

"SEASON OF THE WITCH"

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"Behold, they met a woman with an unclean spirit who had her dwelling in dark forests. And no man could bind her. No, not with chains because she had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder, and the fetters broken in pieces. Neither could any man tame her.

And always, night and day, she was in the mountains crying against God, and bringing with her death over all the land."

--anonymous

(from a Benedictine scroll,
dated 1349)

EXT. COAST OF FRANCE - NIGHT

Dark, foreboding waves...rising and falling...THUNDERING against rocks.

Out to sea we GLIMPSE something -- the prow of a boat cutting through the waves, struggling against a massive swell, then CRASHING down again with brutal force.

IN THE BOW

Stands a man. LaVEY, a Knight of the Crusades. His hair is whipping in the wind and his cloak is coated in ice.

Behind LaVey, his loyal companion FELSON is grappling with the tiller. Felson is a mountain of a man, 250 lbs. from peak to base. His head is shaven bald.

Right now all he cares about is keeping the boat pointed shoreward.

Gradually the NOISE of the storm gives way to another sound. An OLD MAN'S voice.

This is the NARRATOR:

NARRATOR (OFF SCREEN)

In the year of our Lord thirteen hundred forty-nine, on the second day of the first month of winter, a Knight of the Crusades returned home to France.

The boat reaches the shallows.

LaVey grabs the bowline and leaps out. He struggles through the surf, stumbling, exhausted, dragging the boat behind him.

NARRATOR (CONT.)

His name was LaVey de Crecy and he had fought many wars in the dark, godless lands of the south. He was tired in body and soul, having learned of the wickedness of the world and the evil men do...

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

LaVey reaches the shore and collapses face first in the sand. Exhausted. Several yards away, Felson also collapses. Both men lie motionless. Utterly spent.

CLOSER. LAVEY'S FACE.

A hard countenance. The face of a soldier, chiseled and marked with scars.

NARRATOR (CONT.)

And though he hoped to live in peace the remainder of his years, this was not to be for he had returned to France in her darkest hour...

...on this ominous note, we FADE to BLACK:

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

LaVey awakens, squinting in the harsh sun.

The storm has passed. Water laps at his ankles. He rises and looks around for Felson, but there is no sign of him.

EXT. SANDY DUNES - MORNING

LaVey appears over a rise in the land. He stops and scans both directions...and reacts sharply at a noise from above.

A loud KAWING.

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

Circling overhead, a RAVEN.

BACK TO - LAVEY

Staring up, distrustfully, as if it were an omen.

The raven lands on a section of driftwood, the dead husk of a tree. It stares at LaVey, and we NOTICE it has one blind eye, a milky-white orb.

A moment filled with foreboding.

FELSON (O.S.)

LaVey!

LaVey jerks to see Felson approaching over a dune. He has a walking stick in hand.

FELSON (CONT.)

I saw a road back that way and a sign for Marseille. Less than a day's ride from here.

LAVEY

Marseille?

(looking around, puzzled)

Where are the fishermen...the traders?

There isn't a sail on the horizon.

Felson hadn't noticed. But now that LaVey mentions it, it seems odd to him as well. LaVey suddenly remembers the bird. He turns to look... But it's gone.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - LATER

They keep a brisk pace through the wintry landscape, passing beneath trees that are frozen with frost and appear strangely crystalline.

They emerge onto a muddy road. Further down the path we SEE some sheep and cattle, chewing at weeds.

LAVEY

Sheep roaming free? And no shepherd in sight.

FELSON

Maybe they jumped the pen?

LAVEY

Sheep and cattle alike?

Felson shakes his head, "no." Not likely.

EXT. LONG SHOT, ROAD - DAY

We find them trudging along a sodden countryside, the only sound the CRUNCH of their feet on the frozen earth.

CLOSER. LaVEY.

He glances up at the darkening sky and pulls his cloak in tight, chilled by the sight. Felson notices the gesture.

FELSON

What's the matter?

LAVEY

This place. The air, the land...

(he looks around)

...it feels empty.

Felson slaps his hands together to warm them.

FELSON

My belly feels empty. We should have slaughtered one of those sheep.

LAVEY

They're the only living things we've seen all day. Don't you think it's strange? No tracks, no footprints.

FELSON

The storm could have washed them away.

LaVey is about to respond, when something arrests his attention. He stops in his tracks.

FELSON (CONT.)

What is it?

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

At the far side of the field, just beyond the treeline, there's a thin column of smoke rising into the sky.

EXT. TREELINE - DAY

They emerge from the woods and take in the source of the smoke -- a small farmhouse. To one side, we SEE a stable and pen with several large gray horses.

LaVey moves towards the house. Then he falters in his tracks, as he sees the doorway... it's banging open and shut, with the wind. And there's something chilling about that; a doorway, left open in the middle of winter.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

LaVey appears in the entrance, staring in distrustfully.

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

Low rafters in the ceiling. A single wooden table with a lantern on it. A fire is still simmering in the hearth, casting a faint glow over the walls and in the far side of the room, a doorway leads to the next room.

LAVEY

(calling out)

Hello?

No response.

LAVEY (CONT.)
(louder)
Is anyone here?

Still nothing. LaVey moves towards the door in the far side of the room.

FELSON
I don't like this, LaVey.

LAVEY
(gesturing at the table)
Hand me that lantern.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

LaVey enters, lifting the lantern to illuminate the room.

It's a tiny bedroom with a single bed. But what's truly unsettling -- is the perfectly still form of a body on the bed, draped by a sheet.

LaVey moves towards the bed. He reaches out, to draw back the sheets...and suddenly FLINCHES at a sharp CRY from Felson.

FELSON
LaVey!

Felson is pointing to the corner of the room, and as LaVey turns, he SEES why... There's a second figure behind him, seated in a chair, perfectly still.

LaVey lifts the lantern, spilling light onto the form of a horrible corpse, a PEASANT FARMER. The body is covered in boils and sores...gray patches of mottled flesh and festering lesions have consumed the arms and face.

FELSON (CONT.)
(horrified)
Mother of God!

CLOSE ON - LAVEY

A horrible revelation dawning on him. He spins back and YANKS the sheet off the bed.

And it's just what he feared...the second corpse is even more disfigured than the first...blood is oozing from the nostrils and ears, covering the sheets.

LAVEY
 (taking a step back)
 Get out, Felson! Quick!

As Felson runs to comply...

...we CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

LaVey and Felson, saddled on horses now, are staring at the farmhouse, which has been put to the torch. Flames and smoke billow into the night sky.

FELSON
 What in the name of the Devil was it?

LAVEY
 (unsure)
 I don't know. Some kind of...plague.

FELSON
 I never saw such a thing.

Felson draws the sign of a cross in the air, and LaVey, with a final solemn glance, turns his horse away.

EXT. ROAD TO MARSEILLE - NEAR DUSK

A bitter wind blows. Rain turning to sleet.

LaVey and Felson plod on, heads tucked in against the cold. Gradually, they hear a noise growing in the distance and look up. At first it SOUNDS like THUNDER.

...ba-BUM...ba-BUM...ba-BUM...

But LaVey cocks his head. It isn't thunder. It's too regular.

GRADUALLY - OUT OF THE GLOOM

A bizarre sight begins to emerge...a line of BAREFOOT MONKS. They are clad in rags, carrying torches. It's insane, in this temperature they must be near delirium.

But even more bizarre...they are whipping themselves on the backs with straps of leather, all to the macabre beat of a DRUMMER.

Ba-BUM...ba-BUM...ba-BUM...

LaVey and Felson can only stare in horror.

LAVEY

What form of lunacy is this!?

The Monks don't respond. They simply pass silently around them.

VOICE (O.S.)

They cannot answer you, my friend.

Both men jerk around in their saddles to see a dark form watching them from the far side of the road. A knight on horseback.

This is SANCIERRE.

SANCIERRE (CONT.)

They have taken a vow of silence.

LAVEY

What in God's name are they doing?

SANCIERRE

Penance. They believe it is the only way to regain God's favor, through mortification of the flesh.

FELSON

They're mad!

SANCIERRE

Perhaps. It's the Black Death. It drives men to desperation.

LAVEY

It's true then. There is a plague.

SANCIERRE

A plague like no other. Half of France lies in the grave.

(by way of introduction)

I am Sancierre. I have been sent to greet you.

FELSON

(doesn't understand)

Greet us?

LAVEY

You are mistaken, my friend. We are crusaders, from Palest--

SANCIERRE

You are the Knight, LaVey, sworn to the order of Saint John the Baptist. Survivor of Hattin, and first through the breach at Jerusalem.

A long pause. Felson and LaVey share a look, amazed.

LAVEY

How do you know this?

SANCIERRE

I have been sent by the Cardinal of Versailles. He summons you to his palace.

LAVEY

(suspicious)

The Cardinal? What business has he with me?

Sancierre is strangely silent for a moment.

SANCIERRE

That is for him to say.

(a pause)

Will you come?

LaVey and Felson share a look. Unsure.

EXT. ROAD TO AVIGNON - LATER

The three Knights ride in silence along the banks of a great river. Felson turns in his saddle to watch as several bloated forms float by with the current. Dead cattle, a wagon and horse, several unmistakably human shapes...

SANCIERRE

The first to die were along the coast, in Marseille and Avignon. They say the plague struck so quickly there that the stricken didn't even know they were stricken. They simply fell dead within a night.

(quieter)

They were the fortunate ones. For the rest death came slowly. Sometimes two, sometimes three days.

LAVEY

Who is afflicted?

SANCIERRE

Everyone. Old and young. Men, women,
children. The plague knows no bounds.

LAVEY

How long has it been over the land?

SANCIERRE

Two years and a season.

Felson and LaVey react. Staggered.

LAVEY

How many dead?

SANCIERRE

Some say so many as three in four.

FELSON

(disbelief)

Three in four!?

SANCIERRE

Believe it. With my own hands have I buried
four sons, and the wife who bore them.

LaVey and Felson turn to stare at him.

SANCIERRE (CONT.)

(matter-of-factly)

During the first day the victim is stricken
with boils and lesions. By the second day,
the skin turns black. By the third, the
lungs begin to bleed, and then in the final
hours the boils burst... and death comes.

LaVey and Felson try to find something to say, but before they
can form a response:

SANCIERRE (CONT.)

It is getting dark. We should hurry.

Sancierre SPURS his horse more quickly.

EXT. WINDY HILLOCK - NIGHT

The riders reach the top of a ridge and stop.

ANGLE - OPPOSITE VALLEY

Le Palais de Papes. The seat of the Catholic Church in France, it rises majestically from the hillside. Massive stone walls, parapets, turrets... commanding the high ground for miles around.

The knights take in the sight.

EXT. CASTLE WALLS - LATER

A SENTRY appears on the ramparts, looking down as the three riders approach.

SENTRY

Halt and announce yourselves!

SANCIERRE

(calling up)

It is I, Sancierre. I bring the one called LaVey.

THE GATE - MOMENTS LATER

With a SOUND of unseen GEARS and WHEELLOCKS, it begins to rise.

INT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

The Knights pass through the gate into a cobbled courtyard.

A PRIEST is already approaching through one of the vaulted entries to greet them. This is FRA' DeBELZAQ, advisor to the CARDINAL.

He is dressed in a simple brown robe, bound at the waist with the traditional rosaries of his order. He carries a torch by which he studies the Knights.

DEBELZAQ

Which of you is LaVey?

LAVEY

I am he.

DeBelzaq sizes him up. Then, with a sudden flourish, spins and leads the way across the courtyard.

DEBELZAQ

Follow me.

INT. PALACE - NIGHT

DeBelzaq leads the Knights down a long marble corridor lit on either side by torches. He brings them to a halt in front of a tall gilded doorway.

He pushes open the doors...

INT. CARDINAL'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

...and we enter a room with a massive domed ceiling. The marble floors are littered with rare furs. At one end, seated on a darkened dais surrounded by PHYSICIANS, is CARDINAL D'AMBROISE (note: in the dim light, seen only in silhouette).

DEBELZAQ
Gentlemen, the Cardinal D'Ambroise.
(by way of introduction)
Your eminence, the Knights.

The Cardinal leans forward. And as he leans into the torchlight, we see he is deathly pale, almost ghostlike...

CARDINAL
Is it true? You are called LaVey?

LaVey steps forward.

LAVEY
Yes, but how--?

CARDINAL
Please! Come no closer. I am stricken.
(COUGHING)
The Black Death is in me.

He glances sidelong at his PHYSICIANS, who are hovering just out of arm's reach.

CARDINAL (CONT.)
Leave us. Go!

PHYSICIAN
But your eminence... you grow weaker.

CARDINAL
(sharp)
No. I die. And your leeches and ointments
are of no use. Now go!

The Physicians share a look and quickly begin removing the leeches. They pack up their jars and make a general exit.

Once they have left the cardinal turns to LaVey.

CARDINAL (CONT.)

France is in the grip of a terrible evil.
The King has fled his kingdom, and left his
subjects to die--

He is interrupted by a sudden COUGHING fit that wracks his entire body. He tries to stifle it with a handkerchief. When he draws his hand away, we GLIMPSE the white silk, flecked red with blood.

CARDINAL (CONT.)

(recovering a bit)
--it is whispered over all the land that
the end is near, that the hour of our
judgment has come.

He looks up, as if to gauge LaVey's reaction. But LaVey doesn't have one.

CARDINAL (CONT.)

What do you believe?

LAVEY

That we live in dark times.

CARDINAL

A guarded response.

LAVEY

I'm a knight, not a priest.

CARDINAL

And as a knight... as a soldier of God, you
hold no belief?

LAVEY

What would you have me believe?

The Cardinal looks to DeBelzaq, who takes his cue and steps forward.

CARDINAL

The plague is a curse, called up from Hell.

DEBELZAQ

Brought upon us by the Black Witch.

LAVEY

(with a touch of surprise)

The...black witch?

DeBelzaq, registering the tone of LaVey's voice, raises an eyebrow.

DEBELZAQ

The charges have been proven without question. I myself heard the confession--

CARDINAL

(a placating gesture)

DeBelzaq. Please.

(to LaVey, again)

Three weeks ago a woman was found in the forests, wandering...mad, muttering strange words that none could understand. She came to a small village near Marseille.

DEBELZAQ

Louresse.

(darkly)

That place is gone now. Wiped out by the plague.

CARDINAL

From there she traveled west, from Marseille to Avignon...and everywhere she went it was the same. In her footsteps followed death.

LAVEY

I don't understand.

DEBELZAQ

The witch must be taken to the abbey Severac, where our Benedictine brothers are preparing an ancient ritual to destroy her.

LAVEY

Severac...? That is many leagues from here, in the mountains. A barren, desolate place.

DEBELZAQ

Only there can the witch be slain and the
curse lifted.

LAVEY

Why are you telling me this?

CARDINAL

Because... you must deliver her.

CLOSE ON - LAVEY

His eyes darken, but he says nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. DUNGEON STAIRS - NIGHT

The Knights descend a flight of dank, stone steps that wind in
circles downward. DeBelzaq leads the way with a torch.

DEBELZAQ

A word of caution; the witch will attempt
to question you. Do not answer, for her
questions are traps. Neither ask too many,
for the witch is a deceiver. She will
mingle truth with lies. She will try to
turn one man against the other.

(he pauses, glances back)

Also, the witch is blind. But do not trust
her blindness. She has attacked two
jailors already.

He reaches the bottom and unbolts a heavy steel door.

The Knights move past, into...

THE DUNGEON - NIGHT

A BURLY JAILOR rises as they enter.

LaVey looks around and sees that they are circled on all sides
by thick cell doors. But one of the doors stands out...it has
been reinforced with steel bars and braced by a thick oaken beam.

