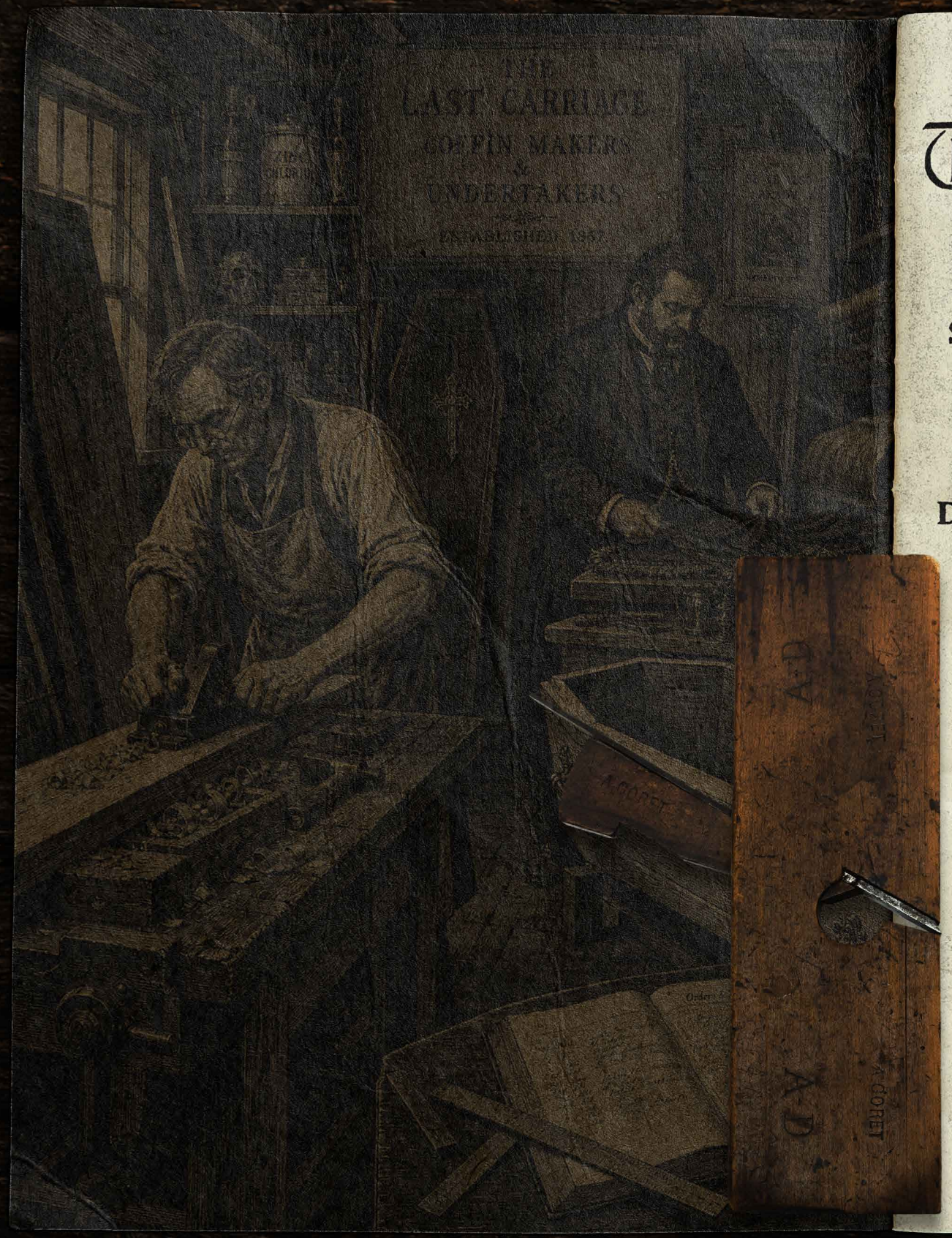
The Last Carriage

a collection of gothic tales
by Ryan de Quintal

Film Bible and
Supplemental Material



Introduction

THE LAST CARRIAGE IS MY LOVE LETTER TO GOTHIC HORROR AND THE CLASSIC LITERATURE OF POE, SHELLEY, STOKER, STEVENSON, AND THE MANY DARK STORYTELLERS WHO SHAPED THE GENRE. THE AIM WAS TO CREATE A COLLECTION OF TALES TOLD ACROSS SEVERAL FEATURE FILMS, EACH EXPLORING A DIFFERENT CORNER OF HORROR THROUGH SHIFTING CENTURIES, LANGUAGES, FOLKLORE, AND VISUAL AESTHETICS. THIS FIRST COLLECTION BEGINS INSIDE AN UNDERTAKER'S SHOP, WHERE DEATH IS MEASURED, STORIES ARE KEPT, AND SIX BLACK-BOUND VOLUMES OPEN INTO WORLDS OF GRIEF, MADNESS, PUNISHMENT, AND THE SUPERNATURAL. I HOPE THESE TALES FEEL LIKE RELICS PULLED FROM THE SHELF, SEALED IN LEATHER AND PINE, AND I HOPE YOU ENJOY THE JOURNEY.

