

"SEEM-LESS ETERNITY"

by
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FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - MIDNIGHT - PRESENT DAY

Thick shadows. Not much is seen. Rain slams against the rooftop. Thunder roars. The room's one window shakes, rattling. Shafts of moonlight seethe through the curtains.

Powerful gust of wind -- the window bursts open with a moan. Curtains billow, dancing in the wind's breath. Window sill bangs, thumping loud.

EDGAR BURNS (late 30s), a solemn man, shivers in his sleep. His breaths are long, wheezy, strained.

Alarming sound of a CLOCK STRIKING MIDNIGHT.

Edgar's eyes shoot open. He gasps, choking for air. Sweat beads from his forehead. It trickles down his face.

Edgar shivers. Then shivers some more. Leaps out of bed. Races to the open window. Tugs it closed with a groan.

An unnatural chill sweeps over Edgar. He blows air into his hands, rubbing palms together, generating heat. No good.

An icy fog consumes the window's glass -- distorting outside.

Edgar's breath swirls in a cloud, white against the darkness.

In moments, the temperature has dropped to freezing.

A lightening bolt slices the night. Spooked, Edgar's face jerks up and back. The silhouette of a menacing CLOAKED FIGURE stands outside the window.

Edgar gasps. Trudges backwards.

After a few steps, Edgar's back slams up against... something.

He stands, posture tight, straight as an arrow. Afraid to turn, afraid to move, afraid to breathe...

The Cloaked Figure is hovering behind Edgar, intimately near. It hisses onto the nape of his neck -- Edgar's hairs visibly stand.

Lightening flashes.

SCREEN BLACK.

DEMONICAL WHISPER
Edgar... Edgar, follow...

EXT. WHITE HAZE

Edgar wanders through thick, sulking fog. Nothing outside the cloudy haze is visible. Edgar pants, lost, losing his mind.

The Cloaked Figure emerges. It slinks through the haze, pace slow and tedious. Almost graceful. It resembles Death.

DEMONICAL WHISPER
Follow...

The Cloaked Figure lifts his arms in a suave "come hither" motion. Edgar follows in morbid awe. He's shamelessly entranced.

EXT. EERIE GRAVEYARD - MOMENTS LATER

The haze has thinned. Most tombstones are overtaken by weeds, long time forgotten by their loved ones.

Wind howls, whispering through leafless branches -- the breeze seems to moan Edgar's name.

Skulls. Thousands of skulls, all grinning. All piled on top of each other. They serve as bricks, forming a gruesome wall.

He continues to follow the beckoning Cloaked Figure...

EXT. BAROQUE CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

The Cloaked Figure has lead Edgar to a church. It towers, seemingly one with the horizon. Sky is oily, black, slick as ink. Stone gargoyles stare down -- watching Edgar, sneering.

The Cloaked Figure stands on the front steps. Waits. Edgar walks up without hesitation. His footsteps pound, echoing.

Silhouette of a gargoyle comes to life. It resurrects. Wings flex, spreading wide. Red eyes beam. A strange rumbling.

The gargoyle takes flight, regal against the bruised sky.

DEMONICAL WHISPER
Follow...

INT. BAROQUE CHURCH

Darkness. Dozens and dozens of candelabras ignite. Their flames twitch, emitting an ominous hum.

Elaborate altar glows. An enormous crucifix is ranged against the furthest wall. It's slanted, slightly askew. Jesus Christ hangs, head bowed, eyes expressing humanity's sorrow.

Blood drips from his palms, forehead, feet. It runs down his mangled body like scarlet tears. A CROWN, made from a THORNED ROSEBUSH, wraps his head. The dripping's amplified -- unnaturally loud.

DRIP... DRIP... DRIP...

The circle of candelabras burst into flames. The church sets on FIRE.

DRIP... DRIP... DRIP...

The Cloaked Figure stands in the middle of the fire. Peels back his hood -- revealing NOTHING. No head. No face. No flesh. A ghost. The Cloak levitates, suspended midair.

The fire grows in ferocity. Flames cackle. They lick the crucifix -- blanketing Jesus with flames. A despairing moan. The Cloak crumbles into a pile of ashes.

A BIBLICAL QUOTE is inscribed across the ceiling in blood:

"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest, day or night, nor sleep.
Revelation 14:11"

EDGAR

stands beside a pew bench in horror. Stares up at the biblical quote.