LaVey takes down a torch and moves towards it.

LAVEY

(to the Jailor)

Open it.

The Jailor looks uneasy. He moves forward with a ring of keys. He unbolts the door and pushes the beam away with both hands. He pulls it open with a low -- creeeaaaaaaak!

It swings wide, like the vault of some dark tomb.

The Knights move forward.

Suddenly there's a scurrying motion on the floor as dozens of oily slick RATS swarm past them up the steps. LaVey hangs motionless in the doorway, recovering.

Once they have past, he steps through...

INTO THE DUNGEON

At first LaVey can't see anything. It's too dark. He raises his torch for a better view and the cell appears empty. He looks around, baffled--

--and WHIRLS suddenly as hears a noise to his left. There's a darkened figure in the corner. A figure that wasn't there a moment ago. Or was it? LaVey can't be certain.

He takes a step forward, holding his torch up, and the flickering light spills onto...the cowering form of a YOUNG PEASANT GIRL.

CLOSE ON - THE KNIGHTS

Reacting with surprise.

FELSON

She's just a girl.

Her head snaps up, REVEALING her eyes. And we SEE they're both milky-white. Blind.

WITCH

(a soft whisper)

...laveeeeeey?

LAVEY

Who are you? How do you know my name?

WITCH

(she beckons)

Come closer.

LaVey takes a cautious step.

WITCH

...closer...

Sancierre places a hand on LaVey's shoulder, cautioning him. The witch seems to "see" the gesture, if the word can be used and CHUCKLES softly.

WITCH
Do you fear me?

In response, LaVey takes another step.

LAVEY
Speak girl. How do you know my name?

WITCH
I know...many things...

LAVEY
I see.
(a skeptical pause)
Then tell me, from where have I come?

WITCH
From the east. Over seas...over sand.

LaVey looks to Felson. A lucky guess?

LAVEY
And how did you know I would come to this place?

WITCH
I have foreseen it. Our destinies are joined. You and I will travel the long, dark road together.

LAVEY
To Severac, you mean?

WITCH
...yes...
(a throaty whisper)
Severac.

LAVEY
Listen to me, girl. They have brought me here to deliver you to your death. Do you understand what will happen at the abbey?

The girl smiles. A darkly alluring smile.

LAVEY (CONT.)

You will be burned at the stake. You have been accused of witch-craft.

DEBELZAQ

She has been accused of conjuring up the plague. And she has confessed.

(he steps forward)

Tell them, girl.

WITCH

The plague...yesssss! A blight upon the land! A curse, to wipe from the earth all things in which flow the breath of life.

DeBelzaq looks at LaVey.

LAVEY

This means nothing. The girl is delirious, half-starved in a dungeon. She would say anything. Anyone would.

DEBELZAQ

She is toying with you.

WITCH

(with sudden venom)

I would destroy all mankind! I would see rats chew the rancid meat from your bones! I would see the flesh rot inside your armor!

And then it happens, blindingly quick--

--she lunges from the floor, at LaVey, her fingers CLAWING for his neck. But the chain jerks taut at the last instant, yanking her back. Inches from him.

Felson and Sancierre move back several paces, startled.

LaVey holds his ground.

WITCH

Proud scum! Monks of war! Your fattened souls will hang in the smoky pits of hell! Like shanks of rotting meat!

THE WITCH

Begins to HISS and CLAW at LaVey. Struggling in vain to reach him. The chains SNAP and JERK. She lets out a horrendous bellow, an inchoate sound of frustration and hatred that grows louder and louder...filling us with dread, penetrating our souls...

...until we CUT TO:

CLOSE UP - A BLAZING FIRE

The embers smoke and glow.

FELSON (O.S.)

Blessed virgin! I wouldn't have believed it, if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes.

WIDER. Now we SEE that we're inside...

INT. GUEST HALL - NIGHTTIME

Felson is pacing nervously back and forth. LaVey is standing before the fire, staring at the flames. He has a goblet in one hand from which he sips occasionally.

LAVEY

What did you see? Nothing but a crazed girl, delirious with fever.

FELSON

You mean, you don't believe it?

LAVEY

That she is a witch? Certainly not.

FELSON

But she confessed!

LAVEY

Oh, that I do not doubt. The church can be--

LAVEY (CONT.)

(choosing his words
carefully)

--very persuasive.

Felson considers this, falls silent.

SANCIERRE

What will you tell the Cardinal?

LAVEY

I will not have the blood of an innocent girl on my hands. No matter how mad she may be.

FELSON

It would not be wise to refuse him.

SANCIERRE

Felson is right. One does not lightly disobey the church. The Cardinal still has power. Especially here.

LAVEY

(SLAMMING his goblet down)

I have shed enough blood in the name of the church. If they want this girl dead, let them dirty their own hands. Let them kill her themselves.

VOICE (O.S.)

We have tried. Three times already.

The men all turn--

--to SEE DeBelzaq standing in the doorway. They share an awkward glance. How much did he hear?

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

The spirit of the demon cannot be destroyed. Each time, upon the moment of death, it leaves the body and possesses another. We have seen it take three forms since we brought it here.

LAVEY

Just a moment...

(he sets his glass down,
incredulous)

Do you mean to tell me that the girl we just saw in the dungeon is not the same one you found in the woods?

DEBELZAQ

In spirit, yes.

LAVEY

In body.

DEBELZAQ

In body, no. She is a serving girl from the kitchen.

The men exchange glances. Expressions of disbelief.

FELSON

And before that?

DEBELZAQ

The cellarer.

(beat)

And before that a stable hand.

FELSON

(exploding)

Good Christ!

LAVEY

You have seen this, with your own eyes?

DEBELZAQ

(a reluctant pause)

No, but it was witnessed by many. The magistrate, the Cardinal... And each time the witch grows in strength.

Felson comes up beside LaVey, lowers his voice to a whisper.

FELSON

I have heard tales of such. In the lands of the north, many years ago, they told a tale--

LAVEY

To scare children.

DEBELZAQ

(defiant)

It is not a tale! Look around you, half of France lies in the grave. More die every day. What more do you require!?

LaVey looks from the priest slowly back at the fire.

LAVEY

The Cardinal will have my answer in the morning.

DeBelzaq stands for a moment, frustrated. Then wheels suddenly away.

EXT. PALACE - NIGHT

Rain PATTERS against a stained glass window of the palace. From within, a warm glow is visible.

INT. CARDINAL'S BED CHAMBER - LATER

The Cardinal is huddled in his bed, his forehead feverish with sweat. DeBelzaq kneels by the bedside.

CARDINAL

(weakly)

Tell me. What do you think of him?

DEBELZAQ

LaVey? I fear he is not equal to the task. He has lost his faith, your eminence... if ever he had it.

The Cardinal smiles oddly, knowingly.

CARDINAL

Perhaps. But he has paid a price. I have seen it before in his kind.

DEBELZAQ

(doesn't understand)

His kind?

CARDINAL

Crusaders. LaVey was among those who took the Holy City. He was at Jerusalem when the wall fell...when the Knights turned their wrath upon the people of that place.

(softly, with shame)

A black day.

INTERCUT - A SERIES OF HAUNTING IMAGES

Swords rising and falling. Blood flecking the sand. Impressionistic glimpses of fire and brimstone...and fleeing

forms racing back and forth...stalked by the shimmering apparition of Knights in Armor.

CARDINAL (O.S.)
They say the streets ran red with blood.
The blood of women...and children.

A CHURCH

Being set afire. Dozens of flaming arrows streak through the sky. Through the tinted windows, we SEE the silhouettes of people, inside, praying.

CARDINAL (O.S.)
The blood of Christians and Jews, alike.

BACK TO - DEBELZAQ

He stares at the Cardinal, horrified.

CARDINAL (CONT.)
Now you see why he has no love of the church.

DEBELZAQ
Yes.

CARDINAL
And you see also why you must go with them.

DeBelzaq's head snaps up, with surprise.

DEBELZAQ
Me? But I am a priest. What use would I be?

CARDINAL
LaVey is the sword. You are the cross.
Where he is weak, you must be strong. And
when he loses the path--
(with grim certainty)
--and he will-- you must stay the course.

DeBelzaq stares for a moment, a little stunned. And then with quiet dignity, and though he is obviously terrified, his head drops in a gesture of acquiescence.

DEBELZAQ
As you will.

CUT TO:

INT. PALACE BEDROOM - PRESENT

LaVey jerks awake. His forehead is glistening with sweat. He has just come out of a nightmare, and it takes his shattered senses a moment to register where he is.

He climbs out of bed, pulls on his tunic.

EXT. PALACE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

LaVey walks down the hall.

The Palace is quiet at this hour, JUST the soft SOUND of his feet on the marble floor.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

LaVey descends with a torch.

Half way down the steps, he falters at a SOUND from below. A pitiable WEEPING that echoes up the staircase.

INT. DUNGEON - NIGHT

LaVey enters. He looks around and sees the Jailor asleep, cotton plugs jammed into his ears. He follows the WEEPING to the witch's cell and opens a small observation window to peer through...

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

The witch is huddled inside. Weeping.

A lone spot of moonlight illuminates her back and we GLIMPSE her robe has been torn open and the skin of her back is red with fresh welts. Whip marks.

Suddenly there is a scurrying motion on the floor. A rat races across the stones. The witch WHIPS out and snatches it up. There's a sickening SNAP as she breaks it in her hands. Then she hunches over it...and slowly begins to feed.

BACK TO - LAVEY

Recoiling. Torn between pity and disgust.

INT. DINING HALL - DAWN

LaVey enters to find the men already seated around the breakfast table. He joins them in silence. Reaches for a shank of lamb.

LAVEY

(without looking up)

You can tell the Cardinal I have made my decision.

DeBelzaq and the others glance up from their food.

LAVEY (CONT.)

I will take the girl to Severac on one condition. Before she is burned, she must be given a trial. If it's proven she is innocent...then she must be set free.

DEBELZAQ

What!? But we - we have all the evidence at hand. Her guilt has been proven.

LAVEY

Not to me.

DEBELZAQ

She confessed!

LAVEY

(sharply)

Under the whip. She would confess to being Lucifer himself, no doubt.

DeBelzaq stares at LaVey for a moment. Unsure.

DEBELZAQ

I must discuss this with the Cardinal. He will not be pleased.

LAVEY

No, perhaps not.

(he wipes his hands and rises)

But the offer is final.

DEBELZAQ

Anything else?

LAVEY

Tell him we need food and horses. New armor
and swords.

DEBELZAQ

Very well.

LaVey pauses in the doorway, looks back at Felson and Sancierre.

LAVEY

And for my companions, full blessings and
remissions from all sin.

DEBELZAQ

And for yourself no doubt.

LAVEY

I require nothing from the church.

An awkward moment. LaVey exits. DeBelzaq stares after him.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTYARD - LATER

LaVey is practicing in the rain. His sword is out and he is
silently swinging it in large arcs, WHISTLING circles that
cleave and bisect the air. It's like some kind of graceful Kata.
A dance of death and LaVey is oblivious to everything else,
driven to perfect it.

SANCIERRE (O.S.)

The Cardinal has agreed to your
conditions.

LaVey's thoughts are interrupted by the sound of Sancierre's
voice. He turns to see the old Knight watching him from the
shelter of the portico.

LAVEY

Yes, I thought he would.
(he lowers his sword)
And what about you?

SANCIERRE

I do not share your...doubts. But I will
accompany you.

LAVEY

Good, that makes three then.

SANCIERRE

Four. The priest is coming too.

LaVey reacts with surprise. But before he can respond, a BOISTEROUS CRY interrupts them both.

VOICE (O.S.)

Five!

They both turn--

--to SEE a YOUNG KNIGHT, approaching from the hall. A boy in armor that looks a little large for his diminutive frame.

KAYLAN

I am Kaylan!

SANCIERRE

(he sizes him up, unsure)

You're a knight?

KAYLAN

(offended)

Of course.

SANCIERRE

I only ask, because--

KAYLAN

Because what?

A tense moment as they study each other.

LAVEY

(cutting in)

How old are you, boy?

KAYLAN

I am seventeen! And I'll have you know I've ridden twice in the lists and won flags for valor.

LaVey casts a sidelong glance at Sancierre. Then back at Kaylan.

LAVEY

You know how to wield a sword?

KAYLAN
Of course.

LAVEY
Show me.

Kaylan is momentarily taken aback.

KAYLAN
What?

LAVEY
Draw your sword. Come here.

Kaylan reluctantly steps into the rain. He draws his sword, a long two-handed blade that seems overly large for him.

He stands opposite LaVey.

An awkward beat as they eye each other.

LAVEY (CONT.)
Is that how you hold it?

KAYLAN
(uncertain)
Yes, of course.

SWOOSH-- KLANG! Kaylan's sword suddenly CLATTERS into the mud. It happened so fast, we're not even sure how LaVey did it. But he has swung and struck, lightning fast, and battered Kaylan's sword out of his grip with a single shattering blow.

Kaylan reacts, stunned. Sancierre lowers his eyes.

LAVEY
Go home, boy. This is no tournament.

LaVey starts off with Sancierre.

KAYLAN
But I - I wasn't ready.

LAVEY
It would just be the same. You hold the sword too tightly.

LaVey exits with Sancierre.

Kaylan is left standing in the rain.

CUT TO -- A MAP.

BEING UNFURLED, across a table. A finger points at a spot on the chart, indicating...

DEBELZAQ

The abbey is here, in the mountains.

(indicating another spot)

We are here.

...WIDEN to REVEAL, we're inside:

INT. MAPROOM - AFTERNOON

DeBelzaq stands over a long mahogany table across which several charts have been spread.

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

The distance between the two is nearly four hundred leagues. Roughly six days travel.

LAVEY

I see a river...heavy forest...a mountain pass. A hard road in any weather, but in the middle of winter? Through plague infested lands?

DEBELZAQ

I assure you, the distances are correct.

LAVEY

Perhaps. But without a guide...

SANCIERRE

LaVey is right.

(indicating a spot on the map)

This forest is called Wormwood. I have seen it. It's not a place to be trifled with. Men have entered there never to be seen again.

LAVEY

We need someone who knows the lay of the land.

DeBelzaq thinks, looks up. Something has clicked.

DEBELZAQ

(reluctant)

There is one. Though I cannot sing his praises...

...off LaVey's glance, we CUT TO:

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD - LATER

LaVey, Felson and Sancierre approach the stocks, where we SEE a man locked up.

This is HAGAMAN. His head and hands protrude through holes in the pillory, so that he can't lift up or look around. All he can do is stare at the ground.

HAGAMAN

(he hears their footsteps)

Ah, visitors! What can I do for you, gentlemen? Perhaps you'd like to pelt me with fruit? Or kick me in the groin?

HAGAMAN'S P.O.V.

LaVey kneels into frame, and stares at him.

LAVEY

You are Hagaman? The swindler?

HAGAMAN

No! I mean, yes. I am Hagaman. But I never swindled anyone. I sold relics. Genuine relics.

LAVEY

Where did you sell your trinkets?

HAGAMAN

(with a touch of pride)

Everywhere. I have happy customers from here to Prague.

LAVEY

And Severac?

Hagaman thinks for a second.

HAGAMAN

Yes, the monks. I sold them the tail of an ass ridden in the flight from Egypt.

FELSON

(dryly)
At a bargain, I'm sure.

HAGAMAN

They even bought a lock of hair from the head of John the Baptist.

LAVEY

So it's safe to assume you know the way to the abbey?

HAGAMAN

Like the back of my hand. I'd be happy to draw you a map but as you can see...

He wiggles his hands in the stocks.

LAVEY, FELSON AND SANCIERRE

They step aside, so Hagaman can't hear.