Ryan de Quintal

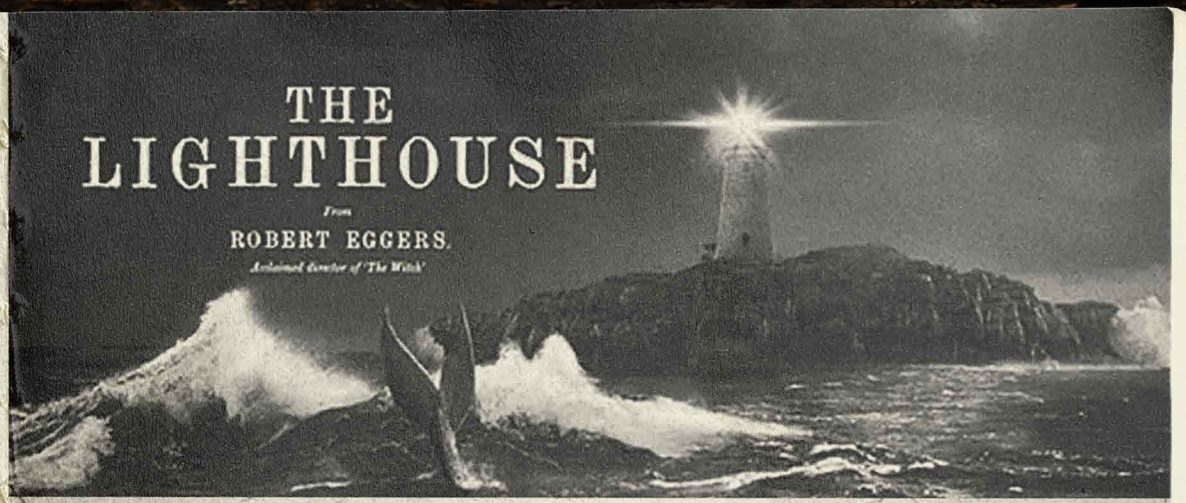
RYAN DE QUINTAL
WRITER / DIRECTOR / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER


THE LAST CARRIAGE
COFFIN MAKERS & UNDERTAKERS
ALL
COMMEN
TO DUST

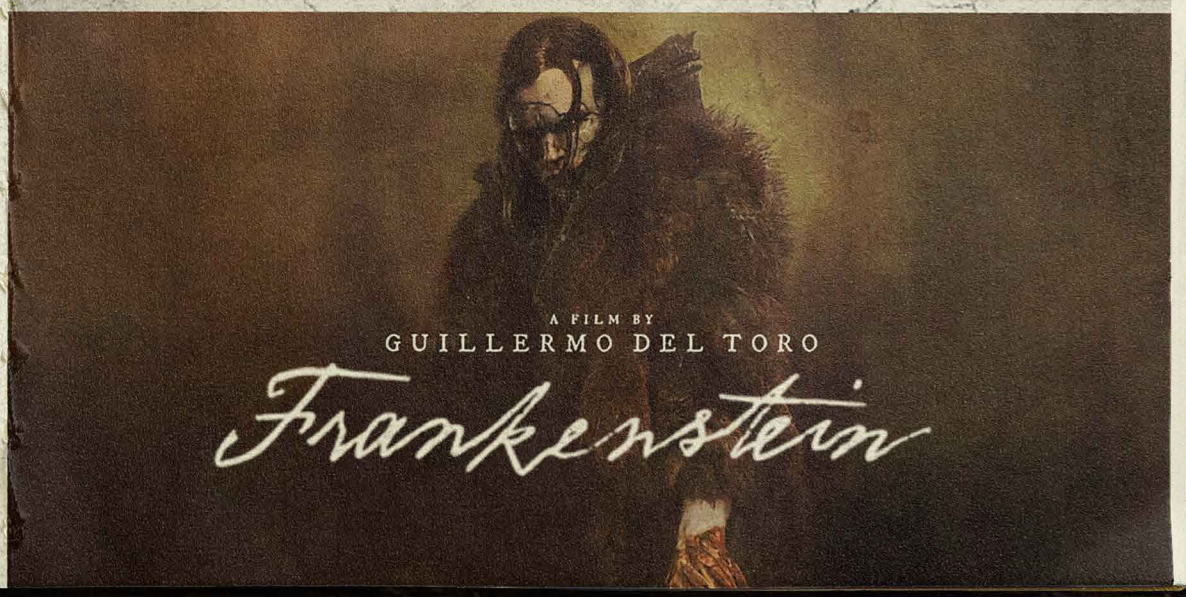
Influences

Gothic Cinema

THE CREATIVE COMPASS FOR THE LAST CARRIAGE BEGINS WITH THE QUESTION: WHAT IF ROBERT EGGERS DIRECTED THE BALLAD OF BUSTER SCRUGGS? THAT BLEND SUGGESTS THE TONE WE ARE CHASING: A LITERARY ANTHOLOGY OF DARK TALES, GROUNDED IN OBSESSIVE PERIOD DETAIL, RITUAL, LANGUAGE, CRAFT, AND ATMOSPHERE. FROM THERE, THE FILM REACHES TOWARD THE FANTASTICAL GOTHIC IMAGINATION OF FILMMAKERS LIKE GUILLERMO DEL TORO, WHERE OBJECTS, FOLKLORE, DEATH, AND MEMORY CAN FEEL BOTH HANDMADE AND MYTHIC. THE GOAL IS TRANSPORTIVE CINEMA. SIX STORIES DISTINCT IN SUBGENRE, CENTURY, LANGUAGE, AND VISUAL TEXTURE, ALL BOUND TOGETHER BY ONE HAUNTED ESTABLISHMENT WHERE DEATH IS MEASURED AND STORIES ARE KEPT.








REGISTER

VOLUME I

THE COFFIN & THE KING

a gothic folktale



Introduction

THE COFFIN & THE KING IS A GOTHIC FOLK TRAGEDY ROOTED IN THE QUIET HORROR OF BELIEF, WHERE LOVE, RITUAL, AND GRIEF COLLIDE WITH IRREVERSIBLE CONSEQUENCE. THE FILM DRAWS TONAL AND CHARACTER INSPIRATION FROM JOHN LOGAN'S PENNY DREADFUL, EMBRACING ITS RICH INTERIOR LIVES AND MORAL DECAY, WHILE ECHOING THE HAUNTING TRAGEDY OF THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE, WHERE LOSS LINGERS AS A PHYSICAL PRESENCE RATHER THAN A SPECTACLE. LIKE A FIELD IN ENGLAND, THE STORY TRAPS ORDINARY MEN WITHIN A CLOSED WORLD GOVERNED BY SUPERSTITION, GREED, AND RITUAL, ALLOWING MYTH TO OVERTAKE REASON. I WANTED THE FILM TO FEEL LIKE A LOST 19TH-CENTURY FOLK TALE, INTIMATE, RESTRAINED, AND UNRESOLVED, WHERE DEATH IS NOT A MONSTER, BUT A TRUTH THAT LISTENS TO NO ONE.

Ryan de Quintal

RYAN DE QUINTAL
WRITER / DIRECTOR / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

The Characters

Charles Williams

A MAN UNDONE BY LOVE, CARRYING THE QUIET AUTHORITY OF SOMEONE WHO ONCE BELIEVED LIFE COULD BE ARRANGED THROUGH ORDER, DEVOTION, AND WILL. A WIDOWER OF MEANS, HE IS METICULOUS AND PRIVATE, SHAPED BY VICTORIAN NOTIONS OF DUTY AND PERMANENCE, AND SHATTERED WHEN THOSE BELIEFS FAIL TO PROTECT THE WOMAN HE LOVED.

UNABLE TO IMAGINE A WORLD BEYOND ELEANOR, CHARLES TURNS GRIEF INTO RITUAL, CONVINCING HIMSELF THAT DEATH CAN BE ENTERED WITH INTENTION, DIGNITY, AND CONTROL. IN THIS, HE MISTAKES RESOLVE FOR PEACE, BELIEVING THAT CHOICE ALONE CAN SANCTIFY DESPAIR. WHEN HE AWAKENS IN THE COFFIN, HE BECOMES THE EMBODIMENT OF A TERRIBLE IRONY: A MAN WHO CHOSE HIS END, ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT DEATH ANSWERS NEITHER LOVE NOR BELIEF.



Bill Cutter

BIIL IS A HARDENED GRAVE ROBBER WHOSE LIFE HAS NARROWED INTO RULES, RITUALS, AND SURVIVAL, SHAPED BY YEARS SPENT WORKING AT THE EDGES OF DEATH. PRACTICAL, SUPERSTITIOUS, AND QUIETLY INTELLIGENT, BILL BELIEVES DEEPLY IN THE CUSTOMS OF THE GROUND, TREATING BURIAL NOT AS SENTIMENT BUT AS A TRANSACTION GOVERNED BY UNSEEN LAWS.

