECEPTIONIST

Is... is everything alright madam?

She continue to write down letters.

REBECCA

(excited)

Wait, that's it. "Order shifts, but pairs must rhyme." If I rearrange the lines, then... (a beat)
Lighthouse! It spells lighthouse.

RECEPTIONIST

(confused)

Madam?

REBECCA

(fast and excited)

Don't you see?

RECEPTIONIST

I'm not sure I do.

REBECCA

It's an acrostic. The first letter of each line, read top to bottom. Only it's not just that... you have to reorder the lines, according to the... (*she slows up, realizes she is babbling*) Sorry. Ran away with myself.

RECEPTIONIST

Its quite all right, madam. I enjoy a good crossword myself now and then. Or a nice word search. Will you be needing anything else?

REBECCA

Yes. Where is the closest lighthouse, please?

The receptionist doesn't even hesitate. She's had stranger requests.

RECEPTIONIST

Well, there's Bethel Point of course. And Cimmerian Cove, but that one's been closed for years.

Rebecca takes a few pensive breaths.

REBECCA

Cimmerian Cove.

RECEPTIONIST

That's right.

REBECCA
I'd like a taxi please.

FADE IN:

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

FX: The rain is torrential. A cab pulls to a halt on a wet, gravel road. The cab's door opens and...

FX: The nearby sea is turbulent as it thunders overhead.

CABBIE
Are you sure this is the place,
miss?

REBECCA
Is this Cimmerian Cove?

CABBIE
Yes.

REBECCA
Then it's the place.

CABBIE
But there's nothing round here for
miles.

REBECCA
Well, there's that rather large
lighthouse over there.

CABBIE
Nobody's been near that place in
years. For good reason.

REBECCA
Well, then, it's time someone
checked in. Now, I don't know how
long I'll be. Do you mind waiting?

CABBIE
I don't think I'd forgive myself if
I didn't.

FX: Rebecca steps fully from the cab, closes the door behind her.

FX: The cabbie rolls his window down. Rebecca opens her bag.

REBECCA
Will twenty dollars suffice?

The cabbie gives a low whistle.

CABBIE

Yes, miss. That'll do nicely. Now, whatever you're about, get it done quickly. This is no place for a young... this is no place for anyone.

REBECCA

Thank you.

FX: Rebecca's footsteps fade away down the gravel path.

The cabbie switches the radio on.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

President Hoover met today with newly elected German Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, to discuss the growing threat in Europe posed by the United Kingdom. The president was optimistic about the situation...

CABBIE

These are strange days, Sidney.
Strange days, indeed.

CUT TO:

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

FX: Rebecca reaches the broken door of the lighthouse and nudges it open. It squeals in protest, but she steps inside.

Her voice echoes in the lighthouse interior.

REBECCA

Hello? Is anyone here?

There is no answer.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

(to herself, rebuking)

Abandoned lighthouse. Middle of the night. Any other bright ideas, Rebecca? Up the ramshackle staircase, you say? Brilliant. What's the worst that could happen?

FX: She begins to ascend the old creaky staircase.

FX: There's a faint noise, difficult to make out.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
Max? Is that you?

FX: Rebecca's breathing quickens. She slows her ascent.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
Is anyone there?

FX: The faint noise grows louder. It sounds like... WHISPERS.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
(false boldness)
That's quite enough of that. If
there's someone there, show
yourself.

FX: From below, the lighthouse door SLAMS shut. Rebecca gives a shout of alarm and turns on the stairs.

FX: Then there's a match STRIKE and a FIZZ of gas igniting.

DETECTIVE
Hello, Mrs. Sullivan.

REBECCA
(fear turned to anger)
Detective? What on Earth are you
doing here, lurking in the dark?
You scared me half to death.

DETECTIVE
(accusatory)
What am I doing here? You are the
one who's where they don't belong.

REBECCA
(a moment of realization)
You translated the message.

DETECTIVE
I did.

REBECCA
But you said you couldn't help me.

DETECTIVE
I can't. And you have not helped
yourself by coming here.

REBECCA
(furious, confused)
What is going on here? Where is my husband?