SANCIERRE

That man's a complete scoundrel! Trust him at your peril.

LAVEY

No doubt. But our options are few.

FELSON

Sancierre's right. He will flee at the first chance.

LaVey considers this.

HAGAMAN'S P.O.V.

As LaVey returns, kneeling down again.

LAVEY

Listen. My friends and I need a guide. But if I release you...

(he fingers the tip of his sword)
...and you attempt to flee?

HAGAMAN

What--!? Say no more. The devil is with you to give you such thoughts!

LaVey studies him skeptically.

HAGAMAN (CONT.)

I swear by all the saints. May they strike me dead if I tell a lie!

LAVEY

That any Saint should be listening to you, I find very doubtful.

Hagaman strains to turn his head as LaVey abruptly stands up again. But all he can see are LaVey's legs -- which suddenly take up a stance like an axe man at the chopping block.

HAGAMAN

Wh-what are you doing?

No response. And now Hagaman's confusion is starting to mount into terror because LaVey's sword has also risen upwards.

HAGAMAN (CONT.)

No! Please--!

WHAM!!! LaVey brings the sword down on top of the block, slicing the lock in half, spilling Hagaman to the ground, where he falls SCREAMING like a choirgirl...

A beat.

Hagaman clutches his throat, surprised. It's still there. LaVey drapes an arm over his shoulder casually.

LAVEY

I am glad we had this talk, Hagaman.

He rises and walks off, leaving Hagaman to stare after him with newfound fear.

EXT. PALACE - DAWN

The first bleak rays of the sun creep over the ramparts.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAWN

The Knights emerge from their chambers, led by DeBelzaq. They are each carrying a long staff with a noose of thick leather at the end.

DEBELZAQ

The witch is drugged. She was given a powerful remedy in her food last night. It will be easier this way.

They enter the stairwell to the dungeon, and descend from view.

INT. DUNGEON - DAWN

The jailor unlocks the door and pulls it wide, to REVEAL --
THE WITCH.

She's sprawled on the floor, unconscious. Her eyes are slightly parted and she's staring blankly at the ceiling.

The men share a look.

HAGAMAN

Don't look at me. I'm just the guide.

FELSON

(he gives him a shove)
Then lead the way.

LAVEY

(to the Jailor)
The keys.

The Jailor tosses them to LaVey. He crosses to the far wall, where the shackle chain is fastened to a heavy steel ring in the stone.

Felson, Sancierre and Hagaman take up positions all around the witch. They maneuver their staffs so the nooses slip over her head. Once she is secured, they look at LaVey.

He unlocks the chain. It slips out of the ring...AND SUDDENLY
THE WITCH COMES ALIVE!

She sits up, eliciting a startled GASP from the men.

DEBELZAQ

Look out--!

Her hands whip up to grab hold of the poles, and we witness a surprising display of strength as she SLAMS the Knights backwards into the wall.

WHAM! They collapse to the floor, dazed. Sancierre drops his staff. With a lust-crazed HOWL the witch hurls herself at him. Sancierre scrambles backwards, trying to get away as she scuttles after him, crab-like.

He backs into the wall and she lunges at his face with her claws -- but LaVey has retrieved the pole, and jerks her back in the nick of time.

WITCH
(spinning to face him)
Ahhh...the mighty LaVey!

She grabs hold of the staff, and they struggle for a moment.

CLOSE ON - LAVEY

Reacting, with surprise. She's stronger than he expected.

CLOSE ON - THE WITCH

She draws a deep, HISSING breath, and suddenly BATTERS the staff out of LaVey's grip. It WHIPS out and strikes Hagaman in the face. He goes down hard, bleeding from a busted nose.

LaVey DUCKS as the witch lunges at him. We HEAR the SCRAPE of nails against stone. She spins back, talons cocked for another blow. LaVey draws his sword.

DEBELZAQ
No! She must not be slain!

DeBelzaq leaps into her path, swinging his torch like a madman, trying to keep her at bay. She BATTERS him aside with one arm, sending the priest crashing into the wall.

She lunges at LaVey, who dodges aside.

He spins, like a pirouette. He kicks the pole up with his foot and catches it. SLAMS her against the wall...holds her pinned, struggling.

WITCH
Ahhhhh! Bastards! Piglets, I curse you
all!

The men stagger to their feet again and quickly grab hold of the staffs. The witch continues to struggle, even as they choke her into submission. She manages to rotate slightly, so she is facing Sancierre.

WITCH (CONT.)

You first, senile fool! May folly and youth be your undoing! May your bowels be spilt by one you trust.

(she hooks a finger at Hagaman)

And you next! Let no living creature harm you! But the circle will come. The ring of death, and tear you to shreds, limb from limb!

(and DeBelzaq)

And you... murderous priest! You shall give me your heart.

(Felson)

May your death be a lingering, slow one. May your wasted, putrid, corpse wander the land for leagues.

Lastly, she jerks to face LaVey. A rictus-like smile forms on her lips.

WITCH (CONT.)

But the worst I reserve for you, LaVey...king of maggots! The greatest agony shall be yours. May the fire of knowledge consume you. May you burn until the flesh falls from your bones in smoking heaps!

She reaches out with one hand and grabs hold of the pole. Slowly the wooden shaft begins to BUCKLE and CRACK.

SANCIERRE

The staff -- she's trying to break it!

LaVey SWINGS his sword like a cudgel, CRACK! He hits her with the flat of the blade and she slumps to the floor, unconscious. The men stand around her, stunned, GASPING for breath...

...as we DISSOLVE TO:

THE WAGON-CAGE - AFTERNOON

An imposing structure, built up with bars and chains, drawn by a team of horses. It RUMBLES through the palace gates.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

So began the journey. On the fifteenth of October five men departed from the palace of the Cardinal.

LaVey and Felson are riding point. Hagaman and DeBelzaq are on the wagon, side by side. Sancierre brings up the rear.

NARRATOR (CONT.)

Three knights, a swindler, and a priest. Together they traveled into the foothills of Avignon. And from there, deeper into plague infested lands...

HIGH ABOVE - A PALACE WINDOW

The Cardinal watches with a solemn gaze, as they diminish in the distance. He draws the sign of a cross in the air.

CARDINAL

Christophori sancti speciem quicumque
tuetur...

On this ominous note...

...we FADE TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

The wagon rattles down a narrow dirt lane.

CLOSER. HAGAMAN.

He glances nervously over his shoulder at the witch. Then back at DeBelzaq, who is beside him in the wagon seat.

HAGAMAN

Do you believe what she said? That we would
all die?

DEBELZAQ

The witch is a liar and a deceiver. Her words are like venom. If you listen to them, they will drip into your ears and poison your soul.

Hagaman regards the priest uncertainly.

HAGAMAN

All the same. Perhaps you'd better give
us a few 'pater nosters.'

DeBelzaq decides it can't hurt. He quickly takes out his
rosaries and begins to PRAY.

DOWN THE ROAD

Felson and LaVey are riding along, side by side.

FELSON

The men are frightened, LaVey. They fear
the witch...the curse.

LAVEY

And you?

FELSON

(unsure)

I felt her strength. And I tell you, it
was not the strength of a girl. It was like
-- like some animal.

LAVEY

She is mad, Felson. And madness lends
strength. That's all.

(he pauses, remembers)

I once saw man near Leipzig, who thought
he could fly. It took ten men to drag him
down from a roof.

Felson considers this. Doesn't seem convinced.

FELSON

What if you are wrong?

LAVEY

(musing)

If she is truly a servant of the devil?
Then I should think her powers are beyond
all of us and we needn't give it another
thought.

That wasn't exactly what Felson wanted to hear.

Suddenly, SANCIERRE comes rides up between them.

SANCIERRE
We are being followed.

LaVey doesn't react.

LAVEY
How many?

SANCIERRE
One. Behind us, on the ridge.

LaVey casts a disinterested glance over his shoulder. Trying to look casual.

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

A lone figure on horseback, dimly visible in the rain.

LAVEY
(he squints, recognizes
him)
It's him, the boy from the palace.

SANCIERRE
You're certain?

LAVEY
Yes, I recognize the armor. Too big for
him.

FELSON
Why is he following us?

LAVEY
Who knows? Let him. He'll grow tired soon
enough.

CUT TO:

THE ROAD - NEAR DARK

The men round a bend in the road and stop to look back. A moment passes, and they react with expressions of surprise.

PAN to REVEAL - KAYLAN

He's still following them, keeping the same distance as before.

SANCIERRE

Hah! He's persistent. I'll grant him that.

HAGAMAN

Give him one night. One night in the rain.

EXT. ABANDONED BARN - NIGHTTIME

The wagon has been unhitched and set in the shelter of a large elm tree, a little ways from the barn.

INT. ABANDONED BARN - NIGHTTIME

The men are huddled around a small fire, in the middle of a heated debate.

FELSON

...the plague travels by touch, not through the air. And even if it did, it could never pierce armor.

HAGAMAN

I tell you it can! I have seen Knights stricken, even in full armor.

SANCIERRE

And what cure have you for that? A relic? Some worthless bauble?

HAGAMAN

(humbly, suggesting)

I have both relics and indulgences. The rarest between here and Rome. Some of them offer protection from the plague.

SANCIERRE

Like what?

HAGAMAN

What indeed.

He reaches for his satchel, a heavy burlap bag, and begins rummaging inside.

HAGAMAN (CONT.)

I have the stone which David used to slay
Goliath--

Sancierre rolls his eyes and rises. He's heard enough.

FOLLOW SANCIERRE, as he crosses to the barn doors where LaVey
is peering into the rain.

SANCIERRE

Where's our young friend?

LAVEY

(he indicates)

Still there.

Sancierre takes a look.

SANCIERRE'S P.O.V.

He can just make out a dim figure hunkered between several
boulders.

SANCIERRE

He'll catch his death out there.

LAVEY

He should have turned back. He's a fool.

SANCIERRE

Perhaps. But we were foolish too once. And
he is not so much younger than I, when I
first went to battle.

LaVey considers this. Casts another glance out the door.

EXT. HILLSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

Kaylan is trying to keep warm, hunkering up against his horse.
It isn't really working, he's shaking like a leaf. But suddenly
he stops trembling... as the tip of LaVey's sword presses up
beneath his chin.

LAVEY (O.S.)

Speak quickly, boy. Why are you following
us?

KAYLAN

The road is free. I - I can go where I wish,
can't I?

LAVEY

Not behind me.
(he prods him with the
sword)
What do you want?

KAYLAN

I told you. I want to come with you to
Severac.

LAVEY

And I told you -- you're no good to me if
you can't hold a sword. Just another mouth
to feed.

KAYLAN

I've been practicing.

LAVEY

(amused)
Practicing?

He lowers his sword, and takes a step back.

LAVEY (CONT.)

Show me.

Kaylan takes a deep breath. He rises and draws his sword. Takes
up a position against LaVey.

LaVey studies him for a moment--

--and lightning fast, WHOOSH-KLANG!

LaVey strikes a tremendous blow to Kaylan's sword. But this
time the young Knight has managed to hold onto it with one hand.
Kaylan's eyes widen with relief.

He looks to LaVey.

LAVEY (CONT.)

Better.

We CUT TO:

INT. BARN - NIGHTTIME

Kaylan is seated around the campfire. He's looking around excitedly, studying his new companions with eager anticipation.

A story is in mid-progress:

LAVEY

--it was a priest who came to Felson's village. He spoke to the men.

FELSON

(annoyed)

This story again? Must you always tell the same one?

LAVEY

Because it amuses me.

(back to the group)

So the priest comes to Felson's village and tells them, whoever goes to battle will receive blessings from the church. Full remission from sin. It was the bit about sin that perked his interest.

FELSON

Not true!

LAVEY

(ignoring him)

So Felson goes up to the priest afterwards and asks him, what sins would be forgiven?

PANNING around the campfire, we observe the men listening with rapt interest. All but Felson, who is turning gradually red with humiliation.

LAVEY (CONT.)

Would they forgive adultery? The priest thought and said, yes. For a two-year pledge. What about theft? The Priest thought again. Yes, for a three-year pledge. So Felson thinks it over. He thinks long and hard and says...

(imitating Felson)

Better sign me up for four!

The men burst into LAUGHTER at Felson's expense. LAUGHING and SLAPPING him heartily on the back. A wineskin is passed around the circle. Sancierre takes a long pull and hands it to Kaylan.

He takes it, uncertainly.

SANCIERRE

Go on, boy. It won't kill you.

He takes a long pull on it, and GASPS when he's done.

More LAUGHTER.

KAYLAN

(gaining courage)

I want to know about the crusades! I want to know all about it, the battles and the...the...

His sentence trails off as he notices LaVey's face darkening. Felson's too. The mood is suddenly spoiled.

DEBELZAQ

(a deft change of subject)

The witch will awaken soon. We should be on our guard.

LAVEY

We'll take turns watching her. Two men at a time. Keep the fires burning through the night.

DEBELZAQ

I'll go first.

KAYLAN

(jumping up, eager)

And I!

SANCIERRE

Perhaps it would be better if--

KAYLAN

No, I am ready! Let her come.

He snatches up his sword and before anyone can protest--

--he's already headed off in the direction of the wagon. The others share a bemused look.

FELSON

Ha! Impetuous youth!

HAGAMAN

With any luck he'll take the watch all the way to Severac.

The men LAUGH gruffly.

EXT. THE WAGON/CAGE - NIGHTTIME

DeBelzaq and Kaylan are seated by the cage. Kaylan has his sword out, laid across his knees. Ready at a moment's notice.

CLOSE - THE WITCH

Asleep. In the pale moonlight her features appear to have softened. The change is subtle, her skin appears smoother. Her hair, less tangled.

Kaylan studies her, intrigued.

KAYLAN

I have never seen a witch before.

DEBELZAQ

When she awakens, do not speak to her.
Nothing good will come of it. She will only try to deceive you.

He moves closer, to study her...

...and suddenly the witch awakens with a sputtering GASP!

Kaylan recoils.

Her eyes flicker open and she stares at Kaylan. She blinks, confused (note: during this sequence, the witch's eyes are no longer milky-white, they will appear normal).

PEASANT GIRL

(groggily)

Where -- where am I?

She looks around, and takes in her surroundings. The cage. The forest. DeBelzaq and Kaylan. And gradually her confusion mounts into panic.

PEASANT GIRL (CONT.)

What am I doing here? Who are you?

Kaylan reacts, puzzled. Shoots a look back to DeBelzaq.

DEBELZAQ

Do not respond. She is only trying to trick you.

PEASANT GIRL

I - I have no memory of this place. How did I get here?

She lunges for the bars and notices suddenly -- as if for the first time -- the chains around her wrist. She stares at them, stupefied.

PEASANT GIRL (CONT.)

(with growing terror)

What is this? Why am I chained?

Kaylan glances at DeBelzaq again. He's trying to ignore the girl, but it's getting progressively harder.

DEBELZAQ

She knows.

(to the Peasant Girl)

I know what you're trying. It won't work.

PEASANT GIRL

(she begins tugging at the chains)

Please--! Let me loose! I beg you, set me free.

KAYLAN

We cannot. You've been accused of witchcraft.

PEASANT GIRL

(stunned)

Wicthcraft!? By whom?

DEBELZAQ

By the cardinal of Avignon! As you well know.

PEASANT GIRL

That's impossible, I am his servant.
Surely there is some mistake.

DEBELZAQ

There is no mistake.

PEASANT GIRL

But I am innocent! I swear before God!

DEBELZAQ

(sharply)

Do not add blasphemy to your sins, woman!
Be silent!

(to Kaylan)

And you, sit down! Take this.

Kaylan is chastened. He sits.

