

A STORY OF WRESTLING AND PRAYER

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A painting appears on screen: *The Destruction of Jerusalem* by David Roberts

White noise and the crackle of a radio broadcast, the lament of a conquered, exiled people...

LAMENT (O.S.)
How does the city sit solitary,
that was full of people! The great
one among the nations is become a
widow; the princess of provinces is
become tributary...

Another painting, Francois Joseph Heim's *Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans*

LAMENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
She weeps sore in the night, her
tears are on her cheeks; among all
her lovers she has none to comfort
her... All her friends have dealt
treacherously with her; they are
become her enemies...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESOLATE ROAD -- DAY

THE EXILE is walking along the road. He's an older man with a knapsack over his shoulder and a small, hand-cranked radio strapped to his belt.

This where the lament comes from.

LAMENT (O.S.)
The Lord has separated them; He
will never...

The motor clicks off.

He takes the radio from his belt and is about to give it a few cranks when he turns and sees another man coming up behind him.

This is BROTHER SIN, a sinister looking fellow dressed in leather and carrying an idol under his arm. This idol is The Calf of the Law.

BROTHER SIN
(overtaking him)
Do you know who I am?

THE EXILE
You're Brother Sin.

BROTHER SIN
(placing the idol at his
feet)
Do you know what this is?

THE EXILE
The Calf of the Law.

BROTHER SIN
(looking him over)
You're an exile, aren't you?

THE EXILE
That's right.

BROTHER SIN
(taking the radio from him)
What are you listening to?

THE EXILE
A lament. For the fall of the city.

BROTHER SIN
Your city fell a long time ago.
You're in a new country now. And in
this country we don't have angels
and spirits or sorcery like where
you came from. We have The Calf of
the Law. And everyone gives
tribute.

He tosses the radio over his shoulder and places The Calf of
the Law on the ground. He kneels and runs his hand over the
surface of the idol. We see now that it's covered in writing.

BROTHER SIN (CONT'D)
It's all here. Written in my own
hand. Right and wrong, good and
evil. The path to life and the path
to death.
(extending his hand)
Come now. Give tribute with me.

A long pause.

THE EXILE
You're playing a game with me
Brother Sin.

BROTHER SIN
How so?

THE EXILE

You know that my people could never give tribute to an idol. Even here, after all this time and so far from home, idolatry is the worst sin.

BROTHER SIN

But so many of your people have become idolators already.

THE EXILE

And on the day that our city lives again, they'll be left out in the darkness.

BROTHER SIN

Your city will never live again. It was built on superstition and lies. And now it's time for you to adopt the new ways.

THE EXILE

I'd sooner die right here in this spot.

Brother Sin rises, walks a few circles around his prey.

BROTHER SIN

And you will die here. But worse than that, you'll die giving tribute to The Calf of the Law.

He takes the Exile by the throat, choking him so that his knees starts to buckle.

THE EXILE

(gasping)

No... I...

BROTHER SIN

You should have just kneeled and asked your God for forgiveness! Now the last act of your life will be a terrible sin!

The Exile weakens.

His legs give from under him and he falls into a kneeling position before the idol. He tries to push back or flop onto his side, but Brother Sin holds him in place.

The Exile gasps and chokes, his last words a desperate plea.

THE EXILE
 Forgive... M....

But he can't get the last part out. He goes limp in Brother Sin's grasp.

Dead.

BROTHER SIN
 You'll never be forgiven now.

FADE OUT.

EXT. DESOLATE ROAD -- LATER

Two men approach from the distance wearing hooded robes and burdened with knapsacks and shovels. These are TOBIT and his grown son, TOBIAS.

They come to the body of The Exile, bow their heads and pay their respects.

TOBIAS
 Did you know him?

TOBIT
 I didn't. But he must have been a good, God-fearing man if Brother Sin did this to him.

Tobias spies the radio lying on the ground. He picks it up, gives it a few cranks and switches it on.

LAMENT (O.S.)
 ...her priests sigh, her virgins
 are afflicted, and she is in
 bitterness... Her enemies have been
 made the head, those who hated her
 have been prospered...

Tobit takes the shovel from across his back and pokes at the ground alongside the road. He soon finds a spot of soft earth and starts digging.

Tobias places the radio on the ground and starts digging too.

Painting appears on screen: Andrea di Lione's *Tobit Burying the Dead*

EXT. HUMBLE HOME OF TOBIT -- DAY

A small house atop a hill in the woods. There's a washbasin set out a few yards from the front door.

Tobit's daughter HANNAH is filling it up with a bucket when she spies the two men approaching the house. They arrive and unburden themselves, kneel and wash their hands and faces in at the basin.

Tobit then stands, lovingly puts his arms around both of his children and looks up at the sky.

TOBIT

Listen my children to the words
from my mouth, and lay them as a
foundation in your heart...

TILT UP TO:

STAR FIELD

The vacuum of space.

TOBIT (V.O.)

Bless the Lord on every occasion,
and desire of him that all your
ways may be directed. For the Lord
himself gives all good things, and
according to His will, He humbles
whomever He wishes.

A twirling, spherical object appears. It bears four distinct faces at each of the four points of the compass: a man, an ox, a lion and an eagle.

This divine spacecraft will be referred to as THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES.

BACK TO:

EXT. HUMBLE HOME OF TOBIT -- DAY

Still looking at the sky, Tobit sees some birds flying past.

TOBIT

Look at the birds in the sky! They
don't plant or harvest. They don't
store grain in barns. Yet your
Father in heaven takes care of
them. Aren't you worth much more
than birds?

SPLAT!

A warm dollop of excrement hits him right across the eyes. He cries out and stumbles backwards. All three hunch over the basin and try to wash him.

But a thick film has already formed over both of the sockets.

TOBIT (CONT'D)

Take me to stream!

His children hook him under the arms and lead him back into the surrounding woods.

EXT. SACRED STREAM -- DAY

A narrow stream running through the woods.

We tilt up from the waters and see the three approach. They crouch down on the bank and again splash water onto Tobit's eyes.

TOBIT

This is a holy place. A place of miracles!

But it does no good. The white, chalky substance has hardened over his eyes.

TOBIAS

(shaking his head)

There are no miracles here.

He gets up and storms off.

EXT. WOODED PATH -- DAY

Tobias' rage mounts as he makes his way back towards the house. Then he stops, shouts up at the sky.

TOBIAS

It isn't just... IT ISN'T JUST!

BROTHER SIN

What isn't just?

Tobias spins and beholds his worst nightmare standing right there behind him.

TOBIAS

(stammering)

To punish the blameless.

BROTHER SIN
So it is. I only punish the guilty.
Do you know who I am?

TOBIAS
You're Brother Sin.

BROTHER SIN
(placing the idol on the
ground before him)
Do you know what this is?

TOBIAS
The Calf of the Law.

BROTHER SIN
There's a law-breaker out here. His
name is Tobit Maccabeus. Do you
know him?

TOBIAS
No.

BROTHER SIN
No?

TOBIAS
No. I don't know him.

BROTHER SIN
It's against the law to bury my
slain dead. Those I kill are food
for the birds and the dogs and the
wolves.

(running his hand along the
idol)
It's written right here, by my own
hand. And Tobit Maccabeus breaks
this law.

(pointing behind him)
There's a home up that way. I saw
shovels and burial shrouds. And
this.

(tosses the radio at
Tobias' feet)
Are you sure that you didn't see
anybody out this way?

TOBIAS
Nobody, Brother Sin.

BROTHER SIN
(thoughtful pause)
You're not a law-breaker, are you?

TOBIAS
No, Brother Sin.

BROTHER SIN
Then pay tribute with me, as
required by the law.

He locks eyes with Tobias, kneels down and places his hand on the side of the calf. Tobias hesitates, but self-preservation overtakes him.

TOBIAS
(laying his hand on the
idol)
Like this?

BROTHER SIN
That's good. Now say these words...
'I renounce my false God and put my
faith in The Calf of the Law.'

TOBIAS
I renounce false Gods...

BROTHER SIN
No. Not 'false gods'! Say, 'I
renounce MY FALSE GOD.'

Tobias reddens and his hand starts to quake. This is the worst thing he could ever do. But he cannot resist Brother Sin's murderous gaze.

TOBIAS
I renounce my false god, and put my
faith in the Calf of The Law.

A muffled cry of agony comes from the surrounding woods. Brother Sin leaps up to investigate. He scans the area, but can see nothing.

He goes back to where Tobias is still kneeling and picks up the Calf of the Law, hoists it over his head and shouts into the woods.

BROTHER SIN
There is no justice but my justice!
There is no law but the Calf of the
Law! And I will find you, Tobit
Maccabeus! And I'll see your dead
body rotting in the streets!

He then turns and walks back off the way that he came.

Tobit and Sarah are crouching among the trees, she with her hand over her father's mouth. They wait until Brother Sin is well out of sight before coming out into the open.

Hannah has to lead Tobit as his eyes are now totally crusted shut.

TOBIT
(enraged)
Idol worshipper! The stink of your
sin fouls the air!

HANNAH
He'd have been killed, Papa!

TOBIT
Let the boy speak for himself.
Speak, boy!

But Tobias can say nothing in his defense.

HANNAH
(taking each of them by the
hand)
Come on! It isn't safe here
anymore.

TOBIT
Not for us. But Brother Sin won't
harm idolator like him! Not now!

HANNAH
Have mercy. This is your son! As
long as he still lives, he can
redeem himself!

Long pause.

TOBIT
So be it, then. Do your penance
here, son. Right in this spot. When
you are forgiven, come and find us
in the mountains.

TOBIAS
(meekly)
I will.

HANNAH
(hugging him)
You will be forgiven, brother!

She takes her father by the hand and leads him back into the surrounding woods.

Left to his shame, Tobias picks up the radio and gives it a few cranks. He lies down on his back and stares up at the sky.

LAMENT (O.S.)
...Her filthiness is in her skirts,
she did not remember her latter
end; therefore she came down
surprisingly, she had no
comforter...

FADE OUT.

Over blackness...

LAMENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
All her people sought their bread
with sadness; they have given all
their precious things for food to
maintain life...

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODED PATH -- NIGHT

Tobias is lying on the ground where we'd left him. The radio clicks off and he gives it another crank.

LAMENT (O.S.)
From high on up he has sent fire
into my bones, and it prevails
against them; he has spread out a
net for my feet; he has turned me
back and made me desolate and
always with pain...

FADE OUT.

EXT. WOODED PATH -- DAY

Weeks have passed. Tobias is bearded and his clothes have begun to rot.