HE JUSTIFIES HIS CRIMES THROUGH FOLKLORE AND PRAGMATISM, CONVINCING HIMSELF THAT ORDER CAN BE MAINTAINED EVEN WHILE VIOLATING THE DEAD. BENEATH HIS CERTAINTY LIES A FEAR HE NEVER NAMES, THE SENSE THAT SOME BOUNDARIES, ONCE CROSSED, REMEMBER WHO CROSSED THEM. WHEN THE WOMAN IN BLACK APPEARS, BILL IS FORCED TO FACE THE TRUTH HE HAS SPENT A LIFETIME AVOIDING: BELIEF DOES NOT PROTECT THOSE WHO PROFIT FROM IT.

Jim Harris

JIM IS A RESTLESS OPPORTUNIST DRIVEN BY HUNGER, DEBT, AND A DESPERATE NEED TO PROVE HIMSELF IN A WORLD THAT OFFERS HIM LITTLE MERCY. LESS HARDENED THAN BILL, JIM MASKS FEAR WITH HUMOR AND BRAVADO, TREATING GRAVE ROBBING AS A GAMBLE RATHER THAN A CREED. WHERE BILL CLINGS TO RITUAL, JIM CLINGS TO CHANCE, BELIEVING LUCK CAN SHIELD HIM FROM CONSEQUENCE.

AS THE NIGHT UNRAVELS, JIM'S GREED GIVES WAY TO TERROR AND FINALLY TO CONSCIENCE, FORCING HIM TO RECKON WITH THE COST OF WHAT HE HAS HELPED DISTURB. BY THE END, JIM BECOMES THE FILM'S CRUELEST IRONY: A MAN WHO SOUGHT PROFIT IN DEATH, AND FINDS HIMSELF FIGHTING TO SAVE A LIFE HE NEVER MEANT TO VALUE.



Eleanor Williams

EXISTS AS A MEMORY, A PRESENCE, AND A WOUND THAT REFUSES TO CLOSE, SHAPING THE LIVES OF THE MEN LEFT BEHIND MORE THAN SHE EVER COULD IN LIFE. REMEMBERED AS GENTLE AND LUMINOUS, ELEANOR IS THE STILL CENTER AROUND WHICH CHARLES'S GRIEF AND DEVOTION SPIRAL INTO RITUAL. WHETHER SHE APPEARS AS GHOST, VISION, OR THE FINAL KINDNESS OF A DYING MIND IS LEFT UNRESOLVED,

HER PRESENCE OFFERING NEITHER RESCUE NOR CONDEMNATION. SHE SPEAKS WITH THE CLARITY OF LOSS RATHER THAN THE AUTHORITY OF THE DEAD, REMINDING CHARLES THAT LOVE DOES NOT BARGAIN WITH DEATH. IN THIS WAY, ELEANOR BECOMES LESS A SPECTER THAN A TRUTH: THAT WHAT WE LOVE MOST CANNOT FOLLOW US INTO THE GRAVE.