DeBelzaq rummages in his robes and produces a scrap of cotton which he thrusts at the young Knight.

DEBELZAQ

Put this in your ears. If you are so easily roused to pity, you're no use to me. Go on, take it.

Kaylan reluctantly takes the cotton and begins packing his ears with it. DeBelzaq regards the witch.

DEBELZAQ

You see? Your efforts are in vain.

CUT TO:

THE CAMPFIRE - LATER

The flames have dimmed. The men are gathered around the fire in various prone positions. Asleep.

THE MOON

White and bloated. Like something dead.

DEBELZAQ

Asleep. His head, on his arms.

KAYLAN

Not far behind. His chin, drooping. Lower and lower. Each time, he JERKS awake at the last instant. This happens several times, until finally...

He forces himself awake and looks around. Blinking.

KAYLAN'S P.O.V. (THE WITCH)

She is dangling by her neck, her eyes fixed on Kaylan. It takes a moment for this to register, for Kaylan to realize what she is doing. She is hanging herself by her own shackle chain.

He lunges awake, galvanized with sudden panic.

KAYLAN

No, don't--!

DeBelzaq lurches awake. Kaylan is rushing at the cage to try to stop her. The priest only has time for a single, startled CRY:

DEBELZAQ

Kaylan--!

But it's too late because the witch suddenly lunges through the bars to grab Kaylan's wrist. The young Knight lets out a startled CRY as he is yanked against the cage.

DeBelzaq rushes to his aid. He tries to pull Kaylan away. The witch RIPS something off DeBelzaq's neck. It's a silver cross. We catch a glimpse of silver flashing through the air, and then-- THUNK! She plunges the crucifix downwards, stabbing DeBelzaq's hand to the floor of the wagon.

The priest lets loose a CRY of AGONY.

CUT TO - THE CAMPFIRE

LaVey lurches up. He bolts for his sword.

EXT. WAGON/CAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The Knights come running up and take in the situation:

The witch, gone.

The cage, open.

Kaylan is sprawled by the tree, unconscious, and DeBelzaq is kneeling by the wagon, his hand still pinned firmly to the wood.

DEBELZAQ
(screaming, in pain)
LaVey! LaVey, help me!

The men rush to the bars, and struggle to free him. LaVey YANKS the cross out and the priest collapses to the ground, GASPING and SPUTTERING.

LAVEY
What happened?

DEBELZAQ
The witch--! She is loose! She took the keys!
(frantic)
Dear God! LaVey, we must catch her!

LAVEY
Which way did she go?

But DeBelzaq is in too much pain to think clearly. He shakes his head uncertainly. LaVey glances at Sancierre, who is helping Kaylan to his feet. The young Knight looks dazed, but unharmed.

FELSON (O.S.)
LaVey.

Felson is kneeling by a trampled patch of grass at the edge of the glade.

FELSON (CONT.)
(pointing)
She went that way.

LAVEY
Hagaman, what lies to the east?

HAGAMAN

The river Loire. Less than a league.

LAVEY

Is there a bridge?

Hagaman thinks for a moment.

HAGAMAN

No, but there is a ferry. At Givaudon.

DEBELZAQ

Mother of God! LaVey, if she reaches the ferry--!!

LAVEY

She won't! Felson, saddle the horses. Bring torches and rope. DeBelzaq, you and Hagaman follow with the wagon. Meet us at the crossing.

As the men rush to obey, we SMASH TO:

CLOSE SHOT - HOOVES

TRAMPLING the earth, kicking up a spray of MUD as the horses THUNDER past...

WIDER. THE RIVERBANK.

LaVey, Felson, Sancierre and Kaylan. Galloping hard. Neck and neck, through the gloom. Each man is carrying a torch.

FELSON

(shouting to be heard)

Where is she!? We should have passed her already!

LAVEY

He's right! Nothing moves this quickly on foot.

SANCIERRE

No, she's still ahead. There, look!

The men have reached a hillock overlooking the village of GIVAUDON, and Sancierre throws out his hand, to point.

The men follow his arm and GLIMPSE a dark form fleeing into one of the narrow alleys at the town's edge. The witch.

EXT. TOWN OF GIVAUDON - NIGHTTIME

Dark and grimy. Heaps of wet garbage. Rats swarm between them.

Then, in a BURST of LIGHTNING...we SEE they aren't piles of garbage at all. They're piles of corpses. Putrefying bodies, stacked high along either side of the road.

Suddenly the stillness is shattered by an animal-like HOWL. A dark form races from the mouth of the alley. It's the witch. She streaks past... her cloak flapping behind her as she vanishes into the darkness of the next alley.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - NIGHTTIME

Amid a CLATTER of HOOVES, the Knights arrive.

LAVEY

Which way to the ferry?

FELSON

(he sees it)

There! Look!

They race on, down a narrow cobbled street.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHTTIME

The center of the devastation. A DEATH CART makes its way slowly through the square. The CART WORKERS, masked men, who collect the bodies, are piling corpses into the back of the cart.

Suddenly the HORSES rear back in terror. The CART WORKERS look up, puzzled. They raise their torches and peer around... wondering what could have spooked the horses?

The answer erupts out of the alley beside them -- the witch, streaking past, causing the horses to REAR and WHINNY in panic...

...and then she's gone again.

MOMENTS LATER - THE KNIGHTS ARRIVE

LaVey takes one look at the cart workers' terrified expressions.

LAVEY

Which way did she go!?

One of them manages to raise an arm, to point.

EXT. THE FERRY CROSSING - NIGHTTIME

No sign of the witch. The Knights leap down and grab their weapons.

LAVEY (CONT.)

Felson, where is she?

Felson examines the ground for any sign. He looks up, puzzled.

FELSON

I do not think she came this way.

LaVey glances both directions, perplexed. He gestures at the ferry, which is still tied to the dock.

LAVEY

She was ahead of us. Why didn't she cross?

SANCIERRE

Perhaps it's true what they say...?
Witches fear the water.

LAVEY

(skeptical)

Perhaps.

Then he catches a WHIFF of something. He winces and turns. Behind the Ferryman's shack is a steep embankment, over which a dim glow is visible.

FELSON

What is it?

LaVey doesn't respond. He starts silently up the embankment...

EXT. BURIAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

...the Knights follow and crest the ridge together.

Below them, a macabre spectacle... a sprawling burial ground, stretching as far as the eye can see. This is where the cart workers have been bringing the dead.

They have been dumping the corpses into deep trenches and pits, which they've set afire with oil. The men stand silent, for a moment. Staring. It's beyond anything they expected.

LAVEY

(in awe)

What is this place?

SANCIERRE

They bring the dead here, to burn them.

FELSON

I never imagined such a sight.

LAVEY

Shhh!

LaVey suddenly jerks up an arm, signaling for silence.

We HEAR a noise echoing in the night -- the distant sound of LAUGHTER. Coming from somewhere below. LaVey starts down the hillside, into the trench. The others follow.

INT. TRENCH - NIGHTTIME

The men arrive at the bottom and find themselves up to their knees in briny, dark water.

LAVEY (CONT.)

(to Kaylan, pointing)

You and Sancierre go that way. If you find the witch, call out.

The men exchange silent glances and divide up.

Felson follows after LaVey.

CUT TO:

KAYLAN AND SANCIERRE

Slogging through the muck. The walls of the trench curve ahead of them, so that they can't see beyond a few yards. Kaylan nervously follows Sancierre. As he moves, his eyes dart back and forth.

He stops suddenly and glances down at the water.

KAYLAN
(a frightened whisper)
Something touched me!

SANCIERRE
What?

KAYLAN
(pointing)
In the water!

Suddenly a shape bobs up next to him. A bloated, pale form...the dead body of a man. Kaylan tenses. Looks around in shock, as he realizes...there are dead bodies all around.

SANCIERRE
(he comes back, grips his
arm)
Don't look at them, boy. Look ahead.

Kaylan nods quickly. Fighting a wave of panic.

ELSEWHERE -- LAVEY & FELSON

The men move silently through another part of the trench maze. As they approach a bend, both men suddenly FREEZE.

A strange CRUNCHING noise up ahead. It's coming from around the bend.

Felson's eyes widen. LaVey inches forward.

OPPOSITE ANGLE - FELSON/LAVEY

As they STEP into view and SEE a massive pile of corpses. The sound is coming from the far side. They circle around it, moving closer... The CRUNCHING, louder...

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

As he clears the mound and sees it's just a RABID DOG. It's pulling at one of the corpses, SNAPPING hungrily at an arm.

BACK TO - LAVEY

He eases the grip on his sword.

FELSON
(he kicks at it)
Get away, mutt!

The dog scampers off, GROWLING.

BACK TO - KAYLAN & SANCIERRE

They have reached a narrow corridor in the trench that has been filled partly in with bodies. Sancierre gestures, silently indicating that they should ascend.

Kaylan stares at the bodies, chilled.

Sancierre starts up. Then notices, Kaylan is frozen behind him. He thrusts out his hand -- to help.

Kaylan shakes his head. No.

SANCIERRE
(nodding slowly)
Fine. Stay here then. I'll check the rest
of the trench and return.

He continues, alone.

Kaylan lingers a moment, in agony. Struggling with indecision. He sets his jaw firmly and begins climbing.

FOLLOW KAYLAN

As he scampers rapidly over the pile of corpses and down the other side.

He arrives to find... No sign of Sancierre. The trench before him is empty. He SPINS around, eyes searching the dark.

KAYLAN
(a whisper)
Sancierre!

Nothing.

He is alone.

KAYLAN (CONT.)
Sancierre!? Where are you?

Still nothing.

Kaylan begins to panic. He clenches his sword. Wheels around. Eyes darting from shadow to shadow.

Suddenly, a dark form appears behind him. Rapidly approaching. At the last instant, Kaylan senses it behind him, whirls around with his sword--

--and plunges it straight into Sancierre's stomach. There's moment of utter horror as it sinks in.

Kaylan and Sancierre stare a beat. Both of them equally stunned at what has happened. The moment is broken as the old Knight suddenly winces and slumps to the ground.

SANCIERRE

(a wet rattle)

...what have...you done?

Kaylan catches him as he falls.

KAYLAN

Oh, God...! No, no, no!

(calling out)

LaVey! Felson! HELP ME!

SMASH TO:

LAVEY AND FELSON

They stop in their tracks. Spin back.

LAVEY

Kaylan!

They race back through the trench.

KAYLAN AND SANCIERRE

The old knight is fading fast. Kaylan is rocking him, in panic, screaming for help.

KAYLAN

LAVEY! WHERE ARE YOU!?

LaVey and Felson burst into view.

KAYLAN (CONT.)

It was an accident! He came up behind me--
Dear, God! He came up behind me!

Felson and LaVey rush to help. But it's useless. By the time they arrive...Sancierre is frothing blood. He shudders once...and his hands fall into the water with a limp SPLASH.

Kaylan stares in sheer horror.

FELSON

(gently)
He's dead, boy.

Kaylan, in denial. Rocking him fiercely.

FELSON (CONT.)

Let him go. He's gone.

A moment of silence. And then there's a horrifying SOUND. A gleeful GIGGLING that emerges from the shadows. The witch.

LaVey and Felson WHEEL around. Swords flashing out.

The witch leaps at Felson. They SPLASH into the water, limbs flailing. She is on top of him, holding his head under. He struggles for air.

LaVey rushes at her. She releases Felson momentarily to lash out with her hands -- CRACK! LaVey is sent flying into the mud. His torch sputters out.

Darkness... Confusion...

The SOUND of Felson CHOKING.

LaVey gropes in the water, searching for his crossbow. He finds it! Raises it. But Kaylan is now standing in his line of fire.

LAVEY

Kaylan!

No response. He's frozen with terror.

LAVEY (CONT.)

(louder)
Kaylan!!

Kaylan snaps out of it. He dives aside, JUST AS -- THWAK!!!
 LaVey fires. The bolt buries itself in the Witch's forearm.
 She lets out an anguished HOWL and drops Felson.

He tumbles free, CHOKING and GASPING.

WITCH

Ahhh! Bastards...piglets!

LAVEY

Felson! The rope, quickly!

They rush in and struggle to subdue her. She fights them furiously, thrashing and flailing. One bony arm whips out slashes at Felson, raking the side of his arm.

FELSON

Look out! Hold her!

LaVey grabs the arm and restrains it, Felson has the other while Kaylan struggles to hold her feet. Finally they manage to pin her down.

LAVEY

Quickly! Tie her legs!

FELSON

I have it, I have it!

CLOSE ON - THE WITCH

Lying in the mud, writhing and convulsing. Her eyes are rolled back, and her mouth is foaming. The only sound coming from her is a low animal-like PANTING.

Finally, there is time again to consider Sancierre.

LaVey looks back -- sees the old knight lying face down in the water.

LAVEY

Felson. Help me.

He starts forward.

KAYLAN

Leave him! I will do it.

The young knight walks over and begins pulling Sancierre out of the water...

...as we FADE slowly TO:

A GRAVEMOUND - AT DAWN

A makeshift cross. Two pieces of wood tied together, thrust into the earth. A lonely sight.

WIDER.

And now we SEE LaVey, DeBelzaq and the others. They are standing over the grave.

DEBELZAQ

(to LaVey)

Would you say some words of prayer?

CLOSE ON - LAVEY

Reluctantly bowing his head. But after a moment he looks up again.

LAVEY

I - I don't know what to say.

DEBELZAQ

A prayer, that he may find peace.

LaVey closes his eyes. Tries once more.

LAVEY

(faltering, with
difficulty)

Lord. We pray for Sancierre. Grant him
... peace in Heaven, for he was your
servant and he fought and died in your
name.

(beat)

Let his sacrifice not be in vain.

LaVey opens his eyes again. He casts a final glance at the grave, and then turns away. DeBelzaq watches him go.

CUT TO:

THE WAGON-CAGE - LATER

Bumping along, again.

The Knights have resumed their journey. But this time we NOTICE a marked change in the atmosphere. DeBelzaq, LaVey, Kaylan, Felson, Hagaman... the men are all strangely silent. Each engulfed in his own dark thoughts.

INSIDE THE CAGE - THE WITCH

She is slumped in the corner, in shadow. SUDDENLY -- a BOLT of LIGHTNING slashes across the sky and we catch a flash glimpse of her. She is staring at LaVey, watching him intently.

DISSOLVE TO:

KAYLAN - ON HIS HORSE

Riding alone, in grim silence.

DEBELZAQ (O.S.)

It was not your fault.

Kaylan looks slowly to his left, sees that DeBelzaq is riding beside him. But he doesn't respond. Just turns to face front again.

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

You may take comfort in this fact, boy. You did not kill him. It was the witch. The demon. There is no one else to blame.

KAYLAN

He welcomed me. Gave me wine. And he died by my sword!

DEBELZAQ

It could have as easily been me. Or Felson. Or LaVey.

KAYLAN

But it wasn't! It was me! I was the one who did it!

He SPURS his horse forward, away from DeBelzaq.

The Priest starts after him:

DEBELZAQ
Kaylan!

FELSON (O.S.)
Let him be.

DeBelzaq turns to look at Felson, riding behind a few paces.

FELSON (CONT.)
There is nothing you can say.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPFIRE - LATER

LaVey is seated before the fire. He's sharpening his sword on a whetting stone. Kriiiiitch... Kriiiiitch...

He stops in mid-stroke and looks back at the SOUND of FOOTSTEPS.
It's Felson.

LAVEY
How are the men?

FELSON
Resting. All but Kaylan. He has not spoken a word. He just stares at the fire.

Felson lingers for a moment, obviously has something more to say.

FELSON (CONT.)
LaVey, there is something that worries me.
Sancierre, the manner in which he died...
(beat)
...it was just as the witch foretold.