LAMENT (O.S.)
They have heard that I sigh, and
there is no comforter for me; all
my enemies have heard of my
trouble; they are glad that you
have done it...

TILT UP TO:

STAR FIELD

The Four Living Creatures slow their twirling and hover motionless in empty space. A trap door in the bottom of the hull slowly opens and an object falls out...

BACK DOWN TO:

EXT. WOODED PATH -- DAY

Tobias is hit across the face by a loaf of bread. He gobbles this up greedily. Then more clusters fall, creating a trail further into the woods.

He takes up the radio and follows it.

EXT. MOUNTAINS -- DAY

Tobias' strength increases with each piece of bread that he consumes. He follows them for miles through the mountains until he comes to an overlook where he finds a complete loaf.

From here, he looks down into a narrow valley where he can see a crude canvas BOOTH that's been constructed at the base of a small hill.

He gazes down at it until Hannah steps out, looks about herself as if she can sense his presence. She keeps scanning the area until she catches sight of him looking down at her.

She cries out with joy at the sight of him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOOTH -- DAY

Tobias sits in a washbasin as Hannah shaves his face with a straight razor. He takes another bite of the bread each time she dips the razor in the water.

HANNAH

We found this place as it is. It's like the booths from the first exile in the desert. It must have belonged to somebody that Brother Sin murdered. But Papa thinks it was built here by the hand of God just for us.

(a pause)

Why haven't you asked about him?

TOBIAS

Shame.

HANNAH

The time for that is over.

TOBIAS

Has his sight returned?

HANNAH

He'll be blind for the rest of his life. But that hasn't stopped him from burying the dead.

TOBIAS

Burying the dead? How can he do that without his eyes?

HANNAH

He uses his nose. He says that he can chase the scent for miles. He'll jump up out of bed at night and grab his shovel. He'll disappear for days at a time and come back caked in dirt and stinking of blood and decay. He's even more determined now. And reckless.

TOBIAS

He's doing God's good work.

HANNAH

How can that be? God has taken everything from him. His home, his wife. God took his sight and sent a terrible enemy against him in Brother Sin.

TOBIAS

(grimly)

He even took his only son and turned him into a idol-worshipper.

HANNAH

(placing her hand on his cheek)

We have to stop him. Promise me that you'll help! Brother Sin is still out there. And if you and I don't do something about it, Papa will lead him right to us. You'll help me, won't you?

Tobias gives no answer.

EXT. BOOTH -- NIGHT

Tobias is asleep on the ground beside a campfire. He stirs at the sound of approaching footsteps.

Then a voice.

TOBIT
(sniffing the air)
Tobias.

TOBIAS
(sitting up)
Papa...

TOBIT
Have you done your penance for that
horrible act of idolatry?

TOBIAS
I have. And I was given this.

He takes out the loaf of bread, breaks off a piece and puts it into his father's hand.

Tobit drops his gear and sits down on the opposite side of the fire. He takes a bite of the bread, turns his blind eyes towards the flame.

TOBIT
For charity delivers from death and
keeps you from entering the
darkness; and for all who practice
it charity is an excellent offering
in the presence of the Most High.
(turns towards his son)
Do you know why burial of the dead
is the greatest act of charity that
one can perform?

TOBIAS
It's a debt that can never be
repaid.

TOBIT
That's right. You toil, you make
yourself unclean for the sake of a
dead person. And you will never be
compensated for it. In this life,
anyway.

TOBIAS

Amen.

TOBIT

I've buried seven men since I've been here in the mountains. They were brothers, all seven of them. I could tell by the scent of their blood.

TOBIAS

Brother Sin killed them?

TOBIT

No. Brother Sin still hunts us. But this is something else. Something far worse.

TOBIAS

Who, then? If not Brother Sin?

Tobit clenches his jaw, turns his face towards the warmth of the fire.

TOBIT

I can smell something on those dead men... something evil ... evil beyond what men are capable of. Something otherworldly.

He drifts off as the camera zooms into the flames and the screen is overcome by a CREATURE in silhouette. It's leaning on crutches and slashes at the air with huge talons.

It emits a blood-curdling SHRIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEK!

TOBIT (CONT'D)

(leaping up and sniffing the air)

There's been another murder! On your feet, son. God's good work awaits!

Hannah steps out of the booth now.

HANNAH

He's not going with you, Papa.

TOBIT

He's done his penance. He's worthy to walk at my side again. Now pack us some food for the journey.

(sniffing the air again)

We may be gone a few days.

HANNAH

No more burying the dead! It's too dangerous!

(turning to her brother)

Tell him!

Long silence.

TOBIT

Was I wrong about you, son? Are you still a coward?

TOBIAS

You always taught me to fear no man. And it isn't man that I fear now.

TOBIT

There's nothing to fear when God is on your side.

TOBIAS

But is God on your side? Look at what he's taken from all of us. How can what you're doing be pleasing to him when he repays you with such cruelty?

Another long, simmering silence.

TOBIT

Put on sackcloth. Both of you! And shave your heads.

Undeterred, he sets off on his own. But he only makes it a short distance before his children take hold of him. A mighty struggle ensues as they drag him back to the booth.

INT. BOOTH - NIGHT

Tobias and Sarah hold their father down by his arms. He struggles mightily as we hear his desperate prayer.

TOBIT (V.O.)

You are righteous, O Lord, and all your deeds are just; all your ways are mercy and truth; you judge the world. So now deal with me as you will...

STAR FIELD

The Four Living Creatures twirl in space as Tobit's prayer continues...

TOBIT (V.O.)
 ...command my spirit to be taken
 from me, so that I may be released
 from the face of the earth and
 become dust.
 For it is better for me to die than
 to live, because I have had to
 listen to undeserved insults, and
 great is the sorrow within me...

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. BOOTH -- MORNING

Tobit lies dead on the floor. The pus that runs down from beneath the bandage across his eyes has dried to a flaky crust.

We hear the cries of his children from just outside the booth.

EXT. BOOTH -- MORNING

Both are kneeling in the dirt, weeping and throwing ashes onto their heads. Their cries fade and another sound comes up on the audio.

LAMENT (O.S.)
 How has the Lord darkened us in his
 anger! He has cast down from heaven
 onto the earth the beauty of our
 people and not remembered his
 footstool in the day of his anger!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN BLUFF -- DAY

Tobias is digging his father's grave.

LAMENT (O.S.)
 The Lord has destroyed and has not
 forgiven;
 (MORE)

LAMENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
he has thrown to the ground the
stronghold of our kingdom...

Time passes quickly and soon he is packing down the last bits of earth. Hannah then drapes a piece of ceremonial linen atop of the grave.

LAMENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Where is the wheat and wine?
Fainting as the dead...
(radio snaps off)

A very long silence.

Then...

A ragged man in filthy wet clothes comes up onto the bluff behind them. He's bit older than Tobias, dazed and unsteady on his feet. He kneels down and bows his head as they do.

This is RAFAEL.

RAFAEL
Brother Sin is dead.

HANNAH
(whipping her head around)
What did you say?

RAFAEL
He's dead. Killed on his wedding night. His body lies unburied a few day's journey from here.

TOBIAS
(standing)
Who are you? How did you find us out here?

RAFAEL
My name is Rafael. I was sent here.

HANNAH
By whom?

RAFAEL
By the Four Living Creatures.
The lion means strength, the man means understanding, the ox means sacrifice and the eagle means spirit.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)

The Four Living Creatures are agents of God's will and his greatest gift to man.

(a pause)

Though their ways can be mysterious and terrifying.

TOBIAS

And unjust.

RAFAEL

No. Never unjust.

HANNAH

Did you see Brother Sin's body for yourself?

RAFAEL

Yes. And now his widow is waiting for your father to come and bury him. The same as he buried the seven other grooms who died in her bedroom.

TOBIAS

What killed those men? My father wouldn't tell me.

RAFAEL

The same thing that killed Brother Sin. A Demon on from Hell. The Demon on Two-Sticks.

Hannah comes closer, takes Rafael's hands in hers.

HANNAH

Tell us everything.

RAFAEL

The story starts with a woman, the mother of the men killed on their wedding night and buried by your father.

FLASHBACK:

Antonio Ciseri's painting, *The Martyrdom of the Maccabee Brothers* appears on screen...

A woman's voice...

MIRIAM (V.O.)
I don't know how you came into
being in my womb. It was not I who
gave you life and breath, nor I who
set in order the elements within
each of you...

EXT. BURIAL YARD -- DAY

MIRIAM kneels among seven burial mounds, each covered in
Tobit's ceremonial linen.

MIRIAM (V.O.)
...Therefore the Creator of the
World, who shaped the beginning of
humankind and devised the origin of
all things, will in his mercy give
life and breath back to you again,
since you now forget yourselves for
the sake of His laws.

Another person enters the yard now, steps right in front of
her. Though she doesn't look up when he speaks.

BROTHER SIN
Do you know who I am?

MIRIAM
You're Brother Sin.

BROTHER SIN
(placing the calf on the
ground)
Do you know what this is?

MIRIAM
(standing)
The Calf of the Law.

BROTHER SIN
Burial of your dead is against the
law. It's written right here in my
own hand.

MIRIAM
The laws of men don't apply to
spirit creatures. It was a devil
that killed my sons, and an angel
that put them into the ground.

Brother Sin's eyes narrow. He pulls the linen up off of the
graves, kick the dirt.

BROTHER SIN

There are no such things as devils
and angels. And laws come from man,
not gods.

MIRIAM

God.

BROTHER SIN

The people here tell me that it was
the bride herself who killed those
boys. Not some storybook monster.

MIRIAM

The people here are blasphemers and
idol-worshippers! But when the God-
fearing people hear tales of angels
and demons, they know them to be
true.

Brother Sin turns, scans the graves.

BROTHER SIN

And when your sons kept getting
killed, why did you keep letting
them marry her? It's madness.

MIRIAM

We are bound by God's Law, Brother
Sin. If a man marries and doesn't
bear children, it is his brother's
duty to take the widow.

BROTHER SIN

So you marry them all off to a
groomslayer?

MIRIAM

That girl didn't kill anybody. The
poor creature is haunted. No matter
what the people around here say.
She is innocent!

BROTHER SIN

You're a fool. That girl killed
your boys. And it was a man named
Tobit Maccabeus who buried them.

MIRIAM

I don't know who that is.

BROTHER SIN
He's a lawbreaker.
(a pause)
Are you?

MIRIAM
I am blameless before the law.

BROTHER SIN
(kneeling, placing his hand
on the idol)
Then come pay tribute with me.

MIRIAM
I allowed my sons to die rather
than break God's Law. How could you
even think to ask this of me?