DETECTIVE
Oh, he's gone. They've all gone. I was too late.

REBECCA
Too late for what?

DETECTIVE
(ignoring her)
Still, if nothing else, it would appear the ritual failed.

REBECCA
Ritual? What ritual?

DETECTIVE
Look around you.

FX: Footsteps as the Detective moves towards the wall and holds up his lantern. The lantern squeaks gently in his head.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
There's not much light, I'm afraid.
But it should suffice.

REBECCA
Drawings?

DETECTIVE
More than drawings. Look closer.

Rebecca gasps.

REBECCA
But that's....

DETECTIVE
Yes.

Rebecca's calm façade begins to fail her.

REBECCA
I don't understand.

DETECTIVE
Max made a choice, Rebecca. A dangerous choice.

REBECCA

You're insane. You're supposed to
be a detective. You're meant to
help people.

DETECTIVE

On the contrary. My role is to
uncover the truth. And the truth is
that what your husband and his
friends attempted here has left a
shadow in its wake. I can't allow
it to escape.

He draws and cocks his revolver, she gasps.

REBECCA

Wait... wait, what are you doing?

DETECTIVE

I warned you to go home. I told you
there was nothing I could do for
you.

REBECCA

I just want to find my husband.

DETECTIVE

If you leave here, the darkness
will follow. You are bound to it.
To him. To her.

FX: Rebecca bolts down the stairs, past the detective and tries to open the door. It won't budge.

FX: The Detective looses a warning shot.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Please. That's enough of that.

FX: Rebecca freezes momentarily, then starts to kick at the door with renewed fury.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, but this is the only way
to be sure. But it doesn't have to
be painful.

REBECCA

(beginning to panic)

We can work together. To stop him.
Whatever he's got himself mixed up
in... I can talk him out of it.
Just help me find him.

DETECTIVE
(resigned)
I'm afraid it's too late for that.
You... deserved better.

FX: The Detective sets his lantern down. A low, unearthly hum starts to build, like a light growing in intensity.

REBECCA
What are you doing?

FX: The Detective begins to chant softly in Tamil.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
The lantern, it's so... bright... I
can't.

FX: The Detective's chanting grows louder. His voice is no longer his own. It's something else, something dark.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
No, I don't want to look. I don't
want to SEE.

FX: It's a maelstrom now. An evil wind is whipping through the lighthouse, carrying the Detective's voice, the dark drone, the burning light... Growing in intensity, to a peak

REBECCA (CONT'D)
Grace... NOOO!

FX: The peak bursts. All sound seems to implode in on itself, like the idea of sound is being sucked from the room. But then the drone reasserts itself, begins to build in intensity.

DETECTIVE
Shit!

FX: The Detective grabs the lantern, tries to relight it.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Light, damn you.

FX: Rebecca bolts for the door. It opens now. She runs.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Mrs. Sullivan, wait!

CUT TO:

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

FX: Rebecca runs, her breath ragged.

FX: The Detective's footsteps - solid, determined are close behind her.

DETECTIVE

(calling out)

There's no point in running,
Rebecca. This isn't something you
can outrun.

FX: He catches up to her. There is a thud as he grabs her by the waist and they both tumble to the ground.

REBECCA

(fury incarnate)

Get off of me.

FX: With a burst of adrenaline, she shoves the Detective off her, and he lands on the ground with a thud and an OOF.

FX: Rebecca scrambles to her feet. So does the Detective.

FX: The gun is cocked.

DETECTIVE

Please believe me when I say that I
do not want to do this.

REBECCA

(almost screaming)

Then DON'T.

FX: BANG!

CUT TO SILENCE

ACT 3

FADE IN:

FX: Light sounds of a typewriter

REBECCA

It is not to be thought that the life of darkness is sunk in misery and lost as if in sorrowing. There is no sorrowing. For sorrow is a thing that is swallowed up in death, and death and dying are the very life of the darkness.

There is a DING from the typewriter

CUT TO SILENCE

FADE IN:

INT. BAR, HOTEL - EARLIER THAT EVENING

FX: The bar is quieter now, but not empty. And Jake still sits, lost in thought.