That BLOODY WRITING rains onto Edgar. It splashes into his eyes -- blinding him. CRIMSON TEARS cascade down his CHEEKS.

The writing scorches. Hisses. Steams. Edgar wails. The blood is boiling hot -- like an iron, it sizzles against his flesh.

An unholy sea of RED pools around his feet in a ring.

Edgar's eyes loll back. He faints -- half from fear, half from pain, half from the fire's smoke.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Edgar wakes with a violent start. He pants. Catches breath.

Cheerful sun-rays pour through curtains. Bluebirds sing.

For the first time, a CRUCIFIX -- hanging above Edgar's bed -- is visible. The BIBLE rests on an end table.

Edgar rubs his eyelids. Gives a bear yawn. Eyes scrunched, he fetches an alarm clock from the side of his bed. Time reads "9:00 AM"

EDGAR
(muttering)
Ah, shit. Late. Again.

Edgar jumps up. Dresses with a relived sigh -- changing into FORMAL ATTIRE. He makes haste. Chuckles, remembering.

EXT. EERIE GRAVEYARD - LATER

Same graveyard from his nightmare.

Edgar passes by, chilled, uneasy. A strange fog sulks low.

Edgar spots a Cloaked Figure crouching amongst the sea of tombstones. It stares, unmoving as Hell.

EXT. BAROQUE CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

The church is in rubble. Ashes. Burned to the ground. Edgar swallows, bothered. A pile of POLISHED STONES catch his eye.

Edgar rushes to it, not missing a beat. The stones are arranged in a CAIRN, conical in form.

A DEAD ROSE BOUQUET leans up against them.

Edgar fetches it. Looks back down.

A faded PHOTOGRAPH of him (age 29) rests on top of the stones -- and an ENGRAVED PLAQUE is next to it.

INSERT - ENGRAVED PLAQUE

"Remember me as you pass by.
As you are now, so once was I.
As I am now, so you will be.
Prepare for death and follow me.

R.I.P.

In memory of Edgar S. Burns

1970-1999"

EDGAR

hollers a STARTLING cry -- a THORN from the bouquet pierces him. He drops the roses. Blood pools on his fingertip.

He looks to the ground -- sees that those roses are no longer dead and wilted. They are freshly picked. Vibrant in color.

Edgar sinks to the crutch of his knees. Carefully reads his plaque's inscription. Traces the words with his sullied finger -- the plaque is stained, letters outlined with blood.

His eyes float back up...

Remarkably, the church is not in rubble. It's being rebuilt. Caution tape wraps one of the stone walls. A bulldozer penetrates the earth.

This is an active construction site.

INT. BAROQUE CHURCH

Dim. Deep shadows. Dust particles float. Nearly empty.

A GRANDFATHER CLOCK. It strikes MIDNIGHT in a piercing wail.

INT. BEDROOM - MIDNIGHT

Back in bed, Edgar wakes -- BLOODCURDLING scream. He perspires. Dripping sweat is loud -- akin to Jesus' blood.

DRIP... DRIP... DRIP...

The window sill thumps. Curtains billow, blowing. But that window is unopened. It's fastened shut.

DRIP... DRIP... DRIP...

He inhales a shaky breath. Tentatively peels away comforter.

Jarring sound of CLOCK STRIKING MIDNIGHT.

Sweat streams down Edgar's forehead. Beads cling to his lashes. He blinks them away. Glances down at reclined body...

Edgar's dressed in his FORMAL ATTIRE. He stares forward -- paralyzed in fear. Unblinking. Seeing nothing. Only despair

DEMONICAL WHISPER
Edgar... Edgar, follow...

SCREEN BLACK.

Sound of CLOCK STRIKING MIDNIGHT. Deafening silence. Then:

DEMONICAL WHISPER
Follow...

Long silence. CLOCK STRIKES MIDNIGHT.

Screen remains pitch black.

DEMONICAL WHISPER
Edgar... Edgar, follow...

CLOCK STRIKES MIDNIGHT.

DEMONICAL WHISPER
Walk. Behold the valley of unrest.
Whoso follows me shall never die...

CLOCK STRIKES MIDNIGHT -- the chime echoes... echoes...

SUPERIMPOSE:

"All that we see or seem is a dream within a dream." - Edgar Allan Poe

FADE OUT.