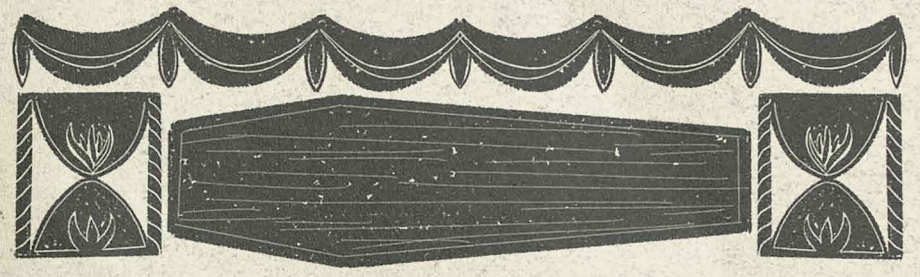


Classic Literature

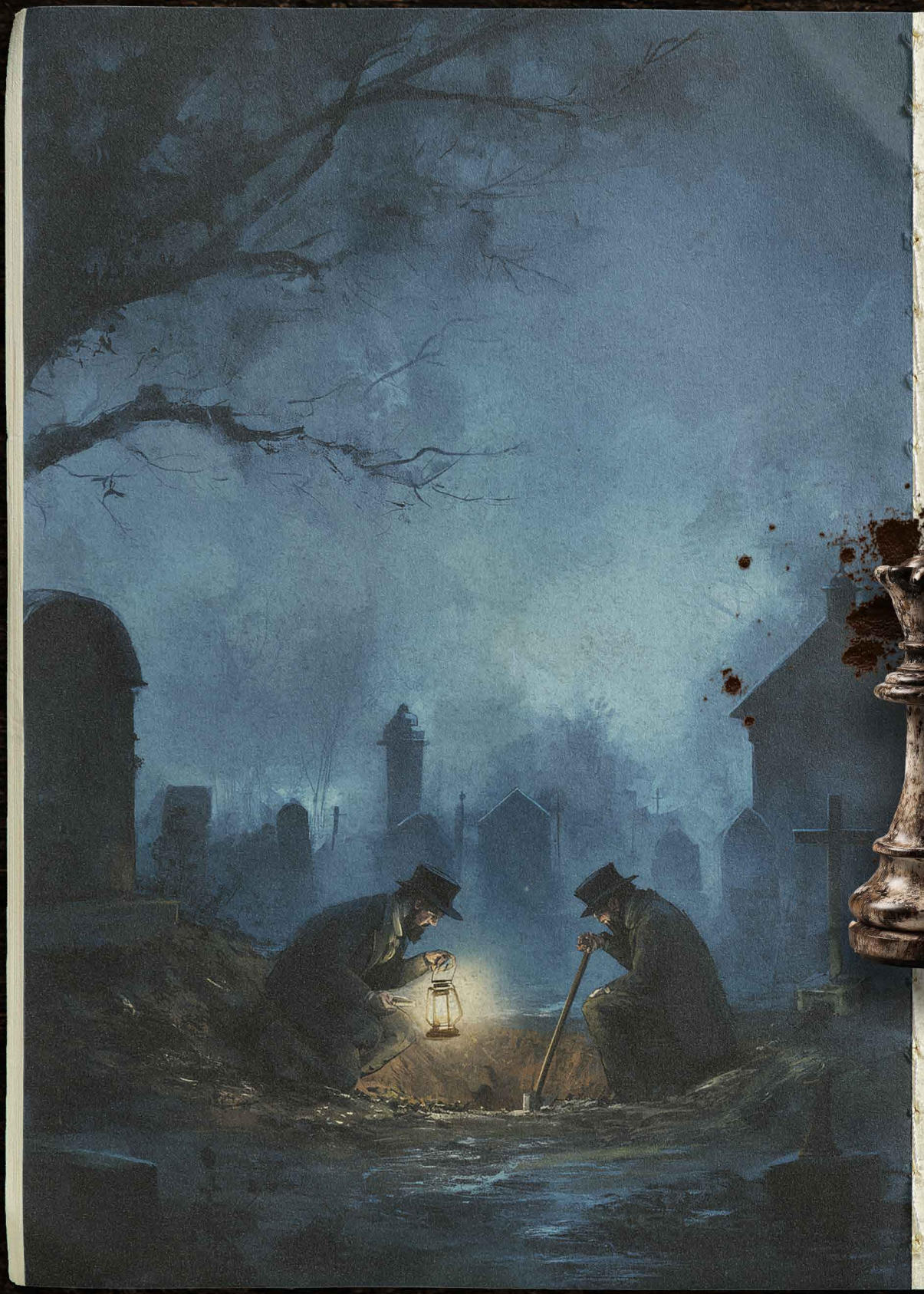
Influences

THE FILM DRAWS DEEPLY FROM THE RICH LITERARY TRADITION OF THE 19TH CENTURY, PARTICULARLY THE WORKS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE AND HORATIUS BONAR, WHOSE WRITING CONFRONTS DEATH WITH INTIMACY, TERROR, AND MORAL WEIGHT. BONAR'S POEM "THE LOVE OF GOD" IS SPOKEN WITHIN THE COFFIN, SERVING AS CHARLES'S FINAL PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL ANCHOR AS PANIC GIVES WAY TO SURRENDER.

POE'S SHORT STORY "THE PREMATURE BURIAL" WAS A DIRECT INFLUENCE, SHAPING THE FILM'S OBSESSION WITH CONSCIOUSNESS TRAPPED BENEATH RITUAL, EARTH, AND INEVITABILITY. BEYOND SPECIFIC TEXTS, THE BROADER CANON OF 19TH-CENTURY LITERATURE INFORMED THE FILM'S CADENCE, VOCABULARY, AND SENSE OF FATALISM, GROUNDING THE HORROR IN PERIOD-AUTHENTIC VOICE RATHER THAN MODERN AFFECTATION. TOGETHER, THESE INFLUENCES ALLOWED THE FILM TO TREAT DEATH NOT AS SPECTACLE, BUT AS A LIVED PHILOSOPHICAL TERROR, SPOKEN, PRAYED, AND ENDURED IN LANGUAGE OF ITS TIME.