FX: We catch just a bit of the news coming from a radio somewhere behind the bar.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

...in Europe broke down today as the UK delegation to The League of Nations walked out in protest over the Leagues vote to block their annexation of...

FX: A rap on the bar. It's NICK, the bartender.

NICK

Hey, boss.

JAKE

(finally hearing it)
Yeah, what is it?

NICK

We're closing up in ten. You want another round?

JAKE

Might as well. I got nowhere to be.
Make it a double.

NICK
You got it, boss.

The bartender pours a drink.

NICK (CONT'D)
You not going after your lady friend?

JAKE
(Irritated)
Excuse me?

NICK
Fancy looking gal with the posh
accent. If I were you, I'd be up
those stairs and hot on her trail,
not propping up the bar.

JAKE
She's not my lady friend. She's...a
client.

NICK
A client, huh? I'm in the wrong line
of work.

JAKE
(slurring slightly)
Don't kid yourself. At least when
you poison people, they've asked
for it. You don't promise them
medicine first.

NICK
Depends on what they're sickening
for. (a beat) On second thought,
maybe you should go home and sleep
it off. Sort things out with
your... client... when you've got a
clear head.

JAKE
Maybe you're right.

NICK
It has been known.

JAKE
I should give her some space. Talk
to her tomorrow.

NICK
A wise choice. Not the one you're
going to make, but a wise choice.

FX: Jake stands. Money CLANKS on the bar.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY, HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Jake approaches the reception desk.

RECEPTIONIST
Good evening, sir.

JAKE
I'm looking for Mrs. Sullivan.
Could you tell me what room she's
staying in?

RECEPTIONIST
I'm afraid we can't share that
information, sir. I can tell you,
however, that Mrs. Sullivan is no
longer on the premises.

JAKE
What?

RECEPTIONIST
She left, by taxi, about ten
minutes ago.

MUSIC CUE: Dramatic music begins to build, softly.

JAKE
A taxi? Where to?

RECEPTIONIST
Again, sir, I can't-

FX: A badge is removed and slapped on the reception desk.

JAKE
Officer Hanlon, Jericho Police.

RECEPTIONIST
I believe she was on her way to
Cimmerian Cove.

JAKE
Fuck!

FX: Jake runs out of the hotel.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVING CAR - CONTINUOUS

FX: Jake drives at a frantic pace, through rain-soaked streets.

FX: He grabs a radio receiver from the dashboard.

JAKE
(into radio)
Irene, it's Jake. Are you receiving me?

FX: A hiss of static.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Irene, pick up.

FX: A further, shorter hiss of static, then...

IRENE
Hey Jake. What's up?

JAKE
Tell me the Detective is sitting behind his desk right now, teaching a bottle of hooch a lesson.

IRENE
Wish I could.

JAKE
Dammit. Get him on the horn now.

IRENE
No can do. Been trying to reach him all night myself.

FX: Jake makes a sharp turn, the tires screeching in complaint.

JAKE
(to himself)
Shit!

Jake suddenly veers to avoid hitting another car

JAKE (CONT'D)
(louder)
Shit!

IRENE
(from radio)
Jake... is everything okay?

JAKE

Not even slightly. If he shows up,
you get him to call me pronto.

IRENE

Of course. Take care out there,
Jake.

FX: The radio clicks off.

FX: Jake's foot slams the accelerator.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

FX: Jake's car pulls up. He kills the engine and exits the vehicle.

FX: Footsteps splash on the sodden ground.

FX: He taps the window of the waiting cab.

FX: The window rolls down. We catch a bit of the baseball game from the car radio

RADIO ANNOUNCER

The 3-2 pitch...and strike three
for Anderson who continues to
struggle at the plate

CABBIE

Jesus Christ. What the hell are you
doing?

FX: Jake fumbles out his badge.

JAKE

Officer Hanlon. Did you bring a
woman here?

CABBIE

Hey, don't be getting the wrong
idea. It was just a fare. I'm
waiting here to make sure she's all
right.

JAKE

Was she alone?

