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RUSH

by

David H. Navratil

A Creative Writing Project
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
Through the Department of
English Language, Literature and Creative Writing
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree of Master of Arts at the
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2004

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"Rush"

by

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ABSTRACT

Rush is a screenplay, set in Las Vegas, Nevada. The story revolves around the troubles of the protagonist, Mark Theseus. After arriving in Vegas for a real estate conference, Mark becomes addicted to gambling. The addiction hits him quickly, and rather than get back on the airplane and leave, he chooses to stay in Vegas. The story is based on the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, and many of the characters, themes and images help to identify it as such. But the story is also about traps and labyrinths, physical and mental spaces where people can become lost. Once Mark decides to stay in Vegas, he has sprung his own trap. And Like Theseus, he must now fulfill a quest in order to secure his freedom.

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FADE IN

EXT. TROPICANA BOULEVARD - NIGHT

SUPER: December, 1999

Snow swirls down a highway, wrapping itself around the "Welcome to Las Vegas" sign. The lights from the strip are barely visible through the snowstorm.

The heavy snow whips around a marooned wooden pirate ship. The ship rests in the middle of a field surrounded by a chain link fence. There is a sign on the fence.

INSERT - THE SIGN

FUTURE HOME OF THE "ACROPOLIS CASINO" - A DAEDALUS CONSTRUCTION PROJECT.

BACK TO SCENE

Tracks in the snow outside the fence lead to a man, MARK THESEUS. Dressed only in a rumpled Armani suit and carrying a bag, he chases after JACKPOT, his golden lab.

MARK

Jackpot! Come back...

He slips in the snow and falls to the ground.

INT. LAS VEGAS AIRPORT - DAY.

SUPER: Seven months earlier.

Mark and 13 other real estate agents make their way through the airport to the luggage area.

As they get on the moving walkway, Mark separates from the group and walks beside them.

Elvis's "Fools Rush In" plays over the speaker system.

SHERMAN, Mark's boss, begins to hand out sticky name badges.

SHERMAN

Okay, I had fourteen of these, and there's one left. Who did I miss?

STEVE, a balding middle-aged coworker, is staring at Mark in disbelief.

STEVE
Mark? Get on the conveyor.

MARK
Can't do it, Stevie. I hate those things.

MIKE, an older coworker who is drinking a beer, joins in.

MIKE
You crazy kid! Using your legs like that. Just wait until you're my age.

MARK
What happens then, Mike?

STEVE
You start wearing diapers again.

MIKE
Shut up.

MARK
I like options, Mike.

STEVE
Vegas!

SHERMAN
Aha. Mark, are you my number fourteen?

He holds it out, but Mark begins to move away.

MARK
I hate those things too!

SHERMAN
Just put it on. It's a small sacrifice to make for your boss.

MARK
I can't do it, Sherman.

SHERMAN
Mark!

Mark starts whooping it up and running.

MARK
VEGAS!

He rounds a corner, entering the Arrivals area.

SHERMAN

Is he drunk?

MARK

No. His Dad is an alcoholic, so Mark never drinks.

SHERMAN

Why does he do things like that?

STEVE

He's a very, very intense guy. Once he decides to do something, he does it to the extreme.

SHERMAN

Really?

STEVE

But he works like a dog, Sherman. That's why you brought him down here.

Sherman frowns, then puts the unused name badge in his breast pocket.

INT. DESSERTED ISLAND CAFE - LATER

An overhead bell JINGLES when Mark, Steve and Mike enter the cafe.

STEVE

Look, I'll run with the Pearson deal from here, okay? You sold the property, I'll do the paperwork.

MARK

Okay, Steve.

STEVE

50-50 split.

MARK

Okay, Steve.

Mike beelines for the washroom.

STEVE

You do need diapers!

MIKE
Enough already.

Mark and Steve slide into a booth.

PASIPHAE, a young Greek waitress, comes over to take their order.

STEVE
Two beers, please.

MARK
Should we order one for Mike?

STEVE
Do you want to stop again?

MARK
Okay. Hi, Pasiphae. Greek?

PASIPHAE
Yes. How did you know?

MARK
I have a little Greek blood too,
but I'm mostly a mongrel.

PASIPHAE
Nice to meet you...

MARK
Mark.

PASIPHAE
Nice to meet you, Mark. Not many
people pronounce it right.

Pasiphae leaves to get their order.

STEVE
My name's Steve!

Steve follows her with his eyes, then smiles at Mark.

STEVE
Ahh, Vegas.

MARK
Ah, Vegas, what?

Steve motions toward Pasiphae.

STEVE

You know. Even in a rat-hole like
this the women are hot.

Mark laughs.

MARK

Even if you were Greek, single, and
owned a shipping company, you
wouldn't have a chance.

STEVE

Go to hell.

Pasiphae returns with the beers.

PASIPHAE

There you go. Enjoy.

MARK

Thanks.

PASIPHAE

Are you guys in town for a
convention?

STEVE

You mean we don't look like locals?

PASIPHAE

Locals don't normally wear name
badges.

Steve looks sheepish.

MARK

You're wearing one.

PASIPHAE

I'm not from here, remember?

She walks away.

PASIPHAE

Let me know if you need anything
else.

Steve is about to say something sarcastic, but Mark shakes
his head, stopping him.

Mark watches her leave.

Mike comes out of the bathroom and heads over to their table.

STEVE
Over here, Gramps!

MARK
I swear I've met her before.

STEVE
Maybe in another life.

Steve makes weird, ghost-like noises.

STEVE
Oooo-eeeeeee.

MIKE
Where's my damn beer?

STEVE
Mark had a vision.

MIKE
Oh yeah?

STEVE
No more booze for you until we get
to the hotel.

MIKE
You're a real prick, you know that?

STEVE
My prick works, Mike.

MIKE
Funny guy. At least I have hair.

STEVE
Ouch!

MARK
Can we leave? I feel as though I
may be missing the Vegas
experience.

They get up from the table.

Mark waves to Pasiphae.

MARK
Thanks, Pasiphae.

PASIPHAE
Have fun.

They all leave the restaurant.

Pasiphae goes to the window to watch them drive away.

INT. MIRAGE CASINO - NIGHT

Steve and Mark are playing blackjack at a table. They are drinking and having a good time.

The dealer is a Filipino woman named PIM.

Mark gets dealt a blackjack.

MARK

I love no-brainer hands!

STEVE

Luck.

PIM

Congratulations.

MARK

Skill!

A WAITRESS comes by.

WAITRESS

Cocktails?

MARK

Bring Stevie another Heinie.

WAITRESS

And for you?

MARK

I don't drink.

WAITRESS

How about another water?

MARK

Okay.

STEVE

Lighten up a little. Have a drink.

MARK

My dad's the drinker in my family.

STEVE

Remember that time you got drunk
when we were 17?

MARK

The one time I got drunk.

PIM

The only time, huh?

MARK

The one and only time I caved in to
peer pressure.

STEVE

You should have seen him. We were
playing night golf with some
friends. I was helping Mark line up
his tee shot. I had to help him
because he kept missing the ball. I
said, "You're doing great, Mark.
You look good."

MARK

I hate this story.

STEVE

Then, just as he was about to take
another swing, I looked down.

PIM

And?

STEVE

And he had no golf ball.

Steve laughs.

STEVE

I said, "I think I found your
problem, Mark."

MARK

And you wonder why I don't drink?

PIM

Are you gentlemen in town for a
convention?

MARK

Real estate.

STEVE

Three days of boring speeches.

MARK

That's the worst. They parade around these million dollar salesmen, who only got that way--

STEVE

Because they have the best area of a city. Like, Hollywood Hills or something.

MARK

Exactly.

Mark gets dealt an eleven.

STEVE

Double down like a wild man!

Mark doubles his bet then looks at Pim.

MARK

I need a ten, Pim.

Pim flips over his card - a king of diamonds.

STEVE

Boo-yah!

MARK

Suicide king - I love you.

Pim laughs at Mark's antics.

Mark stands up and points at his hand while talking to Pim.

MARK

Try and beat me, Pim. I dare you to beat that 21 right there.

Pim pulls an 18, and Mark wins again.

MARK

God, I love it here!

STEVE

Why do you keep winning, and I keep getting beat?

MARK

Lady Luck loves me.

PIM

Shuffle.

MARK

Where are you from Pim?

PIM

Here. But I was born in the Philippines.

MARK

You know that you have the craziest name on earth, don't you?

Pim laughs.

PIM

It's pretty normal where I come from.

MARK

Is Pim short for Pimela?

Pim smiles again, then notices one of the cards is bent.

PIM

Oh-oh. I think we need to change decks. This will take a few minutes.

Pim waves over the PITBOSS, who brings her five new decks, which she methodically begins to check over.

Mark looks disappointed about the wait, then stands and stretches.

MARK

I need to go make pee, Steve.

STEVE

I have a feeling you already made it. I'll come with you.

Mark steers Steve towards the Sports Book section of the casino.

STEVE

Where are you taking me?

MARK

The Sports Book washroom. Even the toilet seats are covered in leather.

STEVE
Sounds classy.

MARK
Exactly.

They enter the

SPORTS BOOK WASHROOMS

And are greeted by KARON, the Haitian-American attendant. Karon never looks anyone in the eye, nor does he ever look up. He is old, bearded, and walks with a cane.

Gentle music fills the air.

KARON
C'mon in, plenty of room.

Steve and Mark look at each other and grin.

STEVE
Thanks, Kar...

KARON
It's pronounced, Car-own.

STEVE
French?

KARON
I'm originally from Port-au-Prince,
in Haiti.

MARK
Haiti! Isn't anyone in this town
actually from Vegas?

KARON
I wouldn't know, sir.

They enter two side-by-side stalls. The sounds of pants being unzipped, followed by peeing, fill the air.

STEVE
Ahh...

MARK
This washroom is nicer than my
parents' basement.

STEVE
Are you still living at home?

MARK

I told you before, they like having me around.

STEVE

Sure they do.

MARK

These days lots of kids live at home well into their thirties.

STEVE

Don't ever use that line in your sales pitch. And when you're in your thirties, you're officially an adult.

MARK

Let me respond by saying this...

Mark's toilet flushes.

Steve and Mark leave their stalls and head to the sink.

Karon stands there holding up a towel.

Mark takes one and gives Karon a dollar.

KARON

Thank you, sir.

He holds one out for Steve.

MARK

It's alright Karon. He can use mine.

KARON

Whatever you say, sir.

Steve laughs.

MARK

Let's go Stevo!

They leave the washroom and head back into the

CASINO.

STEVE

Man, what's the deal with that guy? He never looked up once.

MARK

If you worked in a washroom all day
would you look people in the eye?

STEVE

Good point.

They sit back at their seats.

A new dealer, SANDY, has replaced Pim.

STEVE

Where's Pim?

SANDY

On her break.

MARK

That's bad.

SANDY

Oh, I'm not so tough.

MARK

This is bad luck.

STEVE

Give her a chance. She seems nice.

SANDY

Thank you.

Mark is dealt 16.

MARK

Doom and disaster, Steve.

Mark waves for a card, and busts.

SANDY

Sorry.

MARK

I miss Pim.

Sherman and the other sales people come walking down the
aisle.

SHERMAN

There they are.

MARK

Hi Sherman.

SHERMAN

We're all going out for giant steaks.

Steve grabs his chips and stands up.

MARK

I'm not that hungry yet. You guys go ahead.

Sherman puts a hand on Steve's shoulder.

SHERMAN

C'mon Mark. A little group bonding. My treat.

MARK

I'll catch up with you guys in a bit.

SHERMAN

Alright.

Sherman starts walking away with the others.

STEVE

Smooth.

MARK

I can eat anytime, Steve.

STEVE

Don't lose it all.

Steve runs after the others.

Mark gets dealt another 16. He shakes his head.

INT. MIRAGE - MORNING

Steve, dressed in a suit and sporting a name badge, is at the casino cage cashing in his chips from the night before.

MARK (O.C.)

Double it!

Steve frowns. He takes the money he was paid, then walks around the corner.

Mark is sitting at the table he was playing at last night. He is wearing the same clothes, and looks disheveled.

Steve walks over to the table.

STEVE

Mark?

MARK

Hey Steve! You're finally back.
Pull up a chair.

STEVE

Uh, I'm on my way to the
convention. It's eight a.m.

MARK

What?

Mark looks at his watch.

STEVE

Were you playing all night?

