LUCIUS TURNBULL & THE REDWICH TERROR

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Screenwriting

By

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LUCIUS TURNBULL & THE REDWICH TERROR

By

MATTHEW YOUNG

Master of Arts in Screenwriting

(Based on the works of H.P. Lovecraft)

When mysterious symbols appear in a small New England town, an eccentric professor and his trusty assistant investigate, and find themselves embroiled in a plot to summon a powerful evil force into the world.
FADE IN:

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

A giant, ominous Victorian house stands in darkness, a black Model-T Ford in the drive. Rain pounds against the roof and windows.

SUPER: UPSTATE NEW YORK, 1928

A FLASH of lightning reveals grotesque gargoyles on the roof keeping watch over the estate.

In an upstairs room, the glow of candle light...

INT. SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

In the middle of the lavishly furnished chamber is a round, wooden table covered with strange runes. At the center of the table, beneath a small GLASS DOME, rests a little BELL.

At the head of the table sits DESDEMONA (50, gaunt and severe). Her eyebrow arches - LIGHTNING and THUNDER.

Also at the table are LADY COKELEY (70), a prim and proper matron; STANWORTH (30), a nervous fellow; and LUCIUS TURNBULL (40), every bit the professor, but with a fire in his eyes.

Next to Turnbull, MR. AND MRS. DOOLEY, an anxious, working-class couple in their 30's, hold hands.

    DESDEMONA
    The candles. Blow them out.

Lucius watches with eagle eyes as the others look to one another nervously.

    STANWORTH
    We won't be able to see.

    DESDEMONA
    You will see...

Desdemona's eyes roll back in her head until only the whites show and she MOANS. Mrs. Dooley screams, but Mr. Dooley covers his wife's mouth with his hand.
DESDEMONA (CONT'D)
The candles...
Stanworth blows out the candles and plunges the room into near-blackness.

Desdemona points a bony finger at Lady Cokely.

DESDEMONA (CONT'D)
Your husband...

LADY COKEY
Yes? Is he...?

Lucius leans in, watches it all unfold, the ghost of a smile on his lips.

DESDEMONA
He is with us!
(to Lady Cokely)
Take my hand...

Lady Cokely's hand trembles as she reaches out to take Desdemona's. She recoils.

LADY COKEY
As cold as a corpse!

The Dooleys hold one another in fear.

Stanworth GASPS as the table SHAKES and lifts a few inches off the floor.

STANWORTH
(to Lady Cokely)
Grandmother. Are you alright?

The terrified older woman nods.

Desdemona's head lolls to one side, then the other as she goes into a trance state. She MOANS again.

Her head pops up as a muffled BELL rings.

All eyes are on the bell under glass at the center of the table - it rings, but the clacker does NOT move.

When Desdemona speaks, her voice is lower and she has an English accent - Archibald's voice.

DESDEMONA
(to Lady Cokely)
Genevieve? Is that you, my sweet, funny daisy?
Lady Cokely's jaw drops.

LADY COKELEY
"My sweet, funny..." Archibald?!

Lucius' eyes narrow.

DESDEMONA
Yes.
(Eastern European)
Spirit why have you returned?
(as Archibald)
To right a grave wrong.

Mr. Dooley pats his wife's arm reassuringly.

STANWORTH
This can't be happening.

LADY COKELEY
What wrong must be righted, my love?

DESDEMONA
The Dooleys...

All eyes on the couple.

DESDEMONA (CONT'D)
They are not who they claim to be.

The Dooleys wear looks of confusion and concern.

MR. DOOLEY
But we are your kin, Lady Cokely.

DESDEMONA
Imposters! Our estate and our fortunes are to be left to our great-grandson: Stanworth.

Lady Cokely gasps.

STANWORTH
Me? Why I... Heavens, I never -

DESDEMONA
(European)
He appears! He appears!
A FLASH! A cloud of SMOKE. Within it floats the spectral face of LORD COKELY (70, distinguished). Lady Cokely clutches her chest. Mrs. Dooley hides her face.

Lucius SPRINGS to his feet, arms outstretched like a zombie, a vacant look in his eyes. He speaks as if in a trance.

LUCIUS
The voices from beyond... They tell me...

Desdemona gasps.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
(to Desdemona)
You... Are...
(normal voice)
A peddler of poppycock, hokum and codswallop!

DESDEMONA
What? No!

LUCIUS
Miss Payne, if you would.

The door to the room creaks open and MISS PAYNE (28), pretty and fiery, steps in. She flips the wall switch and the lights come on.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
(to Lady Cokely)
My dear Lady, you have nearly been had.

A BALLOON with a pasted-on photograph of Lord Cokely floats in the middle of the room - this was the ghost. Lucius pulls out a pen knife and pops the balloon. It sputters, flies, then dies.

DESDEMONA
(European)
I am not -

LUCIUS
A medium? Abundantly clear.

Lucius grabs Desdemona's hand - the one that Lady Cokely touched - and yanks. It POPS OFF - a lifelike wax hand.

DESDEMONA
No!

Lucius reaches beneath the table and produces a bucket of ice.
LUCIUS
How about a hand for such a fine performance?

He drops the wax hand in the bucket where it came from.

DESDEMONA
(thick New York accent)
You son of a bitch.

LADY COKELY
What is the meaning of this?!

Lucius moves to Desdemona's side of the table, bodily scoots her chair aside, positions his foot beneath the table, shifts it, then...

LUCIUS
Ah. And table... lift!

Under the table, Lucius' foot hits a lever that shakes it, another that lifts it.

LADY COKELY
But why?

Desdemona's eyes reflexively dart to Stanworth, who bolts out of his seat.

STANWORTH
Well, this simply -

Lucius LEAPS onto the table, nose-to-nose with Stanworth.

LUCIUS
Bo. Gus.

Stanworth backs away as Lucius goes back to the evidence.

LADY COKELY
Stanworth?

Stanworth can't look Lady Cokely in the eye.

Lucius moves behind Desdemona, THRUSTS his hand into her pocket, pulls out a handful of powder.

LUCIUS
The spectral fog...

He THROWS the powder down - FLASH! SMOKE!
LUCIUS (CONT'D)
And the bell...

Lucius searches under the table, finds a little bell with a cloth-wrapped ringer. Gives it a little jingle - same tone.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Lady Cokely, your great-grandson is a con man and a thief. Mr. and Mrs. Dooley, your future is secure.

The Dooleys embrace as Lady Cokely struggles to contain her outrage.

MRS. DOOLEY
Thank you, Mr. Turnbull. We'd heard that you knew all about these strange sorts of things, but -

MR. DOOLEY
But we had no idea. We're so happy you answered our letter. I knew this couldn't be real.

LUCIUS
(sadly)
Glad to help.

Miss Payne speaks with an Scottish accent.

MISS PAYNE
We should be going, Professor Turnbull.

LUCIUS
And to all of you, a good night.

They head for the door, as Lady Cokely stares daggers into Desdemona and Stanworth.

I/E. LUCIUS' MODEL-T - MOVING - NIGHT

Miss Payne drives while Lucius looks out the window into the rainy night.

MISS PAYNE
Cross another off the list, eh?

Lucius nods, smiles wistfully.

MISS PAYNE (CONT'D)
How long are we going are we going to keep doing this?
LUCIUS
Investigating?

MISS PAYNE
And not finding proof of anything.

LUCIUS
As long as the University gives us money to do it.

He gives her a sidelong look.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
You're more than welcome to take up employment elsewhere, Miss Payne.

MISS PAYNE
Who in her right mind would walk away from such a prestigious and high-paying job?

He chuckles.

MISS PAYNE (CONT'D)
Not to mention her overly-generous and staggeringly intelligent employer.

LUCIUS
You make some good points. Alright, I'll let you stay.

Each gets a kick out of the other as they drive on.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

A bustling New England school for higher learning. STUDENTS and PROFESSORS go about their collegiate business among the Gothic architecture of the university buildings.

SUPER: MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY

PROFESSOR DORIAN (50's), short and hefty with a Santa beard, examines papers as he strolls across the quad.

LUCIUS (O.S.)
Professor Dorian!

Lucius JUMPS out from behind a tree. With a SHOUT of surprise, Dorian throws his papers into the air.
PROFESSOR DORIAN
My God, Lucius! Are you trying to give me a heart attack?

LUCIUS
You've got the heart of a lion.

Lucius helps Dorian gather the fallen papers.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
I'm assuming you've seen the requests I put on your desk.

PROFESSOR DORIAN
I've seen them.

LUCIUS
And?

PROFESSOR DORIAN
And what? It's not my call anymore.

This catches Lucius off-guard a bit.

LUCIUS
But the spectre in the Middleton church looks so promising. I want to investigate.

All the papers collected, they walk.

PROFESSOR DORIAN
The University isn't willing to -

LUCIUS
The University should be willing to do whatever it takes to find the truth. We are here to educate our students about -

PROFESSOR DORIAN
"About the nature of the known universe." I read the brochure. Hell, I wrote it. Don't you have a class to teach?

Lucius checks his pocket watch.

LUCIUS
Miss Payne will get class started.
PROFESSOR DORIAN
Lucius, as your friend, I think you should know. There's been a good deal of talk about your...

LUCIUS
Assistant?
(beat)
Wilford, please. I know for a fact that the school's fund is -

PROFESSOR DORIAN
No longer available to you.

They stop.

LUCIUS
Because...?

PROFESSOR DORIAN
I'm sorry. You haven't provided even a glimmer of proof of the paranormal. (beat) Do you even believe in these things?

LUCIUS
You know the answer to that.

PROFESSOR DORIAN
The University is wondering if you and Miss Payne are simply enjoying a series of all-expenses-paid vacations.

LUCIUS
Professor Dorian -

PROFESSOR DORIAN
(softer)
That's not what I think, Lucius, and you know it. But it might be time to stop this gallivanting about.

LUCIUS
(turns to leave)
I'm late.

PROFESSOR DORIAN
And it's time you asked yourself - "Am I trying to prove that these things exist, or that they don't?"
LUCIUS
(turns to Dorian)
My condolences.

PROFESSOR DORIAN
For what?

LUCIUS
I understand that your curiosity died some time ago. 
(beat)
Good bye, then.

Dorian watches Lucius go.

INT. LUCIUS' OFFICE - DAY
A shrine to chaos. Stacks of books, some four-feet-high, stand around the little room. Papers everywhere. On each wall, a chalk board with arcane symbols, diagrams, dates, and the crossed-off words: POLTERGEIST, SPECTRE, and PHANTASM.


LUCIUS
Hmmm.

A NERVOUS STUDENT, 19, male, shifts in the seat opposite Lucius. The student clears his throat. Lucius stops reading, leans forward, makes a space between the books so he can see the student.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Yes?

NERVOUS STUDENT
Well?

LUCIUS
I'm sorry. Who are you?

The student looks around - "Is this a joke?"

NERVOUS STUDENT
I'm the person that wrote the paper you're reading.

Through the mask, Lucius' eyes narrow.

LUCIUS
Do you know where I might find a ghost?
NERVOUS STUDENT
I -
Lucius stands, grabs a TRIBAL SPEAR from the corner and strikes a warrior pose. The kid's eyes widen. Lucius lowers the spear, pushes back the mask.

LUCIUS
A true psychic?

The student shakes his head.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Lycanthrope?

NERVOUS STUDENT
Should I come back?

LUCIUS
That's a shape shifter.

Miss Payne appears in the doorway, knocks. Lucius points to the student with his spear.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Miss Payne, I am in a very important meeting.

NERVOUS STUDENT
(to Miss Payne)
No. We were just -

MISS PAYNE
(re: spear)
When you're done killing that student, you have a telephone call.

LUCIUS
I'll have to call them back.

MISS PAYNE
It's your uncle.

Miss Payne disappears down the hall.

LUCIUS
This is good news!

Lucius hands the spear to the kid and puts the mask over the young man's face, then hurries for the door.
LUCIUS (CONT'D)  
(as he leaves)  
A pleasure meeting with you. You're a model student.

CONFUSED EYES are all that can be seen behind the mask.

Lucius pops his head back in.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)  
Page thirteen, paragraph four. You seem to have confused the Mohenjo-Daro civilization with the Harappan. Easy mistake to make.

He disappears again.

LUCIUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Everything else looks good!

The kid relaxes, a little fist pump of accomplishment.

INT. COLLEGE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

STUDENTS and TEACHERS pass through the corridor. On the wall near the exit, a telephone rests off the hook. Lucius hurries to it, picks it up.

LUCIUS  
Uncle! How are things in Redwich?

INT. REGINALD'S STUDY - DAY

A well-ordered and tastefully decorated study. Books line the walls, a large desk, overstuffed chairs. REGINALD SWIFT, 65, distinguished colonel-type, holds the phone as he sits on the front edge of his desk.

REGINALD  
Lucius, dear boy! How is my favorite nephew?

LUCIUS (V.O.)  
I'm your only nephew.

REGINALD  
Then I guess it doesn't matter.

Reginald smiles warmly. Lucius laughs.
I'll get to the point, Lucius. Certain events here in Redwich have come to my attention that might be of interest to you.

LUCIUS
Events of what sort?

REGINALD
This may sound a bit odd, but a strange symbol - the type I've not seen before - has appeared in and around the town.

Lucius can barely contain himself.

LUCIUS
Symbol?

REGINALD
And it's probably just my imagination...

LUCIUS
What is it?

REGINALD
I suspect that there may be more.
(sighs)
Some things that are difficult to explain. On the phone, that is.