BROTHER SIN
(standing again)
Then I'll force you to your knees
and the last act of your life will
be to give tribute to an idol. And
then I'll wait here with your body
until Tobit Maccabeus comes to bury
you. Then I'll have him.

MIRIAM
If I'm to die today, it won't be by
your hand. And my remains will
never serve your purposes. No
matter what they may be.

BROTHER SIN
(cracking his knuckles)
Quite finished?

MIRIAM
It is finished.

She extents her arms at her sides, shuts her eyes and then
falls straight onto her back.

Dead.

BACK TO:

EXT. BLUFF -- DAY

The three are still crouched around the grave.

RAFAEL

And so she released her soul from her body. Right there before his eyes.

HANNAH

Amazing!

RAFAEL

And just as she'd said, her body did not decay. Brother Sin sat there all night. But nothing. Not even the dogs could sniff her out.

HANNAH

Nor could Papa.

TOBIAS

What of the widow?

RAFAEL

Sarah. Oh, how she suffered. Many thought her a murderess.

HANNAH

Did you believe that she'd killed her own husbands?

RAFAEL

I did. But then I was a different person back then. I even had a different name.

(reflective)

It feels like a thousand years has past even though it's only been a few days...

BACK TO:

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Rafael is standing outside the house with a torch in his hand. He is surrounded by an anonymous mob of TOWNSPEOPLE who are also carrying torches.

RAFAEL

Come out and face justice, you trollop! You can still yet save your soul if you confess!

The camera drifts up and into the bedroom window...

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

SARAH - beautiful, haunted - is scrubbing at a blood-spattered wall with a ragged sponge. The large matrimonial bed is the only other thing in the room.

She blocks out the sounds of the crowd by praying to herself...

SARAH (V.O.)

Blessed are you, merciful God. May
your holy and honored name be
blessed forever and may all your
creation praise you forever.

Yet the voices do break through...

ACCUSER 1 (O.S.)

Devil's whore!

ACCUSER 2 (O.S.)

Witch! Harlot! Necromancer!

ACCUSER 3 (O.S.)

Groom slayer!

SARAH (V.O.)

And now, I have turned my face to
you and lifted up my eyes. Command
that I be released from the earth,
Never again to hear such taunts.

She steels herself, turns and walks out of the room.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

She steps out of the front door, charges across the yard and kneels right at Rafael's feet, locks eyes with him and finishes her prayer aloud.

SARAH

It is better for me to die than to
live, because I have had to listen
to undeserved insults, and great
sorrow is within me.

Rafael is unnerved by this show of courage. But those at his back waste no time in urging him forward.

ACCUSER 1

Go on, Azarias. Kill her!

ACCUSER 2

She's a monster! Destroy her!

They toss weapons at him from the darkness. They pile up at his feet: swords, knives and pistols.

ACCUSER 3

Kill her, Azarias.

The hands at his back shove him so that he falls down right in front of her.

Sarah selects a small caliber pistol and places it in Rafael's quaking hand. She then guides it to her chest, right over her heart.

BROTHER SIN (O.S.)

STOP!

The crowd scatters as Brother Sin weaves his way through them, places himself between Sarah and the muzzle of the weapon.

BROTHER SIN (CONT'D)

(to both of them)

Do you know who I am?

RAFAEL

(stammering)

You're Brother Sin.

He places the Calf of the Law on the ground between them.

BROTHER SIN

And this?

SARAH

(standing)

The Calf of the Law.

BROTHER SIN

You're the widow who killed seven husbands?

SARAH

You've been listening to the wrong stories, Brother Sin. I haven't killed anyone.

BROTHER SIN

(turning to Rafael)

What's your name?

RAFAEL

Azarias.

BROTHER SIN

You'll be my handmaiden tonight,
Azarias. Go fetch me some strong
drink. I suspect that there isn't
any in this house.

RAFAEL

Yes, Brother Sin.
(scampering off)

BROTHER SIN

(chuckling)
You people are cowards.

SARAH

Not all of us, Brother Sin.

BROTHER SIN

You didn't fear those people. But
you should fear me, girl.

SARAH

Fear not them which kill the body,
but are not able to kill the soul:
but rather fear him which is able
to destroy both soul and body in
hell.

(locking eyes with him)
I've seen much worse than you.

BROTHER SIN

A demon, you mean?

SARAH

The Demon on Two Sticks is a real
thing. He walks on crutches from
breaking his legs when he fell from
heaven.

(shutting her eyes)
He is a creature of baseness and
carnality. And he guards my womb
for reasons that I may never know.

BROTHER SIN

I don't care about that. I'm here
for the one who buried your dead.

SARAH

You think you can kill a spirit
creature?

BROTHER SIN

It was no spirit creature that
buried your husbands. It was a
flesh and blood man. Now tell me
about him.

Sarah shuts her eyes, tells the story like it's a dream.

SARAH

When my first husband was killed, I
dragged the body outside to bury it
myself.

BROTHER SIN

You dared!

SARAH

I was only able to get it a little
ways across the yard before I had
to stop and rest...

We see her vision of the angel now: a ghostly, winged figure
in white robes. In this vision, we do not see that the robes
are in fact filthy, and the wings are actually burial linens
draped over the shovel on Tobit's back.

We see him as Sarah did.

SARAH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I awoke to see the angel spiriting
the body away. It moved through the
darkness quickly like it didn't
need the light to see. It whispered
to me to stay back, so as not to
make myself unclean. The next
morning, I found the burial mound
with a linen draped over it.

(pause)

And so it happened again just like
that, six times more.

We come back to Sarah and Brother Sin in the yard now. They
turn at the sound of approaching footsteps. Both hold their
breath, stare at the spot where Sarah said the angel came
from.

Then Rafael comes into the light of the moon, holding out a
mason jar of murky liquid.

RAFAEL

Strong drink indeed, Brother Sin!
We make it here from apples.

Brother Sin scoffs, takes a pull from the jar and exhales loudly through clenched teeth. He picks up The Calf of the Law, tucks it under his arm and turns towards the house.

BROTHER SIN
(to Rafael)
Azarias, handmaiden to Brother Sin,
prepare a meal. I'm done hunting
law-breakers for the night.

The three walk back to the house.

INT. HOME OF SARAH -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Brother Sin sits at the head of a small kitchen table, eating boiled potatoes and drinking from the mason jar.

Sarah sits across from him and Rafael is standing at attention by his side.

BROTHER SIN
Handmaiden...

RAFAEL
Yes, Brother Sin?

BROTHER SIN
Are there people who believe these
stories about the demon and the
angel who buries the dead?

RAFAEL
Oh yes, Brother Sin. The God-
fearing amongst us do. In fact, the
further out from the town you go,
the more the people believe, and
the more extraordinary the story
becomes!

BROTHER SIN
How so?

RAFAEL
Ten miles from here, they say that
seventeen had been killed rather
than seven. And twenty miles from
here, they say that it was seventy.

BROTHER SIN
Seventy? People believe this woman
is a widow seventy times over?

RAFAEL

Oh, yes. And further then that,
they say that the whole town was
massacred.

BROTHER SIN

(taking another pull from
the jar)

They believe that an angel buried
an entire town of slain dead?

RAFAEL

Yes. The angel comes and sanctifies
the bodies. People sing songs about
it.

BROTHER SIN

(reflective)

And here I've been working so hard
to rid you people of superstition
and the old ways. Yet my work is
being undone right here by a
murderous harlot and a fugitive
from the law...

(taking another swig)

This one finally hits him. He stands, wobbly on his feet, and
goes over to the sink. He retches a few times, but refuses to
vomit by sheer force of will.

SARAH

That's right. The story travels
even now. It travels and grows. You
can't quash it.

BROTHER SIN

Savages. All of you. Superstitious
and weak...

He retches again.

SARAH

(mocking tone)

Feeling ill, Brother Sin? You know
when I was a little girl, my mother
would sing a song for me when I was
feeling sick. How about I sing it
for you now?

(clears her throat)

Don't fear, my servant, Jacob,
ho, I had a dream,
don't fear my servant, Jacob,
what a dreadful place!

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

The ladder standing with heavenly
angels,
they all descent and ascend with
wings in a pale shade...
May your strength not stray brother
Jacob!
Get up to your path, forward to the
East!
Go forward, underneath, go, for the
land shall rise now for you and
your seed...
(pause)
Feel better?

Brother Sin steels himself, turns to her.

BROTHER SIN

You're right, girl. I can't stop
the story from travelling.

SARAH

(smugly)
It gives the people faith in God's
justice. One day he'll send another
angel that will put you and the
rest of our oppressors into the
ground. I may not live to see it.
But it will come.

Brother Sin goes back to his place at the head of the table.
He taps his finger on the jar and Rafael pours him some more
of the apple whiskey.

Brother Sin's pride conquers his body as he tosses it back.

BROTHER SIN

But that's only half of the story.
The first half. Tonight, you and I
will write the second. And when the
story is fulfilled, it will travel
to the people and deliver them a
different message than the one that
they have now. Here is the
fulfilment of the tale...

Images that correspond to Brother Sin's tale appear on screen
as he speaks. But instead of art from antiquity, these
pictures are crude renderings in his own hand.

They are the pictorial equivalent of the mad handwriting on
The Calf of the Law...

Drawing in pencil, *Sarah Weeping in the Blood-Spattered
Bridal Chamber* by Brother Sin

BROTHER SIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 A woman lost seven husbands. They
 were all killed on the wedding
 night. She told everyone that it
 was a demon that did this. Her
 story traveled.
 And the people believed her...

Sarah at the graves of the Slain Husbands, by Brother Sin

BROTHER SIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 The bodies of these men were buried
 under cover of night. She told
 everyone that it was an angel from
 God who did this. Her story
 traveled.
 And the people believed her.

Self-Portrait by Brother Sin

BROTHER SIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Then Brother Sin arrived. And he
 brought with him The Calf of the
 Law...

Drawing in pencil, *Sarah Slashing Her Husband's Throats*, by
 Brother Sin

BROTHER SIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 He exposed the killer to be the
 bride herself. And the one who
 buried the men to be an outlaw
 named Tobit Maccabeus.

Brother Sin, still wobbly, gets to his feet and puts the Calf
 of the Law in the middle of the table.

Places his hand on it.

BROTHER SIN (CONT'D)
 The story traveled. And then all of
 the people saw their folly. They
 saw through the lies that their
 ancestors had told them. They saw
 that there were no angels or
 demons. There is no God. Only
 Brother Sin and The Calf of the
 Law.

Long pause.

SARAH
 And how do you propose to do that,
 Brother Sin?

BROTHER SIN
By marrying you myself. And living
to tell the tale.