The Visual Aesthetic

Atmosphere

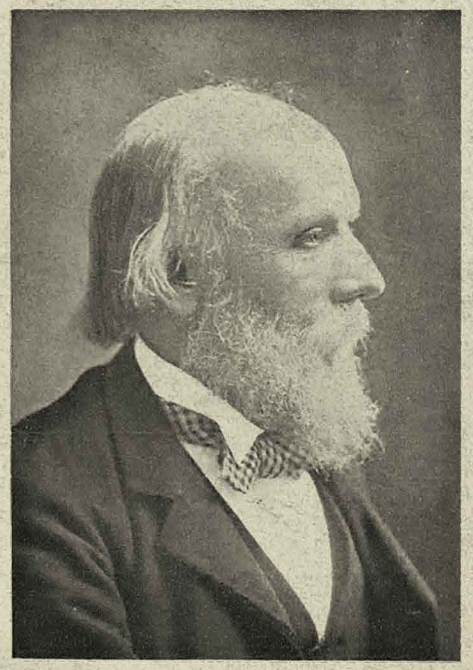
THE VISUAL LANGUAGE OF THE FILM EMBRACES A 2.00:1 ASPECT RATIO, CREATING A WIDE, CINEMATIC FRAME THAT CONTRASTS THE OPENNESS OF THE GRAVEYARD WITH THE SUFFOCATING CONFINEMENT OF THE COFFIN. THIS EXPANDED COMPOSITION ALLOWS THE FILMMAKERS TO STAGE CHARACTERS AGAINST VAST NEGATIVE SPACE, ROLLING HILLS, FOG, AND SKY, WHILE ISOLATING THEM WITHIN THEIR OWN MORAL AND EMOTIONAL SOLITUDE.

THE GOTHIC TONE IS CARRIED THROUGH A CAREFUL INTERPLAY OF COLD MOONLIGHT AND WARM LANTERN GLOW, VISUALLY BALANCING ROMANCE AND DREAD WITHIN THE SAME IMAGE. COLOR IS USED SPARINGLY AND WITH INTENTION, OFTEN DESATURATED TO EVOKE DECAY, WHILE MOMENTS OF WARMTH ARE RESERVED FOR MEMORY, LOVE, AND ILLUSION. EACH SHOT IS DELIBERATELY COMPOSED.

Research

Premature Burial

THIS FILM IS GROUNDED IN THE VERY REAL 19TH-CENTURY FEAR OF PREMATURE BURIAL, A WIDESPREAD ANXIETY THAT LED BRITISH SOCIAL REFORMER WILLIAM TEBB TO PUBLISH A DETAILED TREATISE ON HOW SUCH DEATHS MIGHT BE PREVENTED. THAT TEXT, ALONGSIDE COUNTLESS NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS AND PERIOD WRITINGS, REVEALED A CULTURE OBSESSED WITH DEATH, UNCERTAINTY, AND THE TERROR OF WAKING BENEATH THE EARTH.



PREMATURE BURIAL

AND

HOW IT MAY BE PREVENTED

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TRANCE, CATALEPSY, AND OTHER FORMS OF SUSPENDED ANIMATION

William Tebb



Grave Robbers

THE PRACTICE OF GRAVE ROBBING, CARRIED OUT BY SO-CALLED RESURRECTIONISTS, ALSO INFORMED THE STORY, DRAWING FROM DOCUMENTED CASES THAT PERSISTED EVEN AS THE CENTURY WANED. BY WEAVING THESE HISTORICAL FEARS AND TRUE INCIDENTS INTO THE NARRATIVE, THE FILM AIMS TO CREATE A GOTHIC HORROR ROOTED NOT IN INVENTION, BUT IN ANXIETIES THAT WERE LIVED, RECORDED, AND FAMILIAR.



Folklore

Cats & Ghosts

FOLKLORE PLAYS A QUIET BUT ESSENTIAL ROLE IN THE COFFIN & THE KING, SHAPING HOW THE CHARACTERS UNDERSTAND DEATH LONG BEFORE THE SUPERNATURAL EVER APPEARS. CATS, LONG ASSOCIATED WITH BURIAL GROUNDS AND THE PASSAGE BETWEEN WORLDS, SERVE AS SILENT WITNESSES TO THE TRANSGRESSIONS COMMITTED IN THE GRAVEYARD.