LUCIUS
So you'd like me to come.

REGINALD
Yes, if you think you can take the time off at the University.

No response.

REGINALD (CONT'D)
Lucius? Hello?

IN THE HALL
The earpiece dangles from the box. Lucius is nowhere in sight.
REGINALD

Smiles

PRE-LAP: A TRAIN WHISTLE blows, the CLICK-A-CLACK of the train on the track.

INT. TRAIN CAR - NIGHT

Private passenger quarters with lush, velvet seats. Miss Payne writes in a journal. Lucius bursts in.

    LUCIUS
    The engine is a marvel. It really is worth a look.

    MISS PAYNE
    Are you bothering those men?

    LUCIUS
    Me? A bother? I trust that the lady finds the accommodations to her liking.

He styles to the room like a magician.

She closes her journal, lets her head fall back against the padded rest.

    MISS PAYNE
    I trust that the gentleman will let the lady get some sleep.

Lucius plops down next to her, all excitement.

    LUCIUS
    How can you sleep? We could very well be on the eve of some great paranormal discovery!

    MISS PAYNE
    Again.

She stands and gets a blanket from the overhead.

    LUCIUS
    How very jaded you have become.

    MISS PAYNE
    Or how delusional you've become.

She sits, pulls the blanket up to her shoulders.
LUCIUS
My dear lady, I take great umbrage at that remark.
For I have always been delusional.
(touches his stomach)
I hunger. To the dining car!

He opens the door.

MISS PAYNE
Some wee biscuits would be lovely. Thank you for asking.

LUCIUS
(as he goes)
Wee biscuits it is, m'lady.

She smiles as Lucius heads out into...

INT. TRAIN CAR - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The car rocks with a gentle side-to-side. Lucius steps into the car and makes his way down the hall, private quarters on either side.

He passes a GIDDY COUPLE, who laugh and whisper as they pass. Lucius makes just enough room for them to squeeze by. He watches them go, a smile on his lips.

Lucius turns and finds himself face-to-face with a BLACK-ROBED MAN, whose face is obscured by a dark hood.

LUCIUS
Well, hello.

The man pulls a long, curved KNIFE from the folds in his robe.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Clearly you have me mistaken for -

The man SLASHES with his blade.

Lucius falls back, just out of reach, though the knife SLICES off one of his vest buttons.

Lucius backs up more.

The assassin takes another SWIPE, advances more rapidly.

A HUGE WOMAN steps out of her room between the men. She sees Lucius' fear then sees the cloaked man. She SCREAMS.
LUCIUS (CONT'D)
(to woman)
Get back in your room!

She tries to get back in her quarters, FALLS, her feet TRIP the assassin. The woman pulls her feet in and closes the door as the assassin stands up and hurries after his prey.

Lucius makes it to the door at the end of the car, opens it, steps out...

EXT. TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

Lucius stands between cars. The kissing giddy couple now block the way into the next car. Lucius looks behind him - the cloaked man barrels down on him.

LUCIUS
(to couple)
Get help!

They look at him, perplexed, then see the robed man. They hurry off the opposite way.

Lucius climbs the ladder up to the top of the car, gets up.

The train FLIES along the track as the strong wind plays with Lucius' balance. He moves quickly, but as cautiously as he can.

The cloaked man climbs up after him, knife in hand.

Lucius reaches the end of this car, looks back, musters his courage, JUMPS to the next. He stumbles, falls, claws at the top of the train as he slides over, and grabs a bar.

His assailant stalks towards him as Lucius strains to pull himself up.

He slips down a little further, now able to look into the window one of this car's private rooms.

LUCIUS POV - INTO PRIVATE ROOM - It's his room! Miss Payne rests peacefully beneath the blanket.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
(shouts)
Miss Payne!

She stirs, sits up, looks to the window in shock.

LUCIUS

Looks up to see the assassin slash at his hands with the knife. Lucius pulls the targeted hand back as the blade CLANGS against the metal bar.
The assassin loses his balance. Lucius pulls at the man's sleeve, YANKS hard. The assailant SLIPS off the side and CATCHES the bar.

Lucius and his attacker, side-by-side, kick at one another.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Ow!

Lucius gives another KICK and the man FALLS, but manages to hang on to the window ledge of Lucius' room. The assassin's feet dangle close to the ground.

Lucius strains to pull himself back up - almost there.

The man GRABS Lucius' foot, but Lucius wiggles free of his shoe, which the man throws down.

Miss Payne appears on top of the train and helps pull Lucius up.

The attacker claws his way back up towards them.

A WHISTLE.

Lucius looks down the track - the train heads for trestle bridge, then into a mountain tunnel. No room for any hangers-on. The assassin will surely die.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Give me your hand, you bastard.

The train draws closer to the tunnel.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Do it. Before I change my mind.

Closer. The end of the line.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Come on, damn it! You're going to die.

The man's voice comes out a hiss.

CLOAKED MAN
There is no death.

The cloaked man LETS GO. A golden EYE IN A STAR MEDALLION around his neck gleams in the moonlight for just a moment.

Lucius grabs Miss Payne and pulls her down to the top of the train as it speeds into the tunnel.
The assassin's body collides with the mountainside, then falls from the trestle a hundred feet to SPLAT on the rocks.

Lucius and Miss Payne look to one another in shock.

EXT. TRAIN DEPOT - MORNING

A small town train station. Just a couple of platforms and a little sandwich shop. A CONDUCTOR, 50's, helps Miss Payne and Lucius with their bags.

CONDUCTOR
Are you sure, then? I'm happy to wait until the police arrive. After what you've been through.

LUCIUS
It's quite alright. My mistress and I will alert the authorities ourselves. I'd hate for my wife to know.

Miss Payne and the conductor are equally surprised.

CONDUCTOR
Uh, yes, then. Of course, I - Yes, that's very good.

LUCIUS
Alright, then.

CONDUCTOR
See that you - well, good day to you both.

The conductor gives their luggage a pat, then jumps back onboard the train.

Miss Payne gives Lucius a sharp look.

MISS PAYNE
Your mistress?

LUCIUS
It got rid of him, didn't it?

MISS PAYNE
Why do we want that? We should be going to the police.

Lucius puts a finger on Miss Payne's head, taps gently.

LUCIUS
Is the old thinking gland no longer functioning?
MISS PAYNE
Tap my head again, Mr. Turnbull, and I'll name you something that won't be functioning.

He yanks his finger away.

LUCIUS
Won't happen again.
(beat)
Miss Payne, someone does not want me to go to Redwich.

MISS PAYNE
Clearly.

LUCIUS
Why?

MISS PAYNE
Because there's something there.

LUCIUS
Because. There's. Something. There.

She sits on the suitcase, mulls it over.

MISS PAYNE
And the police -

LUCIUS
Will get in the way of the truth. It's their job, poor fellows.

MISS PAYNE
That man almost killed you. I don't think it's worth it to -

LUCIUS
You're right. It's not worth it to lose you. And that's why you're going home.

MISS PAYNE
What? No -

LUCIUS
I've arranged a car and I'll drive you to another train station. We'll have to locate one, of course, but that will be safest.
She stands, stumps a foot.

MISS PAYNE
I will not be going home.

LUCIUS
My dear -

MISS PAYNE
If you're going to Redwich...
  (taps his head with a finger on each word)

LUCIUS
(smiles)
Well, that's good then. I may need your help climbing atop more fast-moving vehicles. To Redwich, then.

He pulls a map from his pocket and they examine it.

EXT. REDWICH TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The small New England town bustles with activity as TOWNSPEOPLE stroll, shop, work in the Autumn air.

Lucius and Miss Payne sputter into town in an old convertible. They get stares from some of the people, a wave or two.

The place has a happy air, but certain of its residents - a GROCER stacking produce, a BUTCHER in his shop window, an old BARBER sitting outside his place, a large WAITRESS in a corner restaurant, all wear intense, far-off looks.

SHERIFF MCGEE, 40's, a large and powerful man, stands on the street corner and gives a friendly nod to the duo as their car comes to a stop at the town's one street sign.

SHERIFF MCGEE
How do?

LUCIUS
Hello, Sheriff. I'm looking for the home of Professor Reginald Swift.

SHERIFF MCGEE
Friends of Swift, are you?
LUCIUS
Family. I'm his nephew.
(takes Miss Payne's hand)
And this delicate flower is my tender bride-to-be.

Miss Payne squeezes his hand hard. He yanks it back.

SHERIFF MCGEE
Didn't know he had family. Besides his own, of course.

Lucius' face betrays his confusion. McGee takes note.

LUCIUS
Of course.

SHERIFF MCGEE
(points)
You'll find him down that way. Number 26.

Lucius revs the engine.

MISS PAYNE
Thank you, Sheriff.

SHERIFF MCGEE
My pleasure, folks.

McGee watches them go.

EXT. REGINALD'S HOUSE - DAY
A simple, but lovely, upscale home with a picket fence and a tree in the front yard.
Lucius' car sits in the drive.

INT. REGINALD'S STUDY - DAY
HANDS place a tray of drinks and cookies on a small table.
The hands belong to JEAN, 30, pretty and petite with a knowing smile. She smiles at Reginald, who sits on the front edge of his desk and puffs on his pipe.
REGINALD
   (to Jean, warmly)
Thank you my dear.
   (to Lucius)
My boy, I can't tell you how good it is to see you.

Lucius sits in a high-backed chair, looks at a sheet of paper with an ornate ARCANE SYMBOL sketched on it.

LUCIUS
   (distracted)
And you as well, Uncle. I -

MISS PAYNE
   (to Jean)
Thank you for the refreshments, Jean.

JEAN
   Of course. I should get Alice some of these cookies.
   (to Lucius and Payne)
A true pleasure to meet you both.

Lucius rises from his seat.

LUCIUS
   Likewise, Jean.

She leaves. Lucius sits back down, eager to get back to the papers.

MISS PAYNE
   (to Reginald)
She's beautiful.

REGINALD
   She has given me new life.
   (sadly)
And Alice has very much needed a woman in the house.

Lucius looks up.

LUCIUS
   Where is the muskrat?
REGINALD
She's always running off somewhere. The imagination on that one.
(re: the papers)
What do you see there?

LUCIUS
Where did you find this symbol?

REGINALD
It began to appear around town a few months ago. Etched into fence posts, scrawled into rocks along the trail, carved into trees.

LUCIUS
Incredible.

REGINALD
This is my rendering, of course. I hope that I've gotten it right.

LUCIUS
You have.

REGINALD
So you recognize it.

LUCIUS
In a way.

Lucius shares a concerned look with Miss Payne.

REGINALD
Forty years as an anthropologist, and I can't make heads or tails of it.

Lucius stands.

LUCIUS
This is the symbol of an ancient sect. A cult which predates the Sumerians by a fair stretch.

MISS PAYNE
A cult of one the Outer Gods?

Lucius spins, faces his assistant.
LUCIUS
Gold star for you. Specifically?

He hands her the papers. She studies them.

MISS PAYNE
Not Azathoth...

LUCIUS
Good.

MISS PAYNE
Shub-Niggurath? No -

LUCIUS
You've got it.

MISS PAYNE
Yog-Sothoth?

LUCIUS
Precisely.

Reginald coughs.

REGINALD
I'm afraid you have me at a disadvantage. Yog...?

LUCIUS
Sothoth. A deity worshipped thousands of years ago, though his cult vanished over the centuries.

Lucius goes to the window, opens the shade.

LUCIUS(CONT'D)
A dark god, for certain, but one thought to bring illumination to his followers. Knowledge.

MISS PAYNE
But with a price.

Lucius turns to face Reginald.

LUCIUS
Those who sacrificed to Yog-Sothoth - human sacrifice, mind you - were often said to go mad.

Lucius takes the page from Miss Payne, looks at it once more, then smiles.
LUCIUS (CONT'D)
The question, of course -

REGINALD
Why is a pre-Sumerian symbol popping up in a quiet New England town?

Lucius nods.

EXT. REGINALD'S HOUSE - DAY

As Lucius and Miss Payne walk back to their car, Lucius sees something move behind some nearby bushes.

He pauses and Miss Payne looks back at him.

MISS PAYNE
What are -

Lucius lifts a finger to his lips.

Another RUSTLE from the bushes.

Lucius stalks silently to one end of the hedge, pokes his head through and VANISHES from sight.

LUCIUS (O.S.)
Help! Miss Payne!

She bolts for the bushes, but stops as Lucius emerges laughing, with ALICE SWIFT (10) in his arms. The girl is pretty in pigtails and sharp as a tack.

Alice hugs Lucius tightly.

ALICE
I'm glad it was you.

LUCIUS
Miss Payne, this is my dear little cousin, Alice Swift. The aforementioned muskrat.

MISS PAYNE
It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance.

Alice smiles at Miss Payne.

ALICE
I like the way you talk.
MISS PAYNE
Likewise, my dear.

Lucius gestures to the hedge.

LUCIUS
Were you spying on us?

The girl looks down.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Were you?

She shakes her head.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Then what?

Fear takes hold of Alice.

ALICE
I...

MISS PAYNE
What is it, dear?

Lucius looks the girl right in the eyes.

LUCIUS
(tenderly)
Alice, you can tell me anything.

ALICE
Anything?

He nods.

ALICE (CONT'D)
(deadly serious)
I'm keeping watch.

LUCIUS
For who?

ALICE
(shakes her head)
For what.
   (beat)
There's a monster here.
Lucius and Miss Payne exchange looks.

