

**INT. LIVING ROOM, VICTORIAN MANSION. NIGHT. LATE 1800.**

OSCAR, a middle age man wearing classical, heavily untidy clothes, is laying on a luxurious victorian sofa. We barely see his shadow amongst the haze filling up the living room, lit by just a couple of timid candles here and there and moonlight shining in between the window curtains.

Oscar is smoking from an opium pipe and it appears he's been doing it for a while now. He wouldn't be able to stand up if he wanted to.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I'm disgusted by my existence.

Nothing excites me any longer.

Every day the same flavours, the same colours.

The beat of my heart sometimes  
feels like a punishment.

Oscar takes another drag off the opium. He exhales the smoke as if he wanted to abandon himself to the last remaining taste of its flavour.

Oscar stares in front of him. His eyes are looking at something but he is not there.

**INT. LIVING ROOM, VICTORIAN MANSION. NIGHT. LATE 1800 /FLASHBACK.**

Strauss's "Waltz a la Paganini, Op.11" starts. An elegant, tidy version of OSCAR opens up the pair of tall doors leading to the leaving room, holding on each of his two arms TWO BEAUTIFUL COURTISANS - not fully dressed -, who accompany him inside.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I am a spoiled man, I admit.

I've wanted everything, I've had everything.

There's this insatiable thirst I can't domesticate.

Yet I've felt nothing.

Only the boredom of my abundance.

The three of them dance to the music, laugh loudly, smoke opium and get ready to start a ménage-à-trois on the luxurious sofa.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I disgust myself.

Trapped in between the vast infinity  
of my conquests and the anguish of  
my deepest longings...

As if he had seen a ghost, Oscar suddenly loses his smiles. His eyes are fixed out of the room, through the small opening between the tall doors. The ladies continue to undress him lightheartedly. Oscar's eyes won't move.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Then I see him. Handsome, whole.  
Without any sign of shame or regret  
polluting his perfect gaze.

Behind the doors, JUDE, a young handsome man, wearing simple late 1800s working clothes, stares at him back from the living room. He observes with attention, there is no shyness in him.

Oscar leaves the ladies behind and rushes to come closer to JUDE. The two men face each other, through the opening of the doors. The ladies await on the sofa, being Oscar.

A beat. Will he dare to let him in...? No, not today.

Oscar closes the doors putting an end to his discomfort.

END OF FLASHBACK

**INT. LIVING ROOM, VICTORIAN MANSION. NIGHT. LATE 1800**

OSCAR tries to stand up while heavily coughing amongst a cloud of haze. He can barely hold still. He searches for something. His eyes are faster than his body can clumsily follow.

OSCAR

Where are you?! Go away!

I told you you're not welcome in this house!

JUDE appears in flashes in between shades. By the time Oscar manages to look in the right direction, Jude is already gone. Oscar gives up. His body collapses on the floor.

OSCAR

*(Shouting)*

Where are you?!

Go away!

Oscar cries in despair. His full body is contracted in physical and emotional pain.

A beat. He calms down.

Suddenly, we hear THE SHOUTS OF WOMEN outside the mansion, from far away. He can't distinguish what they say, because his intuition never fails him: these are not words of love.

Oscar crawls all the way up the window, in the dark, surrounded by the haze, visibly drugged. He stands up and looks out the window. What appears to be candle lanterns approach in the distance.

OSCAR (V.O.)

An outcasted, a dirty queer.

Money and power cannot buy people's minds.

I am a monster, an aberration.

I must cease to exist.

CUT TO BLACK

**EXT. GARDEN. DAY. LATE 1800**

Outside the sumptuous victorian mansion, JUDE is working on the garden. From inside the house, OSCAR observes him through a window.

**INT. LIVING ROOM, VICTORIAN MANSION. DAY. LATE 1800**

The same living room, this time lit by natural daylight. OSCAR, elegantly dressed, and JUDE, in his working clothes, are sitting in front of each other, Oscar on the luxurious sofa, Jude on a chair besides a small expensive table.

Oscar is finishing his wine. A MAID stands on the corner, waiting for any sign coming from Oscar. When Oscar finishes his wine, she rushes to fill the glass again. He stops her with a gesture. The maid diligently leaves to take her place in the corner.

OSCAR

*(To Jude)*

It's about time you accepted my invitation.  
I am not used to getting 'no' for an answer.

JUDE

I still don't know what I'm doing here.  
Did I not do my job properly?

OSCAR

You did your job perfectly fine.  
I want to talk to you about another matter.

Oscar calls the maid back with a gesture. When she approaches, again rushing to fulfil her task, he takes the bottle of wine from her.

OSCAR

*(to the maid)*

You can leave us now.

The maid quickly leaves.

OSCAR

*(to Jude)*

Wine?

JUDE

No, thank you.

I don't drink while on duty.

Oscar serves Jude a glass of red wine, nevertheless.

OSCAR

How sweet you are.

You don't need to guard your manners with me.