MARK

I'm on a roll, Steve. Check it out.

Mark waves at his chips. He has thousands of dollars in front of him.

STEVE

Holy shit.

MARK

Listen, you go ahead.

Mark grabs his chips and stands.

MARK

I'll go get cleaned up and meet you
at the convention centre. Okay?

STEVE

Sounds good.

Steve walks toward the exit.

Mark cashes in some of his chips, then heads toward the room elevators.

John Prine's, "How Lucky Can One Man Be" plays over the casino's sound system

As he walks past the Armani store in the Mirage mall, Mark pauses to look at a suit in the window. After looking at his own rumpled appearance in a mirror, Mark enters the store.

He comes back out of the store carrying multiple bags, and heads towards the elevators.

One opens and he steps inside.

The door closes, and the music momentarily stops.

When it reopens, Mark is clean shaven, showered, and wearing his new suit.

The music starts to play again.

He gets off the elevator and heads toward the front of the hotel.

As he tries to leave the casino, the sound of the music is overtaken by the sounds of the casino.

At first, a cheer from a winner, then the progressively louder sound of chips being stacked and re-stacked, finally, the overwhelming sound of people talking and cheering combine to drown out the music.

Mark pauses near the tropical forest canopy which leads to the front doors. He consults his watch, then turns and re-enters the casino.

EXT. TROPICANA BOULEVARD - DAY

Mark, dressed in the new black Armani suit, drags his suitcase across the road to the cafe.

PRO-C, a very tall African-American man dressed in a black suit and wearing dark sunglasses, stands in front of the door.

As Mark approaches the door, Pro-C pulls it open. He throws an arm out to block Mark from entering.

TOROS, a short stocky Armenian with a ring through his nose, walks slowly out of the cafe. He is wiping his hands on a napkin.

Toros stops in the entrance, lights a cigarette, and exhales the smoke through his nose.

He stares at Mark, looking him up and down. He reaches out and caresses Mark's lapel, nodding approvingly.

TOROS
Nice suit.

He turns, nodding at Pro-C.

Pro-C gives a card to Mark.

INSERT - THE CARD

TOROS (719) 777-6667

BACK TO SCENE

Toros walks away and Pro-C follows, but not before he points to the card and nods.

PRO-C

Don't lose that number, sport.

Mark watches them climb into a black Cadillac and drive off. Toros stares at Mark through the car window.

He turns and enters the cafe.

INT. CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Pasiphae is tending to her boss, MARTIN, who is nursing a swollen lip.

She looks up when the bell above the door CHIMES. She walks over to Mark, staring at him strangely.

Mark is covered in sweat from his walk.

PASIPHAE

Hi.

MARK

Hi. Uh, can I use your washroom?

PASIPHAE

Sure, it's in the back.

Mark looks over at Martin on his way to the washroom.

Martin has been crying, and Pasiphae walks back and wipes his face with a cloth.

Mark comes out of the washroom.

Pasiphae brings him a glass of water.

MARK

It's alright.

PASIPHAE

Martin wanted you to have it.

Mark looks over at Martin, who waves.

MARK

Thanks Martin!

MARTIN

It's Marty. And you're welcome.

Mark downs the glass in a few greedy gulps.

PASIPHAE

You want another?

MARK

Nah. I gotta catch a plane.

He picks up his bag and heads for the door.

Pasiphae continues to stare at him.

PASIPHAE

How was the convention?

MARK

What?

PASIPHAE

Real estate, right?

MARK

Oh, that. Pretty boring.

Mark smiles weakly.

MARK

I tried gambling, a little.

PASIPHAE

Did you win?

MARK

At one point I did.

PASIPHAE

Oh.

MARK

Well, I gotta go. Thanks.

PASIPHAE

Bye.

He leaves in a hurry and doesn't look back.

MARTIN

You know that guy?

PASIPHAE

Yeah. He was here the other day.

Martin comes over to the window.

MARTIN

If he's walking to the airport in this heat, he can't be much of a player.

PASIPHAE

Maybe.

Martin looks at Pasiphae, his top lip is swollen from the smack he got from Toros.

MARTIN

Trust me, I know all about guys like him.

PASIPHAE

What? Did he set off your gambling radar?

MARTIN

Something like that.

Martin puts the wet cloth back on his face, then goes back behind the counter.

Pasiphae watches Mark trudge back across the road.

INT. AIRPORT - LATER

Mark, covered in sweat from his walk, enters the airport. He looks around and heads to the American Airlines ticket counter.

A young male AGENT waves him forward.

AGENT

Where to, sir?

Mark takes out his ticket and Toros's card drops onto the counter.

Mark picks up the card and reads it again.

AGENT

Okay, Mr. Theseus. I have you in an exit row seat, boarding through gate seven at 3:05.

Mark takes the boarding card.

AGENT

Is there anything else I can help you with?

MARK

Yes. How do I go about cashing in this ticket?

The agent looks surprised, but begins to process Mark's refund.

AGENT

There's a \$75.00 processing fee if you want a cash refund. Is that alright?

MARK

No problem.

AGENT

So your refund total is \$389.65.

MARK

Thanks.

Mark takes the cash, and walks over to the Hertz car rental counter.

The agent watches Mark walk away.

A hand drops on Mark's shoulder.

STEVE

Airport security! Please drop your pants and assume the position!

Mark turns around, Steve and the other agents are all laughing.

SHERMAN

Well, hello there stranger!

STEVE

We thought you were dead.

MARK

I've been around.

STEVE

Not at the convention.

MARK

Sure, I was there.

STEVE

Right.

MARK

Maybe if you showed up before noon,
you might have seen me.

STEVE

I only saw you when I walked by the
blackjack tables!

Steve and a few of the others laugh.

Mark lowers his voice so only Steve can hear.

MARK

Fuck off, Steve.

Steve looks shocked.

STEVE

Easy partner, I'm just horsing
around.

Sherman waves at everyone to head for the gate.

STEVE

Have you checked in yet?

MARK

You guys go ahead. I need to use
the washroom.

STEVE

Don't get lost!

Mark watches them head toward security, then he turns and
leaves the airport.

EXT. AIRPORT - LATER

Mark gets off the Hertz airport bus at the off-site lot, which is right beside the Desserted Island Cafe. Rather than renting a car, Mark starts walking back to the strip.

An American Airlines plane takes off, passing overhead.

Pasiphae opens the door to talk to Mark.

PASIPHAE

Hey.

MARK

Hi.

PASIPHAE

I thought you were leaving.

MARK

The plane was full.

Mark keeps walking.

MARK

See you around.

PASIPHAE

Okay.

A few blocks later, Mark stops in front of a building advertising rooms for rent. He goes inside.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - LATER

Mark walks into an empty loft apartment.

The superintendant, JESSIE, begins to extol the virtues of the place.

JESSIE

It's nothing fancy, but the floors are new, so's the bathroom.

A few more lights are flicked on revealing two large windows. In the distance, the strip twinkles.

JESSIE

It's a big unit, about 1,300 square feet between the two rooms.

Mark gravitates to the windows, staring at the lights.

MARK

I'll take it.

Montage - Gambling and furnishing.

- A furniture company brings in furniture.
- Mark high fives fellow gamblers at a craps table.
- Mark hangs vertical blinds on the windows.
- Mark fist pumps the air as he gets a blackjack.
- The cable & phone company show up at the same time.
- Mark cashes in a large amount of chips.
- Mark adjusts his tie in the standing mirror in his new bedroom.
- Mark, tie askew, places bets at the roulette table.
- Mark, surrounded by unpacked boxes of merchandise, watches TV.
- Mark stares intently at a slot machine, as it come up 777.
- Mark enters his apartment with a frisky golden lab.

RETURN TO SCENE.

Mark falls asleep in front of the TV. The book, "How to Beat the Craps out of the Casino and Win" lays open across his chest. Several other gambling DVDs and books are scattered around the room.

Jackpot eats from Mark's plate.

INT. MIRAGE - LATER

A wall of pay phones is surrounded by a row of loud slot machines.

Mark puts coins into a phone, then dials.

MARK

Hi, Dad.

(beat)

I know, it's really loud. Sorry.

(MORE)

MARK (cont'd)

(beat)

I'm not at the airport. I'm still in Vegas.

(beat)

I know what I said, but I'm still here.

Mark starts staring intently at a slot machine that someone is playing. His face is reflected in the glass surface.

MARK

Things are, uh, just taking longer than I expected, that's all. Starting up a new office isn't easy.

Mark smiles.

MARK

No, I'm not calling to ask you for money.

Mark shakes his head from side to side.

MARK

When did they call?

(beat)

Dad, it's my business. If your bank called for you, it would be your business.

Mark looks angry.

MARK

Why...Why would you call Steve?

(beat)

Well, he's not here, is he? I am, and I- What?

The person playing the slot gets up and leaves.

MARK

Don't..look, dad I have to get going.

(beat)

Everything's fine. You know how hard I've been working. I'm just having an extended holiday. I'll be back before you know it. Okay?

Mark sighs.

MARK

Fine. I'll call soon.

Mark replaces the receiver, and hangs his head.

He walks away from the phone straight to the slot machine. He opens his wallet and takes out the lone bill and inserts it.

EXT. CAFE - AFTERNOON

Mark walks up to the cafe door, where Pro-C stands guard.

PRO-C

I see you made that call.

He grins and pulls open the door.

They both enter.

INT. CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Toros is the only customer, and he is talking with Pasiphae.

Mark and Pro-C walk over to the table, where they wait until acknowledged.

TOROS

You take this present and give it
to your pretty, little girl.

He hands her a stuffed toy bull, which is also a piggy bank.

PASIPHAE

Thank you, Toros.

TOROS

Hey, don't be fooled by what you
hear. I'm a really nice guy.

He laughs insanely, while motioning Pro-C and Mark to sit.

Pasiphae refills Toros coffee cup, then returns to the counter.

Mark gets in the booth first.

Still giggling, Toros lights a cigarette. He then stares intently at Mark.

MARK

Hey, how's it going? I'm the guy,
yeah, the guy that called, you
know?

Toros continues to stare.

Mark pulls out the card from his wallet.

MARK

You gave me this card, remember? It
was right out front about, a month
ago, and--

Toros holds up a hand to silence Mark.

TOROS

If I didn't remember you, my
friend, you would not be here.

Mark puts the card back in his wallet.

MARK

Okay, okay. That's cool.

TOROS

I am Toros. And you are?

MARK

Mark. Mark Theseus.

Toros laughs again.

TOROS

A Mark, eh?

Pro-C laughs.

TOROS

I will call you by your last name.
You will call me Mr. Toros.

MARK

Okay.

Toros glares at Mark.

Pro-C jabs him with an elbow.

MARK

Ah, okay Mr. Toros.

Toros nods.

TOROS
This is my associate.

Pro-C lowers his sunglasses and nods.

MARK
You look familiar.

TOROS
Tell him who you are.

PRO-C
Name's Pro-C. I used to play power forward for Utah State.

MARK
Gary 'Pro-C' Johnson! I saw you play against NC two years ago!

PRO-C
How'd I do?

MARK
30 points, and about a dozen rebounds.

Pro-C smiles.

PRO-C
Sounds like me.

MARK
Man, you were fast! Those damn jets of your's, like, like a gazelle or something!

PRO-C
I can still turn it on when I want to.

MARK
What the hell are you doing here, man? Are you still playing?

A cloud of smoke swirls between the two men, ending their discussion.

Toros is staring furiously at Pro-C.

TOROS
Yes, Pro-C. Please, tell us why you are here.

PRO-C

I'm just--

TOROS

Tell him who you really are, Mr. Basketball star.

PRO-C

C'mon, Mr. Toros.

TOROS

What team do you play for these days?

PRO-C

I work for Mr. Toros now.

TOROS

That's right. Basketball stars don't sit in shitty fucking coffee shops in the desert, do they?

PRO-C

No, sir.

TOROS

Now go get me a cup of coffee.

Pro-C grabs the cup from the table.

Toros stubs out his cigarette.

PRO-C

Right away, Mr. Toros.

He walks slowly to the counter.

Toros smiles.

TOROS

Good staff can be so hard to find, Theseus. And, I must confess, at times I can be a very demanding boss.

He lights a new cigarette.

TOROS

Now, I am sure you did not phone to ask me on a date.

MARK

I, uh, I thought you might be able to help me out, you know.

TOROS

Help you? The guy's wearing a \$5,000 suit and he needs my help.