EXT. MOUNTAIN BLUFF -- DAY

The three are still crouched over Tobit's grave. Rafael pauses for a moment before continuing.

RAFAEL
Maybe she thought that the demon
would rid her of him. Or maybe even
he of it. Either way, she consented
to marry again.

TOBIT
And what was your part in all of
this?

RAFAEL
First I was handmaiden. Then
Brother Sin told me that I would be
an apostle, the one to spread the
good news of how he exposed the
lies in that house...

INT. HOME OF SARAH -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Brother Sin stands behind Sarah with his hands on her shoulders. She's still in her chair facing the Calf of The Law.

Rafael is standing in the far corner of the room as witness to the brief marriage ceremony.

BROTHER SIN
I take this woman to be my wife in
the name of The Calf of The Law.
May we live a hundred years and
sire an entire generation of law
abiding male children.
 (pulls her out of the seat
 and shoves her towards
 the bedroom door)
Prepare yourself.

Sarah gravely opens the bedroom door and goes inside. Brother Sin looks past her to the horrible gore splashed against the walls.

He steps closer but does not cross the threshold.

BROTHER SIN (CONT'D)
You depraved animal. I thought
you'd strangled them. Or poisoned
them. But this... This is the work
of a monster!

SARAH
A demon from Hell, Brother Sin.

Brother Sin reaches into his coat and takes out a knife. He
then goes over to Rafael and places it in his hand.

BROTHER SIN
If anybody tries to come in here,
kill them.

RAFAEL
(nodding meekly)
Yes, Brother Sin.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

He walks into the bedroom and slams the door behind him. He
then goes over to the wall and gives it a closer look.

BROTHER SIN
I know what this is. It's
sacrifice. This is what you people
would do in your holy temple. Back
in that ruined city. Yes...
(taking a step back)
I've heard of this. The blood was
everywhere. It flowed down the
steps.
(turning to her)
You people and blood!

SARAH
That was animal sacrifice, Brother
Sin. And what the demon does here
is a mockery of our holy rituals.

BROTHER SIN
(scanning the room)
So where is it then? Where do you
hide your weapon?

SARAH
There are no secrets here, Brother
Sin. The demon appears out of thin
air. And then it vanishes the same
way.

BROTHER SIN

Bah!

He starts tossing the room, pulling apart the few pieces of furniture and tearing the curtains from the window.

SARAH

That was a fine tale that you told in the kitchen. But it will never be heard again.

BROTHER SIN

Oh, it will. My handmaiden Azarias will be able to say that he was right here in the house when it all happened.

SARAH

No. This is the story that he'll be telling in the morning. He'll tell how you traveled to the house of angels and demons in order to find a man who was burying the dead.

You were strong; but your strength was of this world. And when you set yourself against God's agent of destruction, you were no match.

(a pause)

Your death, and the death of your law, will be a harbinger of our salvation. God's justice will be affirmed seven times seventy times over as the tale reaches every exile in this land.

And as it travels, it will grow and embellish so that your folly will become a reminder to all exiles that the world we live in is just an illusion, the lives that we live meaningless but for faith in God.

SMACK!

An open-handed blow sends her forward onto mattress. When she turns, there is a trickle of blood on her lip.

BROTHER SIN

Up on your haunches.

SARAH

You mean to take me like a beast?

Brother Sin picks up The Calf of the Law and sticks his finger into an orifice at the rear. He takes out a dark, chalky substance and uses it to draw a set of horns on his forehead.

BROTHER SIN

We're all beasts, girl. That's another truth that you and your people will soon come to understand. I'm a bull. You're my calf.

(a pause)

Now. On your haunches.

A gentle breeze blows through the room. Then we hear a sound like two sticks being rubbed together. They start out slow and then get faster...

Sarah looks around, we see her fear for the first time.

SARAH

Lust is rising in your heart, Brother Sin. It's the sex-passion that gives the demon its power. And even good men like my first seven husbands have no control over their urges.

He drops his coat, takes off his shirt to reveal a filthy, but powerful upper body. Sarah winces with revulsion as he reaches out to touch her.

BROTHER SIN

Are you frightened, girl? Are you feeling ill? Sing that song that your mother taught you.

(a pause)

Sing it. Now.

SARAH

(a whisper)

Don't fear, my servant, Jacob, ho, I had a dream...

He takes her by the shoulder, spins her around and positions her up on her knees.

SARAH (CONT'D)

...don't fear my servant, Jacob, what a dreadful place... The ladder standing with heavenly angels... they all descent and ascend with wings in a pale shade...

He draws the pistol that he had taken from Rafael, scans the room one last time. Then he hops up onto the bed behind Sarah, flips her dress up over her back so that it falls forward across her face like a wedding veil.

SARAH (CONT'D)

May your strength not stray brother
Jacob...
Get up to your path, forward to the
East...
Go forward, underneath, go, for the
land shall rise now for you and
your seed...

The sound of sticks rubbing together gets louder and faster as Brother Sin reaches with his grimy hand to make contact with her thigh...

INT. HOME OF SARAH -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Rafael is curled up like a dog on the kitchen floor. He's suddenly roused by a high-pitched and terrifying screeching sound.

SCREEEEEEEECH!

BROTHER SIN (O.S.)

Die! In the name of the Law!

Two gunshots...

BANG! BANG!

Then quiet. Not even a whimper from beyond the door.

Rafael scrambles to the opposite wall now, eyes wide and body frozen in terror. He takes his first furtive steps towards the middle of the room when the last shot is heard.

BANG!

The bullet passes through the door, flinging it open and hitting him in the ribs. He tumbles back to the floor again, groaning and with a trickle of blood already coming from his mouth.

He looks up and beholds a terrifying sight: THE DEMON ON TWO-STICKS hobbles on a pair of crutches to the threshold of the door.

It's a bird-like creature draped in a luminescent patchwork poncho.

It gives out a terrifying screech and then starts rubbing the crutches together until they create a plume of smoke that it vanishes into.

SARAH (O.S.)
(between sobs)
I forgive you.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Rafael crawls out of the front door and drags himself across the yard. He's nearly at the treeline when his strength fails him and he flips onto his back.

His eyes flutter and shut.

Then a dim light from above. As it grows in intensity, Rafael's strength returns. He opens his eyes now to behold a beautiful and terrifying sight.

The Four Living Creatures have descended from space and are hovering just a few yards above him. Against the size of a man, we see now that the craft is massive, near the size of Sarah's house.

We hold on Rafael's face as he's then flooded with an even more powerful and healing light...

RAFAEL (V.O.)
I was given new life in that moment, and a new name. Rafael. It means 'God has Healed'. And I was told to come here to you and deliver the message...

EXT. MOUNTAIN BLUFF -- DAY

RAFAEL
Brother Sin is dead.

Hannah gets up and walks back over to the her father's grave, resumes throwing ashes onto her head.

HANNAH
We'll never be forgiven for this.
We killed him with our lack of faith!

RAFAEL
Yes.

HANNAH
(turning)
Yes, what?

RAFAEL
You can be forgiven. If you do now
what he would have done.

HANNAH
Tell me, please!

RAFAEL
An act of charity to your worst
enemy. You must bury Brother Sin.

TOBIAS
(seething)
Are you mad?

RAFAEL
Your father valued charity as the
greatest virtue. What could be more
charitable than a good deed done
for an enemy?

Tobias stands. He picks up the shovel and takes a few steps
away from them.

TOBIAS
Impossible.

RAFAEL
I was scared of my commission too.
The first thing I did was try to
run away. But then I was swallowed
up by a great serpent. I traveled
in its belly for a full day until I
was released here at your feet.
(a pause)
And what I learned in the belly of
that creature was that God's will
cannot be thwarted.

TOBIAS
God's will isn't my problem
anymore.

He smashes the shovel against the ground until the head
breaks off. He then throws both pieces over the bluff and
walks off back towards the house.

Hannah gets to her feet and chases after him.

Rafael meanwhile looks up to the sky pleadingly, says a prayer of his own.

RAFAEL

I did what you told me. But he's proud and angry. And I'm just a small, weak man. So if it be your will, find someone else to take him there. Please. Release me from this!

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL -- DAY

Hannah follows her brother down the mountain trail. She has to speak to his back as he refuses to stop walking.

HANNAH

What's happened to your faith, Tobias?

TOBIAS

It's buried up there on that hill with our father.

HANNAH

Don't you see how wrong we were? How selfish? Papa wasn't just burying the dead. He was giving people hope. Thousands of them must have heard the story about the angel of the dead! And now its brought an end to Brother Sin and his terror.

TOBIAS

Papa's work is finished then.

HANNAH

But that girl is still waiting with the body. And all the people who believe in Papa are waiting, too. And when they see such grace and mercy, that even a villain like Brother Sin can be forgiven and buried by an angel...

TOBIAS

No! I can't forgive him!

HANNAH

(stopping in her tracks)
Idol worshipper! Honor thy father!

Tobias stops dead and turns to her, his face twisted in rage. But then his eyes catch something falling out of the sky.

THWAP!

A shovel hits the ground right at their feet. It's made of heavy metal and has two ceremonial linens tied off on either side of it.

Both look skyward in awe.

EXT. MOUNTAIN BLUFF -- DAY

Rafael slowly gets to his feet. He collects his things and makes to walk back the way that he came. But he's suddenly knocked to the ground by an invisible force.

RAFAEL

No! Leave me be!

But the force will not.

It grapples with him on the ground, kicking up dirt and making him punch and thrash at the air. Rafael soon gives up the fight. He rolls onto his side, panting for air.

Tobias and Hannah come up over the bluff now.

TOBIAS

Where's the body?

RAFAEL

(breathing heavy)

A day's journey from here. I'll take you.

TOBIAS

No. I'll go myself.

Rafael stands, brushes himself off.

RAFAEL

I have a commission too, Tobias.
And I can't refuse it. No matter
how much I'd like to.

Tobias turns, walks back to his father's grave.

TOBIAS

I'm going to do this thing, Papa.
But for you. Not for God, not for
our people or the Law. Just you.
But this is that last burial.

(MORE)

TOBIAS (CONT'D)

The last act of charity. After this, I'm going to travel far from here and live my life the way that I please.

Hannah gives her brother one last embrace and then stands back as he and Rafael descend the side of the mountain.

HANNAH (V.O.)

Angel Guide of Tobias, lay the request we now address to you at the feet of the Lord. Lonely and tired, crushed by the separations and sorrows of earth, we feel the need of calling to you and of pleading for the protection of your wings. So that we may not be as strangers in the Province of Joy, all ignorant of the concerns of our country. Remember the weak, you who are strong, you whose home lies beyond the region of thunder, in a land that is always peaceful, always serene, and bright with the resplendent glory of God. Amen

Painting on screen: Filippino Lippi's *Tobias and the Angel*

FADE OUT.