LaVey glances up, and we SEE a flash of hesitation.

LAVEY
And you think she had something to do with it? That she cursed him?

FELSON
I find it...troubling.

LAVEY

It was a foolish mistake. Nothing more,
Felson.

FELSON

But what if...
(beat)
...what if the rest of us...?

LAVEY

(rising, tiredly)
Felson, you know this kind of talk bothers
me.

FELSON

She cursed us all. She said we would all
die.

LAVEY

What she said is of no concern to me!
Felson, I have ridden into battle with you,
against twenty thousand men! And here you
speak of one girl, as if she were the devil
himself.
(he rises, looks back)
You should know better than to give in to
such idle fear.

LaVey stalks off, leaving Felson to stare after him...

EXT. CAMPFIRE - LATER

LaVey is seated by the campfire, staring into the flames.

FLASH TO - A MEMORY HIT

An inferno... Raging... TEMPLAR KNIGHTS are dragging PEOPLE
up the steps, and tossing them into the Temple. Men, women and
children... Everyone is flung in together.

A volley of flaming arrows STREAK through the sky and impact
the temple. In moments, the temple is ablaze. SCREAMS emerge...
VOICES raised in terror...then in agony...

JERK BACK - TO PRESENT

LaVey pulls his tattered CLOAK in tight. Chilled.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - DAWN

Hagaman is the first to awaken. He glances around and sees that the other men are all still asleep. He looks down the hill, to where the horses are tethered and waiting.

He considers the situation. And reaches abruptly for his satchel of relics. He starts across the camp. Steps carefully over Kaylan... Past DeBelzaq... who is SNORING loudly... and lastly Felson.

Just as he is stepping over Felson, the Knight stirs. Hagaman freezes. Waits a moment, as Felson shifts in his sleep... And then continues.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE HILL - MOMENTS LATER

Hagaman quickly unties one of the horses. He takes the reins, starts to lead it away on foot. But suddenly he JERKS to a stop, at a SOUND from behind.

LAVEY (O.S.)

There's a strange sight. An ass, leading a horse.

Hagaman rotates slowly to see LaVey. He is sitting on a rock, fingering the tip of his sword.

Hagaman starts stammering, trying to find something to say.

LAVEY (CONT.)

Don't. Just tie the horse, and take your place with the rest.

HAGAMAN

But I-- I am cursed! She has foretold my death. My only hope is to get as far from her as I can. I beg you, let me go.

LAVEY

Of course. After you take us to Severac.

HAGAMAN

You have your maps! You don't need me.

LaVey, staring back at him with all the compassion of a rock.

HAGAMAN (CONT.)

(he gives in with a SIGH)

You're a difficult man, LaVey.

He hands LaVey the reins with a tired SIGH and starts up the hillside again.

CUT TO:

WIDE SHOT - THE COUNTRYSIDE - AFTERNOON

The knights continue. A tiny speck on the horizon, like a ship at sea.

CLOSER - THE WAGON

Looking out from within the bars of the cage, as we BUMP and RATTLE along. The witch is watching LaVey.

WITCH

Tell me, LaVey. Before you buried the old fool, did you offer him the last rites?

(with sarcastic emphasis)

Did you pray for his soul?

LaVey regards her. And though he doesn't respond, we SENSE that she has touched a nerve.

WITCH (CONT.)

What -- can it be? You actually did? You prayed to that whoring bastard? Oh, how priceless...

(with obvious mockery)

Christophori sancti speciem tuetur...

She raises her arms in imitation of the Holy crucifixion.

WITCH (CONT.)

How precious. The faithless crusader, kneeling like an altar boy.

LAVEY

Do not presume to know me, woman!

WITCH

Ahhh... Finally, I have hit a nerve.

She leans forward, excitedly.

WITCH (CONT.)

But you needn't get angry. I mean it as a compliment. Faith is for the weak, for the simple minded.

(gesturing with her head)
 Like that idiot priest. But you... You
 are different. You cannot follow the rest,
 like cattle. You require proof. Evidence.

LAVEY

And what evidence do you offer that you're
 a servant of the devil?

WITCH

(softly CHUCKLING)
 Oh, LaVey... I never said I was a servant
 of the devil.

LAVEY

No? Then what are you?

CLOSE ON - THE WITCH

Her face suddenly contorts with rage. For a moment she is
 unrecognizable. Even her VOICE, when she speaks, has taken on
 a frightening new aspect. It is masculine and deep,
 reverberating with power.

WITCH

I AM THE DEVIL!

LaVey jerks to look at her, startled. But just as quickly her
 features remold again into those of the witch.

LAVEY

If you are what you claim...summon forth
 a bolt of lightning. Strike me down.
 Shatter those bars. Surely it is within
 your power.

WITCH

Assuredly.

LAVEY

Then do it.

WITCH

But what joy would I have in such a simple
 thing?

LAVEY

Last time you tried to escape, I recall it
 was not so simple.

WITCH

Is that what you think? That I truly wanted to escape?

LAVEY

Didn't you?

WITCH

I wanted only to show you what I have done, the beauty of my labors. So you would know the extent of my dominion over the earth.

LAVEY

...your dominion?

LaVey is about to respond, when:

DEBELZAQ (O.S.)

LaVey!

DeBelzaq is standing up in his seat, pointing excitedly into the distance. LaVey follows his arm and sees...

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

Just barely visible in the dusk, the treeline of a distant forest. It looms up before them, stark and foreboding.

The knights take in the sight.

KAYLAN

(with a touch of awe)
Wormwood Forest.

EXT. FOREST PATH - NIGHT

The road has dwindled to a narrow dirt path barely wide enough for the wagon. A heavy mist drifts between the trees in long tendrils... suffusing everything in a ghostly pallor.

Even the SOUND of the horse's HOOVES are muffled.

DeBelzaq is looking upwards with awe, at the dark firs looming above.

DEBELZAQ

They say there are places in the deepest parts of the forest where the sunlight doesn't penetrate at all, where everything is shrouded forever in gloom.

HAGAMAN

They say worse things than that.

DeBelzaq looks at him anxiously.

DEBELZAQ

What else do they say?

HAGAMAN

Talk of spirits. Talk of creatures who
consume the flesh of man.

Off DeBelzaq's worried expression...

...we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST PATH - LATER

The fog has grown thicker. Visibility has been reduced to a few paltry yards and the wagon has slowed to a crawl.

HAGAMAN

Damn this fog! It's like a veil before my eyes.

DEBELZAQ

How far to the other side?

HAGAMAN

How should I know? I can't see my own hand in front of my face.

FARTHER DOWN THE PATH

LaVey stops his horse and turns back to issue a command.

LAVEY

Hagaman, unpack those torches. I want them lit.

EXT. FOREST PATH - LATER

Gradually, out of the gloom, several torches appear... The Knights, riding in single file. They are picking their way along the trail. Felson is squinting into the fog, trying to keep sight of LaVey, who is riding ahead.

FELSON

This fog is unnatural. It only grows thicker.

HAGMAN

Perhaps we should stop. Wait for it to pass.

DEBELZAQ

And if it doesn't?

LaVey reluctantly REINS his horse to a stop. He glances back at the wagon, just a dim shape in the fog.

LAVEY

Unhitch the wagon. We'll camp here.

EXT. THE WAGON/CAGE - LATER

DeBelzaq is seated before the cage. He is clutching a torch with both hands as he stares at the witch.

CLOSE ON - THE WITCH

Glaring back at him. She begins to WHISPER... nothing we can understand... just demented gibberish. She starts rocking back and forth on her heels and her eyelids begin to flicker rapidly, as if in a trance.

BACK TO - DEBELZAQ

Growing uneasy.

DEBELZAQ

Stop it.

But the witch doesn't stop. She is beginning to convulse now, as her incantations grow LOUDER and more urgent.

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

(jumping up)

I said stop it!

She begins thrashing on the floor, convulsing violently as she writhes and HISSES.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHTTIME

Hagaman kneels over a pile of twigs. He is trying unsuccessfully to light a fire.

HAGAMAN

Damn this infernal place! The wood won't even burn.

LAVEY

It's this confounded fog.

HAGAMAN

(hollow)

It's the witch. She has bedeviled us all.

Suddenly there is a startled CRY -- the men all jerk around at the sound, and we SEE DeBelzaq stumbling up the path.

DEBELZAQ

(breathless)

LaVey! The witch -- something is happening!

EXT. WAGON/CAGE - NIGHTTIME

The men come rushing up, carrying torches, swords, bows, etc...

The witch is hunched in the back of the cage on all fours, like an animal. She is BREATHING heavily, frothing at the mouth...

FELSON

What's wrong with her?

DEBELZAQ

I - I don't know. I have never seen her do this.

LaVey takes a step closer to the cage, and raises his torch for a better view.

CLOSE ON - THE WITCH

Slinking away from the light, with a GROWL. She arches her neck, craning her face upwards, and slowly her mouth begins to open...wider and wider... CRACKING impossibly wide, until we HEAR an inhuman noise issue forth... the BAYING of a wolf!

The knights react.

KAYLAN

What the devil is she doing?

EXT. DEEP IN THE FOREST - NIGHT

The unholy SOUND echoes through the dark. A terrible noise, filled with hatred...resonating with evil....

EXT. WAGON/CAGE - NIGHT

Felson moves to the edge of the path and stares out into the forest.

HAGAMAN

Felson?

He doesn't answer. He is too busy staring into the darkness. Staring at something beyond the trees... something he can't quite see, but somehow seems to sense.

Hagaman moves closer to LaVey.

HAGAMAN (CONT.)

What's wrong with him? What does he see?

LAVEY

I don't know. Felson?

The horses are starting to STAMP their hooves nervously. LaVey's eyes also go to the treeline, as he realizes what's happening. He spins back.

LAVEY (CONT.)

The witch -- silence her! Quick!

Kaylan rushes at the cage with his torch. He thrusts it through the bars! She recoils, SNAPPING at the torch like a dog.

JUST THEN -- from the depths of the forest comes a chilling response. The lone CRY of a WOLF.

The Knights wheel around.

KAYLAN

She has summoned wolves!

HAGAMAN

What do we do!?

LAVEY

Quick -- to arms!

Hagaman rushes to the side of the wagon. He begins to unpack swords, crossbows, etc...

In the distance the HOWLING is multiplying. Growing louder, nearer...as the men struggle to load their bows.

LAVEY (CONT.)

Hagaman!

(he tosses him a sword)

Make yourself useful!

HAGAMAN

But I -- I don't know how!?

LAVEY

Learn. Quickly.

Hagaman holds the sword awkwardly.

The HOWLING is nearer now, almost on top of them. The men form a defensive circle around the wagon. Crossbows snap up, as they take aim.

LAVEY (CONT.)

Find the one that leads the pack. Kill him,
and the rest will flee.

HAGAMAN

(terrified)

How many do you think there are?

LAVEY

A dozen. Maybe more.

HAGAMAN

Sweet Jesus...

Suddenly the forest goes deathly still. The HOWLING stops.

CLOSE ON - LAVEY

Looking up. His finger tenses on the trigger.

LAVEY

Steady.

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

Panning the treeline. Gradually several dark hulking forms begin to emerge from the fog. Bristling, monstrous shapes...moving between the trees...

LAVEY (CONT.)

Steady.

HAGAMAN

Panic rising, the sword trembling in his hands.

FELSON

Tightening his grip on his sword.

THE WOLVES

Advance into the torchlight, and we SEE them clearly now... They stand four feet tall, their coats matted with filth...lips drawn back in a SNARL, the red torchlight reflecting in their dull eyes.

LAVEY (CONT.)

(a whisper)

Felson, take the one on the left. Kaylan,
the right.

The men adjust slightly, each picking his target. But as they prepare to fire, a chilling NOISE comes from directly behind them... more WOLVES.

Hagaman's eyes widen with terror, as he realizes they have been flanked. He turns and sees another four wolves directly behind them.

HAGAMAN

Mary Mother of Jesus--!

THE WITCH

A thin smile spreads over her lips.

She SNARLS aloud - and the wolves charge!

Ka-CHAK! CHAK! CHAK! A volley of arrows, as the men let loose with their crossbows. Several great furry shapes CRASH heavily to the ground.

TRACKING WITH - LAVEY

As he moves, like a blur. In one fell motion, tosses aside the bow and brings his sword up in a low WHISTLING arc. He strikes a wolf in mid-leap, cleaving it in half, killing the beast instantly.

FELSON AND KAYLAN

They are swinging their torches and swords like madmen, stabbing and thrusting, struggling to fend off three wolves at once.

THE WOLVES

All around. HOWLING and SNARLING, beginning to encircle the men.

LAVEY

Keep them back! Don't let them cut us off!

HAGAMAN

There are too many! LaVey! Felson! We must flee!

Hagaman is desperately outnumbered, facing four wolves at once. He stabs at a leaping wolf...impales another through the chest. The wolf CRASHES to the ground, the blade caught in its ribcage.

FELSON (O.S.)

(screaming)

Hagaman!! Look out--!!

Suddenly, WHAM!!! Hagaman is knocked flat by a hurtling mass of gray! He CRASHES to the ground, buried under a mountain of fur and SNAPPING teeth.

He struggles to keep the creature from his throat. The wolf lets out a low GURGLE as its jaws clamp around his arm.

And suddenly...Ka-WHAM! The creature is decapitated from behind. Its head tumbles loose, the jaws spilling open.

REVEAL - FELSON

Blood spattered, HACKING and CHOPPING with every ounce of strength. He has just saved Hagaman's life, and spins away without a word to face the next attack.

Hagaman struggles to his feet, his arm streaming with fresh blood. He retrieves his sword, and his face suddenly blanches as he sees... A second GROUP of WOLVES tearing through the thicket, hurtling directly at them.

LAVEY

(panting, breathless)

...here they come!

The men barely have time to brace for the attack. In an instant the wolves are among them -- famished, desperate, leaping at their throats!

The knights respond, with equal desperation. Rending and slicing, their tunics are torn and ripped, their swords are dripping in blood.

LaVey finishes off one wolf with a sharp thrust. He wheels around searching for his next attacker, and mercifully...there are none left. They have won.

LaVey stands there, breathless, his chest heaving as he looks around and takes in the carnage. There must be a dozen carcasses.

He looks to Felson, who is also near exhaustion. Felson shakes the blood off one arm, where a wolf bit him.

LAVEY (CONT.)
(facing the witch)
If you want us dead you will have to try
harder than that.

CLOSE - THE WITCH

A cryptic smile forms on her lips.

She begins to CHANT...in low, half-muttered, nonsensical words...coming more and more quickly as she utters them...slowly gaining in volume...

LaVey watches her warily.

With a sinking feeling, he turns to face the forest again. The men gather their courage and turn, bracing for a renewed onslaught. But nothing comes.

As the witch's CHANTING grows louder, LaVey feels a strange twitching at his feet and slowly looks down.

ANGLE - AT HIS FEET

A horrible gut-wrenching revelation. LaVey sees that one of the slain wolves is beginning to jerk and spasm.

It's impossible -- the creature's head is cloven wide open and we can see into its skull, and yet it is beginning to move again!

DEBELZAQ
(horrified, drawing a
cross in the air)
Pater Noster!

The others stare with dread...as all around a similar phenomenon begins to take place. The carcasses of the slain wolves are

coming to life again, struggling upwards with a grotesque flopping/jerking motion.

CLOSE - HAGAMAN

A dawning horror comes over him as he remembers the witch's riddle.

HAGAMAN
...no living creature...

His eyes dart up, and lock with LaVey's, who has realized the same thing but still can't quite believe it.

HAGAMAN (CONT.)
They won't get me, LaVey! I won't die like that. Not the way she said.