MARK

\$4,449.99 - actually. I got a break on it at the, at the, Armani store in the Mirage. I bought it last week.

TOROS

It looks good on you. Me, I can never get a suit to fit me right.

MARK

You need a tailor. A good tailor.

Mark fiddles with the sugar dispenser, then leans in close to Toros.

MARK

I have a small cash flow problem.

Toros begins laughing again. He turns and yells over at Pro-C.

TOROS

Pro-C! Our friend here has a cash flow problem!

PRO-C

They all do, boss.

Mark looks embarrassed.

TOROS

I think I can help you with your problem.

MARK

So do you want a cheque from me, or how does this work exactly?

TOROS

Are you kidding me?

MARK

No, I--

TOROS

Did someone write 'stupid Armenian'
on my forehead while I was
sleeping?

MARK

No.

TOROS

Here.

Toros throws an envelope to Mark.

TOROS

There is \$10,000 inside that
envelope.

MARK

Uh, I only wanted \$5,000.

TOROS

And you are getting 10. Now shut
up.

MARK

Okay.

Mark sips some water.

TOROS

I meet with people like you Monday
to Saturday. Six days in a row,
every single week.

Pro-C returns with the coffee.

TOROS

On the seventh day, Sunday, Pro-C
and I come to collect.

Pro-C nods.

TOROS

Lucky for you, today is Monday. So
you have some time to return my
\$15,000.

Mark looks surprised.

MARK

Wait, I--

PRO-C

15. Even if you want to give the boss back that envelope right now, you still owe the other 5. Understand?

MARK

Okay.

PRO-C

Nothing less than 10% come Sunday.

Toros stands, and Pro-C follows suit.

TOROS

Until Sunday night, my friend. Good luck.

Pro-C makes a gun with his finger and points it at Mark.

PRO-C

See you around, sport.

The bell jingles as they both leave the cafe. Their car SCREECHES away from the curb.

Mark fingers the envelope.

Martin walks to the window and stares out. He turns and walks towards Mark.

MARTIN

I damn near had a heart attack when they came in. Damn near.

He lights a smoke and yells back at Pasiphae.

MARTIN

Pasiphae, be a sweetheart and bring us a coupla Scotches.

MARK

I don't really drink.

MARTIN

Trust me fella, now's a good time for you to start.

Pasiphae brings over the drinks, then sits down beside Martin.

MARK

Thanks.

MARTIN

What's your game?

MARK

Me? Craps, blackjack, slots - anything.

MARTIN

Figures.

PASIPHAE

Can't you ever talk about anything else?

MARTIN

I'm just asking.

Mark finishes his drink and stands.

PASIPHAE

Off so soon.

MARTIN

Good luck. Make damn sure you have something for Toros on Sunday. He's not the forgiving type.

MARK

Thanks for the advice, but it won't be a problem.

Pasiphae walks him to the door.

PASIPHAE

I don't work every night, you know.

MARK

That's good.

PASIPHAE

Maybe we could go out sometime.

She pulls open the door.

PASIPHAE

If you can drag yourself away from the strip.

MARK

Yeah, I'd like that. How about Friday?

PASIPHAE

When?

MARK

When are you off?

PASIPHAE

Ten.

MARK

I'll see you then.

PASIPHAE

Okay.

Mark walks away, then he turns around.

MARK

Aren't you going to wish me luck?

PASIPHAE

I wish you well.

MARK

Good enough!

Mark walks backwards toward the strip.

MARK

Friday at ten!

PASIPHAE

Watch where you're going.

MARK

We're going on a date!

Mark begins to jog backwards.

PASIPHAE

Watch what you're doing!

MARK

BYE!

He turns around and jogs out of site.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

Pasiphae looks nervous, as she waits by the window.

MARTIN

I told you not to count on that
guy.

PASIPHAE

What are you, my big sister? It's
bad enough I have to work with you
all day.

MARTIN

I'm just saying...

Pasiphae walks away from the window, back to the counter
where Martin is sitting.

PASIPHAE

Mind your own problems.

MARTIN

Fair enough.

She looks at her watch. It's 10:04.

PASIPHAE

Where is he? I got a sitter and
everything.

The bell on the door JINGLES and Mark walks in, flowers in
hand.

MARTIN

Hello gorgeous!

Mark is wearing his trademark suit.

PASIPHAE

You're a little late.

MARK

Sorry, I had trouble getting a cab.

He gives her the flowers.

PASIPHAE

For me?

MARK

They're not for Martin. Its been
awhile since I've done this. Are
flowers still okay?

PASIPHAE

Yes.

MARK

That's good.

PASIPHAE

So where are you taking me?

MARK

I made a reservation at Kokomo's,
in the Mirage.

PASIPHAE

I'm not going to the strip!

MARK

Why not?

PASIPHAE

God. You spend your whole day
there, and now you want to go back?

MARK

Where then?

PASIPHAE

Can you cook?

MARK

Uh, yeah.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - LATER

The door swings open, and Pasiphae enters.

PASIPHAE

Not too bad, for a guy who just
moved here.

MARK

Yeah, it's alright.

PASIPHAE

What's with this?

She holds up the price tag, which is still attached to the
lamp.

PASIPHAE

Are you trying to show off or
something?

MARK

No. It's just that most of the stuff is new.

She notices boxes of unpacked merchandise.

PASIPHAE

And all that?

MARK

Uh, I'm a bit of a compulsive buyer, you know?

PASIPHAE

No.

She moves into the kitchen, and starts to open up cupboards.

PASIPHAE

Jesus. You have two or three of everything in here?

MARK

Yeah.

PASIPHAE

Are you expecting a war?

MARK

No. Are you expecting some wine?

She moves to a closed door.

PASIPHAE

Yes. Are you having some?

MARK

Well, since this is a special occasion...

PASIPHAE

What's in here?

She pulls it open.

MARK

Careful!

Jackpot comes bounding out of the room.

PASIPHAE

Aww, what a cutie. What's his name.

MARK

Jackpot.

PASIPHAE

Hah. It figures.

MARK

What? What's wrong with Jackpot?

She sits on the sofa, and Mark brings her the wine.

PASIPHAE

It's just that everything you have
is related to gambling, you know?

MARK

It is what it is.

PASIPHAE

What does that even mean?

MARK

I have no idea.

He then opens up a curtain, revealing the lights of the
strip.

MARK

How about that view?

PASIPHAE

It always looks good from a
distance.

He goes back and pours Jackpot some dog food from a huge bag.

PASIPHAE

Enough food there for a year.

MARK

He's a big dog.

Mark stands awkwardly near the sofa.

MARK

Did you know that if given a chance
some dogs will eat themselves to
death?

PASIPHAE

Really?

MARK

Yeah, I read that somewhere.

Pasiphae taps the seat beside her.

PASIPHAE

I won't bite you.

MARK

Okay.

Mark sits beside her.

PASIPHAE

Why so nervous?

MARK

Like I said, it's been awhile.

PASIPHAE

Don't worry, I'm not that easy.

MARK

I didn't mean that you--

PASIPHAE

Relax. I'm just teasing.

MARK

So why do you hate the strip? Not a fan of neon?

PASIPHAE

It's not just the strip, it's just that this town gets to me, you know? No you probably don't, not yet anyway.

MARK

What do you mean?

PASIPHAE

The tourists, the gambling, the lights - ugh. The last thing I want to do when I go out is go to the Strip, you know?

MARK

No.

PASIPHAE

Why do you like it so much?

MARK

Vegas?

PASIPHAE

No, gambling.

MARK

It's a rush.

PASIPHAE

A rush?

MARK

When I'm winning, even when I'm losing, the feeling is just incredible. Like being punched and having an orgasm at the same time.

PASIPHAE

Gross.

MARK

Does that sound weird?

PASIPHAE

Yes.

MARK

Can I ask you something?

PASIPHAE

Sure.

MARK

If you hate it so much, why do you stay?

She takes a big drink from her wine.

PASIPHAE

I'm trying to save money so I can leave. But it's tough. Especially when you have a kid.

MARK

You have a daughter, right?

PASIPHAE

Yes, Adriane.

MARK

Is the father around?

Pasiphae looks away.

MARK

Oops, please excuse my awkward attempts at conversation.

PASIPHAE

No. It's alright. Her father is a foreigner, not a local.

MARK

You mean this town actually has locals?

PASIPHAE

I think you're officially a local when you've been here six months.

MARK

I only have three more to go then. Is he a Greek?

PASIPHAE

No, not even close. He doesn't live here. He only comes in once a month.

MARK

Hold that thought. I'm going to throw the pasta on.

Mark runs over to the kitchen.

MARK

It's an old family recipe, from my Aunt Kraft.

He holds up a box of Kraft Dinner.

PASIPHAE

Classy. I should have brought my daughter.

MARK

The salad will more than make up for the main course. So where are you going when you save up that money?

PASIPHAE

Home. To Crete.

MARK

Sounds amazing.

PASIPHAE

It is. And you, Mark? Any skeletons I should know about?

MARK

No wife, no kids, no communicable diseases.

PASIPHAE

So far so good. Anything else?

MARK

Well, I do like to place the occasional wager, but you already know about that.

PASIPHAE

Yeah.

Mark returns to the sofa.

MARK

I always cry when I watch "It's a Wonderful Life," and I get depressed at zoos.

PASIPHAE

A gambler with a heart. How sweet.

MARK

So what about this guy? Can't he help you out?

PASIPHAE

Let's not talk about him, okay?

MARK

Deal. No more talk about gambling or ex-boyfriends.

PASIPHAE

You seem a little nervous.

MARK

It's been awhile since I've talked to a woman who wasn't dealing me a hand of blackjack, or bringing me a water.

PASIPHAE

You're doing fine so far.

MARK

Thanks. But I'm warning you now. If you keep being so nice, I might just start tipping you.

They both laugh.

EXT. DOLPHIN POND - MORNING

Pro-C nods at Toros, who is standing apart from a tourist group.

MINOSLAV, an older man dressed in a sports jacket, walks over to say hello.

MINOSLAV

Toros. How good of you to come.

TOROS

Since this is the last time I will ever see you, I would not have missed it for the world.

He holds out his hand, they shake.

TOROS

How was the flight? Rough, I hope.

MINOSLAV

It was delightful. Somewhere over the Atlantic I convinced a young stewardess to join the miles high club.

TOROS

Mile high. It's amazing who some people will do for money.

MINOSLAV

It is what I have been saying for years. Have you got something for me?

Toros points at the dolphins.

TOROS

Do you know that they smear
Vaseline on the blowholes of these
fish? The sun dries them out.

MINOSLAV

Fascinating.

Toros looks away from the dolphins. He takes out an envelope
and hands it Minoslav.

TOROS

I thought you might find holes and
Vaseline exciting.

Minoslav tries to pull it away, but Toros holds tight.

TOROS

This is the last one, my Russian
friend. We are clear, you and me.

Minoslav tugs the package out of his grasp.

MINOSLAV

We shall see.

He quickly counts the money, nods, then places a finger on
Toros's chest.

MINOSLAV

And I am Chechnyan, not Russian.

As he turns to leave, Toros grabs Minoslav's finger. They
begin to struggle.

Pro-C reaches for a gun, but a crowd of tourists blocks him
from the two men.

TOROS

Stay away from me, old man.

Minoslav wrenches his finger out of Toros's grasp, leaving
behind his signet ring.

MINOSLAV

Give that back.

TOROS

Of course.

Toros throws the ring at Minoslav's head.

Minoslav fails to catch it.

The ring sails over his head and lands in the dolphin pond.

TOROS

Oops.

MINOSLAV

Bastard.

INT. CAFE - MORNING

Mark waves at Toros and Pro-C as they enter.

MARK

Hey! Mr. Toros!

They walk over and sit down.

MARK

Pro-C, my man. Watching some ball
this afternoon?

PRO-C

Maybe later.

TOROS

You haven't changed.

Toros motions at the suit.

MARK

It is the same suit, but I have it
cleaned frequently. Got to keep my
lucky suit fresh, you know?

TOROS

So you had some luck?

MARK

Yeah, the tables were good to me
this week.

Pasiphae brings by two cups of coffee.

TOROS

Thanks.

Mark throws an envelope on the table.

MARK

There it is, fifteen big boys,
although I have to tell you the
interest rate is a little on the
high side.

Mark laughs hysterically.

Toros nods at Pro-C, who takes the envelope. He counts it and
nods back.

PRO-C

It's all good.