ELEANOR'S APPARITION AND THE WOMAN IN BLACK ARE DRAWN FROM FOLK TRADITIONS OF LINGERING SPIRITS AND DEATH OMENS, EXISTING LESS AS MONSTERS THAN AS MANIFESTATIONS OF UNRESOLVED GRIEF AND JUDGMENT. BY GROUNDING THESE ELEMENTS IN FOLKLORE RATHER THAN EXPLANATION, THE FILM ALLOWS MYTH TO COEXIST WITH REALITY, LEAVING THE AUDIENCE TO DECIDE WHERE BELIEF ENDS AND THE HAUNTING BEGINS.







VOLUME II

Dogs Black

a gothic folktale of sin and storms



Introduction

THIS FILM WAS BORN FROM A DESIRE TO CRAFT AN ANCIENT-FEELING FOLKTALE, ONE THAT HONORED THE RICH BLACK DOG LEGENDS AND CHURCH GRIM TRADITIONS WOVEN THROUGH ENGLAND'S OLD COUNTRYSIDE. IN SHAPING DANIEL AND CHARLOTTE'S TENSE, TWO-HANDER DYNAMIC, I DREW HEAVILY FROM THE ISOLATION AND WEATHER-BEATEN PSYCHOLOGY OF THE LIGHTHOUSE, WHERE THE LANDSCAPE BECOMES ITS OWN MERCILESS CHARACTER. THE FILM'S VISUAL LANGUAGE LEANS INTO THE GOTHIC FAIRYTALE SENSIBILITIES OF SLEEPY HOLLOW, WHILE ITS SPIRITUAL DREAD AND PRIMAL FOLKLORE ECHO THE ELEMENTAL TERROR OF THE WITCH. MY AIM WAS TO MAKE A STORY THAT FEELS UNEARTHED RATHER THAN INVENTED, SOMETHING WHISPERED ACROSS MOORS, CARVED INTO OLD STONES, AND CARRIED FORWARD BY STORM AND SHADOW.

Ryan de Quintal

RYAN DE QUINTAL
WRITER / DIRECTOR / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

The Characters



Daniel Bishop

A weary peddler whose life has been shaped by hardship, hunger, and the quiet desperation of a man scraping by on the margins. Beneath his humble exterior lies a secret cowardice, one fateful act of theft and violence he has buried so deep he no longer recognizes it as part of himself. He wanders the moors not as a tradesman, but as a soul in flight, chased by guilt he refuses to name.

His faith is worn thin, more superstition than salvation, yet he clings to it as his last tether to righteousness. Over the course of the story, Daniel is forced to confront the truth of who he is, leading him toward a reckoning as ancient and inevitable as the folklore that hunts him.

Charlotte

A reclusive widow who has lived her final years among the broken stones of the ruined chapel, closer to the dead than to the living. Weathered by loss and sharpened by solitude, she carries the old folklore of the moors in her bones, speaking truths most would rather not hear. Though she appears brittle, her gaze cuts with the clarity of someone who has long abandoned fear and false comfort.

She recognizes guilt in others the way a seasoned shepherd reads sky and soil, seeing in Daniel what he dares not see in himself. In her presence, the boundary between tale and truth thins, making her both witness and herald of the reckoning that approaches.

Daniel Bishop



Full Body





Rosary



Cart

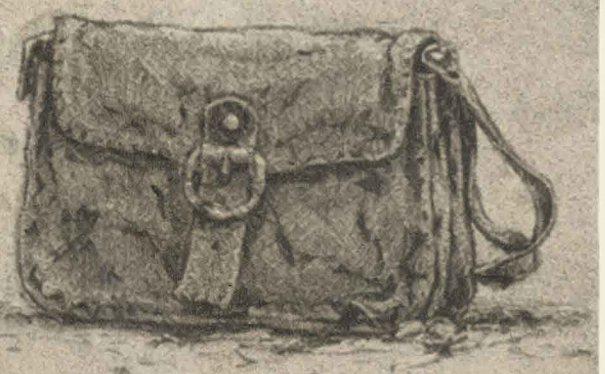
Charlotte



Full Body



Close-Up



Satchel Detail



Brooch Detail



Staff Detail



Lantern:



Ring Detail

The Lore

BLACK SHUCK

THIS STORY DRAWS FROM THE CHURCH GRIM LEGENDS AND THE INFAMOUS BLACK SHUCK SIGHTINGS THAT HAUNTED SUFFOLK, ENGLAND IN THE 1500S, INCLUDING THE NIGHT THE GREAT BLACK HOUND WAS SAID TO HAVE BURST THROUGH A CHURCH DOOR AND STRUCK WORSHIPPERS DEAD. IN OLD ENGLISH LORE, THE GRIM WAS A GUARDIAN SPIRIT BORN FROM A SACRIFICED HOUND, WHILE SHUCK WAS ITS DARKER TWIN, A HARBINGER OF GUILT, DOOM, AND UNREPENTANT SIN.