Sound of the hand-crank radio...

LAMENT (O.S.)

How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed! The stones of the sanctuary are scattered through the crossings of every street...

EXT. MOUNTAIN VALLEY -- DAY

The two men walk along as the radio in Tobias' hand plays.

LAMENT (O.S.)

The young and the old lay on the ground in the streets; my virgins and my young men fell by the sword; you have slain them in the day of your anger!

RAFAEL

Where'd you get that radio?

TOBIAS
From a dead man.

LAMENT (O.S.)
Surely he has turned against me; he
turns his hand against me all the
day...

RAFAEL
You should have left it with him.

LAMENT (O.S.)
He has bent his bow and set me as a
mark for the arrow...

TOBIAS
I find comfort in this.

RAFAEL
You shouldn't. It's an albatross
about both our necks.

TOBIAS
You don't know anything about it.

RAFAEL
I know this.
(turning and snatching the
radio)
The time to lament is over!

He winds up and throws it far out among the trees.

Tobias gives him a hard shove and then chases after it. We
follow him deeper into the woods until the broadcast can
faintly be heard again...

LAMENT (O.S.)
He has filled me with bitterness,
he has made me drunk with
wormwood...
(motor clicks off)

Tobias keeps looking around in vain. Rafael comes to the top
of the hill and motions him forward.

RAFAEL
It's for the best. Let's go.

Tobias gives one last look around and then walks up to
Rafael, gets right in his face.

TOBIAS

Tell me where that body is. I can do this myself.

RAFAEL

No.

TOBIAS

Fine, then. I'm going home.

He drops the shovel at Rafael's feet and starts walking back towards the house.

RAFAEL

I know what you did, Tobias! The Four Living Creatures told me how you gave tribute to the Calf of the Law!

TOBIAS

I was forgiven for that.

RAFAEL

And your father? Did you honor him by holding him down and making him pray for death?

TOBIAS

(walking back towards him)
What did you say?

RAFAEL

I could hear his prayer when I was inside the belly of the serpent...

(a pause)

...command my spirit to be taken from me, so that I may be released from the face of the earth and become dust.

For it is better for me to die than to live, because I have had to listen to undeserved insults, and great is the sorrow within me...

(a pause)

Have you been forgiven for that?

Tobias' steadily growing rage finally explodes. He tackles Rafael and soon the two are grappling on the ground. Tobias puts up a good fight, but he's soon overcome.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)

This journey is an act of penance for me too, Tobias. And my sin may yet be worse than yours.

(MORE)

RAFAEL (CONT'D)

But if you want to do right by God
and your father, you'll heed me the
way that you'd heed either one of
them.

Rafael gets back up, takes a few steps away.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)

So no more weeping and gnashing of
teeth. And if you need to listen to
something as we walk, I know a song
about a hero that will come and
drive our enemies away. He'll
relight the candles in the temple
and bring all of us home.

TOBIAS

Don't know it.

RAFAEL

I'll teach you, then.

(clears his throat)

See the conquering hero comes,
Sound the trumpet, beat the drums;
Sports prepare, the laurel bring,
Songs of triumph to him sing! See
the godlike youth advance,
Breathe the flutes and lead the
dance; Myrtle wreaths and roses
twine, To deck the hero's brows
divine!

Painting on screen: Peter Lastman's *The Angel and Tobias with
the Fish*

Then the sound of rushing water comes up on the audio.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PROFANE RIVER -- DAY

A wide river running through the wooded outskirts. We hold on
the surface of the water as Rafael speaks.

RAFAEL (V.O.)

I've always been a coward. That's
why I ran away from the Four Living
Creatures when they gave me my
commission. I was trying to cross
this river when I was swallowed up
by a serpent. And then I was spit
out right here in this spot.

Camera pans over to...

RIVERBANK -- CONTINUOUS

The two men are standing here looking out onto the water.

RAFAEL

Your sin isn't cowardice. It's lack of faith. But then, maybe that's just a different kind of cowardice.

TOBIAS

I'm not a coward.

RAFAEL

Good.

He draws a knife (the same that Brother Sin had presented to him) and hands it to Tobias. He then points out towards the river.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)

The serpent is still out there.

TOBIAS

The one that swallowed you?

RAFAEL

That's right. Go out there and kill it. Unless you think my story is not believable.

TOBIAS

You're asking if I believe that you lived inside the belly of a giant snake while it brought you to my house?

RAFAEL

No. I want you to show me that you believe it.

(a pause)

Unless you're afraid to believe it.

Tobias takes the knife, wades out into the water. As he does, Rafael turns around and starts tracing a picture in the wet dirt with his finger.

RAFAEL (V.O.)

I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me;
out of the belly of Sheol
I cried, and you heard my voice...

Rafael's drawing in the dirt: *A Stick-Figure Inside the Belly of a SERPENT*

RAFAEL (V.O.)

The waters closed in over me to
take my life; the deep surrounded
me; weeds were wrapped about my
head at the roots of the mountains.
I went down to the land
whose bars closed upon me forever;
yet you brought up my life from the
pit, O Lord my God.

Rafael's drawing in the dirt: *A Stick-Figure Being Expelled From the Serpent*

RAFAEL (V.O.)

But I with the voice of
thanksgiving will sacrifice to you;
what I have vowed I will pay.
Salvation belongs to the Lord!

Tobias is still standing waist-deep in the water, holding the knife out defensively. Every disturbance around him makes him jump.

But at last he calms, turns towards Rafael and shrugs.

RAFAEL

No! Don't doubt me, Tobias!

A flash in the water.

TOBIAS

Arrrrgh!

Tobias doubles over, starts splashing and stumbling towards the shore. When he gets there, we see a large eel attached to his crotch.

Rafael scrambles over and lays hands on the creature. It takes all of his strength to pry it loose.

RAFAEL

Toothsome little beast!

Tobias' sex organ has nearly been bitten off and the area is starting to pus and harden with the same substance that blinded his father.

TOBIAS

There's a poison inside me!

RAFAEL
 (looking around)
 There's a place I can take you.
 It's a sacred place where miracles
 happen.

TOBIAS
 That place is a lie!

Rafael hoists him up onto his feet, but the other man's legs
 fold beneath him.

RAFAEL
 Remember my name 'Rafael'. It means
 'God has healed'.

He pulls Tobias back up and drags him along...

EXT. WOODS -- DAY

It's a grotesque dance that these two are doing as they make
 their way along a wooded trail. Tobias is at once helping his
 own cause and at another time seeming to fight against it.

Then we hear Hannah's voice again.

HANNAH (V.O.)
 Glorious Archangel St. Raphael,
 great prince of the heavenly court,
 you are illustrious for your gifts
 of wisdom and grace. You are a
 guide of those who journey by land
 or sea or air, consoler of the
 afflicted, and refuge of sinners...

EXT. SACRED STREAM -- DAY

The very same place where Tobit and his family tried and
 failed to heal his eyes.

HANNAH (V.O.)
 I beg you, assist Tobias on his
 travels. Because you are the
 "medicine of God" I humbly pray you
 to heal the many infirmities of his
 soul and the ills that afflict his
 body. And to prepare him to be the
 temple of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hannah's prayer concludes as Tobias and Rafael arrive and go
 straight into the water. It's barely two feet deep.

Rafael lays him down and starts splashing water onto his crotch.

RAFAEL

This stream runs all the way back
to the city, beneath the ruins of
the temple and the holy altar
itself. The blood of a million
sacrifices are in these waters.
It's in the mud, the leaves. Even
in the stones.

(his palms are stained with
blood)

This is a place of miracles.

Tobias rolls his head from side to side in a state of delirium.

He slips into another state as his body stays put, but his consciousness rises up and takes him on a high speed journey through the woods...

Down the streets of an abandoned town and then to the very spot where...

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE -- YARD -- DAY

Sarah is keeping her vigil with Brother Sin's body. She's still wearing her tattered nightgown and her eyes are bleary and blood-shot.

She speaks directly into the camera.

SARAH

Why do you keep me waiting, Angel
of the Dead? I have another husband
for you to bury.

The vision then retreats at great speed and returns to Tobias at...

EXT. SCARED STREAM -- DAY

The waters have begun doing their work. The chalky substance is being washed away, the flesh beneath not only healed but completely restored.

Tobias opens his eyes to see Rafael hovering over him.

RAFAEL

It's a miracle!

Tobias slowly gets to his feet, takes a few steps. He should be overjoyed, but his face only shows confusion.

Despair.

TOBIAS

It isn't just.

RAFAEL

What do you mean? What isn't just?

TOBIAS

Why would this place heal me and not my father? He was a good man, blameless before God. But me, I'm the worst kind of sinner. An idolator.

(a pause)

Is that justice?

RAFAEL

Your father didn't need his eyes to fulfill God's purposes. But you need to be whole to fulfill yours.

TOBIAS

What's my purpose, then? To bury Brother Sin? Will God finally be done with me after that?

RAFAEL

No. There's always more.

TOBIAS

(angrily)

Of course there is.

He picks up one of the river stones and it stains his palm with blood. Staring at this, his eyelids start to flutter and a second vision invades his consciousness...

He and Sarah in a passionate embrace.

RAFAEL

Have you ever known a woman?

TOBIAS

(shaken from his reverie)

What?

RAFAEL

The sex act.

TOBIAS
(defensive)
Have you?

RAFAEL
To my shame, yes.

TOBIAS
What's shameful about it?

RAFAEL
The act itself, nothing. But what I
did was base, driven by sex-
passion.

TOBIAS
(turning to him)
Tell me about it.

RAFAEL
No. I don't like to remember it
myself. And anything that I tell
you will just corrupt you. And you
need to stay pure.

TOBIAS
Pure for what?

RAFAEL
I had a vision, too. It was when I
was travelling to you inside of the
serpent. And I can tell it to you
now.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE -- BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The pristine bed in her bedchamber with glistening white
walls...

RAFAEL (V.O.)
I saw that you'd married the widow
Sarah and that on your wedding
night, you'd taken her in perfect
love and purity. There was no lust,
so the Demon on Two-Sticks wasn't
able to harm you.

The image then jumps violently to the same room spattered in
blood and gore...

RAFAEL (V.O.)
 But I also saw that you were
 overcome by lust. And that you were
 killed just like Brother Sin and
 the seven husbands before him.

DISSOLVE TO:

STAR FIELD

The Four Living Creatures twirling in space.