INT. BED AND BREAKFAST - BEDROOM - DAY

A pleasant, plain little room. Simple wooden furniture, a large feather bed. A window looks out onto the town square.

MR. CHARNELTON, 60, humorless and skeletal, shows Lucius and Miss Payne the room. He speaks with a thick New England accent.

CHARNELTON
Breakfast served right at eight. Downstairs.

MISS PAYNE
Thank you, the room is lovely.

CHARNELTON
(re: her accent)
Scotch are you? Don't rob me blind like the last ones we had here.

LUCIUS
I'll keep an eye on her.
(to Payne)
No. Stealing.

She covers her smile, pretends to cough. The bit is lost on Charnelton.

CHARNELTON
They're not all bad, I suppose.

Charnelton turns to leave.

CHARNELTON (CONT'D)
I'll be at the front desk if you need me.

LUCIUS
Oh, Mr. Charnelton. One more thing.

Charnelton turns back as Lucius holds up the drawing of the symbol. Charnelton's eyes widen.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
We're first-timers to Redwich, and we've found a number of these odd markings around town. What does it mean?
CHARNELTON
Best not to go pokin' around too much. Stick to the Apple Press, the old church - regular tourist places.

LUCIUS
Why's that?

MISS PAYNE
What do you know?

Charnelton leans in.

CHARNELTON
There's a strange wind blowin' and you'd be wise to stay indoors.

He gives a curt nod and leaves.

Lucius sits on the bed.

LUCIUS
Since we're staying indoors, we may as well relax a bit.

He pats the bed next to him. She narrows her eyes.

MISS PAYNE
Trust me - you wouldn't know what to do with me.

LUCIUS
Venomous harpy.

She smiles.

MISS PAYNE
That's me. Shall we see more of Redwich?

He gets up, gestures to the door, every inch the gentleman.

LUCIUS
After you, fiancée.

MISS PAYNE
I thank you, fiancé.

They head out.
MONTAGE - LOOKING FOR SIGNS

-- Lucius and Miss Payne, on the side of the road, examine a symbol etched into a mile-marker and record it in a notebook.

-- In the town square, the duo gets strange looks from a couple of TOWNSFOLK as they check out the symbol carved into the base of a tree.

-- They jump over a fence, chased off by an angry FARMER, a rune on the side of his barn.

-- Lucius finds yet another on the cellar door of an old abandoned house. Miss Payne records the findings.

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

The sun dips just below the treeline. A forest trail opens to a picturesque clearing - a perfect photo spot.

Lucius and Miss Payne step off the trail and into the clearing where they see PASTOR RICHARD, 40, lean.

The minister stands transfixed before a rock formation which bears a large, carved rendition of the symbol. The man mutters under his breath.

Lucius and Miss Payne exchange looks, then cautiously approach the pastor.

   LUCIUS
   Hello?

The pastor doesn't respond.

   MISS PAYNE
   Excuse me, sir.

They move a little closer as the man mutters away.

   LUCIUS
   Sir?

Nothing.

Lucius reaches out a hand. Before he touches Pastor Richard's shoulder, the man WHIPS around, wild-eyed. Lucius and Miss Payne jump.

Pastor Richard babbles a mile-a-minute as the sky grows unnaturally dark - no clouds, but no stars either. Just black.
PASTOR RICHARD
The-all-in-one-the-spheres-the-one-in-all-the-
shambling-man-the-spheres-the-knowledge-the-
beyond-one-the-knowledge-the-strange-ones-are-
coming.

Lucius shakes the man's shoulder.

LUCIUS
Sir!

Richard stops, looks around confused for a moment, then is serene. He greets the duo
with a pleasant smile. The sky lightens again.

PASTOR RICHARD
Hello.

The two look to one another, marking the strangeness of the situation.

MISS PAYNE
Are you quite alright?

Pastor Richard looks around, profoundly sad for a beat, then back to his more jovial look.

PASTOR RICHARD
Of course. Lovely morning for a walk in God's
creation.

LUCIUS
It's evening, Sir.

Pastor Richard can't make sense of this.

PASTOR RICHARD
Yes, well, good morning.

He heads for the trail as Lucius and Miss Payne exchange bewildered looks.

EXT. REGINALD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Swift home is a lovely cottage-style place with a perfect picket fence and a perfect
lawn.

Lucius and Miss Payne head up the walk.

LUCIUS
We'll need to rise early in the morning. I may need
to send for some of my references.
She nods.

MISS PAYNE
What do you think the pastor was talking about, Mr. Turnbull? I've never heard the like.

LUCIUS
Nor have I. It's as if -

A blood-curdling SCREAM from inside the house followed by the CRASH of breaking glass.

Lucius and Miss Payne run to the house, burst through the front door.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

In the hall outside of Reginald's study, Jean holds tight to ALICE SWIFT, 10, pretty and smart, but currently terrified.

Lucius and Miss Payne run up the steps and see them.

LUCIUS
What's happened?

Alice sobs into Jean's shoulder. Jean points into the open office.

Lucius, with Miss Payne right behind, bolts through the door into...

INT. REGINALD'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Reginald sits DEAD behind his desk, torn open from throat to belly by some savage clawed creature.

The symbol of Yog-Sothoth FLOATS magically in the air around the dead man for just a moment. It gleams brightly, then disappears.

LUCIUS
No.

Sounds of MOVEMENT from just outside the shattered window.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
(to Miss Payne)
Take them downstairs. Get the gun from above the fireplace. Keep them safe.

She nods, hurries to do it.
Lucius take another look at his slain uncle, breathes deeply, then steps through the open window frame onto the roof...

EXT. REGINALD'S HOUSE - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

As he emerges onto the roof outside of the study, Lucius sees a DARK FIGURE slide off the roof into the back yard. In the moonlight, the figure can not be clearly seen.

    LUCIUS
    Stop!

Lucius leaps down into the backyard, stumbles, picks himself up and gives chase.

The figure vanishes into the dense woods behind Reginald's house with amazing speed.

Lucius stops at the edge of the woods.

    LUCIUS (CONT'D)
    Damn.

From deep within the woods, a HISS and the flash of RED EYES, then all is black and silent once more.

Breathing heavily, Lucius can't make sense of what has just happened. He turns and hurries back toward the house.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Two desks and a cell. A gun cabinet against one wall.

Alice cries in Jean's arm's. Miss Payne leans against the edge of a desk, bites her lip.

Turnbull paces the room as Sheriff McGee makes notes.

    LUCIUS
    I'll tell you again, sir - whatever it was that attacked my uncle was no bear.

    SHERIFF MCGEE
    But you said it happened so fast. How can you be sure?

    LUCIUS
    I do know what a bear looks like, Sheriff.

    SHERIFF MCGEE
    And Jean, you didn't see it either?
JEAN
I heard Alice scream and found her at the top of the stairs. That's when Lucius...

The Sheriff crosses to Alice and Jean, gets down on one knee.

SHERIFF MCGEE
(to Alice)
Can you remember what you saw, sweetheart?

The girl continues to cry into her step-mother's shoulder.

SHERIFF MCGEE (CONT'D)
Alice?
(beat)
Come on, honey, if there's anything -

LUCIUS
Enough.

SHERIFF MCGEE
Enough?

LUCIUS
Yes. Enough. Please. We've already asked her and it's become clear she can scarcely remember her name right now.

The Sheriff nods.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
(to Jean)
Is there anyone who would want to harm my uncle?

She shakes her head.

MISS PAYNE
(to Jean and Alice)
The two of you should stay somewhere else tonight. Do you have a -

JEAN
My mother's. It's not far. I can drive.

LUCIUS
Good.

He pushes a piece of paper her way, rolls her a pencil.
LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Write down the address. We'll be checking on you.

SHERIFF MCGEE
I'm sorry, Mr. Turnbull, but I think you'd better leave safety to the professionals.

LUCIUS
Sir -

SHERIFF MCGEE
I'm sure you understand. I don't know you. I don't know a thing about you. I'll find out what happened and you'll stay out of it.

The two men lock eyes. Lucius takes a deep breath.

LUCIUS
Let me know if there's anything I can do to help.

MISS PAYNE
But -

LUCIUS
(re: Miss Payne)
Either of us.

The sheriff nods as Jean collects Alice and heads for the door. As she reaches it, Jean turns.

JEAN
And Mr. Turnbull, what about the symbols?

LUCIUS
What?

JEAN
I heard you tell Miss Payne that you saw something strange. In the air in the study. Did you tell the sheriff?

Lucius is more than a little caught off guard.

SHERIFF MCGEE
What's she talking about?
LUCIUS
I'm not sure what I saw. The whole thing was really quite a blur.

SHERIFF MCGEE
But you're sure it was no bear.

LUCIUS
Certain.

EXT. WOODS BEHIND REGINALD'S HOUSE - DAY

Lucius' eyes scan the area as he and Miss Payne stalk through the dense trees.

LUCIUS
It would have stopped about...

He kneels down, sees an odd footprint - a long foot with just three clawed toes.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Here.

Miss Payne sketches the print in a notebook.

Lucius heads in the direction the print was headed.

MISS PAYNE
Perhaps we should let the sheriff go about his business here.

Lucius turns back to her.

LUCIUS
Oh, no. But don't worry - we'll not get in the way of his investigation. We'll simply embark on one of our own.

(lost in thought)
If only you'd seen them. The sigils floating...

MISS PAYNE
What do you think they were?

He shakes his head.

LUCIUS
Whatever they were, I imagine they're too much for a small-town sheriff to understand.
MISS PAYNE
You're certainly sure of yourself.

LUCIUS
I am sure. Very. My uncle. These things in the air. This...

MISS PAYNE
Creature.

He nods.

LUCIUS
They're all part of it. So, no. The sheriff of this town is not as well-equipped as I to discover the truth. If that makes me sound arrogant...

She gives him a sad little smile.

MISS PAYNE
No more than usual, I guess.

He returns the smile, then points in the direction of the print's path.

LUCIUS
Through here, then.

EXT. BEHIND THE CHURCH - DAY

A pretty little sanctuary on the edge of the woods.

Pastor Richard hums "ARE YOU WASHED IN THE BLOOD?" as he POUNDS a hammer against the frame of the back door of the little church. He pulls a nail from between his lips and hammers it in, as well.

Lucius and Miss Payne emerge from the stand of trees. Unseen by Pastor Richard, they exchange looks.

LUCIUS
Excuse me, Pastor Richard.

The man pauses, lowers his hammer, turns to them with a beatific smile on his face.

PASTOR RICHARD
Hello again.

MISS PAYNE
Hello.
Lucius nods as he and Miss Payne draw closer to the minister.

PASTOR RICHARD
May I help you with something?

LUCIUS
Yes, I hope so. Last night -

PASTOR RICHARD
Does this have to do with the terrible fate of Mr. Swift?

MISS PAYNE
It does.

LUCIUS
He was my uncle.

Pastor Richard steps up to them, places a hand on Lucius' arm.

PASTOR RICHARD
I am so very sorry for your loss.
(closes eyes for a beat)
Bear attack, they say.

LUCIUS
No. Something else. It went through the woods and came out here. Did you see anything?

PASTOR RICHARD
I'm afraid not, but it seems to have damaged the church door as well. I'm not much of a repairman, but...

LUCIUS
I see. I'm Lucius Turnbull and this is Miss Payne. We're staying at the inn. You'll let us know if you see anything, won't you?

PASTOR RICHARD
I will.

MISS PAYNE
Are you feeling quite alright now, Pastor? The other day you were...

PASTOR RICHARD
I don't know what you mean.
MISS PAYNE
I -

LUCIUS
Good bye.

They nod to one another. Lucius and Miss Payne walk off as Pastor Richard watches them go.

INT. REGINALD'S STUDY - DAY

Lucius rummages through Reginald's desk. He scans scraps of paper, flips through books - nothing.

Miss Payne checks out the books on the shelf.

LUCIUS
There must be something here. Uncle Reginald kept journals from the time he could hold a pencil.

MISS PAYNE
Perhaps he kept them somewhere else.

LUCIUS
Perhaps. Or perhaps he kept them hidden.

MISS PAYNE
Why would he hide them?

LUCIUS
For the same reason he is no longer with us.

Lucius plops down into Reginald's desk chair and swivels back and forth.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
When I was a child, he and I would send letters to one another in secret code. He loved the darker side of things. The arcane. Cloak and dagger.
(smiles wistfully)
I blame him for what I've become.

MISS PAYNE
I think this life would have found you with or without your uncle.

Lucius shrugs, sighs, then sits bolt-upright.
LUCIUS
Secret code.
(beat)
Find a map. Any map in the room.

MISS PAYNE
What -

LUCIUS
Just do it.

They ransack the place. They look through books, drawers, stacks of paper.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
We would send our messages to one another on maps. We were adventurers, you see?

They continue to search. Again - nothing.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
I was sure it would be...

A framed old-world map on the wall catches his eye.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Here.

He pulls the frame from wall, turns it over, pulls off the backing and takes it out.

On the back of the map is a hand-drawn diagram of an arrangement of Stonehenge-like monoliths. In the lower right corner are the initials "F.H."

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Thank you, Uncle Reggie.

He folds the map and puts it in his breast pocket as Sheriff McGee appears in the door.

SHERIFF MCGEE
Would you like to tell me what you're doing here?

LUCIUS
I left my...

Grabs a pencil from the desktop.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
...this here the other night. Lucky pencil.
SHERIFF MCGEE
You need to leave.

Lucius ushers Miss Payne out the door.

LUCIUS
Thank you, Sheriff.