Toros looks disappointed, then he forces out a half smile.

MARK

Hey, cheer up, Toros.

TOROS

I'm glad for you.

He stands, and they head for the door.

MARK

Nice doing business with you!

Toros turns.

TOROS

And you. Next time you need me,
your credit is doubled.

They exit.

Mark waves, then gives the closing door the finger.

MARK

Next time you can shove that money
up your ass!

MARTIN

Are you fucking nuts?

Mark looks over.

MARK

I'm just screwing around.

MARTIN

Not with him, not ever. He's not
your buddy.

Pasiphae walks over to the table.

PASIPHAE

Now that you are paid off, quit.

MARK

What?

PASIPHAE

Just quit. Walk away.

MARK

Pasiphae you never leave the table
when you're on a roll. Never.

She shakes her head, and takes one of his smokes.

MARK

Marty? Help me out here.

Martin just shakes his head and goes back to cooking.

PASIPHAE

When do you leave then?

Mark shrugs his shoulders.

MARK

What about dinner?

PASIPHAE

What about it?

MARK

I promise not to cook this time. My
treat.

PASIPHAE

Okay, but not on the strip.

MARK

I'll see you at eight.

Mark runs to the door.

MARK

Later Marty. Watch out for that
seven!

MARTIN

See ya.

Pasiphae watches Mark leave.

MARTIN

He'll break your fucking heart.

She looks back at Martin.

PASIPHAE

I feel sorry for him. He has no friends here.

MARTIN

So?

PASIPHAE

Maybe he'll change.

MARTIN

He won't.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

Martin looks at the wall clock. It's nearly 8:30.

MARTIN

He's a little late.

PASIPHAE

Have some faith, Martin.

MARTIN

I lost that a few weeks back.

A horn honks.

Pasiphae smiles and leaves the cafe.

EXT. CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Mark's upper torso hangs out of a stretch limo's sunroof. He is holding a bottle of champagne and two glasses.

MARK

Pasiphae! Your hero has arrived.

PASIPHAE

What's this?

Jackpot sticks his head out of the sunroof and barks.

MARK

I'm on a killer winning streak.
Let's drive downtown and drink
Jello shooters!

Pasiphae refuses to get into the car.

PASIPHAE

No thanks.

MARK

Why not?

PASIPHAE

I told you. I don't want any of
that shit.

She starts walking off.

MARK

Hey!

Mark climbs out of the car and goes chasing after her.

MARK

C'mon. I thought you might want a
nice night out for a change.

PASIPHAE

I had a nice night last time we
went out.

MARK

I mean on the town, you know.

PASIPHAE

No. I told you I don't do the
strip.

She starts walking off again.

MARK

Would you wait.

She stops.

MARK

I'm just trying to impress you a
little, you know? I won a lot of
money and I've got no one to spend
it on. Except my dog.

PASIPHAE

Look. If you want to come over to my place, you can.

Mark smiles.

PASIPHAE

But. No champagne, no fancy cars, no gambling stories, just you.

MARK

Okay, okay. Man, you're tough.

PASIPHAE

I just don't want any of that shit, Mark.

MARK

Alright.

PASIPHAE

It's fake. It's not real.

MARK

Okay.

PASIPHAE

So are you coming?

MARK

We're walking?

PASIPHAE

It's not that far.

MARK

Okay. Let me get my jacket.

Mark goes running back to the car.

PASIPHAE

And leave that bottle of Champagne there! I got beer in the fridge.

Mark veers toward the cafe.

PASIPHAE

What are you doing now?

MARK

I'm giving it to Marty!

Pasiphae shakes her head.

PASIPHAE

Hurry!

INT. TRAILER - LATER

The interior of the trailer is modest, but large.

ADRIANE, Pasiphae's five-year-old daughter, is petting Jackpot.

MARK

So how old are you, Adriane?

ADRIANE

Five.

MARK

You're kidding.

ADRIANE

Nope.

MARK

I was five once, not too long ago.

ADRIANE

No you weren't.

MARK

It's true. Five is a real lucky number.

Adriane giggles, then goes back to watching TV.

Pasiphae brings Mark a beer.

MARK

She's really fun.

PASIPHAE

Usually. She always acts nice for guests. Right, honey?

ADRIANE

Yup!

PASIPHAE

Not that I ever have any. Okay. Time for bed. If you do it now, Mark will come tuck you in.

Adriane runs into the bedroom.

ADRIANE

Yayyyyyyy.....

Mark and Jackpot into the bedroom.

MARK

Are you ready?

ADRIANE

I love your dog.

Mark leans down to tuck her in.

MARK

I think he loves you too. He
doesn't just lick anyone's feet.

Adriane giggles.

ADRIANE

Do you want to know a secret?

MARK

I love secrets.

Adriane shows Mark the blue bull she has hidden under the covers.

ADRIANE

This is where we keep our money.
Mommy says that we nearly have
enough to go back home to Crete.

PASIPHAE

Adriane! I told you, that's not a
toy.

Pasiphae comes and takes the bull from her hands.

PASIPHAE

Say good night.

ADRIANE

Good night.

Pasiphae takes the bull into her bedroom.

Mark gives a \$100 to Adriane.

MARK

(whispering)

Put this in your piggy bank when
your mom isn't looking, okay?

ADRIANE

(whispering)

It's a bull, not a piggy!

MARK

Remember, it's a secret. Night!

ADRIANE

Nighty-night.

He closes the door and sits back down at the table.

PASIPHAE

She okay?

MARK

She's fine.

PASIPHAE

Sometimes she can be a handful at
bedtime.

MARK

So when are you moving back to
Crete?

PASIPHAE

Pretend you never heard her, okay?

MARK

Sure.

PASIPHAE

Look, I'm not trying to be all
weird, it's just that her
biological father. He's, uh, a
problem.

MARK

How?

PASIPHAE

He likes us here.

MARK

In this trailer?

PASIPHAE

Vegas.

MARK

Oh.

PASIPHAE

I met him working at a casino on the strip. He seemed nice enough.

MARK

You don't have to tell me anything.

PASIPHAE

It's nothing. I got pregnant. The oldest story in the world.

MARK

And the guy.

PASIPHAE

The guy is married. The guy is a mobster or something.

MARK

Oh.

PASIPHAE

He asked me to stay in Vegas.

She laughs sarcastically.

PASIPHAE

He made me an offer I couldn't refuse.

Pasiphae takes a sip from her beer.

PASIPHAE

Anyway, I'm trying to save up enough so I can go home to my family, but it's hard.

MARK

I could give you some.

PASIPHAE

No.

MARK

But--

PASIPHAE

Mark, it's that kind of money that put me here.

MARK

Sorry, I just want to help.

PASIPHAE

Thanks, but no. One day soon, when I have enough, I'm going to take Adriane to the airport and hop on a plane and never come back.

MARK

Won't he come after you?

PASIPHAE

Naw, once I'm gone he won't think twice about me.

Mark takes a drink.

PASIPHAE

You're very cute, you know.

MARK

I know.

Pasiphae laughs.

PASIPHAE

Would you go to bed with me?

Mark looks caught off guard.

MARK

What about your daughter?

PASIPHAE

In a trailer, the trick is to make love horizontally, not side to side. That way it doesn't rock.

She leans forward and they kiss.

PASIPHAE

We all need friends, Mark. Vegas can be a very lonely place.

He returns the kiss.

MARK
Which way is horizontal in this
thing?

They both smile.

INT. DESSERTED ISLAND CAFE - MORNING

Martin looks up as Pasiphae enters the cafe.

MARTIN
Morning.

Mark follows her in. He is grinning and unshaven.

MARK
Hi Marty!

MARTIN
Uh-oh.

PASIPHAE
Hey, be nice. He's a customer.

MARK
Just a coffee.

MARTIN
Yes, sir.

MARK
And hold the sass.

Pasiphae laughs.

MARTIN
Yes, sir.

Martin brings him a cup.

Mark gulps it down.

A HORN sounds.

MARK
There's my cab.

Pasiphae comes over and gives him a kiss.

PASIPHAE
Don't be a stranger.

MARK
I won't. See yah, Marty!

MARTIN
Bye.

Mark bounds out the door.

PASIPHAE
Don't say anything.

MARTIN
Nothing worse than a guy the
morning after he gets laid.

PASIPHAE
Martin!

INT. MIRAGE - DAY

MONTAGE - MARK'S LOSSES MOUNT.

-- Mark goes up to a bank machine and takes out \$500.

-- Mark goes back to the same machine, takes out another \$500.

-- Mark comes back to the same machine, but his daily limit has been reached. He takes out his Visa card, and swipes it for \$1,500.

-- Mark returns to the machine and tries to take out a another \$1,500 on his Visa, but it is declined. All he can get is \$500.

-- Mark waits near a machine with a bunch of tired looking people. It is nearly midnight. When his watch clicks to midnight, all the people rush to the machines. Mark tries to take out a \$1,000, but all he has left is \$400, which he takes out.

-- Mark swipes his Visa for progressively smaller amounts, but it is declined repeatedly.

EXT. MIRAGE - MORNING

Mark walks out into the bright morning light.

The DOORMAN greets him.

DOORMAN

Good morning, sir. Cab?

MARK

No thanks.

Mark walks past the silent volcano, out to a nearly deserted Las Vegas Boulevard.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mark opens the door, and both Pro-C and Toros enter.

MARK

Come in.

TOROS

So? Last time we met you were winning, and now?

MARK

I, uh, I hit a bit of a bad streak.

TOROS

How sad.

Toros sits on the couch.

TOROS

You have good taste, Mark.

MARK

Thanks. Do you guys want anything?

PRO-C

We're not here to hang out, man.

TOROS

No chips and dips for us.

PRO-C

Or coke.

Toros and Pro-C laugh.

Pro-C drops an envelope on the table.

PRO-C

Fifty K, sport.

MARK
Thanks again.

TOROS
It is our pleasure, Mark.

He stands.

TOROS
We shall see you Sunday night, say
midnight?

Pro-C walks up to Mark.

PRO-C
That's five Gs, no matter what. Are
we cool?

MARK
Uh, yeah, we're cool.

TOROS
Allow me to translate his gangsta-
rap language. What Pro-C is saying
is that if you don't have at least
five for us on Sunday, we'll rip
your fucking heart out.

Mark goes pale.

TOROS
You see, Pro-C? When you speak in
American, people understand you
better.

PRO-C
Next time, boss.

TOROS
Let's go.

They leave.

Mark rubs his face with his hands, then grabs the money and
leaves.

MONTAGE - MARK LOSES AND SELLS FURNITURE

-- Mark opens the door and leaves his apartment.

-- Mark moves his bet from 22 to 18, then back to 22. The
ball lands on 18.

- Mark sits alone in his darkened apartment.
- Mark breaks his blackjack hand again, again, and again.
- Mark signs a receipt for his furniture, as the last item is carried out by movers.
- Mark is reduced to playing nickel slots.
- Mark opens up cupboards which are empty. The only thing left to eat is a big bag of dog food.
- Mark walks out of the casino into the night.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - LATER

Mark enters the apartment and turns on a few lights. He looks tired and miserable.

The light on his answering machine is blinking. Mark hits the play button.

JESSIE (ANSWERING MACHINE)

Mr. Theseus? Are you there?

Mark lets Jackpot out of the bedroom and pats him a few times.

JESSIE (ANSWERING MACHINE)

Look, you can't hide from me forever. I'm just doing my job, nothing personal, understand?

Mark pulls out the nearly empty bag of dog food and pours the last of it into a bowl.

Jackpot wags his tail excitedly.

JESSIE (ANSWERING MACHINE)

So if you don't have this month's rent and the back rent to me by tomorrow, you're out.

The line goes dead. Another beep starts the next message. It is a computerized VOICE.

VOICE (ANSWERING MACHINE)

Dear customer. Due to the recent arrears on your electrical account, and your failure to contact us regarding this account, we have put your account into collection. Furthermore, as is the policy of Nevada Electric, we are disconnecting your service as of midnight tonight. Please contact our collection department as soon as possible to bring your account back into order. Have a nice day.

The line goes dead.

Mark takes a spoon out of the sink.

He looks at his watch, it is just before midnight.

Another beep.

PRO-C (ANSWERING MACHINE)

Hey, sport. The boss wanted me to give you a call. He says to say hi. See you on Sunday.

Another beep.