RAFAEL (V.O.)
 The lion means strength, the man is
 understanding, the ox is sacrifice
 and the eagle is spirit. You must
 have all of these qualities when
 you enter that bedroom. But it's
 the last one, the spirit, that will
 determine if you live or if you
 die.

Painting on screen: *Sarah Expects Tobias in the Wedding Night*
 by Rembrandt

FADE OUT.

EXT. OUTER SETTLEMENTS -- NIGHT

Rafael is leading the way by the light of an electric
 lantern. He and Tobias have moved out of the deeper woods and
 are now in a blighted industrial area.

They can hear dogs baying in the distance.

RAFAEL
 Brother Sin was good for the dogs.
 I wonder what they'll eat now, eh?

TOBIAS
 We should leave him to them. Would
 serve him right.

RAFAEL
 Sarah would never allow that.

A pause.

TOBIAS
 I keep seeing her face. Tell me
 more about her.

RAFAEL

Her parents abandoned her after the second husband was killed. The only friend she had was her mother-in-law. And then Brother Sin killed her too.

TOBIAS

The woman who took her own life in burial yard.

RAFAEL

Her name was Miriam.

TOBIAS

(stopping)
I'm afraid.

RAFAEL

(turning to him)
The Demon on Two-Sticks is a terrifying creature. But it can't hurt you as long as you don't let the sex-passion overcome you.

TOBIAS

It's not the demon that scares me. It's the other thing.

RAFAEL

What other thing?

TOBIAS

(struggling to say it)
The sex act. I don't know anything about it.

RAFAEL

I don't know anything about it, either.

TOBIAS

But you do.

RAFAEL

It was Azarias who did that terrible thing. My name is Rafael now. And knowing what he did won't help you at all.

TOBIAS

Do you know your Scriptures?

RAFAEL

Of course.

TOBIAS

Then you know that it's just as instructive to be told what's wrong as it is to be told what's right.

The sound of dogs howling in the distance.

RAFAEL

(looking around)

We need to get moving. Those dogs have got a taste for human flesh now.

TOBIAS

I'll walk behind you. And as we go, I want you to tell me about Azarias' sin. As long as you keep talking, I'll keep moving. Otherwise we can wait here together for the dogs to come.

RAFAEL

It was Azarias. Not Rafael. Remember that.

TOBIAS

I will.

RAFAEL

(turns and resumes walking)

Azarias was a base man. He would eat unclean food, give tribute to false gods. He cast a lustful eye on women and would abuse himself in public. The only reason that the other exiles tolerated him was because they knew that if something horrible had to be done, they could call on Azarias to do it. That's why they called on him to kill Sarah. But it was before that, when he committed his terrible sin...

EXT. BURIAL YARD -- DAY

We travel back in time now to the day that Azarias committed his sin. We see what he saw: Miriam lying dead on the ground.

The camera moves towards her as if from Azarias' perspective. Rafael continues...

RAFAEL (V.O.)

He came upon Miriam's body after Brother Sin had abandoned it. She'd showed no signs of decay. She was just as beautiful as Azarias had ever seen her. And of all the women that he'd ever coveted from afar, it was this one who he'd always coveted the most.

The camera moves across her body, caressing it...

BACK TO:

EXT. OUTER SETTLEMENTS/BURIAL YARD - NIGHT

Present.

Rafael takes a few more steps into the darkness. We see now that they are walking among the very same burial linens that covered the graves of the seven dead husbands.

They've wandered right back into the scene of the crime!

The light of Rafael's lantern suddenly falls on Miriam's body. Though now it has begun to rot and decay. Tobias is aghast. But Rafael's face is like stone.

RAFAEL

And so in baseness and carnality,
he took her there where she lay.
And in defiling her, the once
blessed body has now started to
rot.

(crouching down)

Even looking at her now in this
state, his passion is rising again.

The lantern quakes in his hand.

TOBIAS

No! Rafael! It wasn't you! It was
Azarias!

RAFAEL

You can change a man's name, but
you can't change his nature!

Rafael makes a go for the body; but Tobias pulls him back. Another quick scuffle and Rafael frees himself, scurries over and mounts her right there in the dirt.

Horrificed, Tobias runs off into the darkness. He covers his ears, but the sounds of Rafael's terrible sin surrounds him. He keeps going until he can hear them no longer.

Gasping for air, he drops down and props himself against a tree.

TOBIAS

The baseness! The depravity!

The sounds of the night soon fade away. No more crickets or dogs barking in the distance. Even Tobias' desperate breathing ceases to make a sound.

Then a voice.

LAMENT (O.S.)

He has filled me with bitterness,
he has made me drunk with wormwood.
He has broken my teeth with gravel
stones; he has covered me with
ashes...

This time the lament is not boosted by a radio signal. It's just a man's voice coming from someplace near-by.

Tobias gets up, follows the sound through the darkness until he comes to an old, brick-work CISTERN.

LAMENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

My soul removed itself far from
peace; I forgot about good. And I
said, My strength and my hope of
the Lord is perished...

As he nears, he sees an antenna jutting out of the top. He then peers down into the darkness, waits for the next verse and says it too...

TOBIAS & LAMENT

The wormwood and the gall. My soul
shall have them still in
remembrance because it is humbled
in me.

A pause.

VOICE (O.S.)

Who's there?

TOBIAS

Someone who laments. Like you.

Longer pause.

VOICE (O.S.)
Come on, then. I'm just an old man
in a well. I won't hurt you.

Tobias carefully throws his leg over the edge of the cistern and lowers himself about ten feet down.

INT. CISTERN -- NIGHT

He lands in about six inches of water and follows a dim light along the length of a narrow tunnel.

This takes him to a...

BROADCAST CHAMBER

All of the equipment is battered and rusty. There's an older man sitting at a crude microphone with his back to us. This is JEREMIAH.

He turns and rises as Tobias enters the chamber.

JEREMIAH
You're too young to have known the
city.

TOBIAS
My father would say that we all
carry it in our hearts, young and
old alike. And so we all mourn.

JEREMIAH
(nodding)
Many of us, yes. But even more of
our people choose to forget. We're
in an unholy land now. And I'm just
a voice in the wilderness.

TOBIAS
I saw something terrible tonight. A
man, one of our own people...

JEREMIAH
Yes? Tell me.

TOBIAS
(struggling)
He lay with a dead woman.

JEREMIAH

(shaking his head)

Our people have fallen into perversion and idolatry. And the more time that goes by, the worse it gets. But it wasn't always that way, my boy. There was a time when nobody would bow to a calf or lay with the dead. Before the fall of the city, things like that were impossible.

TOBIAS

How did we come to this?

The sounds of battle come up on the audio - clanking of swords, the cries of women and children.

Painting on screen: *The Destruction of Jerusalem* by David Roberts

TOBIAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My father told me about the invading forces and the siege and the massacres. He told me how he and my mother escaped through the tunnels beneath the temple, and how we had to hide from Brother Sin and the armies at his back. He taught us to stay true to our faith no matter the consequences. But he was never able to give an answer to the question that a child always asks 'why'?

JEREMIAH (V.O.)

Why did God lift his protection, you mean?

TOBIAS (V.O.)

Why does he make us suffer so?

The sounds of war fade and the painting dissolves back to the two men in the broadcast chamber. Jeremiah takes Tobias by the hand and leads him to a stone bench where they sit.

JEREMIAH

The Four Living Creatures speak to many of us. Knowledge is given, action is commanded. I was told why our city fell, and then I was commanded to broadcast this lament until the day that our people could return.

TOBIAS
Return? How can we do that?

JEREMIAH
You won't understand until I first
tell you why we were exiled.

Painting: Gerard van Honthorst's *King David Playing the Harp*

JEREMIAH (V.O.)
Our king was a just and virtuous
man. He was blameless before God
and his soul was a bulwark against
our enemies.

Painting on screen: *Bathsheba* by Jean Leon Gerome

JEREMIAH (V.O.)
But one day he saw another man's
wife bathing on her rooftop. He
wanted her. And in that moment, he
allowed lust to possess him.

Painting on screen: *Bathsheba with David's Messenger* by Jan
Massys

JEREMIAH (V.O.)
He took her and made her pregnant.
Her husband was a soldier, and the
king had him sent to the vanguard
of battle where he knew he'd be
killed.

Painting on screen, *King David in Prayer* by Pieter De Grebber

JEREMIAH (V.O.)
God turned away from our king in
that moment. And he loosed our
enemies upon our home. For the King
was the best of us, and his failure
was the failure of us all. So now
we all must do penance until we
find favor with God again.

Return to Tobias and Jeremiah in the Cistern...

JEREMIAH
Because we ourselves have unleashed
a demon into this world. The demon
of lust.

TOBIAS
The Demon on Two-Sticks.

JEREMIAH

And now you see sex-passion all
around us. Even between the living
and the dead.

Long pause.

TOBIAS

And The Four Living Creatures told
you how we could be forgiven?

JEREMIAH

It will take one just man. And one
just woman. They must marry and
consummate in perfect love and
purity. No baseness. No lust. Such
an act will banish the demon and
release our savior into this world.

(a pause)

Have you ever known a woman?

TOBIAS

No.

JEREMIAH

Do you know anything about men and
women together?

TOBIAS

I asked someone today. And I
already told you what he did.

Jeremiah motions Tobias to come closer. He takes out a long
roll of paper and lays it out on the floor. Then he uses a
piece of charcoal to draw a picture.

JEREMIAH

This is woman, yes? And this is a
man. To make a child, they must
come together like this...

Jeremiah starts to draw another picture. Tobias becomes flush
with excitement. He nearly doubles over.

TOBIAS

Oh, my!

JEREMIAH

(urgently)

No! Control yourself!

TOBIAS

What's happening to me!?

JEREMIAH
Control your body. Don't spill your
seed!

Tobias falls down on his knees now. Jeremiah comes over to
comfort him.

TOBIAS
(quaking)
I CAN'T CONTROL IT!

JEREMIAH
Fight, boy!

TOBIAS
How?!

JEREMIAH
With prayer!

Panting on screen: Nicolaus Knupfer's - Tobias en Sarah

JEREMIAH (V.O.)
Blessed are you, God of our
Fathers, Blessed too is your name
forever and ever. Let the Heavens
praise you and All your creation
forever. You created Adam and his
wife Eve as his helper and support.
You said, 'It is not good for a man
to be alone; Let us make a partner
for him like himself.
So now we take one another, not out
of lust, but with sincerity. Grant
that we shall find mercy, and that
we may grow old together.

Tobias' breathing slows back down, normalizes.

TOBIAS
Amen.