INT. BED AND BREAKFAST - DAY

Behind the reception desk, Charnelton grunts and chews a stub of pencil as he goes over the books.

Lucius and Miss Payne come in and step up to him.

LUCIUS
Excuse us, Mr. Charnelton.

CHARNELTON
(eyes on the page)
Carry the...
(holds up a finger)
Thirty-six a week? No, that ain't it.

Charnelton glances up at the two, tries in vain to figure out the book keeping error, gives up.

CHARNELTON (CONT'D)
Oh, what is it?

LUCIUS
First, let me say that the service here is out.
Standing.

MISS PAYNE
It truly is.

Charnelton HARUMPHS.

LUCIUS
We're hoping that you might be able to help us find someone.

CHARNELTON
Who's that?

LUCIUS
We're not exactly sure.
CHARNELTON
Can't help you.

His eyes go back to his books.

LUCIUS
The person's initials are F.H.

Charnelton sighs, eyes to the ceiling, lost in thought. He coughs - a raspy hack, then looks back at the two.

CHARNELTON
Why?

MISS PAYNE
"Why?"

CHARNELTON
Why you lookin' for F.H.?

Lucius has had enough. He leans close, looks Charnelton in the eye. He's all business.

LUCIUS
Because we are. Do you know or not?

Charnelton bristles at this, but gives in.

CHARNELTON

Lucius keeps eye contact until Charnelton breaks it, nervously looks away.

LUCIUS
Thank you. Again, the service...

EXT. HOPPER HOME - DAY

A crumbling old Victorian, once lovely, now abandoned. A tattered picket fence surrounds the place. Lucius and Miss Payne pull up in their car.

MISS PAYNE
This can't be...

Lucius points to the mailbox sign which reads: HOPPER.

They step onto the porch and Lucius knocks on the front door.
MISS PAYNE (CONT'D)
I don't think there's anyone here.

Lucius peeks into a dusty window, then BLAM! A shotgun blast from inside shatters the window.

Lucius launches himself at Miss Payne. They tumble to the ground as he covers her body with his own.

IMOGENE HOPPER (O.S.)
Get the hell off my property!

Lucius' and Miss Payne's eyes meet - awkward position. They roll off the porch and run back to their car as another BLAST issues from the same window. They duck behind the automobile.

LUCIUS
We're here to speak to Frank Hopper!

IMOGENE HOPPER (85), tiny and tough, pokes her head through the window.

IMOGENE HOPPER
You're not from the bankers?

LUCIUS
No.

She mulls it over.

IMOGENE HOPPER
Sorry 'bout shooting at you. But Frank's been dead and buried in Oster Hills Cemetery for twenty years.

Lucius and Miss Payne look to one another - "Seriously?"

EXT. HOPPER HOME - LATER

Lucius and Miss Payne step out of the house onto the front porch, Imogene right behind.

LUCIUS
Thank you for the lemonade, Mrs. Hopper.

IMOGENE HOPPER
It's my pleasure. Sorry I couldn't be of more help.

MISS PAYNE
It's alright, Ma'am.
LUCIUS

Goodbye.

They head for the car and get in, wave to Imogene.

MISS PAYNE

So nothing to do with it?

Lucius shakes his head, fires up the car.

LUCIUS

Dead end.

(then)

Thanks for tip, Mr. Charnelton.

They drive off.

INT. SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

A little classroom in a modest school house. Tiny desks in rows, a slate runs across the front wall. Jean pulls some items from her desk as Lucius and Miss Payne stand nearby.

JEAN

I'm sorry, I just don't know anyone with those initials.

LUCIUS

It's quite alright. Are you sure you wouldn't like some help with your...

Jean puts some books and papers into a bag, hoists it onto her shoulder.

JEAN

I'm fine, thank you.

(teary)

As fine as I can be, I guess.

MISS PAYNE

Can you think of anything - anything at all that might help?

Jean sighs, thinks for a moment.

LUCIUS

What was Uncle Reginald studying or reading before...?
JEAN
He had been spending so much time in the library. They let him have the run of the place. (lost in memory) Some nights he would come home so late. He'd crawl into bed smelling like musty old books from the library basement. (light bulb moment) I have his keys.

LUCIUS
To the library.

She nods.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
May I?

JEAN
Will you please find out what happened?

LUCIUS
I will.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT
Moonlight spills into the library as the front door groans open. Rows and rows of bookshelves. Dead silent.

Lucius and Miss Payne step into the room. Lucius’ flashlight clicks on. A MOUSE bolts for the safety of a tiny hole in the wall.

MISS PAYNE
Remind me again why we're coming after hours.

LUCIUS
I prefer to keep my reading habits to myself.

LIGHTNING flashes outside illuminating the room for a split second as rain suddenly pours down.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
And there's nothing quite like a good book on a rainy night.

Lucius points to a door marked "BASEMENT."
INT. LIBRARY - BASEMENT - NIGHT

The dungeon-like basement holds rows of far older books, though it is much less orderly than upstairs. Here and there stand stacks of tomes, papers, maps, and documents of all sorts, all coated in a thick layer of dust.

Lucius’ flashlight beam severs the darkness and scans the room as the duo descends into the basement.

LUCIUS
Yes. He’d be right at home here.

MISS PAYNE
Where do we start?

Lucius walks the perimeter of the room, his beam shining on the book-lined walls as he goes.

LUCIUS
When he was in pursuit of something, Uncle Reginald would find the most secluded place possible to do his research.

MISS PAYNE
It’s not private enough down here?

Lucius arrives at an unmarked door.

LUCIUS
Not at all. But this is.

He reaches out of hand to grab the handle. The door BURSTS open and in a split second, a shadowy FIGURE pounces out of the other room and knocks Lucius to the ground. His flashlight flies from his grasp.

MISS PAYNE
Mr. Turnbull!

She runs for the fallen flashlight, its beam pointed away from the struggle.

Still unable to be clearly seen, the assailant pins Lucius to the ground, its animal-like face pressed against Lucius’ own. A charge of energy between their foreheads.

LUCIUS’ VISION...
EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - DAY

The red sky stretches cloudless to the grey-brown, scrub horizon surrounding the peak.

A hundred or more barely-dressed DEVOTEES dance and writhe as a VORTEX opens in the sky above the summit.

Lucius stands in the midst of the chaos, slack-jawed at the sights around and above him.

A CRASH of lightning and a wild, ecstatic SHOUT from the worshippers as BLOOD rains from the sky. The crowd dances and spins around Lucius, but pays him no mind.

At the center of vortex, a giant EYE appears. Lucius gasps as the eye stares into his soul.

LUCIUS

No!

Lucius' consciousness transports BACK TO...

INT. LIBRARY - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Lucius shoves with all his might, pushing the form off of him as Miss Payne shines the light towards him.

The assailant vanishes into the recesses of the dark basement. Somewhere in the darkness - heavy inhuman BREATHING.

LUCIUS

(to Payne)

Run!

They hurry up the steps and slam the door behind them as they go.

EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Lucius and Miss Payne rush out of the library and down the steps towards their car.

From the corner of his eye, Lucius spies a small group of PEOPLE across the street near a stand of trees. In the shadows their faces are unrecognizable, but their eyes are locked on the duo.

Lucius and Payne fly off in their car.
INT. BED AND BREAKFAST - NIGHT

Lucius' hand SLAMS down on the bell on the lobby desk. DING DING DING! He hits it again while Miss Payne looks out the front window.

LUCIUS
Mr. Charnelton!

A light comes on in the next room. Charnelton GRUMMLES incoherently, then emerges from the back in a nightgown. He pushes his glasses onto his nose. He is not happy.

CHARNELTON
And there had best be a fine reason to call a man from his bed at this hour.

LUCIUS
Considering the fool's errand you sent us on earlier today, I'd say we're even.

Charnelton shrugs.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
I'll be employing the use of your telephone, Mr. Charnelton.

CHARNELTON
For business only.

LUCIUS
It is.

CHARNELTON
What?

LUCIUS
Business.

CHARNELTON
Whose?

LUCIUS
None of yours. Good night.

They stare each other down for a moment, then Charnelton puts the phone on the desk and backs into the other room. The light clicks off.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
I know you're still listening, Mr. Charnelton.
A HARUMPH from the other room, some footsteps, and finally a door closes.

MISS PAYNE
Who are you calling?

LUCIUS
I'm going to need some books.

He puts the phone to his ear.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

The Nervous Student from Lucius' office shifts in a wooden chair across from Sheriff McGee's desk, a large steamer trunk next to him.

The front door flies open and Lucius and Miss Payne come in. The student brightens when he sees Lucius, much more so when he sees Miss Payne.

LUCIUS
Why are you holding this man?

SHERIFF MCGEE
Hello, Mr. Turnbull. Miss.

MISS PAYNE
Hello, Sheriff.
(to the student)
Hello.

The young man beams at Miss Payne.

SHERIFF MCGEE
I just had a few questions, is all. We don't get many of visitors in Redwich, then a bunch in just a few days. And with your uncle...

LUCIUS
(re: student)
Yes. This one has the look of crazed killer.

SHERIFF MCGEE
(to Lucius)
You're a guest in this town and I can ask you to leave at any time.

LUCIUS
I'll try to remember that.
Sheriff McGee gets up from his desk and examines the trunk.

SHERIFF MCGEE
Mr. Turnbull, I am truly sorry for your loss. But you need to stay out of this and let me do my job.

MISS PAYNE
So we should just sit on our hands.

SHERIFF MCGEE
This is what I do and I'm working on it. (beat) So what's in the trunk?

LUCIUS
You haven't opened it?

SHERIFF MCGEE
Wanted to, but I thought Junior here would die of heart failure if I tried.

NERVOUS STUDENT
I know my rights.

He smiles at Miss Payne who gives a "Good for you" nod.

LUCIUS
Books.

SHERIFF MCGEE
Books?

LUCIUS
Thought I'd get some reading done while you solve my uncle's murder.

SHERIFF MCGEE
You didn't have to send all the way to Arkham for a stack of books. We've got a library, you know. (beat) Course you do.

Lucius and Miss Payne glance to one another.
INT. BED AND BREAKFAST - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Open books, diagrams, scraps of paper litter every inch of the room. Lucius sits on the bed, cross-legged, scratches his head with a WAX HAND (like Desdemona's). He grimaces as he tries to reason out the puzzle.

Miss Payne pours a cup of tea, hands it to him. He takes it, sips absently.

LUCIUS
It says here that the last reported cult of the Yog-Sothoth supposedly disappeared in the Middle Ages.

MISS PAYNE
Why would they return now? What do they want?

She picks up a book, leafs through it.

As he reads, Lucius absently grabs some FLASH POWDER from a bag, and tosses it to the ground, creating a small, white cloud.

MISS PAYNE (CONT'D)
Do you have to -?

LUCIUS
In the... vision I had in the library, there was a worship ritual. More importantly, a portal was opened and Yog-Sothoth peered through.

MISS PAYNE
The question is -

LUCIUS
What will it take for him to walk through the door?

She nods.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
A sacrifice, most assuredly, but there are other factors that must be met, as well. And therein lies the rub.

Miss Payne stretches, puts down the book.
MISS PAYNE
Aye. There's the rub. I'm stepping outside for some air. I feel trapped in here.
(beat)
No offense.

She turns to go.

LUCIUS
None taken - Wait!

She spins.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
(suddenly excited)
Trapped. You said you feel "trapped."

MISS PAYNE
I wasn't trying to hurt your feelings.

His fingers fly through the pages of several books, seemingly at once.

LUCIUS
The opposite, in fact. You've solved it.

MISS PAYNE
I have?

Lucius' finger STABS at an illustration of a PRE-HIEROGLYPHIC STONE ETCHING.

LUCIUS
He's trapped. He's stuck.

MISS PAYNE
Yog-Sothoth.

LUCIUS
Yes. It's not that he - it - doesn't want to be here. It's that it can't be. It's trapped. And the key?

MISS PAYNE
In that picture?
LUCIUS
(on fire now)
It's a calendar. Something, something, something here. I know it. I know it.
(beat)
Yes!

He stands on the bed, bounces up and down.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Give me our map of the symbols.

She sifts through a stack of papers, pulls out a sheet, hands it to him. He holds the
document next to the book.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
The symbols are appearing over time. Not randomly. In order. In a specific order. And when
they're done - which, according to this, is soon...

MISS PAYNE
And when the right blood is shed...

LUCIUS
He comes.

THUNDER rumbles in the distance.

EXT. REGINALD'S HOUSE - DAY

MOURNERS dressed in black walk up the sidewalk into the open door of Reginald's
home. Some carry covered dishes, some flowers.

INT. REGINALD'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Jean greets GUESTS in the living room as they arrive to offer condolences.

Alice sits nearby.

Alice GASPS as a teddy bear pokes its head from behind the chair, her grief momentarily
forgotten. A HAND makes the bear's little arm wave and Alice laughs.

The hand belongs to Lucius. He steps into view and hands the bear to his niece.

LUCIUS
For you, my dear.
She hugs him.

ALICE
Thank you.

He squeezes the little girl tightly as he takes in the guests, some of whom look at him with suspicion.

Miss Payne steps up with a small glass of lemonade.

MISS PAYNE
Here you are, dear.

She hands it to Alice, who smiles and takes a sip, pretends to share it with her new bear.

Lucius and Payne glance at the guests.

MISS PAYNE (CONT'D)
So which of these do you think were watching us?

LUCIUS
It was too dark to be sure. But by the way we're being watched now, I dare say it's a safe bet that we're in the same room with some of them.