CABBIE

Yeah. She went up toward the lighthouse, God knows why, said she'd only be a few minutes.

JAKE

(urgent)

And how long *has* she been?

CABBIE

I don't know. Ten minutes. Maybe less. What's this all about, officer?

JAKE

She pay you?

CABBIE

Yeah, but that's not...

JAKE

Beat it. You were never here!
Understand me?!

FX: Suddenly a gunshot pierces the night air, coming from the lighthouse.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Shit!

FX: The cabbie guns his engine.

CABBIE

I was never here.

FX: Jake turns and runs toward the lighthouse as the cab roars off.

JAKE

(panting)

Oh, God. Rebecca, please.

FX: He runs with everything he has.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

Jake is running. His breath is heavy, he's almost stumbling. The he hears.

REBECCA
(almost screaming)
Then DON'T.

FX: Jake doesn't think. Doesn't plan. Just reacts. Cocks his gun and aims roughly. A gunshot rings out. BANG!

FX: The Detective grunts. His body smacks the ground.

Rebecca screams.

FX: Jake runs towards Rebecca

REBECCA (CONT'D)
(Shocked)
Jake?!

JAKE
(panting)
Are you okay?

REBECCA
He was going to kill me.

JAKE
Who?

REBECCA
The Detective!

JAKE
What? That was... Oh, my god.

FX: Jake darts over to the fallen Detective.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. It was dark. I didn't see.

The Detective coughs.

DETECTIVE
Jake, you did the right thing. You made a choice I couldn't make.

JAKE
Come on, let's get you out of here.

DETECTIVE
No. Get the girl out of here. I was wrong about her. I was wrong about so many things.

FX: The lighthouse door clatters open.

FX: We hear the deep drone of the darkness, like a prowling animal, hunting its prey.

JAKE

We'll all go. Whatever it is, I can't do without you. You understand all this stuff. I'm just a gun and a badge.

DETECTIVE

(growing weaker)

You aren't just anything, Jake. And that's true of fewer people than you think.

FX: The drone is growing closer. Louder. More insistent.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Run. Now.

JAKE

(taking the decision)

Rebecca, we need to go.

REBECCA

Go where?!

JAKE

Anywhere but here.

FX: Jake and Rebecca run, as the drone becomes a vicious, snarling thing, threatening to swallow everything in its path.

FX: With a grunt, the Detective hauls himself to his feet.

FX: He picks up the lantern at his side. We hear a match strike and fizzle out.

DETECTIVE

Come on, motherfucker! Come on.

FX: The drone is HOWLING now.

FX: Match after match. Fizzling out, cast aside.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

God damn you, light!

FX: Suddenly, the lantern flares into life with a sizzle. The drone seems to scream as if in pain.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
 You don't like that, do you, you
 son of a bitch?

FX: Wind rises up and whips at the lantern.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
 (through clenched teeth,
 fighting something)
 Not here. Not this time. You are
 NOT unstoppable. I will cut you
 down. (*last effort*) I am
 Truthseeker! You know me well.

FX: The light blazes audibly, as if clashing with the dark drone.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
 (summoning his last
 breath)
 YOU. WILL. CROSS. NO. FURTHER.

The last word is shouted into the wind, then the Detective begins to chant once more. The sounds of light and dark rip at each other, until they consume the detective's cries entirely.

At their peak, there is a very brief WHOOSH as darkness and light are condensed into a singularity followed by a sudden and violent SHOCKWAVE of energy rippling across the area as light and darkness cancel each other out

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. SOMEWHERE - SOMEWHEN

Music cue: light non diegetic piano begins

FX: Light sounds of a typewriter

REBECCA (V.O.)
 Our folly lies in the notion that
 darkness is but light's absence.
 Two enemies locked in an eternal
 struggle of annihilation. But how
 can one exist without the other?
 Does the spirit prevail over the
 soul? No, they are kin, perhaps
 even lovers. Each vying for
 recognition, each demanding their
 share.

(MORE)

REBECCA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And we, hapless souls, stand
betwixt them and their eternal
embrace. Caught in the tempest,
ever searching for love.

There is a loud DING from the typewriter.

And silence.