LAVEY
No one's going to die -- not if you do as I say! Now get to the horses! Quick!

The men take off at a dash.

All around them the wolves continue to regenerate. Bent bones reform, shattered limbs grow strong again...the air is filled with the sound of GROWLING...

WIDE SHOT - THE CAMPSITE

The witch's LAUGHTER echoes in the fog, as the Knights race to mount up. DeBelzaq leaps into the wagon and frantically WHIPS the REINS! The horses bolt forward in terror.

HAGAMAN, KAYLAN, FELSON AND LAVEY

They SPUR their horses after the wagon.

HAGAMAN
Heeyah!

They race off down the path, as more and more wolves begin to regenerate around them and give chase.

EXT. FOREST PATH - NIGHTTIME

The horses THUNDER past, racing blindly through the mist. All concern for direction is lost now, as they flee for their lives.

THE WOLVES

Tearing through a thicket...fully regenerated and moving with horrible speed!

LaVey risks a glance over his shoulder. Nothing but fog. Then -- a glimpse! A dark, sleek shape. And another. They are coming in great leaps and bounds!

LaVey SPURS his mount faster!

The wagon careens wildly around a bend as DeBelzaq WHIPS the REINS madly. Behind them, the pack splits suddenly in two as the wolves begin to overtake the Knights.

FELSON

(shouting to be heard)

LaVey! We cannot outrun them! They are too quick!

LAVEY

We must hold them back, allow the wagon to escape!

LaVey draws his sword while he gallops.

Felson and Hagaman, in the rear, do the same. They glance up on either side and see the sleek forms of the wolves running with them, barely glimpsed between the dark trees.

Suddenly -- a great, gray mass explodes from the ridge overlooking the path! Directly at Hagaman! He is SLAMMED backwards from his saddle. The horse tumbles to the ground, head first, 400 lbs. of steel and flesh crashing to the earth.

LaVey jerks the reins, wheeling around for Hagaman.

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

Hagaman is on his back, struggling to reach his crossbow. The wolf approaches, SNARLING. It prepares to leap, JUST AS - Hagaman fires! THWAK!

The creature is driven backwards by the impact, pinned to the side of a tree. But it isn't dead. It just hangs there, writhing grotesquely, pinned to the wood.

Hagaman tears his eyes from the sight and rushes to where his horse is sprawled. He tries to pull it up, and then sees... The animal is dead. It's neck broken by the fall.

BACK TO - HAGAMAN

He spins to face LaVey. But his view is suddenly cut off by several MASSIVE FORMS that leap into the path between them.

The Wolves have cut him off. He stares past them, to LaVey. They share a momentary glance...an unspoken communication.

HAGAMAN
(shouting)
Go!!

LAVEY - FROZEN ON HIS HORSE

Torn with indecision. Part of him knows Hagaman is already doomed.

FELSON (O.S.)
LaVey! You cannot save him!

HAGAMAN
Damn you -- go!

LaVey gives a grudging nod. He raises an arm to salute Hagaman, a final gesture of respect, and then he SPURS his horse away.

We HOLD on HAGAMAN.

Wheeling around to face the wolves. He discards the crossbow and draws his sword. His other hand- trembling slightly- reaches into his pocket to draw out something. We recognize it as the relic he tried to sell Sancierre, the small stone.

He grips it tightly.

ANGLE ABOVE - LOOKING DOWN

As the wolves emerge from the fog all around, loping towards him. Skulking shapes that close from all sides, circling in. A circle of death, tightening... as Hagaman circles with them.

HAGAMAN (CONT.)
Come on, you devils.
(he grips his sword)
COME ON!!!

And they come all at once! Leaping from several sides as Hagaman whirls and spins...CHOPPING with desperate strength as the wolves tear into him, ripping away his tunic, thrashing his legs!

But Hagaman doesn't fall. He continues to struggle with every ounce, even as he is gradually pulled down, and we slowly PAN AWAY, knowing he is doomed...

EXT. FOREST PATH - LATER

The Knights continue their frantic dash, racing wildly through the fog and trees. Gradually the SOUNDS of the WOLVES diminish in the distance.

CUT TO - THE FOG

Beginning to break. Through the canopy of trees we GLIMPSE the first weak rays of dawn.

EXT. A FOREST CLEARING - AFTERNOON

The wagon slows to a stop. DeBelzaq leans over the reins, exhausted. The horses are spent, frothing at the mouth, their flanks steaming in the cold air.

The knights look back, as a chilling NOISE echoes through the forest. The lone HOWL of a solitary wolf.

They react, each affected in their own way.

KAYLAN

He - he gave his life for us. That we might live.

FELSON

He died nobly.

KAYLAN

(exploding with grief)
He wasn't noble, and he didn't choose this fate! He didn't even want to come.

Kaylan jumps down from his horse and runs off.

DEBELZAQ

Kaylan! Come back!

LAVEY

Let him go!

DeBelzaq and Felson turn to LaVey, startled.

LAVEY (CONT.)

What does it matter?

A ROCKY LEDGE - OVERLOOKING THE FOREST - TWILIGHT

LaVey is seated on a fallen tree, staring out over a panoramic view of the forest. Below him, a thin mist hangs over the canopy of trees.

DEBELZAQ (O.S.)

LaVey.

The priest comes up behind him.

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

We cannot give up now.

LAVEY

What would you have me do? Go on, until we are all dead?

DEBELZAQ

If that is our fate. Yes. But I do not believe God would abandon us.

LAVEY

You don't know Him as I do.

An awkward silence.

DEBELZAQ

Do you know the story of Job?

LAVEY

I'm not in the mood for a sermon.

DEBELZAQ

He was a righteous man. The devil tormented him with many miseries, so that he would turn against God in his anger.

(quoting from the bible)

What have I done, cried Job unto the Lord, that you set your heart against me?

LaVey -- reacts. Affected, despite himself.

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

In the end, Job found his faith again. God returned all the Devil took away from him.

LAVEY

A nice tale. For children.

DEBELZAQ

Tell me, LaVey. If you are truly as cynical
as you pretend, why did you agree to come?

LaVey shrugs, offhand.

LAVEY

You priests ask too many questions.

DEBELZAQ

And you answer too few. If you did not
believe, why did you come?

LAVEY

(louder)

I don't know!

DEBELZAQ

(matching him)

There must have been a reason!

LAVEY

(exploding)

BECAUSE I WANTED TO BELIEVE! I wanted to
know what I was fighting for! I wanted to
know that there was a God in Heaven!

DeBelzaq stares at him, taken aback. LaVey is also taken aback,
surprised by his own outburst.

DEBELZAQ

You wanted...proof?

LaVey nods slowly.

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

But don't you see? If there is a Devil...
then there must be a God.

LaVey looks up, with a haunted expression.

CUT TO:

THE WAGON/CAGE - LATER

The witch is HUMMING a tune, a strange children's melody that actually might have been beautiful once. But not now. In the wet, raspy VOICE of the witch, it is somehow perverse... grotesque.

She stops HUMMING as she SENSES someone behind her.

WITCH

Does my voice please you, LaVey? Is it not beautiful?

LaVey doesn't respond. He circles the cage, studying her.

WITCH (CONT.)

No? Shall I sing something else? A requiem perhaps, for your pathetic companion?

(singing, with mockery)

...the wolves ate him up, oh yes, they did!
Ate him whole! Ate him whole!

LAVEY

I know your purpose.

WITCH

Do you? Pray tell.

She picks idly at one finger, and slowly PULLS out one of her own finger nails. Glances at disinterestedly.

LAVEY

You want me to despair. You want me to think God has forsaken me.

WITCH

(with a touch of surprise)

Forsaken--? Oh, LaVey. You disappoint me. Surely you see the truth by now. You were forsaken long ago.

LAVEY

You lie!

WITCH

No, LaVey. I have no need of lies. Look around. If He has not abandoned you, where is He?

LaVey considers this, searching for some response. But he has none.

WITCH (CONT.)

If your precious God truly exists, how can He abide so much suffering? How can He stand idly by and watch while your friends are killed?

LAVEY

I do not question His will.

At this, the witch BURSTS into LAUGHTER. Mocking, uproarious.

WITCH

Now you are lying! But there is still time. You will see more of my miracles, LaVey. I will make you...
 (low, with menace)
 ...a true believer.

LaVey turns and starts off.

EXT. FOREST EDGE - LATER

The Knights emerge from the treeline. LaVey is leading the way, like Dante guiding his companions from hell. They appear torn and bloody, face masked with grime.

CLOSER - FELSON

Swaying slightly in his saddle. His face, wracked with strain.

FELSON

(weakly)

LaVey.

LaVey glances back. Sees Felson bringing his horse to a stop.

LAVEY

What is it?

FELSON

I feel...

(he climbs down)
...weak.

As his feet leave the stirrups, his knees buckle.

LAVEY
Felson!

LaVey is beside him in an instant.

FELSON
My arms...grow tired. Heavy.

LAVEY (CONT.)
DeBelzaq, help me!

The priest rushes to where they are kneeling and the men struggle with the clasps on Felson's armor. Finally they have them free and the breast plat tumbles aside to reveal...a deep gash on Felson's arm.

A wolf bite. But the wound is unlike any we've ever seen. A deep gangrenous gash seeping with fluid. LaVey pales at the sight of it.

FELSON
One of the wolves...must have...bit me.

LAVEY
(under his breath, to
DeBelzaq)
Is it -- is it the plague?

The priest just shakes his head slowly. No.

LAVEY (CONT.)
What then?!

DeBelzaq turns slowly to look back at--

--the witch. She is seated in her cage, smiling coyly. Like a willful child.

LAVEY (CONT.)
(rising)
What have you done to him!?

WITCH

His death will be a lingering one. And I
fear...most painful.

In an instant -- LaVey's sword is out. He takes two rapid steps
towards the cage before DeBelzaq leaps in his path.

DEBELZAQ

No, LaVey! The witch must not be slain!

LAVEY

Stand aside, priest!

DEBELZAQ

Only one thing can save Felson! Listen to
me, LaVey. Only one thing!

LAVEY

(dangerous, low)

What?

DEBELZAQ

We must deliver the witch! Once the monks
have destroyed her, the curse will be
lifted. That is the only thing that will
save him now.

WITCH

He will be dead by dawn. A rotting corpse.

LaVey, galvanized by sudden fury! He shoves DeBelzaq aside.
Kaylan leaps in to stop him as well, but LaVey's strength is
fueled by anger. He pushes him aside too.

WITCH (CONT.)

(excitedly)

Do it! Do it, you stinking coward! Strike
me down!

LaVey draws back his sword--

--and abruptly stops at a CRY from Felson.

FELSON

LaVey!

He looks back, torn. Felson has struggled up again, and is
clutching his saddle.

FELSON (CONT.)

Don't do it! Listen...to the priest.

LaVey sinks inward, slowly lowers his sword.

WITCH

(she SPITS through the
bars)

Coward! Stinking filth! All the trappings
of men, and not a spine among you.

LaVey brings one arm up to slowly wipe away the spit.

LAVEY

If Felson dies... I'll kill you myself.

WITCH

Forget not your own fate, LaVey. You will
burn. Your stinking carcass will burn in
a fire of knowledge.

LAVEY

(he comes right up to the
bars)

Perhaps. But you will burn with me.

DISSOLVE TO:

WIDE SHOT - MOUNTAINS - AFTERNOON

The snow-peaked tips of the Alps.

The knights stare up at it. It is a magnificent view, those
craggy peaks rising up into the gloom.

DEBELZAQ

(softly, to himself)
Severac.

EXT. THE FOOTHILLS, RISING - AFTERNOON

Moving past snow covered pastures. A strong, cold wind blowing
against them, they pull their tattered cloaks in tight.

EXT. A ROCKY PASS - LATER

The frozen pastures give way to rock, and the elm trees to firs
as they continue higher into the mountains.

FELSON AND LAVEY

They are riding together, behind the wagon. Felson's condition has worsened. He can barely keep his eyes open now.

LaVey looks to him. Longs to say something.

LAVEY

Does it hurt?

FELSON

It's all right.

He starts to slide in his saddle. LaVey whips out a hand to steady him.

FELSON (CONT.)

--all right, I said!

LAVEY

I can tie you to the saddle. If it would help--

FELSON

You can stop blubbering over me like a damn mid-wife!

LaVey, taken aback.

Felson shoots him a look. Both men stare a beat, and Felson suddenly starts to grin. It's infectious. LaVey grins back

LAVEY

No man has ever said that to me.

FELSON

(grinning)

The mighty LaVey. Mid-wife to Felson.

LAVEY

If you weren't injured--

FELSON

Even like this, I'd thrash your hide.

But the gallows humor is suddenly interrupted by a shooting pain that courses through Felson. He winces, then quickly tries to cover the reaction.

LaVey notices, but says nothing.

KAYLAN AND DEBELZAQ

They round a curve in the mountain pass, and a bitter GALE buffets them. Kaylan glances at DeBelzaq.

KAYLAN

DeBelzaq, I - I have a confession to make.

DeBelzaq looks at him.

KAYLAN (CONT.)

(with compulsive honesty)

I have lied to you.

DEBELZAQ

To me?

KAYLAN

To all of you.

DEBELZAQ

In what way?

KAYLAN

When I said I was a knight. I have never been given the oath.

DeBelzaq stares at him for a moment. Puzzled.

DEBELZAQ

But the crest upon your armor--?

KAYLAN

It isn't mine. It barely even fits. I took it from the body of a dead knight I passed on the way to Avignon.

He sinks his head, guiltily.

KAYLAN (CONT.)

I never meant to deceive anyone. I only wanted to prove myself. I thought, in time it wouldn't matter. That they might accept me as a comrade.

DEBELZAQ

Why do you tell me this?

KAYLAN
(with a shrug)
You are a priest... if I should die, I would
not want such a sin to hang above me.

DeBelzaq nods slowly, an odd smile playing on his lips.

DEBELZAQ
You are a brave lad.
(he draws a cross over him)
I forgive your sins.

Kaylan looks up, surprised.

KAYLAN
You won't tell the others?

DEBELZAQ
(with a shrug)
A matter of confession? Certainly not.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DUSK

A steep, rocky path winds into the mountains. To one side, we SEE a steep cliff wall rising upwards, and to the other, a precipice that plunges from view.

The wagon emerges from a bend in the road. DeBelzaq YANKS the reins and brings it to a halt. The knights react in wonder. They crane their necks upward.

HIGH ABOVE - THE ABBEY SEVERAC.

A monastery, hewn out of the mountainside. It looms out of the mist like something ancient and ominous. The men share a collective moment of silence.

The end of their journey is in sight.

EXT. THE ABBEY - NIGHT

Massive stone walls extend upwards fifty feet. Thick as time. Built to withstand a siege. LaVey peers up to the tops, which are only dimly visible in the dark.

He cups his hands to his mouth and SHOUTS:

LAVEY
Hello!

No response, except the lonely SOUND of his ECHO. He tries again, a little louder.

LAVEY (CONT.)

Is anyone there?

Still nothing. He turns to look back at the others, puzzled.

KAYLAN

Where are they?

DEBELZAQ

I - I don't know. At this hour they should be at vespers.

LaVey swings down from his horse and approaches the entrance. Two massive, oaken doors reinforced with steel, set deeply into the wall.

He takes hold of one of the brass knockers and BANGS it loudly. The SOUND echoes faintly within. The men wait for a response. But there is none.

LAVEY

(signaling the men)

DeBelzaq. Kaylan.

They swing down from their horses.

Together with LaVey, they brace, and begin to push at the doors. And to their surprise -- they swing open silently... slowly... like the vault of a massive crypt.

REVEAL - THE ABBEY COURTYARD

Bodies lie heaped in piles. Stacked against the walls, everywhere that there is room.