Across the room, Mr. Charnelton stuffs his mouth with small sandwiches, notices the duo, manages a courtesy wave.

Jean steps up.

JEAN
Thank you for being here.

LUCIUS
Of course.

Pastor Richard comes in from the next room and comforts the grieving guests. He nods a comforting hello to Jean and Lucius.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Jean, I know that this may seem an odd question, but was my uncle in conflict with anyone in this room?

JEAN
(startled)
You don't think -

Lucius steadies her with a hand on her arm.
LUCIUS
Please. Even if it seems like nothing.

JEAN
I don't - Well... no. I don't believe so.

Imogene Hopper comes into the room, dressed in raggedy black mourning attire.

MISS PAYNE
(points to Imogene)
Not her?

Jean shakes her head. Imogene waves to Lucius.

IMOGENE HOPPER
(from across the room)
Sorry again for the -

Lucius stops her with a raised hand and a smile: "It's fine."

MOVEMENT at the top of the staircase gets Lucius' attention.

LUCIUS
Excuse me.

He heads for the stairs.

INT. REGINALD'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Lucius treads carefully down the long, picture-lined corridor towards the door to Reginald's study, which stands slightly ajar.

Sounds of MOVEMENT from inside the room.

Unintelligible WHISPERS between two people.

Lucius draws closer. Almost to the door.

Sound of papers being SHUFFLED. A cabinet OPENING and CLOSING.

Lucius reaches the door, peeks into the room.

Jean appears right behind him.

JEAN
Could you help me downstairs, Lucius?

He starts, turns.
LUCIUS
Good god.

JEAN
What are you doing?

LUCIUS
I just. I wanted to look one more time in -

Sheriff McGee steps out of the room, closes the door behind him.

JEAN
Sheriff. What was -

SHERIFF MCGEE
I'm very sorry, Jean. I needed to check a few more things in the study. I should have asked...

JEAN
No, it's - it's fine.

The sheriff heads down the hall.

LUCIUS
Sheriff.

McGee turns.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Were you alone in there?

SHERIFF MCGEE
Of course. Why?

Lucius shakes his head. Sheriff McGee heads down the steps as Lucius turns, opens the door to Reginald's study and steps into...

INT. REGINALD'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Lucius looks around the room, Jean right behind him. Not a thing out of place.

A breeze gently blows the curtains in the open window.

JEAN
Lucius, what's happening?

Lucius moves to the window.
LUCIUS
Something terrible.

He shuts the window.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

A sea of graves on gently rolling hills. A parked car sits outside the rusty wrought-iron gate. The sign reads OSTER HILLS CEMETERY - the "F" in Foster fell off long ago, but the ghost of its outline remains.

Lucius and Miss Payne step out of the fog and walk to the fence. Lucius smiles as he points to the sign.

LUCIUS
And here is our elusive "F.H."

MISS PAYNE
But even Mrs. Hopper called it Oster Hills.

LUCIUS
Of course she did. They all do. How would we have known?
(points to car)
The Sheriff's here. Are you willfully and knowingly going to help me secretly follow a man of the law?

Miss Payne holds up a hand, pretends to place the other on a book.

MISS PAYNE
I am. I do solemnly swear.

LUCIUS
 seriouliness)
But if this gets dangerous... More dangerous -

MISS PAYNE
I already solemnly swore. Is my word on a make-believe Bible not enough for you?

He smiles, nods. They move into the graveyard.

EXT. CEMETERY - MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Rows of gravestones and markers - some simple, some very elaborate. A large mausoleum stands as the center piece - ancient and decaying.
As Lucius and Miss Payne walk silently through the cemetery, the wheels in his head are clearly spinning. He mumbles to himself as he goes, points to random stones, nods. Miss Payne gives him a concerned look.

LUCIUS
(under his breath)
Something. Something about these. It's...
(beat, then loudly)
Ha!

MISS PAYNE
Shhh!

He puts a hand over his own mouth as Miss Payne pulls him down behind a grave.

MISS PAYNE (CONT'D)
(whispers)
What is it? You're babbling like the mad pastor.

Lucius pulls the map out of his coat pocket, unfolds it, and examines the Stonehenge-like illustration on the back of it.

LUCIUS
You see?

MISS PAYNE
No.

He points insistently at the map.

LUCIUS
There are no ancient monoliths near Redwich. No Henge. But there are hundreds of new ones right here.

He points to several of the stones surrounding them, then to their corresponding illustrated versions.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
In plain sight.

Lucius' eyes are glued to the map.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Uncle Reginald, you sly old -

MISS PAYNE
Mr. Turnbull.
He looks up. Miss Payne points a shaky finger towards the

MAUSOLEUM

Illuminated by the moon, the enormous stone door MOANS open, pushed from the inside by an inhuman HAND.

The GHOUL emerges - half again the size of a normal man, its face a nightmarish and grotesque mockery of a human's features. Its fangs drip with drool, which its snake-like tongue slurps constantly. It carries a rag-wrapped object.

The thing's foot-long talon-like fingers run all over its own body in a strange caress before it LEAPS onto the top of a gravestone and squats like a frog, though its knees bend the wrong way.

MISS PAYNE

Gasps. Lucius puts a hand over her mouth and pulls her further down behind cover.

THE GHOUL

Sniffs at the air, squints into the night, its RED EYES aglow. Sheriff McGee approaches with reverence.

LUCIUS

Strains to see what is happening.

MISS PAYNE (CONT'D)

(whispers)

What is it? It's going to kill him.

Lucius shakes his head, "no." He gestures for Miss Payne to stay put. He sneaks behind another large gravestone to get a closer look, then another. He peeks over the top of the grave to see...

SHERIFF MCGEE

kisses the ghoul's monstrous feet. It HISSES with pleasure and hands the sheriff the wrapped item.

LUCIUS

Tries to get closer still. He leans forward next to a freshly dug open grave and knocks over a shovel, which CLATTERS against a nearby stone.
SHERIFF MCGEE

Looks towards the sound. The ghoul rears up, eyes blazing, HISSES, then disappears into the night.

The Sheriff tucks away the blade in his belt, pulls out his gun and walks towards the area from which the sound came. He swiftly turns the corner where Lucius had just been - nothing. He looks around once more, then hurries off.

A HAND reaches up from beneath the soil at the bottom of the open grave. An arm. A head. A figure crawls forth - it's a very muddy Lucius. He climbs out of the grave as Miss Payne approaches.

MISS PAYNE (CONT'D)

Did you see -

LUCIUS

I did. Yes, I did.

MISS PAYNE

So what do we do?

A GUN SHOT.

LUCIUS

Run!

They take off for the entrance.

Another GUN SHOT.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Lucius and Miss Payne sprint out of the cemetery and into the fog just as Sheriff McGee appears. He fires after them, gets in his car and pursues the duo as they run.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The two run along a country road.

LUCIUS

Our car's just up ahead.

Payne looks back - headlights gaining.

MISS PAYNE

He's right behind us.
LUCIUS
Keep going.

The sheriff's car roars closer.

MISS PAYNE
Where is it? Where's our car?

They can barely see through the fog ahead of them.

LUCIUS
Trust me - almost there!

The sheriff is right at their backs - he's going to run them down.

At the last second, Lucius SHOVES Miss Payne to the side, and he jumps to the other.

SHERIFF MCGEE'S EYES
Go wide as the fog clears just enough for him to see Lucius' parked car right in front of him. He PLOWS into it, flies through the windshield, over Lucius' car to land with a SPLAT/THUD on the road.

Lucius and Miss Payne slowly approach the Sheriff's prone, broken body. The fallen man moans in pain, gasps.

Lucius bends down and picks up the wrapped object next to the Sheriff and pulls off the ragged cloth covering. He pulls out an ancient, curved sacrificial BLADE.

Lucius holds it up for Miss Payne to see, then kneels beside the sheriff.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
(re: blade)
Who is this for?

McGee laughs, coughs up blood, but says nothing.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Who?

Lucius takes a deep breath, steadies himself.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Who is this for?

SHERIFF MCGEE
Don't tell me you don't know.
LUCIUS
Alice.

The sheriff laughs again, gasps, then dies.

MISS PAYNE
We've got to get to that girl.

He nods, holds up the knife, examines it.

LUCIUS
And I imagine they'll be wanting this back.

EXT. JEAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rain falls on the cozy little cottage house. Lucius and Payne exit their badly-damaged car, rush to the front door and knock. The porch light springs to life and Jean, in a robe, opens the door.

JEAN
What are you -

LUCIUS
Please, let us in.

Fear grips Jean.

JEAN
What's wrong? What's happening?

Lucius face is calm, but deadly serious.

LUCIUS
Please.

Jean lets them in.

INT. JEAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lucius and Miss Payne look out the front window of the rustic living room. Jean comes in from the hall.

JEAN
She's sleeping soundly.

LUCIUS
And no one else has been here tonight?
JEAN
(shakes her head no)
I just - I just cannot believe that Sheriff McGee
would want to...

LUCIUS
We believe that he's not the only one.

MISS PAYNE
And the others will come for Alice.

JEAN
How can this be happening?

Miss Payne puts a hand on Jean's arm.

LUCIUS
We need to leave. Tonight.

JEAN
Now?

LUCIUS
Yes.

JEAN
I don't - but my mother -

LUCIUS
No one is safe here. We have to get you to the
authorities. Someone who can protect you.

Jean nods, stands and heads for the hall again.

JEAN
Can I at least see the knife?

LUCIUS
Why would -

JEAN
I want to see the thing they were planning to use to
kill an innocent girl.

LUCIUS
It's in the car.
MISS PAYNE
(confused)
It's -

LUCIUS
In the glove compartment. We'll show you when we leave.

Jean shakes her head in disbelief at the whole affair and smiles sadly to the duo.

JEAN
Thank you.

She leaves.

Payne turns to Lucius.

MISS PAYNE
Why did you -

LUCIUS
She's in on it.

MISS PAYNE
What?

LUCIUS
We never told her it was a knife. We said we found something with which they were going to harm Alice. She's part of it.

MISS PAYNE
My God.

LUCIUS
I'm going to find Alice. You watch Jean. She'll be outside.

Miss Payne is speechless as Lucius heads into the hallway.

INT. JEAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

In the hall, Lucius opens a door and peeks in - nothing.

Next door, the same, moves to the next...
INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

An old, dusty bedroom with a huge four poster bed.

Light spills in from the hall as the door cracks open. Lucius looks in and gasps. An OLD WOMAN squats in the corner, eyes rolled back in her head, she gibbers unintelligibly - this is Jean's mother.

Lucius takes a step towards the old woman, who SNARLS and LEAPS at him.

Lucius quickly backs out and closes the door. Jean's mother claws at the door for a moment, before returning to the corner of the room.

INT. JEAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Miss Payne pads to the front window, pulls back the curtain just enough to sneak a peek outside where she sees...

EXT. JEAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jean, bundled up, hurries through the rain to Lucius' car, opens the door and gets in, searching.

MISS PAYNE's

Eyes narrow.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Lucius steps into a modestly furnished little bedroom, moves to the bed - empty.

    LUCIUS
    Damn.

He looks around the dark room. Not a thing. He turns to go, but hears a SHUFFLE sound just as he reaches the door.

Lucius moves back to the bed, drops to his knees and looks beneath it. Alice SCREAMS. Lucius' finger races to his lips, his eyes wide with intensity.

Alice stifles the scream, scrambles out from beneath the bed and leaps into her cousin's arms.

    ALICE
    I thought you were a monster.
LUCIUS
No. But there is one here. You be quiet and you must be brave. Can you do those things?

She's stunned.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Can you?

She manages a nod. He follows with as much of a smile as he can muster.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Good girl. Now let's get out of here.

INT. JEAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Jean comes into the room, a bit flustered.

JEAN
She's sleeping so soundly. Can't we just give her a bit more time before we...

Lucius and Payne are nowhere to be seen. Jean sees that the back door is ajar.

JEAN (CONT'D)
No.

From outside, the car engine FIRES UP.

Jean hurries to the front window in time to see the car speed off into the night.

JEAN (CONT'D)
No!

Raw ELECTRICITY stirs in the air around Jean. Her eyes go white and her hair stands on end as arcs of LIGHTNING crackles across her body.

INT./EXT. LUCIUS' MODEL-T - NIGHT (MOVING)
Behind the wheel, Lucius tears through the countryside as rain pours down. Alice clings to Miss Payne in the passenger seat.

MISS PAYNE
Where can we go?

LUCIUS
Back to Arkham. Away from here, anyway.
Lucius looks in the rearview mirror, sighs, and drives on.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A huge stalled truck blocks the road. A DRIVER (50's) works beneath the hood.

Lucius pulls up and brings his car to a stop. He and Miss Payne share a concerned look.

Lucius gets out of the car and approaches the man.

LUCIUS
May I help you get that beast off the road? Couple of strapping fellows like ourselves...

The driver spins around, yanks a double-barreled SHOTGUN from inside the hood.

DRIVER
It's okay where it is.

LUCIUS
I see.

(smiles)
Then we'll just head back the other way and -

Lucius turns back to his car.

The driver COCKS the shotgun, which stops Lucius in his tracks, his back to the other man.

DRIVER
It was destined to be, you know?

LUCIUS
What's that?

DRIVER
He is coming into this world.

LUCIUS
Yog-Sothoth.
(eyes locked on Miss Payne's)
Sir, I don't want to alarm you, but if you would be so kind as to put away your shotgun, perhaps we can find a solution to this situation before it accelerates.