STEVE (ANSWERING MACHINE)

Mark? Is that you? It's Steve. Listen, I'm in town. I'll be at the California Pizza Kitchen in the Mirage at eight pm Saturday. I've got your cut of the Pearson deal. Hope you can make it. Bye.

Mark's eyes light up.

Another beep.

Mark's FATHER'S voice fills the room.

FATHER

Mark? I hate these damn things. Listen, I don't know what the hell is going on down there, but I've had damn near enough. Six months, Mark! C'mon!

(sighs)

I spoke to your mother. We've bought you a plane ticket.

(MORE)

FATHER (cont'd)

It's for American Airlines and it's under your name. You can't change it for cash, or sell it in a pawn shop, but it'll get you home.

(beat)

Come back home, son.

The phone rings.

PASIPHAE (ANSWERING MACHINE)

Hey stranger? Are you there? Toros came by the cafe asking about you. Are you in trou--

Mark picks up the phone.

MARK

Hi.

PASIPHAE

Wow. So you are still alive.

MARK

Sorry I haven't called. I--

PASIPHAE

You don't owe me anything.

MARK

Still-

PASIPHAE

Look, I just wanted you to know about Toros. He looked pissed.

MARK

Thanks.

PASIPHAE

Hey, do you want to come over sometime? God, I sound like a desperate teenager.

MARK

Yes. I mean, yes I'll come over, but no you don't sound desperate.

PASIPHAE

How about Sunday night?

MARK

Okay.

PASIPHAE

Are you sure you're okay?

The power goes off, throwing the apartment into semi-darkness. The only light comes from the windows.

MARK

Yeah. Everything's fine. I'll see you tomorrow around ten.

PASIPHAE

Bye.

MARK

Bye.

He drops the phone on the table, fumbles for the spoon, and starts to CRUNCH down the dog food.

Jackpot whines.

MARK

Relax, Jackpot. I'll leave you some.

Jackpot stops whining, and Mark continues eating.

INT. MIRAGE - LATER

The California Pizza Kitchen is very busy, particularly at the stools where Mark is sitting, near the open kitchen.

Mark is smoking furiously. He alternates between checking his watch, following several sports games on the monitors, and staring at every single person who walks into the restaurant.

He spots Steve looking awkward and out of place near the entrance.

MARK

STEVE!

He waves frantically until Steve spots him and heads over.

They shake hands and Steve sits.

MARK

Steve Smith. Stevie! Good to see, yah!

STEVE

Glad you got the message. Wow. Look at you.

Steve stares at the wrinkled suit, then stops at Mark's wild eyes and unshaven face.

MARK

You like it?

Mark smooths out a lapel.

STEVE

Yeah, it looks great.

A WAITER comes over and they order some beers.

MARK

So, how's the gang doing, huh?

STEVE

They're alright.

MARK

Are you in town for the conference?

STEVE

Every six months.

MARK

Did Mike come? I miss that old dog.

Steve looks very uncomfortable.

STEVE

Uh, Mike's dead.

MARK

What?

STEVE

He had a heart attack. I thought you knew.

MARK

No, I did--of course, I didn't know. Shit.

The waiter comes back with the beers, Mark takes several large gulps. He can't seem to make direct eye contact with Steve.

STEVE
I didn't know you drank.

MARK
Sometimes. You know how it is.

STEVE
Look, is everything alright? I mean, you quit your job. Your dad says you never call. Have you moved down he--

MARK
Did you bring it, Steve? Did'ja?

STEVE
Ah.

MARK
Because, I got things to do, you know? And--

STEVE
Look at me, Mark.

Mark keeps his head down.

STEVE
Hey, just fucking look at me, alright?

Mark looks up, his eyes are wild and panicky.

STEVE
Do you need help?

MARK
What? What for?

STEVE
Are you serious?

The waiter comes back, and Steve orders.

STEVE
Are you having anything? My treat.

MARK
I already ate.

The waiter leaves.

Mark mumbles under his breath.

MARK
I'm not a God-damn charity case.

STEVE
What?

MARK
I said, I'm not a fucking charity case.

STEVE
Easy. I just thought...

MARK
Look, let's cut the crap, Okay?
Have you got my cut from the
Pearson deal.

STEVE
I know what I--

MARK
Let's not pretend we both don't
know what's happening here.

STEVE
Okay.

MARK
I don't need this shit.

STEVE
Alright, just calm down.

MARK
Fuck you, don't tell me to calm
down. I'm not here to have pizza
with an old buddy, I just want my
\$7,500.

Steve pulls out his wallet, and drops a cheque in front of Mark.

STEVE
Here.

Mark looks stunned.

MARK
Whoa, wait. What's this!

Steve looks confused.

STEVE
\$7,500 - your cut of the Pearson
deal.

Mark grasps his head in his hands although his skull is about
to explode.

STEVE
What the hell? Were you expecting
the whole fifteen Gs?

MARK
A cheque? Are you fucking kidding
me?

STEVE
It won't bounce.

MARK
Mine have!

Steve looks embarrassed.

STEVE
Can't you just cash it somewhere?

Mark laughs sarcastically.

MARK
Where? Who the fuck is going to
cash a cheque from me? Besides,
it's after six.

He hangs his head.

MARK
I need the money now!

STEVE
Maybe tomorrow.

MARK
Sunday?

STEVE
Look, I'm sorry, alright. How the
hell was I supposed to know?

Mark freezes, then stares directly at Steve.

MARK
I've got an idea.

STEVE

What?

MARK

You could just give me cash. I'm going to sign this over to you.

Mark begins to sign the cheque.

STEVE

Wait a minute.

MARK

What?

STEVE

I can't get that much. Are you nuts?

MARK

Fuck! Fucking-fuck!

STEVE

I have a \$500 limit, what the hell can I do?

Mark looks around like a wild man. His eyes lock on a credit card cash machine. He looks back at Steve.

MARK

Do you still have your gold card?

STEVE

Sure. Why?

Mark points to the machine.

MARK

You could swipe your card and pay me in cash.

Steve looks horrified.

STEVE

Forget that. I've never had a cash advance in my life.

MARK

Please! I'll sign the cheque over to you and pay the service fee.

STEVE

No, I won't do it.

Mark slams the table.

STEVE
You really need help.

Mark shakes his head in disgust.

STEVE
You used to be such a normal guy.

MARK
Normal, like you, right?

STEVE
Yeah, like me.

MARK
You're unbelievable, do you know that?

STEVE
Excuse me?

MARK
You're so fucking boring.

STEVE
What?

MARK
Your whole life, the boring sameness of your life. Fuck - how can you stand it. Work until 65, then have a heart attack like Mike - boring and predictable.

STEVE
Oh, and your life is so great.

MARK
Yes.

Mark waves an arm to encompass the casino.

MARK
I can walk out there with five bucks, and walk out the front door with a hundred grand.

Steve shakes his head with pity.

MARK
That's living.

STEVE

Yeah, right. Do you even have five bucks?

MARK

Oh, you're so damn smug.

STEVE

Not about everything.

MARK

So righteous, so right. How can you stand it?

STEVE

I know what's important in life, you don't - it's that simple.

Mark drains his beer.

MARK

Nothing is that simple.

STEVE

Whatever you're doing out here...I don't get it.

MARK

Well, let me explain it to you.

Mark leans in close.

MARK

When I gamble, it's like the whole world is dancing on the end of my cock.

Steve goes pale.

Mark won't look away.

MARK

Do you get that?

He sucks at his empty beer bottle, then chuckles.

MARK

Funny, selling homes never gave me the same rush.

Mark sags, deflated from the effort.

Steve sighs, then gets up.

STEVE

Wait here.

Mark watches him leave, the SOUNDS of the restaurant and casino grow louder and louder.

Steve returns after a few minutes. He drops \$5,000 dollars on the table.

STEVE

I could only get five grand. And for that I had to talk to VISA, since they thought I was being robbed.

MARK

Thanks.

Mark looks up. He is all smiles now.

MARK

Steve. Serving up a stake for Mark.

Steve drinks his beer, and puts some money on the table for the bill.

STEVE

I'll wire you the rest when I get home.

He turns to leave.

MARK

Steve.

Mark has tears in his eyes.

MARK

Give the \$2,500 to my dad, okay?

STEVE

Sure.

Mark turns to leave.

STEVE

Why don't you come home with me, Mark? We could get you some help.

MARK

It is what it is, Stevie.

Mark walks rapidly from the restaurant.

Steve watches him go.

Mark stops at a craps table a short distance from the restaurant entrance. He does not make eye contact with Steve when he walks by.

INT. MIRAGE - CONTINUOUS

MONTAGE - MARK PLAYS CRAPS

-- The only sound heard is the slow beating of Mark's heart, as he walks up to the craps game.

-- Mark has a smile on his face and he looks ecstatic. He drops the \$5,000 on the table, and it is quickly exchanged for chips. His heart starts to beat faster.

-- A shooter sevens out, and the dice are slid in front of Mark. He looks down at the dice. Two of them are glowing red. He smiles even wider. He takes the two glowing red dice, and stares at them with wonder.

-- Around the table, the other players and the dealers are moving in slow motion.

-- Mark places a bet, and throws the dice. The other players watch the dice expectantly, most have manic expressions on their faces. The dice hit the far side of the table, coming up six and five.

-- The players cheer in silent slow motion, except Minoslav. He is dressed all in black, and sits at the opposite end of the table.

-- Mark's heartbeat increases with each roll, and the dice stay red hot. Minoslav loses with each roll, since he is betting against the table. He wants Mark to seven out.

-- Mark hits another 11, and he jumps up and down, high-fiving the players around him, who have all turned into beautiful women. As the STICKMAN slides more money to Mark, he begins to kiss some of the women around him.

-- Mark runs toward the table naked. He jumps into the air and lands in the craps table, which is full of water. The water splashes onto the black & white players on either side, infusing them with color. Mark surfaces, raising his hands in the air like a God. Several naked woman jump into the water with him. Minoslav's cigar has created a naked smoke angel over the table. Mark stares up at her, as the women begin to rub themselves against him. The angel smiles back.

-- The POV now switches to the red hot dice. Mark clutches them, causing everything to go momentarily black. He lets them fly, revealing the players surrounding the table. They look like hungry-eyed animals, as they stare intently at the tumbling dice. The dice hit the far wall and stop. Mark's heart races. He double pumps both fists, and looks hysterical. All the other players have become shadowy shapes, except for Mark and Minoslav.

-- The stickman slides more money in front of Mark. His heartbeat is racing even faster now. He looks up for his smoke angel, but she is gone. Mark frowns. The beautiful women around him have become grotesque in appearance. He throws the dice up high. They land, but one hops off the table. Minoslav smiles. Mark mouths "Same dice." The dice are slid back to Mark, but they have lost their red lustre. Minoslav slides a massive bet onto the big red spot, hoping for a seven. He leers at Mark. Mark bets all of his money on hard eight.

-- The dice sail up over the table, impossibly high, then land. One die hits Minoslav's stack of chips, and come up four. The other hits the far wall and turns up three. Mark looks stunned. The stickman quickly clears the table of all the money, except for the only winner, Minoslav. A huge stack of chips is placed before him.

-- Mark staggers away from the table, and a new shooter starts their roll. Mark's heartbeat slowly returns to normal, as he makes his way to the Sports Book washrooms.

INT. MIRAGE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gentle music is playing.

Karon, head bowed as always, nods as Mark comes in.

Mark stumbles over to a urinal. After mechanically opening his fly, he begins to pee.

Mark is unaware that Minoslav has followed him to the washroom.

Although the washroom is empty, Minoslav takes the urinal next to Mark.

MINOSLAV

Rough night.

Dazed, Mark focuses in on Minoslav's face.

MARK

What?

MINOSLAV

A rough night for you. Dice.

MARK

Yeah, you could say that.

MINOSLAV

I am Minoslav.

MARK

Mark. Mark Theseus. I'd love to shake hands, but...

MINOSLAV

Pleased to your acquaintance meet, Mark.

MARK

Same.

MINOSLAV

It is a shame that someone has to lose, is it not?

Mark returns to peeing.

MINOSLAV

You lose your money, but because of this, I win much money.

MARK

Well, that sure makes me feel better.

MINOSLAV

I feel obligated to you. You lost so much, \$5,000 I believe.

Mark looks sharply at Minoslav, then heads to the sink to wash his hands.

Minoslav follows him.

MINOSLAV

I am not trying to mock your losses, Mark. \$5,000 is much money.

MARK

More than you'll know.