*(approaching him, lowering his voice)*

I know who you are. I know what you are.

Oscar stands up and comes around Jude's chair.

OSCAR

*(Behind Jude's chair, with his arms around him)*

*You are the death, the devil. Lucifer.*

You are here to tempt me and arouse my sins.

Oscar tries to unbutton Jude's shirt. Jude stops him after a couple of buttons: he firmly grabs Oscar's hand.

JUDE

You think you can do whatever you please?

Because you have wealth, power...?

This is precisely what you loath.

This is why you think you want me.

OSCAR

Oh, come on lover-boy, stop the game.

JUDE

A soul to possess, a body to buy.

The humble are weak, we have no character.

OSCAR starts to cough. He feels unwell, he has difficulty to breath. He comes back to the sofa and sits. Oscar stares at the wine, grabs it and smells it. Oscar notices that JUDE hasn't touched his wine.

OSCAR

What have you done?

JUDE

Me? Or was it her?

You poison yourself every day.

The smoke, the wine...

In a matter of days you'll be dead.

OSCAR tries to puke the wine he's drunk.

JUDE

You've begged for it so many times.

I got sick of listening.

You want to devoid yourself

from choice, from gut.

It doesn't work like that.

A good death is to be earned.

Yours won't be.

OSCAR

Who are you?

JUDE

You said it yourself.

I'm the death, the devil. Lucifer.

I go by many names.

Oscar observes Jude carefully, everything is getting blurry.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I wasn't afraid to die.

I can take pain.

But I was not ready to die

without having been loved.

Jude comes to sit on the sofa, next to OSCAR, who is in very bad shape.

JUDE

*(shouting towards the door)*

Help! Maid!

OSCAR

No! Don't call her!

OSCAR (V.O.)

As his enchanting eyes approached me

I knew I was ready to embrace who I was.

I wanted to say to him,

for the very first time in my life,

the words which had had no meaning to me until now.

OSCAR

I love you.

A beat. Jude stays silent. Oscar stares at Jude as if waiting for one 'I love you' back that wasn't going to come. Jude tries to stand up.

OSCAR

*(stopping Jude from standing up)*

Please don't leave! Stay with me.  
I love you. Don't you understand?

JUDE

I think I should get you a doctor.

OSCAR

No! No doctors!  
There's nothing wrong with me.

Oscar tries to reach for his opium pipe.

OSCAR

Give me my pipe.

JUDE

I don't think that's a good idea.

Oscar bursts into tears. He wipes his eyes and turns his head to look at the tall doors leading to the living room. From behind the doors, his MOTHER appears, wearing black, like a vision from another time.

OSCAR

Mother?

JUDE

What's there? Talk to me.

The eyes of Oscar are fixed on his mother. But when Jude looks, there's nobody there.

OSCAR (V.O.)

She left. She left me. I was 13.  
I was playing with another boy and...

She didn't like the succession of events.

When Oscar looks, however, she is there, stands still, staring back at him. She sees him, like she's always had.

MOTHER

You're such a disgrace...

The woman disappears again behind the tall doors.

OSCAR

*(turns to Jude)*

I just wanted to be loved.  
Like I want to be loved now.  
Do you understand that?

Oscar studies Jude's face with his hands. After a moment of hesitation, Jude kisses his forehead, steps away and leaves.

JUDE

I'm going to get you some help.

OSCAR

No doctors, I said!  
There's nothing wrong with me!  
There's nothing wrong with me!  
There's nothing wrong with me!

OSCAR explodes in anger. But his cough and his dizziness won't let him go very far.

**INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. LATE 1800**

We go back to OSCAR looking out the window, the SHOUTS OF WOMEN can be heard from closer now, still unintelligible. As the figures carrying the candle lanterns walk closer, Oscar discovers his COURTISANS, his MOTHER walking after then, finally his MAID. As the last one approaches, she throws her candle lantern towards the

window with all her forces. Oscar abruptly closes the curtains. He turns around.

JUDE is there. He's been observing at a distance.

JUDE

It's time, Oscar.

Oscar can't move.

JUDE

It's time.

You don't need to fight anymore.

OSCAR

You're not welcome in this house.

JUDE

It's the last time you'll see me.

Tonight it'll be your last.

MURMURS of people shouting and FEET MARCHING outside the mansion. Oscar knows there's no point in arguing anymore. He comes back to his sofa and, before he can reach it, he falls, right next to it, on the floor. He throws his opium pipe away.

OSCAR

*(to Jude)*

But I love you.

JUDE

Good.

Jude leaves. Oscar is now alone in the dark.

Suddenly, the living room catches FIRE. OSCAR has no choice but to accept his destiny amongst the flames. He welcomes it in peace.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I was perhaps born too soon.

In a world where fear  
and terror of the other were still kings.

I only said 'I love you' to Jude once.

Twice. Three times.

Those are the sweetest moments

I take with me now.

I am finally free.

1111I am finally myself.

And there's nothing to fear anymore,  
for I am dead.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END