Miss Payne gives a subtle nod, slowly pushes Alice down onto the floor of the car.
Lucius' hand slowly goes to the sacrificial knife in his belt. He nods to Payne.

She HONKS the horn and slams her foot on the gas. The startled driver points his shotgun at the oncoming car.

Lucius spins around and flings the blade at the other man and it lands in his thigh. The driver SCREAMS in agony, falls to his knees and fires a wild blast with his shotgun.

    LUCIUS (CONT'D)
    (shocked)
    I hit him.
    (delighted)
    I hit him!

As Lucius and the man struggle, Miss Payne drives the Model-T against the stalled truck to force it out of the way.

Lucius runs to the driver and grabs the shotgun barrel. The driver, hand still on the trigger, forces the barrel towards Lucius' face and FIRES.

KA-BLAM!

At the last second, Lucius moves his face away from the blast, though it obliterates half of his mustache. One hand still on the gun, Lucius' other hand flies to his face and feels where his facial hair used to be.

    LUCIUS (CONT'D)
    You bastard.

The driver rises to his feet, yanks the empty shotgun from Lucius' hand and grips it like a baseball batter.

Lucius sees what's coming and reflexively PUNCHES the sacrificial blade further into the driver's thigh. The man HOWLS as Lucius grabs the shotgun from him, swings it, NAILS him in the head and knocks him out cold.

Miss Payne pushes the truck off the road enough to get the car through.

Lucius winces as he pulls the blade out of the unconscious man's leg, turns to leave. He has a thought, kneels back down and takes a handful of shotgun shells from the fallen man's jacket pocket.

He looks to Miss Payne, who waits for him in the car.

    LUCIUS (CONT'D)
    Shall we?
Her eyes look to the sky behind him. He turns to see a flashing LIGHT in the distance moving closer.

    MISS PAYNE
    That can't be lightning so low to the ground.

    LUCIUS
    Remember - Yog-Sothoth brings light to the world.
    Before he destroys it.

    MISS PAYNE
    So we should probably...

    LUCIUS
    Precisely.

He hops into the passenger side and collects Alice on his lap as the car speeds off down the road.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

Stars shimmer and shine against infinite blackness.

Several stars simultaneously surge with light and form a constellation in the shape of the Symbol of Yog-Sothoth. The stars in the constellation pulse with the same rhythm and intensity.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A light from an unseen source approaches the still unconscious driver on the road. It gets more brilliant, crackles with energy.

The light is revealed to be Jean - her body emits electric power. She sees the truck and the fallen driver.

The man on the ground stirs and opens his eyes. He props himself up on his elbows. His eyes go wide as he sees Jean.

    DRIVER
    I - I tried... I tried to stop them...

She moves closer. He knows what's coming.

    DRIVER (CONT'D)
    Please. Please!
Jean touches him and energy courses through her. They both SCREAM as the power surges from Jean into the man and FRIES him.

She releases him and, spent, collapses to one knee as the driver's charred husk falls to the ground.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

The rain has subsided a bit, but a drizzle remains constant.

Lucius' car sits on the side of the road as smoke billows from beneath the hood.

In the distance, Lucius, Miss Payne and Alice trudge across a field towards an old farmhouse.

INT. ABANDONED FARMHOUSE - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

The door to the dusty and broken-down front room GROANS open and Lucius, Payne and Alice cautiously enter.

The beam from Miss Payne's flashlight reveals things left behind by the previous owners - a cracked family portrait on the wall, a tattered bassinet, a rusted saw.

LUCIUS
A bit of a fixer-upper, but I think we could be quite comfy here.

He winks at Alice, who manages a smile. Lucius kneels down next to her.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
You know I won't let anyone harm you.

ALICE
How do you know that you can stop them?

Lucius looks to Miss Payne for help with this one. She shrugs, as lost as he is.

LUCIUS
Because I must.

Alice hugs him.

INT. ABANDONED FARMHOUSE - FRONT ROOM - LATER

The first gray light of dawn threatens to warm the room. Alice sleeps against the wall beneath Lucius' coat.
Lucius stares out the window.

Miss Payne comes in from another room. She carries an old hatchet and a large, wooden mallet.

MISS PAYNE
I found some tools in the basement.
(beat)
You're sure they'll come?

He nods.

MISS PAYNE (CONT'D)
There's still time for us to run for it. We can find someone to help us.

LUCIUS
Someone like our truck driver friend? No, thank you.

MISS PAYNE
It just can't be that everyone is part of this. That would be -

LUCIUS
Miss Payne, we must cling to our paranoia like a drowning man to a life-preserver.
(beat)
Yes, they'll come. They'll find our car and they'll come.

She walks to him, stands at his side as they both stare out at the field as a hint of the sun breaks the horizon.

MISS PAYNE
What are we doing here?

LUCIUS
This is all I've ever wanted. To know for sure.

MISS PAYNE
Well, now you do.

LUCIUS
Now I do.
MISS PAYNE
You are the most stubbornly driven man I've ever known.

LUCIUS
And what does that say about you?

MISS PAYNE
I've never even asked you why. And I've followed after you all this time.
(beat)
Why?

He thinks on this for a beat, searches her eyes.

LUCIUS
You've never asked, and I've never told a soul.
(remembers)
I hinted at it once to Professor Dorian. But then I told him it was just the brandy talking.
(makes up his mind)
Yes. I'll tell you why, my star pupil. My protege. My friend.

He smiles.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. EDGE OF THE WOODS - NIGHT (30 YEARS AGO)

At the edge of a forest, YOUNG LUCIUS (10), small for his age, faces a group of KIDS. Their leader, BULLY KID (13), sneers at Lucius.

BULLY KID
(to the others)
He won't go. He's too scared.

Lucius eyes the woods, shivers a bit.

BULLY KID (CONT'D)
Look at the little runt. He's shaking.

LUCIUS
(angry)
Just get the ribbon off the tree in the clearing, right?
BULLY KID
And bring it back.
(beat)
If the shadow man doesn't take you.

Fearful murmurs from the other kids. Lucius looks at the kids, at the bully, at the woods.

LUCIUS
There's no such thing.
(deep breath)
Fine. I'll go.

The kids struggle to contain their excitement as Lucius steps toward the trees. A GIRL (11) steps away from the group and follows him.

GIRL
Lucius, wait.

He turns back to face her. She steps close.

GIRL (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Take this.

Her back to the other kids, she holds out a RED RIBBON so that only Lucius can see.

GIRL (CONT'D)
Just hide nearby for a bit, then come back with it.
They won't know.

He looks at the ribbon, reaches for it, then stops himself.

LUCIUS
But I'll know.

He turns and heads again towards the trees, stops, turns back to her.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
But thanks.

She smiles as he disappears into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - FURTHER IN - NIGHT

Young Lucius cautiously creeps through the brambles and branches of the wild woods, his breath visible in the night air.

Something MOVES in the bushes nearby and Lucius hurries his pace.
An owl HOOTS above and Lucius drops to his knees, startled. He continues until he reaches...

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

A huge oak stands alone in the center of a woodland clearing. A branch adorned with a RED RIBBON reaches to the side.

Young Lucius steps into the clearing. Relief spreads across his face as sees the object of his quest. He heads for it.

SHADOWS swirl around him as he goes, though he does not notice, his eyes fixed firmly on the ribbon.

The shadows whirl and writhe, then converge in the shape of a SHADOW MAN - a lean, tall, all black figure in a top hat.

Lucius' hand shakes as he reaches for the ribbon.

As he pulls, it snarls on a branch and he must tug with both hands. One last pull and it rips free. A brief victorious smile before he turns around and finds himself face-to-face with the shadow man.

Lucius freezes with fear.

The figure leans in, cocks its head, sniffs at Lucius and exhales a HISS, the breath of which holds Lucius transfixed. A huge MOUTH emerges in the center of the ebony figure which opens to consume the boy.

The shadow man pauses. The mouth closes, smiles, then disappears. The thing's hand reaches out and touches Lucius' head and an arc of BLACK ENERGY surges into the boy's head.

Lucius opens his mouth to speak, can't find the words, swoons and falls down.

All goes BLACK.

END FLASHBACK

INT. ABANDONED FARMHOUSE - FRONT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Miss Payne leans against the wall as Lucius finishes his story.

LUCIUS

They found me the next day. Still unconscious. I tried to tell them what I had seen, but...
MISS PAYNE
But monsters aren't real.

LUCIUS
Precisely. As the years went by, even I wasn't sure that I'd seen what I'd seen.

MISS PAYNE
So your life becomes making sure.

LUCIUS
Yes.

He moves across the room and pulls his coat up around Alice's shoulders. The girl stirs, but stays asleep.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
And I thought, "wouldn't it be peachy if..."
(plops down on a chair)
But a murdered uncle, an abandoned farmhouse, and one deadly cult of an ancient god later - not so peachy.

MISS PAYNE
You shouldn't joke.

LUCIUS
I'm not. I would go mad from all of this if it weren't for the fact that I have to keep this girl alive. Not to mention you.

She comes closer.

MISS PAYNE
I can watch out for myself.

LUCIUS
Of that I have no doubt.

MISS PAYNE
If they do find us -

Closer still.

LUCIUS
When.
MISS PAYNE
When they do, you realize that this may be our last
day on Earth.

LUCIUS
Not a particularly pleasant thought.

MISS PAYNE
Perhaps it's time for deathbed confessions.

He thinks long and hard on this, then leans in close. They are practically nose-to-nose.

LUCIUS
There are so many things I want for you to know.
The most important...

MISS PAYNE
Yes?

LUCIUS
They're here.

He hurries to the window.

MISS PAYNE
What?

LUCIUS
They're here.

He points out.

LUCIUS' POV - ACROSS THE FIELD

Several FIGURES jump the fence and head for the house. In the dim light, their features
are hard to make out, but as they get closer they are revealed to be TOWNSPEOPLE,
including the Butcher, Barber, Grocer and the Waitress.

Behind them shambles the Ghoul from the graveyard.

LUCIUS
Takes a deep breath.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
And they brought a friend.
EXT. ABANDONED FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The townspeople/cultists approach the house with caution. A few hold guns, some have knives, one has a sledge hammer.

The Ghoul SNARLS and GRUNTS as it lopes behind the others and shields its eyes from the rising sun.

A few of the group head for the back, while the others move onto the front porch.

The ghoul clambers up the chimney like a monkey and peers into a dusty second-floor window.

INT. ABANDONED FARMHOUSE - FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The front door FLIES open the Butcher, the Grocer, and two others rushes in. Lucius and the others are nowhere to be seen. The cultists ransack the place. The Butcher (the leader) points to the back.

BUTCHER
You two go that way. Bill and me will check out the kitchen.

The two head for the back. The Grocer (Bill) lifts a finger in dissent.

GROCER
Uh, that's Bill and I.

Butcher gets in his face.

BUTCHER
Bill and I, what?

LUCIUS (O.C.)
Bill and I are going to sleep.

A TWO-BY-FOUR BREAKS over the Butcher's head and lays him out cold.

The Grocer turns to see Lucius in a pugilist's pose. Lucius PUNCHES the Grocer rapidly once, twice, three times and the other man drops. Lucius shakes his punching hand, winces.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
(to the guys on the floor)
Nighty night.
INT. ABANDONED FARMHOUSE - CELLAR - MORNING

Dirt floor. Cobwebs. A dusty wheelbarrow propped up in the corner near a stack of rusted farm tools - hoe, pitchfork, shovel, etc. Rickety wooden stairs lead up to the main floor.

The door at the top of the stairs CREAKS open and the Waitress, hatchet in hand, takes a few steps down. She peers into the dark basement, tries to let her eyes adjust. Squints. She takes one more look behind her and descends.

WAITRESS
I know you're down here. It's alright. It's just fine.

She arrives at the bottom, looks around, her hatchet at the ready.

A SKITTER from the side of the room. The woman whips around to see a rat scurry behind some shelves. She notices the wheelbarrow in the corner, then sees a small FOOT disappear behind it. She smiles.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
Just come out, dear. Nothing to worry about.

A SHOTGUN BARREL presses against the Waitress' head. Her eyes shift to see Miss Payne holding it.

MISS PAYNE
(quietly)
As a girl in Scotland I killed more rabbits each year than the rest of my village combined. Aye, it's a gift and I'd be happy to show you how I did it.

WAITRESS
My dear, you have no idea what's coming. If you did, you wouldn't fight it.
(smiles)
You're not going to do this.

MISS PAYNE
Take a step towards that girl and find out.

The old Barber appears at the top of the nearby stairs. He, too, can't see into the darkness.

BARBER
Marge? You down there?

Miss Payne loses her concentration for a split second, looks up to the old man. The Waitress (Marge) drops to a knee and SLASHES Miss Payne's arm with her hatchet. The gun barrel lifts and Payne squeezes the trigger - BOOM! It goes wide.
WAITRESS
Down here!

Marge drops her hatchet and grabs the shotgun. The two women dance in a tug-of-war over the weapon.

BARBER
(to the others in the house)
Here!

The Barber takes a couple steps down the stairs.

Miss Payne YANKS the gun back and Marge's hand triggers the other barrel - KA-BLAM!

The blast obliterates the stairs beneath the old man's feet and he topples to the ground amidst the splintered and destroyed stairs. He's down for the count.

The women grapple over the now empty double-barrel, Marge's back to Alice.

Alice sets the wheel barrow upright, grabs the handles and swiftly pushes it at the combatants. Miss Payne sees what's coming and releases the gun.