Mark heads toward the door.

Minoslav calls out to him.

MINOSLAV
Perhaps I could give you back this
money?

Mark pauses at the door.

MARK
What?

MINOSLAV
Would you like your money back,
Mark?

Mark turns.

MARK
What's the catch?

Minoslav smiles.

MINOSLAV
Do you really care what the catch
is?

Mark shakes his head no.

MINOSLAV
Come back here and wait by the
stalls.

Mark does as he is told.

Minoslav goes over and begins whispering to Karon.

KARON
Yes, sir.

Minoslav is grinning as he walks back toward Mark.

In the background, Karon is locking the door.

MINOSLAV
Come. In here, please.

Minoslav pushes open the stall to the handicap washroom.

MARK
What the hell is this?

MINOSLAV
You will drop pants.

MARK
Fuck this shit.

Mark tries to push past Minoslav, but Minoslav blocks him with an arm.

MINOSLAV
Where will you go, Mark? Hmm? Will
Toros give you more money?

Mark sags as the fight leaves his body.

MINOSLAV
It will be over so quickly, and
then you will have your money back.

Minoslav shuts the door.

Mark's belt and pants hit the floor.

MINOSLAV
Good boy.

Mark kneels down and leans forward over the toilet.

MINOSLAV
Bend, bend some more. There.

MARK
Ah. It hurts!

MINOSLAV
It's all right, my little Mark.

Mark stares at his reflection in the chrome pipe. His face is contorted in pain as it grows larger and smaller with each thrust.

The sounds of Mark's muffled cries and Minoslav's groans echo through the washroom.

From above, all the empty stalls look like a maze.

Minoslav gives one last thrust and Mark collapses on the ground. Both are breathing hard.

Minoslav pulls his pants up and chuckles.

MINOSLAV

Ah, my poor friend. Your passion
for gambling is remarkable.

MARK

Fuck you.

MINOSLAV

Here is your money. Try not to lose
it too quickly.

Minoslav's chuckles echo through the washroom, as he heads
for the door.

Mark can hear an exchange between Karon and Minoslav, then
Minoslav departs.

Shortly after, Karon calls out to Mark.

KARON

Sir? He's gone now, and I need to
unlock the door.

Mark struggles to his feet.

MARK

I'll be right out, Karon!

He wads up some toilet paper, grimaces, and places the paper
in his underwear. He pulls up his pants, puts on a smile, and
walks out.

Karon, head still bowed, is waiting near the door.

Mark strides to the sink, and starts splashing his face with
water.

MARK

Hah, well, that's just the damndest
thing there.

He motions feebly with his thumb.

Karon has a towel ready, but he is not looking up.

MARK

That was nothing, back there,
Karon, nothing. You know? I'm not
queer or anything. I'm normal.

KARON

It's none of my business, sir.

Mark starts to get angry.

MARK

He paid me \$5,000. I did it for the cash. Just a one shot thing. That's all it was.

Mark holds up a bill for Karon, who takes it in exchange for a towel.

Then, for the first time, Karon looks him right in the eyes.

KARON

You don't say?

Karon SNAPS the lock open.

KARON

I got \$500 just for locking the door.

Mark lowers his gaze.

KARON

Good night, sir.

Mark leaves, and the door closes silently behind him.

INT. MIRAGE - CONTINUOUS

Mark exits the washroom. He looks around, then strides toward the front doors.

As he passes the craps table, Minoslav raises a drink to him in a mock toast and gestures at an empty spot.

Mark ignores him and keeps on walking until he goes out the front door. He walks across the driveway and stops near the volcano.

As the mock eruption sequence begins, Mark lights up a smoke.

Mark turns and gives the finger to the casino.

In the background, the volcano starts to rumble and roar.

Mark stares desperately at the entrance.

The volcano begins to erupt, casting a weird glow over Mark's features.

He finishes his smoke, steps on it, then walks quickly back toward the entrance.

The volcanic eruption peaks as he goes through the doors, then abruptly dies out.

INT. CARIBE CAFE - MORNING

Mark is seated at a counter. A WAITRESS comes by and Mark places his order.

It's obvious that Mark has been up all night, and he looks depressed. He keeps shifting uncomfortably as he drinks his coffee.

WAITRESS #2 interrupts his solitude.

WAITRESS #2

Excuse me, Hon.

Mark stares at her.

MARK

Yes?

WAITRESS #2

The gentleman sitting over there asked me to bring you this.

She hands Mark a seat cushion.

Mark looks over to see Minoslav toasting him with his orange juice glass. He is sitting with a woman and a child, both have their backs to Mark.

Mark takes the pillow and sits on it.

WAITRESS #2

Is this a joke or something?

MARK

Do you see me laughing?

He goes back to sipping his coffee.

Waitress #2 leaves.

Minoslav walks up to the counter with his bill.

MINOSLAV

You are a good sport, Mark.

He gives his bill to Waitress #2.

MARK
Go to hell.

MINOSLAV
One day.

Mark gestures toward the table.

MARK
You're not even gay? What kind of
sick bastard...

MINOSLAV
You would be amazed if you knew
what some people have done for my
money, Mark.

Minoslav slap Mark's back.

MINOSLAV
But then again, perhaps you would
not.

MARK
Does your wife know what a freak
you are?

Minoslav laughs again.

MINOSLAV
My wife is back in Chechnya.

Waitress #2 brings back his change.

MINOSLAV
Thank you.

He puts a hand on Mark's shoulder.

MINOSLAV
Good day, Mark. Thanks again for
last night.

He walks away, laughing.

Mark turns to watch him leave.

Pasiphae and Adriane get up from their seats and leave with
Minoslav.

Mark looks stunned.

INT. MIRAGE - NIGHT

MONTAGE - MARK PLAYS SLOTS

-- Mark walks into the \$5.00 slot area. He sits down and shoves a \$100 bill into a machine. He has a huge roll of bills.

-- Mark leaves the \$5.00 slot area. He moves into the \$1.00 slot area, and puts money into a machine. His roll is getting smaller.

-- Mark, looking angry, heads over to the quarter slots. He plays and loses. His roll has been reduced to a few bills.

-- Mark, with his hands in his pockets, sits down at the nickel slots. He puts his last \$20 in the machine, and loses it. He gets up and walks out.

INT. DESSERTED ISLAND CAFE - LATER

Pasiphae looks at her watch one last time, then leaves the cafe.

Martin watches her go, then locks the door.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The only light inside the apartment comes from the windows, which throw bar-like shadows across the bare floors. In the dim light, the apartment appears totally empty.

Without warning, the front door falls silently from its frame, smashing onto the floor.

Toros stands in the empty frame, blocking out most of the light. He casually lights up a cigarette, exhaling a stream of smoke.

TOROS

Knock-knock.

He enters the dark apartment.

Pro-C, carrying a large axe, follows him.

Mark's frightened voice breaks the silence.

MARK

Ah, hey, it's not midnight yet,
right, Mr. Toros?

TOROS

It's nearly 12.

A CLICKING sound can be heard.

PRO-C

Damn, man. The power's off.

TOROS

Tsk, tsk. You really should pay
your bills, Theseus.

The flare of a lighter catches Mark off guard, crouching near
a wall.

MARK

No, Toros, please. I thought, I
thought I had until tomorrow, you
know? Please.

The lighter snaps off, and Mark stops pleading.

A sound of someone running is cut short by a loud THUMP.

The axe CLATTERS to the ground.

The lighter snaps back on.

Mark is pinned in the bar shadows, Pro-C sits on top of him.

Toros is framed by the lighter's glow. He looks demonic.

MARK

NO! PLEASE, just give me until
tomorrow!

PRO-C

Stop squirming, man. You're making
me work up a sweat.

TOROS

And what would happen tomorrow,
hmm?

MARK

Please, my friend, Steve, he, ah,
he said he would meet me tomorrow
and bring me \$7,500.

TOROS
He did? I thought that you were
meeting him on Saturday?

MARK
No, he, he--

PRO-C
Shut-up.

Toros bends down and picks the axe up off the floor.

Mark begins to flail and scream.

MARK
No!

As he struggles with Pro-C, Mark tears Pro-C's breast pocket.
A small piece of paper flutters to the ground.

PRO-C
Damn, man.

He smacks Mark hard across the face, stopping the struggling.

TOROS
If you would buy better quality,
like our friend here, your suits
would last longer.

Toros chuckles, and the lighter goes out once again.

TOROS
Hold him still, and light this
thing.

The lighter snaps back on.

Mark is still in a daze.

The axe flashes as Toros pulls it up high.

Mark cries.

The axe smashes into the floor beside Mark's head.

PRO-C
You missed, boss.

TOROS
I just can't do it.

MARK

Thank-you, thank-you, Toros. I'm getting you that money, whatever I have to do, I--

Toros reaches down and caresses the lapel of Mark's suit.

TOROS

I just can't ruin this fine suit.

Toros sighs.

TOROS

Take the suit off first, then we'll finish up.

Mark begins to shake in fear.

Toros's hand moves from Mark's shivering body, over to the slip of paper from Pro-C's pocket.

PRO-C

Take the suit off, bitch.

TOROS

Basketball?

PRO-C

Boss?

He holds the slip into the lighter's glow.

TOROS

You placed a bet? Huh?

He stares hard at Pro-C.

PRO-C

Boss, I--

TOROS

I told you. When you work for me, you don't bet. Didn't I tell you that?

PRO-C

Boss, I swear--

TOROS

And...

Toros looks again at the ticket. He pulls the axe up over his shoulder. His voice comes out in a low whisper.

TOROS

Where did you get ten grand for a bet?

The lighter snaps off.

The sounds of running can be heard, and a shadow passes through the open doorway.

Toros begins to chuckle.

TOROS

He's actually running? Can you believe it?

He walks into the hallway, dragging a still quivering Mark with him.

The fire exit door is just swinging shut, and footsteps can be heard pounding down the stairs.

Toros resumes his chuckling.

He looks into Mark's terrified face.

TOROS

Running! From me! What's he thinking?

A shotgun CHAMBERS a round.

Mark and Toros turn around.

JESSIE

Hold it right there, bub.

Jessie is standing near the elevators.

JESSIE

I don't know what the hell is going on up here, but I told you to clear outta that damn apartment yesterday!

Toros lets Mark go and walks toward Jessie.

JESSIE

You got a broken door, and some crazy black guy running around all...

Toros presses up against the shotgun.

JESSIE

Ah, Mr. Toros, I-I-didn't know it was you.

TOROS

Hello Jessie! Mr. Theseus has decided he is not moving out after all. Be a good boy and go turn on the power.

JESSIE

Ah, but, but the back rent.

Toros pulls out a roll.

TOROS

How much?

JESSIE

Three, ah...

Toros counts out the money.

TOROS

Here you go.

JESSIE

Thank you, Mr. Toros.

Jessie takes the money and quickly heads for the elevator.

TOROS

And fix this door. Tonight.

Toros walks back to Mark and they enter the dark apartment.

TOROS

You work for me now. Just until your debt is paid off.

MARK

Thank-you, Mr. Toros.

MARK

I'm, ah, I'm not much of a tough guy.

Toros chuckles.

TOROS

I'm not looking for a tough guy. I'm looking for someone who looks good in a suit.

The lights flick on.

Toros grabs Mark by his red tie. He pulls him up close.

TOROS
No more gambling for you. Alright?

Mark chokes out a reply.

MARK
Okay.

Toros releases Mark.

TOROS
Now, let's go buy you a new tie.
Red is such an unlucky color.

INT. KARAOKE BAR - LATER

INSERT SIGN:

Karaoke Contest - every Sunday night!! Prizes and Fun!

RETURN TO SCENE

Toros and Mark enter the smoky bar. Toros pats a glass trophy case twice, then taps his chest.

He looks over at Mark.

TOROS
For luck.

Mark is wearing a new navy tie.

KEN, the Chinese owner, runs up to greet Toros.

KEN
Mr. Toros, an honor, an honor.

Ken waves at a WAITER, then ushers them to a table.

An elderly woman sings "Do ya think I'm Sexy" loudly and off key.

KEN
Perhaps tonight is your night, Mr.
Toros?

Toros lights a cigarette.

TOROS
How's the talent?

Ken continues grinning.

KEN
More or less the same.

Ken looks anxious.

KEN
But...I am afraid the Chinese Elvis
is here.

He motions over to a table, where the CHINESE ELVIS is sitting. He is dressed as Elvis, complete with a flashing sequined white suit.