Jeremiah goes to his broadcast booth and comes back with a
small leather satchel. He places it on the floor and opens it
to reveal a small pile of shattered brickwork.

JEREMIAH
I know who you are Tobias, son of
Tobit. And I have some instruction
for you.
(pointing at the brickwork)
Before you consummate the marriage,
make a square around the bed with
these. Not a circle, a square.

TOBIAS
 (picking up one of the
 pieces)
 What are they?

JEREMIAH
 (solemnly)
 Those are pieces of brickwork from
 the city wall. If you can conquer
 your lust, they will protect you as
 they once protected all of us.
 (placing it in his hand)
 Good luck. And Godspeed.

He returns to the broadcast booth and resumes his lament.

Tobias slowly stands and walks back out the way that he came,
 Jeremiah's words at his back.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)
 We are orphans without father; our
 mothers are as widows. Our skin
 became black like an oven because
 of the terrible famine, what has
 become upon us, look, and behold
 our reproach!

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. BURIAL YARD -- DAY

Rafael is lying beside Miriam's decaying body. He wakes with
 a start as Tobias comes out of the woods and stands over him.

RAFAEL
 (despairing)
 I wanted to believe that Azarias'
 sin had died with his name. But I
 was wrong.

TOBIAS
 Your name is baseness. Depravity.
 And I can't have that at my side.

RAFAEL
 I told you that it wasn't my will
 to be here with you. You saw me
 wrestling with it at your father's
 grave. And before that, it put me
 in the belly of the serpent.

TOBIAS
(turning to go)
That's all over now.

RAFAEL
(getting up into his path)
I've bested you once already.

TOBIAS
That was before you defiled that
woman's body. Now Rafael is as bad
as Azarias.

Tobias gives him a hard shove and two of them are soon rolling around on the ground again. But it's different this time. Tobias easily wins the fight.

He then gets up and walks away, leaving Rafael battered in the dirt.

RAFAEL
You won't find them without me.

TOBIAS
I'll know the path if I stray from
it.

Then he disappears into the woods.

RAFAEL
(to himself)
Yes. That you just may.

He stays lying on the ground for a spell. He then gets up and goes back over to Hannah's body. He crouches down beside it and starts pawing at the earth with his bare hands.

Time passes quickly and soon Hannah is buried in a shallow grave. Rafael then flops onto his back and looks up at the sky.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
It's finished, then. Do what you
will with me.

A long silence and then the sound of white noise.

Rafael gets up and walks a few feet further into the woods. Here he finds Tobias' radio half wedged in the ground.

LAMENT (O.S.)
...our necks are under persecution;
we are become tired and have no
rest...

He pulls it up out of the ground and draws his arm back to throw it even further this time. But the lament suddenly stops. Jeremiah's voice addresses him directly.

JEREMIAH (O.S.)

Rafael.

He stops abruptly, gives the radio another look.

RAFAEL

Who is this?

JEREMIAH (O.S.)

I have a message for you, from the Four Living Creatures. Your penance isn't yet done. You have another sin now. And you can't just bury it in the ground.

A gentle wind picks up and then a BROADSWORD comes tumbling out of the sky, sticking in the ground right beside him. Seized with terror, he immediately knows what this weapon is for.

RAFAEL

No! I can't face that demon again!

He smashes the radio and then tries to throw the sword back into the sky. Each time it returns to him, he stubbornly tries again. Then something even more terrifying happens.

The shovel goes up and does not come back down. Instead, the skies open and the Four Living Creatures themselves descend from the clouds.

Rafael flees in terror. But he barely makes it a few yards before he himself is sucked up into the craft.

INT. THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES

Rafael floats in a space that has no up or down, left or right. Thuribles swing in the air, filling it with a thick haze.

Then something drifts into view. It's a painting in a sleek metallic frame - *The Destruction of Jerusalem* by David Roberts.

Then another, Andrea di Lione's *Tobit Burying the Dead*.

All of the paintings that have been shown in the film thus far are here in The Divine Craft. Rafael inspects them all.

Then he spies another chamber off of this larger one. It's a cockpit. And THE PILOT is sitting at the controls with his back to us. He is a man in a white robe with shoulder length hair and a metallic crown on his head.

Rafael propels himself closer. He reaches out to touch the man's shoulder. But then a doorway slams shut and casts the entire space into

DARKNESS

FADE IN:

EXT. OUTER SETTLEMENTS -- DAY

Tobias continues on alone through the decrepit and abandoned remnants of a town where exiles once lived. He passes burned-out buildings, lots over-grown with grass and weeds.

He stops in the middle of the street, looks about himself. A flicker of despair crosses his face for a moment, then one of resolve.

TOBIAS

(boldly)

See the conquering hero comes,
Sound the trumpet, beat the drums;
Sports prepare, the laurel bring,
Songs of triumph to him sing! See
the godlike youth advance,
Breathe the flutes and lead the
dance; Myrtle wreaths and roses
twine, To deck the hero's brows
divine!

His voice travels through the town, bounding off of every piece of shattered brickwork, every graffiti-spattered wall.

A long silence follows and then another sound. It's a rushing of wind. The hair on Tobias' head blows back as he turns, looks up to the sky.

The Four Living Creatures are hovering above him, though so high up he can barely make them out. They make a sharp move to the side and he follows.

So it goes that they lead him through the town and then further into a surrounding woods.

EXT. WOODS -- NIGHT

Tobias continues under the guidance of The Four Living Creatures. He loses sight of them a few times, but then they reappear.

Until suddenly they don't. He stops in his tracks, waits for them. But nothing comes.

Then he hears the howling of the wild dogs.

He takes the shovel from across his back and holds it out defensively. The dogs get louder and now he can hear their paws on the dirt.

Panting, growling.

One of them darts past him, and then another. Then a third nips at his heel. He can't see any of his attackers in this darkness so he just starts swinging the shovel wildly.

He connects with one of the dogs and sends it away yelping. He hits another and that one retreats also.

He swings one more time, but instead of hitting flesh, he hits something solid and hears a metallic 'clank'.

A faint glow all around him and then...

The Calf of the Law appears. It hovers a few inches above the ground, and then touches down right at his feet.

Speaks with Brother Sin's voice.

THE CALF OF THE LAW
Do you know what I am?

TOBIAS
The Calf of the Law.

THE CALF OF THE LAW
And you? What are you?

TOBIAS
...a man.

THE CALF OF THE LAW
You're an animal. Governed by your animal passions. And your sex-passion will kill you in that girl's bed.
(a pause)
(MORE)

THE CALF OF THE LAW (CONT'D)
 But I saved you from certain death
 before, remember? I can do it again
 now.

TOBIAS
 That was the worst moment of my
 life. Damn you for reminding me.

THE CALF OF THE LAW
 But you live! And now I'm here
 again to save you. To purify you.

TOBIAS
 I am pure.

THE CALF OF THE LAW
 You almost spilled your seed when
 an old man drew a picture in the
 dirt! How will you control your sex-
 passion with a real woman?

A pause.

TOBIAS
 You're not The Calf of the Law.

THE CALF OF THE LAW
 What does it matter who or what I
 really am? I can save you.

TOBIAS
 Prayer will save me.

THE CALF OF THE LAW
 Prayer is for the spirit. But it's
 your body that will betray you.
 Your sex-passion will show itself
 when it's too late. And then the
 Demon on Two-Sticks will have you.

The Calf of The Law rises up into the air and spins around,
 revealing its hindquarters and its orifice. This orifice
 begins to steam and emit vapor.

THE CALF OF THE LAW (CONT'D)
 Empty your passion into me. Then it
 won't be able to harm you. Put it
 in me, and then you can go to that
 girl pure and without fear.

The steam and vapor has a hypnotic effect on Tobias. He gets
 down on all fours and starts crawling towards the animal.

THE CALF OF THE LAW (CONT'D)

Yes... It's the only way. Put it
inside of me! Do it! What chance
does an ordinary man have when even
a king can't control his sex-
passion!

TOBIAS

...my king...

He stops himself. But he's so close now that the draw of the
orifice is very strong. It pulls him now against his will.
He's propped up on his knees, The Calf backs up and prepares
to be mounted.

THE CALF OF THE LAW

Come now! It's the only way!

At the last moment, Tobias reaches into his pocket and pulls
out the knife that Rafael had given him. He winds up and
drives it straight into the animal's hole.

The Calf of Law emits a shrill, agonizing cry and falls onto
its side, twitching and bleeding all down the side of its
metallic legs.

The spell is broken and Tobias returns to his senses. He then
recovers his shovel and smashes the idol to pieces.

The Four Living Creatures return. He follows them a little
further into the woods until they disappear again and he
hears a voice coming from near-by.

SARAH (O.S.)

Angel of the Dead, why are you so
long in coming this time?

He follows it a few yards to a treeline where he crouches and
strains his eyes to see...

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE -- YARD -- NIGHT

Bleary-eyed and teetering on the brink of unconsciousness,
Sarah has kept this vigil for almost a week. She draws on her
last reserves of energy to speak to the angel.

SARAH

At first I thought it was because
Brother Sin was a monster and you'd
decided that he didn't deserve a
burial.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

But then if a simple girl like me could forgive him, how much more so an angel from heaven?

Then I thought it was because he'd been an unbeliever. But in his last moments, when facing a demon from Hell, he most certainly believed. So something else...

Maybe the marriage wasn't true in your eyes because it was sworn on The Calf of the Law. But then, a vow is more than contracts and rituals. So he was my husband, same as the others.

All these days, I've thought of more and more reasons. But now I know the truth. Maybe I've known it all along and have just been deceiving myself.

You've looked into my heart, haven't you? You've looked deep inside and found my secret sin. You know what I desire and so now you stay away.

She reaches down and pries the pistol from Brother Sin's cold, dead hand. She checks the chamber, pulls the hammer back and then presses the barrel against her chest.

SARAH (CONT'D)

So be it. I'll have to answer my own prayers.

But before she can commit this horrible act, she catches sight of a figure approaching from the woods. It's clothed in white and has a small pair of wings.

It stops just before coming into the moonlight, giving the impression of a spirit creature hovering above the ground.

But seeing him at last does not fill Sarah with joy. Instead, it just confirms her guilt.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You've come to hear my confession? Well have it, then. At least I can die with a clean conscience.

(bowing her head)

I know that it's a terrible sin for angels to lie with women. I know that God unleashed a great flood because of it, and nearly destroyed the whole world.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

I'm guilty of wanting to break his law, to want to marry one of his spirit creatures.

(looking back up)

But it wasn't because of baseness or lust! I needed a protector! Who but a spirit creature could destroy another spirit creature? Who else but an angel could destroy the Demon on Two-Sticks?!