Marge STUMBLIES backwards, trips over the oncoming wheel barrow, staggers to the side and lands on the rusty PITCH FORK, which impales her. She points to her wound, a confused look on her face, gasps and dies.

Miss Payne pulls Alice to her, then looks to the top of where the stairs used to be - another cultist appears, but can't get down.

She looks to a small window to the ground level, then to Alice.

INT. ABANDONED FARMHOUSE - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - MORNING

Lucius hides behind an open door as cultists run past in the hallway.

SHORT CULTIST
(as he passes)
They're downstairs.

They disappear down the hall.

Lucius turns to head after them, then something out the window catches his eye. He hurries to the window, rubs off a layer of dust and sees...

LUCIUS' POV - FARMYARD

Alice runs from the house and hides behind a derelict tractor, overgrown with weeds.
The ghoul's hand SMASHES the glass window and YANKS Lucius by the neck through the broken frame...

EXT. ABANDONED FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The ghoul, his serpentine tongue lashing and flicking, holds Lucius by the throat. Lucius' feet dangle over the edge of the second story awning.

Lucius swings with his fists and kicks with his feet, but is powerless - he doesn't even come close.

The creature TOSSES Lucius to the ground below where the man lands with an audible THUD. The ghoul leaps to the ground beside him as drool drips onto Lucius' face.

Lucius rolls to the side, pulls the MALLET from his pocket, gets to his knees and SWINGS at the ghoul's face. It makes solid contact - a blow that would have knocked any man flat. But against the ghoul, the head FLIES off the handle.

LUCIUS

Heavens.

The ghoul rears back its head and produces a guttural laugh. Lucius recoils from the horrific sound.

The creature back-hands Lucius, who flies backwards through the air to land sprawled out on his back.

The ghoul sniffs the air, turns its head towards the tractor and ambles towards it.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

Alice.

Lucius hurries to his feet and races after the creature.

BY THE TRACTOR

Alice SCREAMS as she sees the ghoul run towards her. She runs to one end of the tractor as the creature reaches the other. As Lucius runs towards them, the ghoul chases Alice around the tractor.
The thing LEAPS on top of the machine, then pounces on the girl and pins her to the ground.

Lucius rushes up and body-checks the ghoul just enough to free Alice.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
(to Alice)
Run!

He stands between the girl and the monster.

ALICE
Where?

LUCIUS
Just run!

Alice runs toward the house.

ON THE FRONT PORCH

Miss Payne and two cultists spill onto the porch from inside, engaged in a three-person hand-to-hand brawl. One of the cultists pulls a pistol, fires it at Miss Payne, but the shot goes wide in such close quarters.

She grabs the gun-wielding man's arm, points the weapon at the other cultist who clings to her leg and pulls the trigger. The shot goes through the chest of the clinging cultist.

Payne shoves the gun-wielder backwards, wrestles the gun from his grasp, turns the pistol on the man.

ALICE
Sees the short cultist sneak up behind Payne.

ALICE
Behind you.

Payne SPINS around, pistol whips the short cultist in the face and knocks him to the ground, turns back and points the gun at her previous target. The man puts up his hands, backs up, jumps over the porch railing and runs for it.

Miss PAYNE
Hears movement from back inside, heads in to deal with it.
LUCIUS

Stares down the ghoul, which cocks its head to the side, and gives a mocking grin, though it puts up its hand to block the intensifying morning light.

LUCIUS
More of a night-owl, are you?

Something clicks in his mind.

The ghoul growls and moves slowly at Lucius as its eyes dart towards Alice.

Behind his back, Lucius draws the SACRIFICIAL BLADE and readies it.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
You do realize that Yog-Sothoth is the bringer of light?

The ghoul JUMPS at Lucius, who SLAMS the blade into the creature's chest. It looks at him in shock, then HOWLS to the heavens before its body disintegrates in a brilliant flash. Only a pile of dust remains on the ground.

Lucius gapes but GUNFIRE from the house snaps him out of it.

He runs to...

THE FRONT PORCH

Miss Payne comes out of the house, battered and bruised, but alive, pistol in her hand.

MISS PAYNE
We did it.

LUCIUS
They ran.

MISS PAYNE
Or...

He nods, looks around panicked.

LUCIUS
You have Alice with you?

MISS PAYNE
No.

They both look around, startled.
LUCIUS
Alice!

MISS PAYNE
Alice! Where are you?!

LUCIUS
No. No. No.

They frantically search the farmyard - she's not there.

INT./EXT. CAR - MORNING (MOVING)
The formerly-gun-wielding cultist drives along the country road, Alice, bound and gagged, beside him.

EXT. REDWICH TOWN SQUARE - EVENING
Strange red clouds swirl overhead. The streets are deserted, though EYES peer out of houses through window blinds. Something's not right and everyone feels it.

An old TRUCK pulls into town and comes to a stop at the Bed and Breakfast. Lucius and Miss Payne get out and wave a thanks to the DRIVER, who wastes no time in getting out of town. The duo heads inside.

INT. BED AND BREAKFAST - BEDROOM - EVENING
SLAM! A stack of books falls onto the desk. Lucius and Payne each take several volumes and get to work.

LUCIUS
It must be here...

MISS PAYNE
How do we even know what we're looking for?

LUCIUS
We'll know it when we find it.

Miss Payne tosses one book aside, grabs another.

MISS PAYNE
Maybe we should just get a car and –
LUCIUS
And drive around the entire county? Take a leisurely stroll along the lake, perhaps?

MISS PAYNE
I want to find her just as much as you do.

LUCIUS
I just... I -

She closes her book, moves to him, and looks him in the eye. He freezes.

MISS PAYNE
You are the most brilliant, interesting, curious... and infuriating man I have ever known. If anyone can find that little girl, it's you.

He struggles with the weight of the compliment.

LUCIUS
Miss Payne...

MISS PAYNE
Shhh.

She kisses his forehead gently. Their eyes meet again. She SLAPS his face.

MISS PAYNE (CONT'D)
Now get your head straight and figure it out.

Just what he needed. His eyes narrow as he attacks his book with renewed vigor, flips pages, tosses it over his shoulder, grabs another book, flips, tosses, grabs a third, opens, scans. Stops.

LUCIUS
Hmmm.

MISS PAYNE
What is it?

LUCIUS
Something odd here. If I'm reading this correctly, the person to be sacrificed must go willingly to their death.

MISS PAYNE
They want to be killed? But Alice -
LUCIUS
No. It makes no sense, I know.
(shakes it off)
But where...?

Flip. Flip. He SLAMS his hand on the open page.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

Miss Payne looks over his shoulder at the

MEDIEVAL ILLUSTRATION - Monk-like figures COWER near an altar as a cloud opens above them and spews fire from heaven.

LUCIUS
stands as his excitement builds. He paces the room.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
This god of light thrives where there is light already. And he warps it and twists it and turns it on itself.
(points to illustration)
These are holy men.

MISS PAYNE
They're not worshipping him?

LUCIUS
Not "him" - it. And no, they're not. They're terrified because their god couldn't protect them...

MISS PAYNE
In their own place of worship.

He SLAMS the tome shut.

EXT. SPACE

Against the void, the symbol of Yog-Sothoth appears as a FULL CONSTELLATION, solid white lines now clear between the individual stars in the formation. The whole thing PULSES rhythmically.
EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Around Pastor Richards' little church, a throng of robed CULTISTS sway and moan in orgiastic ecstasy as they BABBLE their prayers in a strange language.

The ground RUMBLES and SHAKES. The cultists pause for just a moment, as they all look to one another. Another JOLT of the ground and they return to their prayers with renewed fervor.

A sudden QUAKE - the church EXPLODES into splinters as an enormous STONE TOWER emerges from the earth beneath it. Chunks of wood fly through the air, landing on several cult members, crushing a few, but the ritual goes on.

The tower stabs skyward and stops when it reaches a hundred feet - its side emblazoned with luminescent RUNES and depictions of grotesque CREATURES of all shapes and sizes. No entrance is visible at the base.

A CAR pulls to a stop nearby and Lucius and Miss Payne step out, mouths agape at the scene.

LUCIUS
I have a nagging suspicion that this might be the place.

The cultists pay no attention to Lucius and Miss Payne.

MISS PAYNE
(re: cultists)
It's like we're not even here.

LIGHTNING flashes in the sky. The duo looks up to see a swirling vortex overhead.

PASTOR RICHARD (O.C.)
The-all-in-one-the-spheres-the-one-in-all-the-spheres--

Lucius and Payne spin around to see Pastor Richard. The symbol of Yog-Sothoth, drawn in blood a hundred times or more, covers his shirtless body and face.

He advances, wild-eyed. Ms. Payne lifts her SHOTGUN. Lucius puts a hand on the gun barrel, lowers it.

LUCIUS
(to Pastor Richard)
How do we end this?

PASTOR RICHARD
The-coming-has-been-decided-the-lamb-is-here--
LUCIUS
Not of her own will.

PASTOR RICHARD

LUCIUS
She didn't -

Pastor Richard blinks. For a moment, he is clear.

PASTOR RICHARD
The lamb knows.

Tears stream down the minister's face.

PASTOR RICHARD (CONT'D)
Oh, this light that will destroy light. You must...

LUCIUS
What?

His eyes glaze over.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
We have to stop this!
(points to tower)
How do we get in there?

Pastor Richard raises his hands in exultation to the heavens.

PASTOR RICHARD
The-beyond-one-the-knowledge-the-strange-ones-are-coming--

Richard smiles a grim smile and RUNS full speed at the base of the tower.

PASTOR RICHARD (CONT'D)
The-all-in-one-the-spheres-the-one-in-all-the-shambling-man-the-spheres--

Richard lowers his head as he sprints.

MISS PAYNE
My God!

LUCIUS
No!
Lucius and Payne avert their eyes and hear a SPLAT! as Pastor Richard's head explodes as he collides with the tower. In shock, Lucius and Miss Payne turn their eyes to the minister's fallen body.

The blood stain on the wall TRANSFORMS into a small opening at the base of the tower, then becomes a crooked doorway. Inside, a flight of stairs leads up.

The duo looks at each other once more - "This is it." They head for the opening.

INT. TOWER - STAIRS - NIGHT

A seemingly endless flight of spiral stairs curls its way to the top of the tower. The walls pulsate with a violent red light, and bulge outward as if something is pressing from the other side.

Lucius and Miss Payne ascend. She readies her shotgun.

A deafening alien SCREECH as a large, membranous bulge of blood-red light EXPANDS from the wall in front of them like a giant luminescent polyp. The duo ducks out of the way and the thing disappears again into the wall.

MISS PAYNE
What is that?

LUCIUS
It's him. Part of him. The veil between worlds is growing thinner. Yog-Sothoth is finding his way in.

As they get higher and higher, the steps become more and more narrow - no guard rail.

Another BURST knocks Miss Payne to the edge of the stairs, her feet TEETER on the edge.

MISS PAYNE
Lucius!

He grabs the barrel of her shotgun, she clings to the stock. He pulls her back onto the stairs, she nods a breathless thanks.

LUCIUS
We really should get someone in here to fix that step.

MISS PAYNE
(points downstairs)
Front door could use a little work, too.

They muster grim smiles and keep moving.
Each new burst of light threatens to send them over the edge, but they somehow keep their balance and make it to...

EXT. TOP OF THE TOWER - NIGHT

Lucius and Miss Payne emerge from the stairwell onto the top of the tower more than a hundred feet above the ground.

A FLASH of light blinds them momentarily. When it dims, they see Jean, who stands before a stone altar. She wears a long, crimson robe and she GLOWS with a reddish light as arcs of cosmic electricity SURGE from her body. She smiles.

Alice trembles on the ground before Jean. The girl's eyes lock on Lucius, hopeful.

Above Jean, the vortex CRACKLES and SPITS ENERGY as grotesque BUBBLES OF LIGHT from another dimension seek entry to this one.

LUCIUS
Let her go.

JEAN
No.

Lucius takes a step closer, then stops as Jean's energy intensifies.

LUCIUS
(to Jean)
Yog-Sothoth will not appear if you can't make your sacrifice.

JEAN
Really?

LUCIUS
The knife. I destroyed it.

Jean scoffs.

JEAN
First of all, you and I both know that you would never destroy such a thing. It's probably very close. And second...

She pulls two SACRIFICIAL BLADES from her robe.

JEAN (CONT'D)
I've got more.
MISS PAYNE
Witch.

Jean acknowledges this with a nod. Lucius deflates a bit, then remembers. He braves another step closer. A tongue of red ELECTRICITY LASHES at his face. He dodges, stands his ground.

LUCIUS
She didn't come of her own will, Jean.

JEAN
What do you mean?

LUCIUS
You missed something very important. The sacrifice must choose to come here.

MISS PAYNE
And kidnapping doesn't count.

Jean appears shocked.

JEAN
My plan! It's falling apart!

Lucius and Payne look to one another - "We've got her now."

Jean suddenly LAUGHS, which becomes uncontrollable as she sees their confused faces.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Did you really think that I would overlook such a key element?

(beat)
No.

(beat)
Lucius, Alice was never the sacrifice.

She edges closer.

LUCIUS
What?

JEAN
You were.

LUCIUS
But -
JEAN
(points to Alice)
And thanks to Reginald's little incentive over there, you willingly, knowingly walked right into the tower and up the stairs.
(right in his face - like a lamb)
Baaaahhh!

Lucius stumbles backwards. Miss Payne helps him keep his balance.

LIGHTNING.

LUCIUS
But... Why me?

JEAN
You were touched by the other side long ago, Lucius.