In the center of the courtyard are several death carts, filled with putrescent corpses, the dead monks, brimming over the top...arms and limbs spilling onto the flagstones.

BACK TO - THE KNIGHTS

Reacting, in horror. Expressions of defeat, despair.

KAYLAN

It - it cannot be!

DeBelzaq pushes past them, to take in the sight.

DEBELZAQ

Oh, God...no.

LAVEY

(calling out)

Is anyone here?

Silence.

KAYLAN

(a cold edge comes into his
voice)

They are dead. They are all dead.

DEBELZAQ

God would not abandon us, not when we have
come so far. When we have suffered so much!

WITCH

Did you truly think He was watching over
you? Did you actually believe He would
save you?

From the men - no response. None of them has the strength.

WITCH (CONT.)

(bursting into LAUGHTER)

Oh, what exquisite delight! How precious
your pain!

(low, pointed)

Tell me, LaVey, now that your pitiful quest
has come to an end... what has it brought
you?

LaVey ignores her. He starts off into the abbey.

FELSON

Where are you going?

LAVEY

Someone must look. To be sure.

Felson's arm darts out to stop him. A gesture full of warning.

FELSON

It isn't safe. We should leave.

LAVEY

And go where?

Felson falters. Where indeed? He releases LaVey's arm.

INT. MONASTERY, DORMITORY - NIGHT

LaVey moves past rows of beds, each one holding the still form of a monk. They are covered with sheets. A few, apparently the last to die, are uncovered.

LaVey passes by them, in silence, checking each corpse for a sign of life. But there is none.

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

The men wait, in silence.

KAYLAN

What will become of us? What do we do?

DEBELZAQ

Do? Nothing. The monks...the book, they were our last hope.

INT. CHURCH RECTORY - NIGHT

The doors are pushed open. LaVey stands in the entrance, staring in. He walks down the aisle and stops before the altar.

And then he does something odd; he kneels down and draws his sword. Is he praying?

LAVEY

(faltering, with
difficulty)

Lord, if you can hear me... If you still hold us in Your heart, I pray to you. We have shed blood in Your name. We have broken steel and we have bled. Men have died. Good men.

(looking up slowly)

And now we have come to this place.

LAVEY'S P.O.V.

The cross, hanging over the altar. A simple cross. Built of wood.

LAVEY (CONT.)
I pray to you...hear me.

CLOSE - HIS HAND

Tightening on the hilt of his sword.

LAVEY (CONT.)
...do not forsake us.

LaVey stares up, his eyes filled with intensity. Filled with a desperate hope. And then miraculously...there is a response, a low whisper that echoes through the church!

VOICE (O.S.)
Heeeeeere...

LaVey surges to his feet, startled.

It comes again. Weaker.

VOICE (CONT.)
Oooooovvver...heeeeeerre...

And suddenly LaVey realizes it's not coming from the cross at all, but from behind the altar! He rushes forward.

THE ALTAR

As he rounds the dais a hand thrusts into frame, clutching at him. A skeletal arm, bony, emaciated.

A MONK is sprawled out behind the altar. It's a miracle he's lived this long...his face is covered with lesions and boils, and some of the boils have already burst. He must be hanging on by a thread.

BACK TO - LAVEY

Galvanized with sudden hope.

LAVEY
(shouting, frantic)
DeBelzaq!

EXT. RECTORY - NIGHT

The knights snatch up their swords and rush after LaVey. All but Felson, who is too weak to move.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The monk is convulsing, struggling frantically to draw LaVey's attention to the altar.

MONK
...you must...look...

LAVEY
(calling, louder)
DeBelzaq! Hurry!

MONK
...no time... you must...

LAVEY
Please! Wait!

MONK
(feverish)
No! You must see!

LaVey turns to look, but the monk is obviously delirious. He's gesturing at the wooden cross that hangs over the altar.

The monk pulls LaVey close and GASPS out, with sudden intensity:

MONK (CONT.)
...YOU... MUST SEE!!!

Behind LaVey, the doors of the church BURST open as the men rush in. But they're too late. The Monk's hands fall away... he is dead.

DEBELZAQ
(muttering a prayer)
In nomine patri...espíritu sancti.

LaVey rises and walks away.

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)
What did he say?

LAVEY

Nothing. He was delirious.

CLOSE ON - LAVEY

He stares at the cross. A thought occurring to him suddenly.

FELSON

What is it?

LAVEY

I don't know.

LaVey searches for something. Something he can't be quite certain of... and then he notices something; behind the altar, there's a small nook in the wall. And inside this rests a thick LEATHER-BOUND BOOK.

The monk wasn't pointing at the cross at all. He was pointing to the book.

LaVey reaches up and pulls it out. He opens it.

INSIDE -- we SEE pages and pages of Latin.

LAVEY

This is Latin. I cannot read this.

DEBELZAQ

No. But I can.

INT. RECTORY - LATER

DeBelzaq is standing over a table, studying the book. Kaylan is holding a torch for him to read by, and we can hear DeBelzaq occasionally muttering some passage aloud as he flips the pages.

IN THE FAR CORNER

Felson is slumped in a chair. Clutching his sword weakly.

He looks terrible.

FELSON

LaVey?

LAVEY

I am here.

FELSON

You know me...know I'm not afraid to die.

LAVEY

(nodding)

I know.

FELSON

And yet... to die like this. A slow,
festering death. Such a death does not
become a warrior.

LAVEY

Do not speak of death.

FELSON

No? We have never minced words, you and
I.

LAVEY

You and I will grow old, Felson. We will
sit by the fire, in the hall of my fathers,
and drink tankards of ale together. Till
the end of our days.

Felson smiles wanly.

FELSON

(lost in the image)

I would like that.

BACK TO - DEBELZAQ

He stops suddenly and squints at a particular passage.

Kaylan's head is drooping with fatigue. But he flinches
suddenly as DeBelzaq SLAMS a fist down on the table.

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

I have it!

(looking up, intense)

The Roman Ritual of Exorcism.

He turns to face Kaylan.

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

I will need you to go across to the chapel.
See if you can find some holy water and a
cross. Silver, understand? Not wood. And
bring me a cassock.

Kaylan nods and runs to comply.

LaVey looks to the priest, awaiting instructions.

LAVEY

And me?

DEBELZAQ

Prepare the pyre. We begin at once.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHTTIME

Kaylan rushes into the chapel. He scans the space, frantically
searching -- and spots a basin of water in the far side.

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

LaVey is furiously building up a pile of wood around the wagon.

INSIDE - THE CAGE

The witch is oblivious. She seems to be in a trance of some
kind. Her head is lolling to one side, and we can see her lips
moving silently.

INT. CLOISTER - NIGHT

DeBelzaq, dressing in vestments.

He pulls the cassock on, with deliberate care. Before him on
the table lies a silver cross, a flask of Holy Water, and the
book of rituals.

His hands wander over them, gently, almost reverently.

WIDE SHOT - THE ABBEY - NIGHT

Still in the night. Like the calm before a storm, the only SOUND
is the wind WHISTLING off the ramparts.

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

DeBelzaq emerges from the rectory, garbed in priestly robes.
He appears different than we have seen him before. He carries
himself with purpose, with strength.

The book is held in both hands, as he crosses to Kaylan and LaVey.

DEBELZAQ

(he pauses, searching for
something to say)

The ritual, the words -- they must be
spoken to their conclusion before the pyre
may be lit. This is not something to be
trifled with. No matter what tricks or
deceits the demon may use to lead us
astray...the rite must be finished before
any harm comes to her.

They both nod their understanding.

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

Good. Let us begin.

LAVEY

Not yet.

DeBelzaq looks at him. Sees his attention fixed on the rectory.

He turns.

And we SEE the doors to the rectory have been pushed open. Felson
stands weakly in the entrance, supporting himself with his
sword.

FELSON

You weren't going to begin without me?

He approaches.

Together the four men proceed across the courtyard.

EXT. THE WAGON/CAGE - NIGHTTIME

The witch is sitting with her back to the men. She cocks her
head to one side, as if she could sense their presence, and we
can HEAR her BREATHING...a wet, raspy sibilant SOUND...

Debelzaq steps to the cage. He takes out the vial of holy water
and opens it.

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

(sprinkling the water)

Ecce crucem domine, fúgite partes
advérsae.

The witch jerks around to face them.

And there is a sharp intake of breath-- a reaction of horror from the men-- as they see her face. It is covered in gruesome welts, massive lacerations that crisscross the skin to form a macabre pattern on the flesh.

WITCH

You will fail, pig!

The witch tips back her head and begins to LAUGH gleefully.

DeBelzaq ignores her.

He replaces the holy water and draws the sign of a cross in the air. The gesture is directed at the witch, and she SPITS at him as he does so.

WITCH (CONT.)

Your souls are mine!

DEBELZAQ

Be silent!

The witch falls instantly still.

DeBelzaq opens the book and begins to read.

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

Adjúro te, serpens antíque, per júdicem
vivórum et mortuórum, per factórem tuum,
per factórem mundi, per eum, qui habet
potestátem mitténdi te in gehénnam...

CLOSE ON - THE WITCH

Beginning to writhe, as if by some unseen force. She is starting to jerk and twitch in her shackles, the chains SHAKING and RATTLING as she flails her arms.

DeBelzaq repeats the invocation, louder this time:

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

By all the Saints, by the courage of Christ
and the blood of the martyrs, I command
you; tell me your name!

WITCH

I'm the devil, you stinking maggot!

DEBELZAQ
Your name! Speak it!

WITCH
(a BOOMING VOICE)
I AM LUCIFER!

She thrusts her arms upwards, in the shackles, like some malevolent angel, summoning all her demonic power...

THE WAGON

It begins to rock violently on its wheels.

THE KNIGHTS

They draw their swords and move back several paces.

DEBELZAQ

He stares for a moment, transfixed. Terrified.

LAVEY
DeBelzaq!

The priest recovers and continues reading.

DEBELZAQ
Exi ergo, transgressor! Exi sedúctor,
plene omni dolo et fallácia, virtútis
inimici, innocéntium persecutor!

THE WITCH

With a tortured RENDING NOISE the shackles on her wrists begin to TWIST open. The Knights stare in awe, watching as the steel slowly bends and GROANS apart.

The shackles fall to the floor with a heavy -- THUNK!

LAVEY
Read faster!

DEBELZAQ
(faster)
Da locum, diríssime! Da locum,
implíssime, da locum Christo! In quo nihil
invenísto de opéribus tuis...

The witch, free of her shackles, now points at the bars of the cage. And the knights witness a horrifying spectacle...the bars of the cage begin to rot away before their very eyes!

Like some horrifying time-lapse effect, they begin to rapidly age several hundred years in a few moments. They grow gray, then black... moss and fungus crawl up them, rotting the wood out from within... spreading up the bars and consuming the roof...

CLOSE ON - LAVEY

He yanks his sword up.

LAVEY

Felson! Kaylan! On guard!

The men SNAP up their blades in response and move forward, taking up positions between the witch and the priest. Protecting DeBelzaq.

DEBELZAQ

(continuing again, with
more urgency)

Recède ergo nunc adjurátos in nomine
ejus! Ab hómine, quem ipse plasmávit!
Durum est tibi velle resistere...

THE WAGON/CAGE

The ceiling of the wagon sags inwards, rotting away, as great pieces of wood begin to collapse.

SUDDENLY -- the roof erupts outwards in a massive blast that sends the men reeling. LaVey looks up from where he has fallen. Through the dust and smoke, and raining debris...a chilling sight:

The witch is loose!

With a horrendous leap, she catapults into the air, across the courtyard. She lands at the rear wall of the abbey, before a doorway. With a gesture of her hand it CRACKS violently apart.

She vanishes within.

THE KNIGHTS

Stagger up again, dazed. DeBelzaq is already running after the witch, waving the others forward.

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

Quickly -- no time to lose! We must follow her!

LAVEY

(COUGHING through the dust)

Wait! DeBelzaq!

LaVey helps Felson up, and they run after her.

INT. SCRIPTORIUM - NIGHTTIME

They enter a large room filled with tables and chairs. LaVey staggers past them, supporting Felson who is doubled over in pain.

They run past them, wheeling around, trying to pinpoint the direction the witch has fled. But there are doors on all sides. Which one did she take!?

Then DeBelzaq hears a sound. The witch, CHANTING.

He spins. Fixes the location -- a doorway in the far side of the chamber.

DEBELZAQ

There!

KAYLAN

She is in the catacombs!

The men run after her.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHTTIME

They stumble down circular staircase. The CHANTING grows louder as they descend.

From below, a dim glow is emanating, giving the impression of a descent into the belly of some monstrous furnace. The men arrive at the bottom and step through a low archway into...

THE CATACOMBS

A warren of tunnels and doors, and stairs, that crisscross and branch into a dozen different chambers. LaVey stares for a moment, stunned.

And AT THAT MOMENT -- the CHANTING abruptly stops.

The men look at each other, lost. Without the CHANTING it's impossible to tell which direction to proceed.

DEBELZAQ

Which way!?

LaVey flings open one of the doors, peers down a darkened stretch of tunnel. Kaylan and DeBelzaq do the same.

They too, find nothing.

CLOSE ON - KAYLAN

As he is about to close his door, he falters. Turns back. Did he just hear something? A faint flutter of noise?

KAYLAN

(an anxious whisper)

LaVey...!

LaVey looks back.

KAYLAN

I thought I heard something.

They remain frozen, listening. But all we HEAR is the faint DRIPPING of water from some distant cavern.

Kaylan decides to take a closer look. He steps away from the group, thrusting his torch into the dark...

KAYLAN'S P.O.V.

...and the flickering light illuminates a nightmarish image... The tunnel is packed with bodies...dark, robed forms...the plague-ridden corpses of RESURRECTED MONKS.

Kaylan lets out a strangled CRY of terror.

He staggers back and tries to SLAM the door shut. But he's not quick enough. A pair of gangrenous limbs dart out. LaVey and Felson throw their weight into the door, adding their strength to Kaylan's. But another pair of arms darts out...and another...and gradually the door is forced open.

KAYLAN
 (through gritted teeth)
 I can't hold it! I CAN'T--!

It begins to SPLINTER!

LAVEY
 Leave it! RUN!

LaVey grabs Kaylan, hauls him away from the door. It SLAMS open and a crush of bodies pours out.

WIDE SHOT - PASSAGEWAY

The Knights race down an adjoining corridor, pursued by the MONKS. Felson stumbles along, dragged by LaVey.

DEBELZAQ
 This way! Quickly!

INT. CATACOMBS - NIGHTTIME

LaVey reaches the end of the corridor and bursts into the next chamber. DeBelzaq is ahead of him, already trying to open the far door.

DEBELZAQ
 Hurry!

Kaylan, seconds behind. But before the young knight can reach the door -- a dark figure CRASHES through an adjoining entry, directly into his path.

Kaylan hacks it down with a brutal blow. But another figure CRASHES in. And another.

He's cut off.

LAVEY
 Kaylan!

KAYLAN
 (SWINGING madly)
 Go! Do it!

He struggles towards the door and PUSHES it slowly closed between them.

LAVEY

Kaylaaaaaan---!

The sound is cut off as the door SLAMS shut. Kaylan wheels -- gripping his sword. A grim determination in his eyes.

Down the passage...the SOUND of SHUFFLING in the dark...

KAYLAN

(grim, unafraid)

I've had enough running.

And then they're on him! But the one advantage -- the passage is narrow and they can only reach him two at a time. Kaylan begins swinging like a madman... blood spattering the walls, severing limbs with every blow...and this is no longer the boy who could barely hold a sword...this is a man.

KAYLAN (CONT.)