The figure starts moving now, comes into the moonlight.

The robes are revealed to be burial linen thrown over his shoulders, his wings a shovel strapped lengthwise across his back.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You're not the Angel of the Dead.

TOBIAS

No.

SARAH

Who are you?

TOBIAS

I'm his son.

SARAH

The children of angels are giants and monsters. You're neither.

TOBIAS

A giant or monster can't defeat the Demon on Two-Sticks. Only a man can do that. And a woman.

SARAH

What can a man and a woman do against a demon from Hell?

TOBIAS

They can marry and consummate in perfect love and purity, a union unsullied by lust or baseness or carnality.

(a pause)

The way that man and woman once were and will be again.

Long awkward silence.

Tobias then takes the shovel from across his back and steps past her, starts to dig Brother Sin's grave right there in the yard.

SARAH

(speaking to him with her
back turned)

Impossible. Men can't control their
base passions. Even those good men
that I married were lustful at the
last moment. It's in your nature.

TOBIAS

No. It was bequeathed to us by the
sin of our king. And an act of
redemption will purge it from us.

SARAH

(shaking her head)

How can a man and woman atone for
the sin of a king?

TOBIAS

Because he was the best of us, the
most exalted. And if a simple man
and woman show greater strength
than the king... That proves that
our people deserve forgiveness.

Long pause.

SARAH

(turning to him)

Are you and I are that man and
woman?

TOBIAS

It was shown to me.

SARAH

By whom?

TOBIAS

By the Four Living Creatures.

SARAH

The what?

TOBIAS

It's a space ship with four animal
heads on it. In one way or another,
it's shown me everything that I've
just told you.

A very long pause.

SARAH
(turning away from him
again)
You're mad.

TOBIAS
God speaks to the mad most of all.

SARAH
(a whisper)
Or is it his voice that drives us
mad?

She steps away into the darkness as Tobias continues his work. Time passes quickly and he is soon laying a burial linen on the fresh grave.

Then Sarah's voice from the darkness.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Don't fear, my servant, Jacob,
ho, I had a dream,
don't fear my servant, Jacob,
what a dreadful place!

The ladder standing with heavenly
angels,
they all descent and ascend with
wings in a pale shade...
May your strength not stray brother
Jacob!

Get up to your path, forward to the
East!
Go forward, underneath, go, for the
land shall rise now for you and
your seed...

BANG!

Tobias runs across the yard to the spot where he saw the muzzle flash. He finds Sarah barely alive with a wound to her chest and a trickle of blood coming from her mouth. She sways a few times and then falls onto her side.

Dead.

Tobias is stunned, incredulous. All he can do is weep. But as his sobs become louder and more intense, the sound of rushing water comes up on the audio.

He raises his head and a vision appears before his tear-filled eyes...

The Sacred Stream

Hit with inspiration, he scurries back into the darkness and returns with his satchel. He takes out the stone that he'd removed from the river and places it right over the wound on her chest.

He then shuts his eyes and the screen is again overcome by the image of the stream.

When we return to the yard, we see that the stone has vanished and that Sarah's wound has been healed. Her clothes have also been restored to their original state of cleanliness and Tobias' body and clothes have been purified too.

She opens her eyes, stares directly up and into...

NIGHT SKY

The Four Living Creatures are hovering a few hundred feet above the tree-line.

SARAH (V.O.)

(a murmur)

You know, Lord, that I never
coveted a husband and have kept my
soul clean from all lust. But
either I was unworthy of them, or
maybe they were unworthy of me.
Because maybe you have kept me for
another man.

DISSOLVE TO:

Image on screen: *Wedding Contract*

A beautiful document with gold leaf and ornate flourishes.

TOBIAS (V.O.)

Be thou my wife, according to the
law. And I will work for you, honor
you, provide for you and support
you in accordance with the practice
of a husband. And I will give you
your food, clothing and
necessities, and live with you as
husband and wife according to the
universal custom...

The camera pans down the document and lingers on seven names with lines crossed through them. These are Sarah's seven slain husbands: Abim, Antonius, Gurias, Eleazar, Eusebonus, Alimus and Marcellus.

Tobias signs his own at the bottom of them.

TOBIAS (V.O.)
 So say I, on the first day of the
 week, the fourth day of the month
 of Tishri in the 40th year of our
 exile.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE -- BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Sarah is kneeling on the bed, dressed in her restored wedding clothes. She has a far away look in her eyes, like she's staring through the wall.

She speaks in a dreamy murmur as Tobias carefully surrounds the bed with the pieces of the city wall that Jeremiah had given him.

SARAH
 Before I woke from death, I saw
 everything that you'd told me. I
 saw the king and his mistress...

Painting on screen: *Bathsheba* by Jean Leon Gerome

When the image dissolves back to Sarah, the glassy look in her eyes vanishes and her gaze fixes intensely on Tobias as he gets up onto the bed and kneels before her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 How can we redeem such an act?

TOBIAS
 With prayer.

He takes her hands and they both shut their eyes.

TOBIAS (V.O.)
 Blessed are you, God of our
 Fathers, Blessed too is your name
 forever and ever. Let the Heavens
 praise you and All your creation
 forever. You created Adam and his
 wife Eve as his helper and support.
 You said, 'It is not good for a man
 to be alone; Let us make a partner
 for him like himself.
 (MORE)

TOBIAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So now we take one another, not out of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that we shall find mercy, and that we may grow old together.

As he prays, the fragments around the bed reconfigure to make solid bricks. These in turn multiply and stack atop one another, creating a barrier around the bed.

When complete, the muffled sounds of a perfect and pure physical union can be heard from inside. As they intensify, the sounds of the demon's crutches rubbing together can be heard.

Then a puff of smoke and The Demon on Two-Sticks appears. It emits its horrible cry and flings itself up against the brickwork. But the razor sharp talons have no effect.

The Demon weakens quickly in the presence of this pure act of love. Its body loses its glow and becomes dull and dirty. The terrifying cry that it just made moments ago now turns to a clucking wheeze.

Seeing defeat, it tries to make an escape by rubbing the crutches together. But it's weakening so quickly that it can't create the smoke.

In desperation, it flings itself out of the window...

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE -- YARD -- NIGHT

Landing hard on the dirt, the demon hobbles to its feet and starts limping towards the treeline. Then it spies something approaching fast from overhead.

The Four Living Creatures.

The craft hovers about six feet above the ground and deposits Rafael roughly onto the grass, broadsword landing right beside him.

Then the craft rockets back into the sky and vanishes.

Rafael gets to his feet, looks around himself and then recoils in horror as The Demon on Two-Sticks approaches him.

Then we hear its terrible, though labored voice.

DEMON ON TWO-STICKS

(wheezing)

I know you. You lay with the dead!

Emboldened by this, the demon raises up one of its crutches to reveal another set of talons affixed to the bottom of it. It swings this weapon at Rafael who can only deflect it with meek parries of the sword.

DEMON ON TWO-STICKS (CONT'D)
 You eat unclean food and abuse
 yourself in public!

Rafael scrambles around the yard as the Demon chases him and continues to hurl indictments.

DEMON ON TWO-STICKS (CONT'D)
 You're a coward and a pervert! The
 bastard son of an exile and a
 soldier!

The Demon slows down to catch its breath. It wobbles on its crutches and nearly falls over.

DEMON ON TWO-STICKS (CONT'D)
 (breathing heavily)
 You...
 (wheezing)
 Your name is Azarias...

RAFAEL
 Yes. It means 'God has helped'

He raises the sword and charges, knocking the demon over and slashing at it furiously. Though most of the blows are deflected by the crutches and those that connect leave little damage.

RAFAEL (V.O.)
 I called out to the Lord, out of my
 distress, and he answered me;
 out of the belly of Sheol
 I cried, and you heard my voice...

The demon lunges at him from the ground, driving a talon into Rafael's side and pulling him down so that both are rolling and writhing in the dirt.

RAFAEL (V.O.)
 The waters closed in over me to
 take my life; the deep surrounded
 me; weeds were wrapped about my
 head at the roots of the mountains.

They grunt and gasp together so that this passionate struggle in the moonlight resembles the very manner of base sex act that Tobias and Sarah did not commit.

RAFAEL (V.O.)
But I with the voice of
thanksgiving will sacrifice to you;
what I have vowed I will pay.
Salvation belongs to the Lord!

He gets his hands around the Demon's throat and squeezes. The gasping, wheezing creature drives one of the talons deep into Rafael's side. But it can't free itself from those murderous hands.

It gives a few last desperate thrashes and then goes still.

Rafael rolls onto his side, bleeding from the same spot that the bullet had hit him the night that Brother Sin died. Though this time there will be no resurrection.

He breathes his last, dying beside the Demon in a spooning position that looks downright tender.

FADE OUT.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

The brickwork around the bed falls away in the sunlight to reveal Tobias and his bride embracing under a white sheet with a single blood stain on it.

The walls around them have miraculously turned pure white again and the two look as if they could be hovering in the clouds.

Tobias wakes first. He gets out of bed and walks over to the window, sees Rafael lying dead in the yard. He quickly dresses and slips out of the room.

Sarah meanwhile continues sleeping until she's awakened by flicker of light in the far corner of the room and the soothing voice that accompanies it.

VOICE
Do not be afraid, Sarah; you have
found favor with God. You have
conceived a son, and you are to
call him Judas Maccabeus. He will
be a great warrior and will raise
an army to take back the city. He
will be called the Son of the Most
High. The Lord God will give him
the throne of his father David, and
he will reign over Jacob's
descendants forever.

Painting on screen: *The Annunciation* by Henry Ossawa Tanner

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE -- YARD -- DAY

Rafael's body is still intact. Though all that's left of the Demon is a pile of ash and his broken crutches. Tobias picks up the shovel that's still lying beside Brother Sin's grave and starts to dig Rafael's.

Sarah meanwhile steps out of the house wrapped only in her bedsheet. She walks back to the same spot where she'd shot herself and kneels, sends a prayer of gratitude into the sky.

SARAH

Blessed are you God with every pure
and holy blessing! Let your holy
ones and all your creatures bless
you, And let all your Angels and
chosen ones bless you forever.
Blessed are you because you have
made me so happy: It did not turn
out as I had feared. Instead you
have shown mercy on us, and we
shall live in happiness and mercy.

EXT. MOUNTAIN BLUFF -- DAY

Hannah is keeping vigil at her father's grave. She spies something down in the valley and leaps up with joy at the approach of her brother and his bride.

She gets up and runs to meet them, through the camera stays behind and lingers on Tobit's burial mound so that it stays in the foreground as we see the happy reunion in the distance.

FADE OUT.