QUICK FLASHBACK - 30 YEARS AGO

The Shadow Man's hand reaches out and touches Young Lucius' head and an arc of BLACK ENERGY surges into the boy.

BACK TO PRESENT

Jean LEVITATES and hovers. Her face and body begin to transform as bulbous, veiny and luminescent polyps push their way through her skin. She's becoming a monster.

JEAN (CONT'D)
And those who have been so anointed have the strongest bond with the next world. Don't you see? You've been given a gift.

LUCIUS
(point to Alice)
And what about her?

Jean regards the girl for a beat, smiles.

JEAN
We'll kill her, too. Come!

Three ROBED CULTISTS appear from the stairwell. Alice whimpers.
JEAN (CONT'D)

(to cultists)
Get rid of the girl and...
(points to Miss Payne)
Her.

A MUSCULAR CULTIST moves to grab Alice. Miss Payne lifts her shotgun, but Jean ZAPS it out of her hand with a shock of LIGHTNING. The gun skitters over the edge of the tower. Gone.

LUCIUS

RUSHES at Jean. She backhands him and he FLIES to the edge of the tower, nearly going over. He DIGS his fingers into the cracks of structure and claws his way back up.

ALICE

Screams as the muscular cultist grabs her. Miss Payne hurries to them and KICKS the cultist in the side of the knee - CRUNCH! The man howls and drops. Payne picks up Alice. From the ground, the cultist reaches after them.

Miss Payne KNEES him in the face and he's out.

JEAN

Continues to transform, grows more creature-like as red, light-filled orbs bubble violently on her skin. The pain of the change distracts her for a moment. She lets out a WAIL of ecstatic agony.

The TALL CULTIST and the FEMALE CULTIST advance on Miss Payne, KNIVES in hand.

Lucius picks up the fallen shotgun, cocks it and fires a BLAST! The Tall Cultist goes down, the Female turns to Lucius in shock, fury in her eyes.

LUCIUS

(to Payne)
Run! Get her out of here!

Lucius cocks the again, lifts it to fire, Jean GRABS him by the throat and SLAMS him on the stone altar, the shotgun flies over the side of the tower.

Miss Payne, Alice in her arms, freezes.

MISS PAYNE

Lucius!
LUCIUS

Go!

The Female Cultist, knife raised, RUSHES Miss Payne, who doesn't see her coming. Alice SCREAMS as the blade SLASHES. Miss Payne ducks at the last second and avoids the cut.

Payne SPINS around. The Female Cultist is off balance. Payne winds up an angry Scottish fist and PUNCHES the other woman dead in the nose, knocks her out cold.

One more look back at Lucius.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

Hurry!

Miss Payne picks up a fallen blade and runs for the stairs.

The vortex above the tower SPEWS giant arcs of ENERGY, each more powerful than the last.

Jean is now barely recognizable - her face is a monstrous mask of glowing, membranous BOILS. Her body is larger now - twisted and grotesque.

She moves towards Lucius, sacrificial blade held high.

Lucius' HAND goes to his coat pocket as she advances.

JEAN

Yog-Sothoth! Light beyond light! The time is now for you to come into this world! Accept this sacrifice for -

Lucius THROWS a handful of powder and a huge cloud of SMOKE appears. Jean is disoriented, then waves her hand and the smoke dissipates.

Lucius almost makes it to the stairwell door, but Jean ZAPS him with an energy blast and he falls, moans with pain.

JEAN (CONT'D)

You think you can trick me?

He rolls over, props himself up on his elbow.

LUCIUS

Thought it was worth a try.

With a much larger arm than before, Jean GRABS Lucius and YANKS him back towards the altar.
INT. TOWER - STAIRS

POP! Miss Payne, with Alice on her back, STABS a giant, living bubble with the knife - it spews glowing slime all over both of them.

As they run, the walls PULSE and EXPAND, the bubbles are bigger now - within each globule of light, an EYE!

They dodge or pop the monstrous growths coming out of the walls as they hurry down the stairs.

A huge bubble PUSHES up from the stairs and KNOCKS Miss Payne against the wall. More glowing, red polyps form around her, and TRAP her against the wall. She and Alice struggle, but can't get free - the exit is just feet away.

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<tr>
<th>MISS PAYNE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lucius!</td>
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<tr>
<th>ALICE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Help!</td>
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The wall tightens on the pair.

EXT. TOP OF THE TOWER

Lucius faces off with Jean.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<th>JEAN</th>
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<tr>
<td>You can end their suffering now.</td>
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<tr>
<th>LUCIUS</th>
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<tr>
<td>And have them live in a world ruled by Yog-Sothoth? I'd rather die.</td>
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<tr>
<th>JEAN</th>
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<td>That's the idea.</td>
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Lucius looks to the edge of the tower.

<table>
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<th>JEAN (CONT'D)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mmmm. But would you survive the fall?</td>
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</table>
He walks to the edge, looks down.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Have it your way. A sacrifice is a sacrifice.

He weighs his options.

INT. TOWER - STAIRS
The living wall has almost completely absorbed Miss Payne and Alice.

ALICE
Lucius! Help us!

Miss Payne holds the girl tightly.

MISS PAYNE
(under her breath)
Please.

She closes her eyes in a silent prayer. Inside the bubbles, drooling, fanged MOUTHS appear.

EXT. TOP OF THE TOWER
Lucius looks once more over the side. Deep breath.

LUCIUS
Alright.

Jean's distorted face shows surprise. Her voice is now deeper, more guttural.

JEAN
Alright?

He nods, exhales, steps backwards OFF THE EDGE, and vanishes from view.

Jean is taken aback for a beat, then the power of the moment dawns on her. She lifts her arms to the heavens and lets out a primal ROAR of exultation.

She waits.

She looks around.

Nothing.

Looks up again.
Still nothing.

Jean walks to the edge of the tower, peers over the edge.

LUCIUS

just a few feet below, CLINGS to the strap of Miss Payne's shotgun, which was snagged by a narrow tower outcropping. His legs dangle over the 100-foot drop.

Jean ROARS furiously. Energy surges and crackles around her. She winds up, ready to throw a lightning blast at Lucius.

He reaches up, SQUEEZES the trigger on the shotgun, which BLASTS Jean backwards and knocks her to the ground.

Lucius climbs back up over the edge, grabs the shotgun and spins around as Jean gets up again and rushes him.

BLAM! Another shotgun blast sends Jean over the edge of the tower. He reloads as he hurries over and looks down.

JEAN,

Bloodied, but no longer monstrous in any way, clings to the ledge. She looks up with pleading eyes.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Please. Don't let me fall. I'm hurt.

He is torn. She looks pathetic - defeated.

JEAN (CONT'D)

You've won... Please.

He makes up his mind.

Lucius kneels, puts down the shotgun, his eyes locked on hers. He offers his hand. She reaches up and takes it. He pulls, she starts to climb up.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Give me your other hand.

A tiny FLASH behind her eyes.

Lucius offers his other hand and she YANKS it with a SCREAM of victory.

Lucius' hand POPS off - a WAX HAND (like Desdemona's).
Confused, Jean FALLS backwards, unable to make sense of it. Far too late, she gets it then SPLATS! on the ground below.

The tower begins to SHAKE.

Lucius hurries to the stairs.

INT. TOWER - STAIRS

Only a hint of Miss Payne is visible in the surging, living wall.

Lucius runs down the steps, almost runs past, then notices her, stops. He picks up the sacrificial knife on the floor and HACKS at the wall, which explodes in glowing goo.

Miss Payne and Alice fall out of the wall. They gasp for breath. Lucius picks up the little girl, helps Miss Payne to her feet.

The tower ROCKS violently as giant chunks of stone fall from above - this place is coming down!

MISS PAYNE
Lucius -

LUCIUS
No time! Run!

They sprint down the stairs, the exit just ahead.

EXT. TOWER

With a deafening RUMBLE, the tower COLLAPSES just as Lucius, with Alice in his arms, and Miss Payne RUN from the exit. Several cultists run, horror and dismay on their faces. Huge chunks of stone crush some that remain.

Lucius and Miss Payne get a safe distance away, then fall to the ground, exhausted and watch the tower of Yog-Sothoth become rubble.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY MUSEUM - DAY

A huge hall in the Anthropology wing. Lucius watches as a MUSEUM WORKER closes a display case, locks it, wipes the glass clean.
MUSEUM WORKER
(to Lucius)
So where'd you get this thing?

LUCIUS
My uncle.

Inside the case is one of the sacrificial blades.

MUSEUM WORKER
Huh.

The worker heads off.

ALICE (O.C.)
Lucius!

He turns to see Alice running right for him. She jumps into his arms and laughs as he swings her around. Miss Payne walks up.

LUCIUS
I've been wondering what was taking the two of you so long.
(points to the case)
Look.

The three of them look at the blade, conflicting feelings clear on all of their faces. They've been through a lot.

Professor Dorian approaches.

PROFESSOR DORIAN
Wonderful. Just wonderful. Lucius, I can't tell how delighted the University is with these pieces.

Lucius smiles.

PROFESSOR DORIAN (CONT'D)
Miss Payne, I would like to offer my wholehearted gratitude for your contribution.

MISS PAYNE
(a little surprised)
Thank you.

Dorian kneels in front of Alice.
PROFESSOR DORIAN
And you, little lady. With your guardian's permission, I should very much like to treat you to the best ice cream on campus.

She looks to Lucius. He nods. She beams.

ALICE
(to Dorian)
Yes, please!

Alice gives a little wave as she and Dorian head off.

Miss Payne and Lucius look at one another, something different, deeper between them.

LUCIUS
(Dorian impersonation)
"I would like to offer my wholehearted gratitude for your contribution."

She laughs.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
It's good to know that if you contribute enough to the museum, scandalous rumors don't matter.

MISS PAYNE
Well, as your pretend mistress, I'm happy to hear it. (beat)
You could do worse, by the way.

LUCIUS
I could do far worse.

They look into one another's eyes. He suddenly remembers.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
A letter!

MISS PAYNE
What?

They stroll past cavemen and mammoth bones.

LUCIUS
There was something about it all that never made sense.
MISS PAYNE
What?

LUCIUS
On the train.

MISS PAYNE
The man who tried to kill you.

QUICK FLASH - The would-be assassin on the train falls, a golden EYE IN A STAR MEDALLION around his neck gleams in the moonlight.

BACK TO PRESENT

LUCIUS
The stars weren't right. Not then.

MISS PAYNE
So why did -

LUCIUS
Why did they send someone to kill me before it was time to kill me?

She ponders this.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Because it wasn't them. Someone else wanted me dead.

MISS PAYNE
What are you talking about?

Lucius pulls a letter from his breast pocket, opens it, reads.

LUCIUS
"Dear Mr. Turnbull..."

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOLDEN STAR LODGE - DAY
An upscale brownstone with a DOORMAN out front. Barely visible above the entrance is a familiar symbol - an EYE IN A STAR.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
It is with humble thanks that I write this. Were it not for your timely intervention in Redwich...
INT. GOLDEN STAR LODGE - SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Several MEN converse, smoke cigars, drink scotch.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
...the world would surely have fallen to the forces of darkness. For that, we are truly grateful.

They all have the look of distinguished and seasoned travelers. A DARK-SKINNED MAN in a turban listens to the tale of a MAN WITH AN EYE PATCH.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
It is with no small degree of embarrassment that I acknowledge our agent's attempt on your life.

A ONE-ARMED MAN and an AMERICAN INDIAN MAN examine a HUGE map of the world. The one-armed man points to an area in the Pacific marked: RLYLEH.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
As we became aware that you were the intended sacrifice in a plot to bring forth the despicable one, some within our ranks felt that we had little choice but to remove you as a piece from the playing field.

In the corner of the room, a solid oak DOOR.

INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Part laboratory, part library, part sorcerer's workshop. Ancient tomes in strange languages lie open on tables and shelves. Electric experiments crackle and spark around the room.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
To our eventual relief, we were unsuccessful in our attempt.

On a huge desk, A HAND writes a letter with a quill pen.

MAN'S VOICE
Certain events have recently come to light that beg further investigation.

The hand belongs to PHILIP WEATHERSBY (65) a wizard in a suit and tie.

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
On this matter I'll say little more until I see you face-to-face. However, I do offer this single word...
Cthulhu.
Philip signs his name to the letter, folds it.

INT. MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY MUSEUM - DAY

Miss Payne hangs on his every word.

LUCIUS
"Sincerely, Philip J. Weathersby, Chapter Master - Order of the Golden Star."

MISS PAYNE
This is...

LUCIUS
Amazing.

MISS PAYNE
What?

LUCIUS
Cthulhu. The most horrific of the Elder Gods. This could be -

MISS PAYNE
They tried to kill you.

LUCIUS
They had a good reason. I might have done the same.

MISS PAYNE
You wouldn't. You'd never. You should stay far away from them.

He refolds the letter, puts it back in the envelope, tucks it back into his jacket.

LUCIUS
(smiles)
You don't have to come.

MISS PAYNE
You're meeting them. When?

LUCIUS
Tomorrow.

She shakes her head.
MISS PAYNE
This is too soon.

LUCIUS
I'm just meeting with them.
(sincerely)
Really.

They let it sink in.

MISS PAYNE
Alright.

LUCIUS
Truly?

She takes his hand in hers. Pats it gently, looks him in the eye.

MISS PAYNE
Truly. Boss.

He smiles at her.

LUCIUS
Thank you. Annie.

She smiles back.

FADE OUT.