(screaming, possessed)

Come on! COME ON!!!

And the sword BLURS --

--we SMASH TO:

LAVEY, FELSON AND DEBELZAQ

Weaving through a massive chamber filled with shelves, from floor to ceiling. Each shelf lined with books, and scrolls, and ancient manuscripts.

As they duck and weave...Felson begins to fade from consciousness. He looks up, trying to get a bearing and all he sees is an impressionistic BLUR of walls and books, and more walls...

FELSON

(delirious)

Where...are we?

DEBELZAQ

The Benedictine Library!

They stumble through a final entrance and finally--

--they're inside

THE AEDIFICIUM

The innermost sanctum. A circular room set deep in the bowels of the monastery.

Here the most precious volumes are kept. But the stacks have been pushed over, one against the other, to form a massive pile of rubble in the center of the room. And seated laconically upon this pile, like the queen of the damned, is the witch.

WITCH

I am disappointed, LaVey! I was prepared to offer you far more. Power beyond power. The riches of all the earth.

DEBELZAQ

Your gifts are nothing to me!

WITCH

(with sudden venom)

Not you, stinking priest! Do you know how many of your kind I've already tempted!?

The witch gestures impatiently at DeBelzaq and suddenly, with a HOWL of ANGUISH his leg CRACKS open! Splintering grotesquely, as if it were a piece of wood.

DeBelzaq collapses, SCREAMING.

WITCH (CONT.)

(to LaVey, apologetic)

A vulgar display...forgive me. But I grow tired of his prattling.

(then, serious again)

I meant you, LaVey. You would have been a rare prize; the protector of God who turns against his Master.

Lavey reacts. With trembling uncertainty.

LAVEY

I have not--

DEBELZAQ

(in agony)

Do not respond, LaVey!

WITCH

LIAR!!! You cannot deceive me! You despise Him. You have given everything up for Him, and what does He give you in return?

The witch takes a step forward.

She gesture with her hand and Felson and DeBelzaq are both sent flying by a flick of her wrist. They SLAM up against the walls at the far side of the chamber and collapse to the floor, bleeding from their nose and ears.

Lavey finds himself suddenly alone.

The witch lashes out with one arm and grips him by the throat. Hoists him into the air, choking.

His torch falls to the ground.

WITCH

Nothing! If you had given yourself to me, LaVey, I would have put an end to your torment. You would have seen perfection...I am perfection.

CLOSE ON - THE TORCH

Lying where it fell. The flames catch against a piece of parchment and begin to spread along the mound of books.

LAVEY

(CHOKING, desperate)

You...you cannot tempt me!

WITCH

Oh, LaVey. Is that what you think? That I wish to tempt you? To sway you from His...

(with sarcastic emphasis)

...divine grace? Why do humans always place so much value upon their souls. Really, they're quite worthless. Such amusements ceased to interest me eons ago.

LaVey struggles for breath.

LAVEY

Then...why...me? What's so special...about me!?

The witch smiles slowly.

WITCH

Nothing. Nothing at all.

(beat)

Haven't you guessed it, yet?

She suddenly releases LaVey to fall CHOKING and SPUTTERING to the floor. She crosses the chamber to where DeBelzaq lies dazed, bleeding.

She bends down and casually YANK something from the priest's grip. The Roman Ritual.

BACK TO - LAVEY

His eyes widening, with an awful gut-wrenching realization.

LAVEY

The book...? You wanted the book?

WITCH

(she eyes it, hungrily)

Why else would I endure your miserable company for so long?

LAVEY

...and we delivered it to you.

WITCH

I should thank you, LaVey. You have no idea how this accursed scrap of paper has tormented me over the centuries. How I've longed for this moment...

(she glances at the book,
almost reverently)

I destroyed a copy at Alexandria nearly five hundred years ago. And another at Jerusalem. There were five originally. And here is the last. Here it ends.

As if on cue, the stacks suddenly BURST into flames! The fire spreads upwards...flames licking up all around.

CUT TO:

FELSON

In the stacks, behind the witch. He summons some unknown reserve of strength...willing himself slowly upwards, pushing to his feet again.

He moves towards the witch, his sword arm limp at his side...the point dragging across the ground...

LAVEY

Staggers up. Wipes the blood from his nose.

LAVEY

(low)

I will not allow it.

WITCH

(she moves towards him,
slowly)

You will not allow it? What will you do,
LaVey? Everything you have done...
everything that has happened...has been by
my design. My will.

She YANKS him up again. LaVey makes a feeble gesture to swing his sword but she SLAPS it aside, as it were a toy. The sword clatters to the ground.

WITCH (O.S.)

You could have joined me, LaVey. But at
every turn you defy me! Now you will pay
the price...as your pitiful companions
have paid...

CLOSE ON - THE WITCH

Hoisting LaVey up by the throat.

The witch smiles.

And suddenly Felson's sword comes slicing up through her belly. LaVey falls free, CHOKING and GASPING, as we realize... Felson has impaled her from behind!

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)
 (horrified)
 Noooo! I did not finish the rite!

LaVey falls free, CHOCKING and GASPING.

LAVEY
 Felson! What have you done!?

Felson YANKS the sword out again, and then he does something strange. He tosses the sword to LaVey.

FELSON
 Take it!

LaVey catches it, and then suddenly shields his eyes as Felson is struck by what appears to be an arc of blue fire. It leaps out of the witch at Felson, forcing him backwards, as it shoots through his body.

As they course through him, we witness a horrible transformation taking place. The witch's soul begins to possess Felson's body. He begins to convulse...his very soul in agony, as the witch's physical appearance merges with his own.

FELSON (CONT.)
 (struggling to speak)
 De-de-belzaq! Finish...the... ritual!

Then he lets out an agonized SCREAM, as his features suddenly contort. His flesh changes color, bruising and mottling, becoming instantly riddled with scars and lesions just like the witch's... Even his hair seems to grow and darken into a hideous crawling mass.

As the witch's body slumps away lifeless, Felson spins around to face LaVey -- and he has been reborn into the form of THE WARLOCK now!

CLOSE ON - LAVEY

Too stunned to even raise his sword. The Warlock approaches -- and WHAM! A vicious blow sends LaVey flying into the stacks. Flaming debris rains down.

The warlock approaches again -- WHAM! A second blow!

DEBELZAQ

He struggles to his knees again, and with trembling fingers reaches for the book. He begins to read the passages of the incantation again.

DEBELZAQ

Discéde ergo nunc! Discéde sedúctor! Tibi
erémus sedes est. Tibi habitátio serpens
est; humiliáre, et prostérnere! In
nominee Patrií--!

CLOSE - THE WARLOCK

His head WHIPS around and he drops LaVey.

WITCH

Do not utter that name in my presence, you
foul hypocrite!

He leaps across the chamber and snatches the startled priest
up by the neck. DeBelzaq drops the book, but he has read the
final passage already and now he struggles to finish the final
words, even as she strangles him.

DEBELZAQ

--qui dominátur vivórum et mortuórum: Qui
ventúrus est judicáre vivos et mórtuos, et
sæculum per ignem!

DEBELZAQ (CONT.)

(shouting, to LaVey)

It is done! LaVey - It is done! Give place,
abomination! Give way, monster! Give way!
GIVE WAY TO CHRIST!

LaVey, his senses still reeling, staggers to his feet and
reclaims his sword.

CLOSE ON - THE WARLOCK

Holding DeBelzaq up with one hand, he cocks back a fist, like
a pile-driver and SLAMS it directly through the startled
priest's chest.

It emerges bloody, grasping the man's still-beating heart.

LAVEY (O.S.)

Noooooo!

CLOSE ON - THE WARLOCK

Spinning to face LaVey, the bloody mass clutched in one hand.

But suddenly his expression darkens with confusion... then
fear. He looks down and we realize... LaVey has driven his blade
up to the hilt, into the creature's belly.

A beat.

The warlock's face contorts in agony. He collapses, mortally wounded...and those same blue arcs of electricity course wildly in the air.

They attempt to enter LaVey. He writhes in pain, staggering back, as they course through his body...but fail to possess him!

The energy goes streaking skyward, like a bolt of lightning, sucking up debris and papers, and smoke...in a massive churning funnel, a vortex that causes LaVey to stagger and clutch at a table. There is a loud ROAR of WIND, and then suddenly the VORTEX consumes itself.

It is gone. Everything is strangely calm.

CLOSE ON - LAVEY

Stunned.

He looks down and sees that the face and features of the warlock have reverted once again into Felson's. His comrade lies sprawled on the ground, the sword still driven through his belly.

LaVey kneels by his side.

Felson, slowly, painfully reaches out for LaVey's hand and grips it weakly. His lips move as he struggles to speak.

LAVEY

Felson...don't speak.

FELSON

(with desperate urgency)

Is it-- is it-- dead?

LaVey nods, slowly. He squeezes Felson's hand.

CLOSE ON - FELSON

The briefest trace of a smile.

BACK TO - LAVEY

As he struggles to say something.

LAVEY

Felson, I--

But his sentence trails off as he notices...

CLOSE ON - FELSON'S HAND

The fingers have gone slack. They fall open.

LAVEY (CONT.)
(wracked with grief)
Oh, God...Felson.

EXT. ABBEY COURTYARD - DAWN

The aftermath. Smoke and burning pitch waft across the courtyard.

A FIGURE

Appears in the entrance, stumbling, dazed. It's Kaylan. He staggers out of the smoke, COUGHING, and takes in the devastation all around.

A NOISE causes him to turn.

KAYLAN'S P.O.V.

There is a second survivor, a dark form limping slowly out of the smoke. LaVey. He's carrying Felson's body.

LAVEY (CONT.)
(simple, flat)
It is done.

Kaylan is wracked with grief.

He sinks to his knees, his head falling into his hands. LaVey slumps down beside him, lowering Felson gently to the ground.

KAYLAN
And DeBelzaq?

LaVey shakes his head solemnly.

KAYLAN (CONT.)
Then -- we are all that remain?

He nods slowly.

And then, as he tries to rise again, we notice for the first time something is wrong. He staggers a bit and clutches his side. He's bleeding.

KAYLAN (CONT.)
You're hurt!

LAVEY
It is...nothing.

KAYLAN
Let me look.

LAVEY
(quickly)
No! It's only a scratch.

He pushes Kaylan away and struggles to his feet. He starts towards the hitching post, where the horses are tied. Kaylan trails behind him, concerned.

KAYLAN
Where are you going?

LAVEY
I am done here.

KAYLAN
But you could come back to Avignon! You and I could--

LAVEY
There is nothing for me in Avignon.

LaVey struggles to pull himself into the saddle. He has quite a bit of difficulty. It's obvious the wound is worse than we thought.

LAVEY (CONT.)
(labored)
K-kaylan... bury them... Bury them well,
and place their swords in the earth to mark
the place where they lie.

Kaylan nods quickly, fighting back a wave of tears as LaVey takes the reins and turns his horse away.

KAYLAN
Please... don't go.
(a beat)
You're wounded.

LaVey looks at Kaylan. Forces a weak smile.

LAVEY

No, Kaylan. I am healed.

He starts out of the gate. Headed back into the mountains. But not the way they came... he's headed East. Farther into the mountains.

Kaylan runs after him.

KAYLAN

LaVey! Don't go! LAVEY!

But LaVey doesn't look back. He just continues into the mountains, turning down the steep path, fading slowly from view...

And all we're left with is Kaylan's VOICE, a plaintive CRY that ECHOES through the mountains.

KAYLAN (O.S.)

...laveylaveylavey!!!

And gradually that also fades. Until we're left with nothing.

The VOICE of the NARRATOR begins again:

NARRATOR (O.S.)

That was the last I ever saw of LaVey.

CUT TO:

A WIND SWEPT RIDGE - LATER

Three grave mounds, side by side. And the swords are buried in the top of each. A symbol of strength, of steel... But also of faith.

WIDER.

Now we SEE Kaylan, standing over the graves, staring down.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

But I did as he asked, and I buried Felson and DeBelzaq side by side. I buried also the body of the Peasant Girl, whose name we never even knew.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD TO AVIGNON - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Kaylan has begun the journey back. He rides alone, in silence, peering out at the landscape around him, which somehow seems less menacing now.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

As for me, I put away my sword and began
the long journey home, to Avignon.

A WINDY RIDGE

Kaylan crests a hill and comes to a stop. He catches his breath at something he sees in the distance.

KAYLAN'S P.O.V

Below him... a rolling valley and fields, and the sun has broken through the clouds. And in the distance, a lone farmer is at work, tilling the earth.

The moment is small. And yet after all that's happened, there's something extraordinary about the sight.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

So it ended. The plague passed in the
winter of that year, just as DeBelzaq had
foretold. And life returned to the land.

BACK TO - KAYLAN

Staring at the farmer, with a wan smile. Deeply affected.

And now the farmer is starting to notice, and he lowers his till and looks back at Kaylan. Wondering what this strange Knight finds so fascinating.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

I do not know what became of LaVey, whether
he lived or died that day. But I pray that
wherever he is now... He has found peace.

(softly, but with
conviction)

God willing, he has found peace at last.

With a lingering smile, Kaylan SPURS his horse onwards again.
And slowly he descends into the valley below... until we lose
sight of him.

MUSIC COMES UP...

...as we FADE to BLACK.

"SEASON OF THE WITCH"

APPENDIX

THE ROMAN RITUAL OF EXORCISM, for use as necessary:

(LATIN)

Adjuro ergo te, draco nequissime, in nómine Agni immaculáti, qui ambulávit super áspidem et basiliscum, qui conculcávit leónem et dracónem, ut discédas ab hoc hómine (fiat signum crucis in fronte), discédas ab Ecclésia Dei (fiat signum crucis super circumstantes): contremisce, et éffuge, invocáto nómini Dómini illíus, quem ínferi tremunt: cui virtútes cælórum, et Potestátes, et Dominationés subjéctæ sunt: quem Chérubim et Sérphim indeféssis vóciis laudant, dicentes: Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dóminus Deus Sábaoth. Imperat tibi Verbum caro factum. Imperat tibi natus ex Vírgine. Imperat tibi Jesus Nazarénus, qui te, cum discípulos ejus contémneres, elísum atque prostrátum exíre præcépit ab hómine: quo præsénte, cum te ab hómine separásset, nec porcórum gregem íngredi præsumébas. Recéde ergo nunc adjurátus in nómine ejus ab hómine, quem ipse plasmávit. Durum est tibi velle resistere. Durum est tibi contra stímulum calcitráre. Quia quanto tárdius exis, tanto magis tibi supplicium crescit, quia non hómines contémnis, sed illum, qui dominátur vivórum et mortuórum: Qui ventúrus est judicáre vivos et mórtuos, et sæculum per ignem.

R. Amen.

(ENGLISH)

I adjure you, profligate dragon, in the name of the spotless Lamb, who has trodden down the asp and the basilisk, and overcome the lion and the dragon, to depart from this woman, to depart from the Church of God (signing the bystanders). Tremble and flee, as we call on the name of the Lord, before whom the denizens of hell cower, to whom the heavenly Virtues and Powers and Dominations are subject, whom the Cherubim and Seraphim praise with unending cries as they sing: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. The Word made flesh commands you; the Virgin's Son commands you; Jesus of Nazareth commands you, who once, when you despised His disciples, forced you to flee in shameful defeat from a man; and when He had cast you out you did not even dare, except by His leave, to enter into a herd of swine. And now as I adjure you in His name, begone from this woman who is His creature. It is futile to resist His will. It is hard for you to kick against the goad. The longer you delay, the heavier your punishment shall be; for it is not men you are condemning, but rather Him who rules the living and the dead, who is coming to judge both the living and the dead and the world by fire.

All: Amen.