TOROS
Does that guy live here?

KEN
No, Mr. Toros.

TOROS
Everybody loves that dead King.

KEN
Yes, Mr. Toros. Enjoy your night.

Ken rushes off.

The waiter places two shots of tequila and a glass of water in front of Toros.

The woman finishes her song.

Toros slams back both shots.

TOROS
Wait here.

Toros goes up and takes the microphone from the woman.

He yells over to the DJ.

TOROS
79C.

He steps into the semi-circle of light and begins to sing Irving Gordon's "Unforgettable" as sung by Nat King Cole.

TOROS

Unforgettable, that's what you are.
 Unforgettable though near or far.
 Like a song of love that clings to
 me. How the thought of you does
 things to me. Never before has
 someone been more in every
 way...And forever more, that's how
 you'll stay. That's why, darling,
 it's incredible. That someone so
 unforgettable, Thinks that I am
 unforgettable too...

Toros stumbles on the words, as he realizes the crowd is not that interested in his singing.

He quickly regains his composure, but now there is a hard edge in his voice.

TOROS

No never before has someone been
 born. Unforgettable in every way.
 And forevermore that's how you'll
 stay. That's why, darling, it's
 fucking incredible. That someone so
 fucking unforgettable, Thinks that
 I am un-fucking-forgettable too...

Toros chuckles his way off the stage, weak applause follows him to his seat.

Several of the patrons stare at him, but no one says a word.

Ken and the waiters are all applauding loudly.

TOROS

How did I sound?

MARK

Uh, I liked it.

TOROS

I think I need to work more on my
 style, you know?

The Chinese Elvis makes his way on stage, and the crowd goes wild.

A woman's death screams cut through the applause.

Mark looks around nervously, as he realizes the sound is coming from their table.

The screams get progressively louder.

Toros reaches into his jacket and pulls out his cell phone. The screams are his ring-tone.

MARK

Jesus, what the hell is that?

TOROS

My ex-wife.

Toros answers the phone, cutting off the ring/scream midway.

TOROS

Yes?

He smiles.

TOROS

Excellent. See you in 10 minutes.

ELVIS

Thank you. Thank you very much.

TOROS

Better make it 20.

He hangs up the phone.

TOROS

We're leaving soon.

Mark gets up to leave, then Toros motions him to sit.

TOROS

After Elvis.

The Chinese Elvis begins to sing an excellent rendition of Mark James's "Suspicious Minds."

EXT. JOURNEY'S END MOTEL - LATER

A frazzled looking WOMAN waits in a cab, parked outside a shabby old motel.

Toros walks up to her open window.

WOMAN

Number seven. 'Round back.

Toros hands her a roll of cash.

She drops the keys in his hand.

TOROS

Good girl.

The cab drives away.

Mark and Toros stand outside room number seven.

Toros gives the axe to Mark, who takes it with apprehension.

MARK

Do you want me to smash it?

Toros pulls the key out of his pocket and opens the door.

They walk inside the dark room. The digital alarm clock glows four am.

SNORING sounds are coming from the bed.

Toros flicks on a light switch.

Pro-C is fast asleep, and his long legs hang over the end of the tiny bed.

Toros stands over Pro-C, dry chuckling.

He takes the axe from Mark and whispers something to him.

Mark's face loses its color. He nods, and slowly pins Pro-C to the mattress.

Pro-C begins to stir.

PRO-C

Wha?

The axe flashes in the dim light, and Pro-C screams as his right leg is chopped off below the knee.

PRO-C

Ahh!

He begins to thrash, and Mark struggles to hold him down.

The axe is raised up again.

TOROS

You shouldn't run from a bull.

The axe comes down hard, cleaving off the left leg below the knee.

TOROS

Unless you are sure you can get
away.

Pro-C screams again, then passes out from the shock.

MARK

Oh, God.

Mark starts to dry heave.

Toros picks up the two legs from the floor.

TOROS

Bring the body.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

A trunk opens to reveal a plastic liner. First the two legs
are tossed in, then Pro-C's bleeding body follows.

The trunk is shut.

The car pulls away.

A trail of blood leads back to the hotel.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Mark is in the passenger seat, Toros drives.

Toros whistles "Unforgettable."

TOROS

I just think that maybe, I should
draw out the chorus. What do you
think? Honestly.

MARK

Maybe...

TOROS

Don't be shy.

MARK

Uh, maybe you shouldn't swear so
much at the end.

TOROS
That's my trademark!

A loud THUMP comes from the rear of the car.

Mark jumps, and looks over his shoulder.

TOROS
I'll think about it.

Toros continues whistling, but he does it in time with the thumps.

EXT. DEVIL'S HOLE - LATER

Not much can be made out in the barren wasteland of the desert.

A sign reads, DEVIL'S HOLE.

MARK
What is this place?

TOROS
A hole in the earth.

They open the trunk.

Pro-C is still alive, but unconscious.

Toros hauls him out, dropping Pro-C to the ground.

Pro-C mumbles incoherently.

TOROS
Bring his legs.

MARK
Ah, what, what about the plastic?

TOROS
Leave it. This area is very environmentally sensitive.

Toros drags Pro-C to the edge of a dark hole.

When he grabs the legs, Mark nearly has a panic attack.

He runs after Toros, following the blood trail in the sand.

PRO-C

Coach?

Mark comes running up and drops the legs.

MARK

What's down there?

Toros comes over and stares down into the darkness.

TOROS

A very rare species of pupfish.

PRO-C

Put me in Coach.

TOROS

What the hell is he mumbling about?

Toros walks back over to Pro-C and props him up.

TOROS

What?

Pro-C is delirious from loss of blood.

PRO-C

Please Coach. I screwed up the last half, but I won't let you down again.

Toros looks over at Mark and begins to laugh.

TOROS

He thinks he's playing basketball!

PRO-C

C'mon Coach. There are scouts all over the place. Help me out.

TOROS

Alright Pro-C. I'm going to give you one last chance.

PRO-C

Thanks Coach.

TOROS

You go in and score one for the team, alright?

PRO-C

You got it Coach.

Pro-C starts to walk forward on his stumps, then stops and looks down.

TOROS
What is it?

PRO-C
I need my legs, coach. I can't play
without my legs.

Toros starts laughing.

TOROS
You're right, Pro-C. How stupid of
me. Assistant Coach Theseus has
them, right over there. You go and
get them from him.

PRO-C
Thanks coach.

MARK
This isn't real.

TOROS
Stand them up near the hole.

MARK
I think I'm going to get sick.

Mark stands them by the edge of the hole, and Pro-C begins to stumble and crawl toward his legs.

Toros walks beside Pro-C shouting out encouragement.

TOROS
C'mon Pro-C. Your team needs you.

MARK
Oh God.

PRO-C
I just need those legs, Coach.

Pro-C reaches out for his legs and grabs them. He looks over at Toros and smiles.

PRO-C
Got 'em!

TOROS
Good work. Now get in there and
score.

Toros puts a foot on Pro-C's shoulder and nudges him into the hole.

Pro-C looks confused, then falls backwards - legs and all - into the hole. A loud SPLASH is heard.

PRO-C
Coach! Coach! I dropped my legs.

Toros turns and heads back to the car. Mark stumbles after him.

Pro-C's screams and splashing echo through the desert.

INT. DESSERTED ISLAND CAFE - DAY

The bell jingles, and Mark enters the cafe with Toros.

Pasiphae scowls, then walks over to take their order.

TOROS
Hello, Pasiphae. How are you today?

PASIPHAE
Fine.

TOROS
I will have a coffee. Have you met Theseus before?

PASIPHAE
Yes.

TOROS
He is working with me now.

Pasiphae's eyes widen.

PASIPHAE
Oh.

TOROS
Pro-C had a big game that he needed to play in, so he had to depart rather suddenly. Isn't that right, Theseus.

MARK
Uh, yes.

Toros clears his throat.

MARK

That's right, Mr. Toros.

PASIPHAE

I'll be right back with your coffee.

MARK

I need to use the bathroom.

TOROS

By all means.

Mark walks over to the washrooms.

TOROS

Martin, get over here. Don't you owe me a joke?

Pasiphae delivers the coffee, then heads over to the washrooms.

He is waiting behind the partition to speak with her.

PASIPHAE

Where were you last night?

MARK

Don't ask.

PASIPHAE

Why are you with him, Mark? What's going on?

MARK

It's my problem.

PASIPHAE

You gamblers. You're all the same. Broken promises, lies--

MARK

I saw you yesterday.

Pasiphae's eyes widen.

PASIPHAE

When?

MARK

At the Mirage.

PASIPHAE

So?

MARK

I thought you never went to the strip?

PASIPHAE

I had no choice.

Mark shakes his head.

MARK

Minoslav.

PASIPHAE

How do you know that name?

MARK

Is he your mystery guy?

PASIPHAE

It's none of your business. Am I going to see you again?

MARK

I don't know.

PASIPHAE

Mark.

Mark returns to the table.

Pasiphae watches him leave.

PASIPHAE

Be careful.

Martin and Toros are laughing about something.

TOROS

That's a good one, Martin. Now go make me a sandwich.

Mark sits.

TOROS

How was the piss?

MARK

Okay, I guess.

TOROS
Where are you from?

MARK
Baltimore.

TOROS
I am from Armenia, originally.

Mark smiles.

TOROS
This is funny?

MARK
No, it's just that I've been here
six months and I haven't met anyone
yet who is from Las Vegas.

TOROS
People are drawn to this place,
Theseus. It doesn't have the same
pull on the locals that it does for
people like you and me.

Toros sips his coffee.

TOROS
Here they offer you a chance to win
the American dream. Quickly,
without education or work.

Toros has another sip.

TOROS
That is why, my friend, they come
here in the millions each year.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mark opens the door and Pasiphae pushes her way in.

MARK
What are you doing?

PASIPHAE
I should be asking you that!

MARK
What?

PASIPHAE

You know who Toros is, Mark? How could you get mixed up with him?

MARK

You're one to talk. Fucking Minoslav!

PASIPHAE

That's none of your business!

MARK

How is my gambling your business?

PASIPHAE

I really like you, Mark. And I don't want you to get killed!

MARK

Look, it's only temporary. As soon as--

PASIPHAE

Since I've been working at the cafe, Toros has had two employees leave. Do you want to be number three?

MARK

It's not like I have a choice.

Pasiphae sits.

PASIPHAE

This city. It's like a spiderweb. You want to escape, but you just can't.

Mark sits beside her.

PASIPHAE

You should have got on that plane.

MARK

It's a little late for that now.

PASIPHAE

Don't say that. I won't believe that. I'm getting out of here one day, and so are you.

Pasiphae starts to cry and Mark holds her.

MARK

It's my day off tomorrow. Do you want to do something?

PASIPHAE

Okay.

EXT. MIRAGE DOLPHIN POND - AFTERNOON

Mark strolls around a group of tourists.

He sees Adriane and Pasiphae.

MARK

Hi.

ADRIANE

Hi, Mark.

MARK

Hi, Princess.

Adriane giggles.

ADRIANE

Hold out your hand.

MARK

Okay.

Mark holds out his hand, and Adriane selects one finger. She ties a thin string around it.

MARK

What's this for?

ADRIANE

It's so you don't forget.

MARK

Forget what?

ADRIANE

That I love you.

Mark gives her a hug.

PASIPHAE

Honey, why don't you go and look at the dolphins. Mommy needs to talk to Mark.

ADRIANE

Okay. Did you see the baby dolphin yet?

MARK

Not yet.

ADRIANE

He's so cute.

Adriane runs over to the pool.

PASIPHAE

We need to talk.

Mark sits.

PASIPHAE

Minoslav is leaving. For good this time.

MARK

So?

PASIPHAE

He wants to talk to you before he goes.

MARK

Forget it.

PASIPHAE

Mark, he can help you.

MARK

Like he helped you?

MINOSLAV

Hello, Mark.

Mark jumps up.

MARK

What the hell is this?

Pasiphae looks down.

MINOSLAV

Pasiphae told me you would be here today.

MARK

I'm leaving.

MINOSLAV

Mark, please, listen to what I have to say.

PASIPHAE

He can help, Mark.

MARK

He helped me once, that was enough

MINOSLAV

Come, let us look at dolphins.

Mark reluctantly follows Minoslav.

Pasiphae mouths "I'm sorry."

MINOSLAV

It is odd, don't you think?

MARK

What?

MINOSLAV

To be trapped like this. Out of one's natural element.

Minoslav motions at the dolphins.

MINOSLAV

Kept alive by strangers.

MARK

They were born here. Maybe they like it.

MINOSLAV

I doubt it.

He looks at Mark.

MINOSLAV

Me. I hate Vegas.

He turns his back to the pond.

MINOSLAV

So much desperation, so many people. So many fat Americans.

He shakes his head.

MINOSLAV
The excess disgusts me.

Minoslav gestures toward Pasiphae.

MINOSLAV
She is very beautiful, and so
passionate.

Mark shrugs.

MINOSLAV
Would you like to know what she did
for me, Mark?

MARK
No. What do you want?

MINOSLAV
I'm leaving, Mark. Chechnya is
where I belong.

MARK
It's a shame to see you go.

Minoslav laughs out loud.

MINOSLAV
I am sure that for you, it won't be
such a sad sight.

He places a hand on Mark's shoulder.

MINOSLAV
Before I leave this country, there
are two things that must be done.

MARK
What?

Mark looks suspicious.

MARK
I, I'm not going to, you know...I
don't...

MINOSLAV
No. You misunderstand me.

Minoslav rubs the bandage on his finger, then points into the
water.

MINOSLAV

That insolent pig, Toros, tore my father's ring from my hand and threw it here, in the water.

He looks directly at Mark.

MINOSLAV

I cannot leave this country without it.

MARK

What do you want me to do?

MINOSLAV

Get me my ring.

MARK

Why should I help you?

MINOSLAV

I will pay your debt.

MARK

Maybe I like owing money.

MINOSLAV

I doubt this, Mark. I doubt this very much.

He leans in closer to Mark.

MINOSLAV

If you need more incentive, think about them. When I am gone, Pasiphae is free to do as she wishes.

MARK

What's the other thing?

MINOSLAV

That is not your concern. Do you accept my offer?

Mark looks at the staff milling about, then the large crowds of tourists, and finally at the mounds of 'fake' glittering treasure at the bottom of the pond.

Mark dives into the pond. As he swims to the bottom, the dolphins swim around him.

A crowd starts to gather around the pond.

Mark begins to look through the fake treasure.

Pasiphae and Adriane join Minoslav by the pond.

A dolphin moves beside Mark. It motions to him with its snout. Mark follows the dolphin, which leads him to the ring.

The crowd stares expectantly at the water.

Mark breaks the surface.

ADRIANE

Mark!

Security and staff drag him out of the water.

The crowd applauds.

Mark shouts to Pasiphae.

MARK

I'm okay.

As Mark is led away, he stumbles into Minoslav. He passes him the ring.

INT. MIRAGE CASINO - LATER

Mark, still wet from his swim, leaves the security office.

He begins walking out of the casino, but pauses near a Roulette wheel.

He takes out a wet \$20 bill and places it on red.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mark opens the door. Martin is standing there wearing a suit and tie. He looks frightened.

MARK

Marty?

Toros comes out from around the corner. He hits Mark with a bat, knocking him out.

INT. TRUNK - CONTINUOUS

Mark lights a lighter. He is locked inside the trunk of Toros's car.

Lying dead beside Mark is the Chinese Elvis.

The lighter snaps off.

The muffled sound of conversation is barely audible.

EXT. DEVIL'S HOLE - LATER

Toros and Martin exit the car and walk around to the trunk.

MARTIN

What the hell is this place?

Toros throws the keys to Martin.

TOROS

Open it .

Martin inserts the key, and the trunk slowly opens.

Mark holds up a hand defensively.

MARK

Please...

TOROS

Get out.

Mark stares at Martin. Martin turns away.

MARK

Toros, I, I...

TOROS

What?

MARK

Why?

TOROS

You know why. Move.

He shoves Mark towards the hole.

Martin follows, carrying the bat and a flashlight.

MARK

But Minoslav--

TOROS

The fat Russian. What about him?

MARK

He paid my debt!

TOROS

Oh, I know he did. But we're not here about that.

MARK

Why then?

TOROS

You placed a bet today, Mark.

Mark goes pale.

MARK

But my debt's paid.

Toros mimics Mark's pleas.

TOROS

My debt's paid, my debt's paid.

Toros leans in close to Mark.

TOROS

It wasn't when you placed that bet.

Toros punches Mark, knocking him to his knees.

TOROS

Now you're gonna join Pro-C and a few other guys that didn't listen to me.

Martin swings the bat, smacking Toros on the head.

Toros drops.

Martin moves in to take another swing, but Toros rolls out of the way.

Martin smashes the bat on the platform.

Toros jumps up and rushes Martin. They begin to wrestle near the drop-off.

TOROS

Back in Armenia, I was an amateur wrestler. Did I ever tell you guys that?

MARTIN

Mark!

Toros wrestles the bat from Martin, then proceeds to put him in a choke hold.

TOROS

I never lost a single match.

Mark stirs and tries to stand.

Toros begins to shuffle Martin closer and closer to the edge.

TOROS

The Turks called me the Human Bull.

Toros dangles Martin over the edge.

Martin chokes for breath.

TOROS

But, what they didn't know is that Toros is the name of a dead king, not a bull.

Martin's feet kick spastically.

Toros drops Martin.

MARK

Marty!

Martin hits the water with a loud SPLASH.

Toros holds his hands wide, as though surprised. He starts to turn around.

TOROS

How many people do I gotta kill tonight?

Mark breaks the bat over Toros's head.

Toros turns. He looks dazed, but he manages to grab Mark by his tie. He pulls Mark toward him.

Mark struggles to break free.

Toros falls into the hole, still holding Mark's tie.

Mark clings to the railing, choking from the weight of Toros.

He uses one hand to loosen the tie. It unravels quickly, and Toros splashes into the hole.

Marl collapses, gasping for breath.

A beam of light shines up from the hole.

Martin is clinging to a wall with one hand. In the other hand is the flashlight.

MARTIN

Help me! I can't swim. I can't swim!

MARK

Hang on, Marty!

Toros's hand reaches into the light, pushing Martin's head under water.

MARTIN

Ahh!

Martin struggles wildly, causing the flashlight to move from side to side.

MARK

Marty!

He stops struggling, and the hand with the flashlight sinks below the surface. The light goes out.

Mark stares into the darkness.

MARK

Marty?

TOROS

You better pray I can't climb out of here.

Mark jumps back from the edge.

Toros begins chuckling, then starts humming "Unforgettable."

Mark runs to the car, climbs in, and speeds away.

On the dashboard is a small Karaoke trophy.

Near the city limits, he slides into a ditch. He gets out and runs the rest of the way.

Snow starts falling.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - LATER

Mark shoves open the door.

MARK
Jackpot!

The dog jumps at Mark.

MARK
C'mon.

They leave the building.

EXT. TROPICANA AVENUE - LATER

Mark, Jackpot at his side, bends into the wind and snow. He stares at his ice covered shoes.

He looks up, squinting into the wind. There is a wooden pirate ship sitting in the middle of an empty field - a sign says "Daedalus Construction".

When he looks back down, Jackpot has vanished.

Staring back at his solitary tracks in the snow, he sees Jackpot standing several yards back, staring at him.

MARK
C'mon boy.

Jackpot stares for a moment longer, then turns and runs away.

Mark runs a few steps toward the retreating dog.

MARK
Jackpot!

He slips and falls, soaking himself in the slush and snow.

Jackpot disappears into the gloom.

MARK
Jackpot...

INT. TRAILER - LATER

Pasiphae opens the door.

Mark is illuminated in the pale light. He is wet, covered in snow, and shivering.

PASIPHAE

Mark! Where have you been? I tried calling you a dozen times.

Mark coughs and shivers.

MARK

Please, I, can I just come in for a bit?

Pasiphae looks outside at the trail of footprints.

PASIPHAE

Toros?

Mark shakes his head no.

Adriane pokes her head out between her mom's legs.

MARK

It's just me.

ADRIANE

Where's your dog?

Mark looks at Pasiphae. Tears start to slide down his wet cheeks.

MARK

He ran away.

ADRIANE

Why?

MARK

Because I...I...I ate his food.

Mark starts to sob.

Pasiphae holds him and lets him in.

They sit at a table.

PASIPHAE

I'll get you some coffee.

She goes to the kitchen.

PASIPHAE

We really need to talk.

Adriane reappears with a half-eaten hamburger.

ADRIANE

Here, Mark.

He takes the burger from her hands.

MARK

What's this for?

ADRIANE

It's for your dog. You can give it to him and then he'll come back.

Mark hugs her.

PASIPHAE

Adriane. Go back to bed, okay? Mommy needs to talk with Mark.

Adriane goes back to her room.

Pasiphae sits down with Mark.

PASIPHAE

The police called here earlier.

MARK

What?

PASIPHAE

Minoslav is dead. They found his body half-burnt, half-boiled in the volcano at the Mirage.

MARK

Shit.

PASIPHAE

The police called me, can you imagine? Like I'm his wife or something.

Mark looks scared.

PASIPHAE

What's going on? First Marty
doesn't show up to work, now you
come in here half frozen.

MARK

Marty's gone.

PASIPHAE

What?

MARK

I couldn't save him. I--

PASIPHAE

When?

MARK

He's gone.

PASIPHAE

And Toros?

MARK

I think he's dead.

PASIPHAE

You think?

Mark shakes his head.

MARK

I gotta get out of here. I gotta
get home.

PASIPHAE

Where, Mark? Where can you go?

MARK

I don't know. I just, I just...

Pasiphae holds him.

MARK

What are we going to do?

PASIPHAE

Calm down. Go get changed out of
that suit.

MARK

And then?

PASIPHAE

And then we'll go to bed.

Mark shakes his head.

PASIPHAE

Toros doesn't know where I live. So unless you got a better idea...

MARK

No.

Mark takes his bag into the

BEDROOM

and shuts the door.

He throws his suitcase on the bed, then sits heavily on the mattress.

INT. TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Pasiphae puts dishes in the sink, then begins to turn off lights.

She walks over to check on Adriane, who is sound asleep.

She makes her way to the closed bedroom door and knocks softly.

PASIPHAE

(whispering)

Mark?

She turns the handle, opening the door wide.

The room is empty, and the rear door is ajar.

She has a confused look on her face, then her eyes go wide in alarm.

She runs to the front of the trailer and opens the door. There is now a new set of footprints that lead away from the trailer.

PASIPHAE

Mark!

EXT. SAXON TRAILER VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Mark runs past the "SAXON TRAILER VILLAGE" sign.

INT. AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Mark enters the airport, pausing once to wipe the moisture from his face and brush snow off his jacket.

He looks up at the board. There is flight leaving for Baltimore in less than an hour.

He heads into the departure line for American Airlines, and walks up to the female AGENT.

AGENT

Still snowing, huh? Where are you headed this evening?

MARK

My, uh, my father bought a ticket for me.

AGENT

Where to?

MARK

Baltimore.

AGENT

Could I see some ID, please?

Mark gives her his license.

AGENT

Okay. Yes, here it is. I have a Baltimore flight leaving at three a.m. Is that the one you wanted?

MARK

Uhhh...

AGENT

Yes?

MARK

I was just wondering, could I change my destination?

AGENT

Um, sure. I'm not allowed to cash this in for you since it's on your father's credit card, but you can use it as a credit toward another flight. Where were you thinking?

MARK

Atlantic City.

AGENT

No problem.

She prints off the ticket and checks him in.

AGENT

Just the one bag?

MARK

Yes.

A young girl's laugh cuts through the noise of the airport.

Mark looks around nervously, then puts the bag on the scale.

The agent tickets Mark's bag and presses a button to move it onto the conveyor.

AGENT

You're all set. The flight is leaving in 30 minutes, so you'd better go straight to the gate.

Mark panics and yells at the agent.

MARK

Wait!

She stops the bag and looks at Mark.

Mark pulls back his bag, opens it, and removes Adriane's stuffed bull.

MARK

I'll carry this on.

AGENT

It's very cute. Someone's going to get a big surprise.

Mark smiles awkwardly.

He notices the string on his finger and removes it.

MARK

Could you throw this out for me?

AGENT

Sure. Have a good journey.

Clutching the bull very tightly, Mark enters the departure tunnel.

FADE OUT

VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: David H. Navratil

PLACE OF BIRTH: Vancouver, British Columbia

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1964

EDUCATION: Westwood Collegiate, Winnipeg, Manitoba
1981-1984

University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba
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