THE FILM BLENDS THESE TWO THREADS INTO A SINGLE MYTHIC FORCE: A BEAST THAT WALKS THE MOORS NOT FOR BLOOD, BUT FOR TRUTH. BY ROOTING THE NARRATIVE IN THIS CENTURIES-OLD FOLKLORE, THE STORY AIMS TO FEEL LESS INVENTED AND MORE UNEARTHED, AN ANCIENT WARNING WHISPERED ACROSS STORMS AND GRAVESTONES.

A ſtraunge.

and terrible Wunder wrought
very late in the parish Church
of Bongay, a Towun of no greate di-
ſtance from the citie of Norwich, name-
ly the fourth of this August, in ỹ yeare of
our Lord 1577. in a great tempeſt of vi-
olent raine, lightning, and thunder, the
like whereof hath been
knowne ſeene.
With the appearance of an horrible ſha-
ped thing, ſenſibly perceiued of the
people then and there
aſſembled.
Drawen into a plain method ac-
cording to the written copye.
by Abraham Fleming.



Church Grim



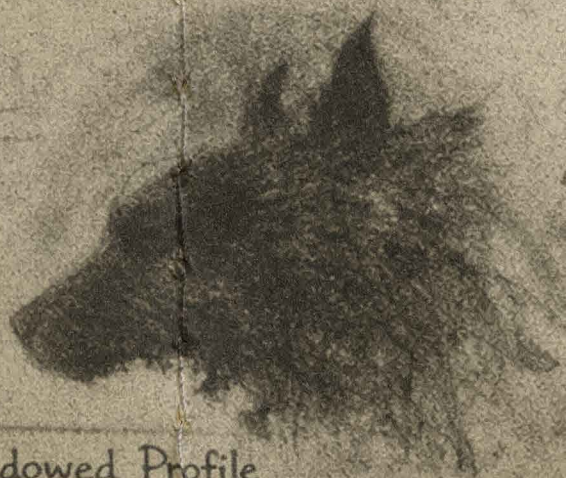
Wide Silhouette.



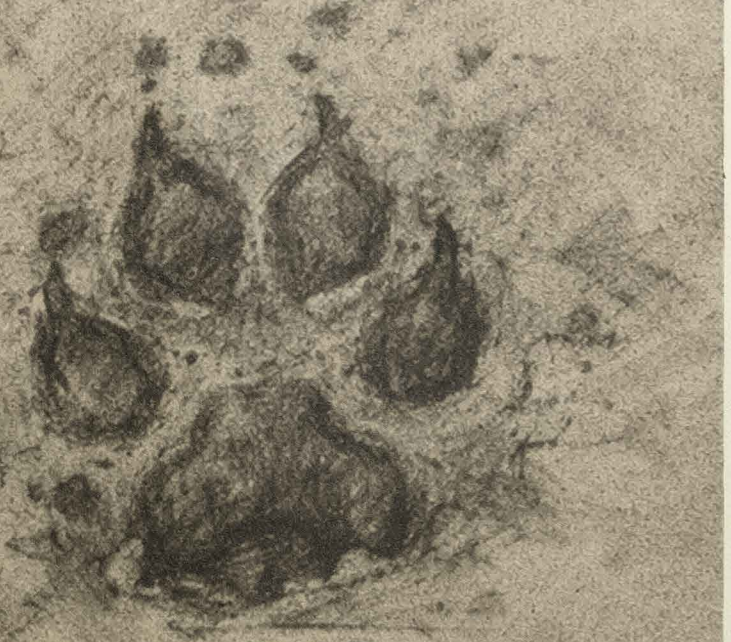
Close-up

Red eyes burn like embers...





Shadowed Profile



Paw Print



BLACK DOG FOLKLORE

BLACK DOG FOLKLORE IN ENGLAND TELLS OF GREAT SPECTRAL HOUNDS THAT ROAM LONELY ROADS, CHURCHYARDS, AND STORM-SWEPT MOORS, APPEARING AS OMENS OF DEATH OR DIVINE JUDGMENT. ACROSS COUNTIES AND CENTURIES, THESE CREATURES, KNOWN BY MANY NAMES, INCLUDING BLACK SHUCK, EMBODY THE LAND'S OLDEST FEARS, WHERE WEATHER, WILDERNESS, AND THE WEIGHT OF SIN WALK SIDE BY SIDE.





Daniel Transforming into the Church Grim



Eyes Changing



Teeth Growing



Nails Growing









Stage 1

Stage 2

Stage 3.

Stage 4.



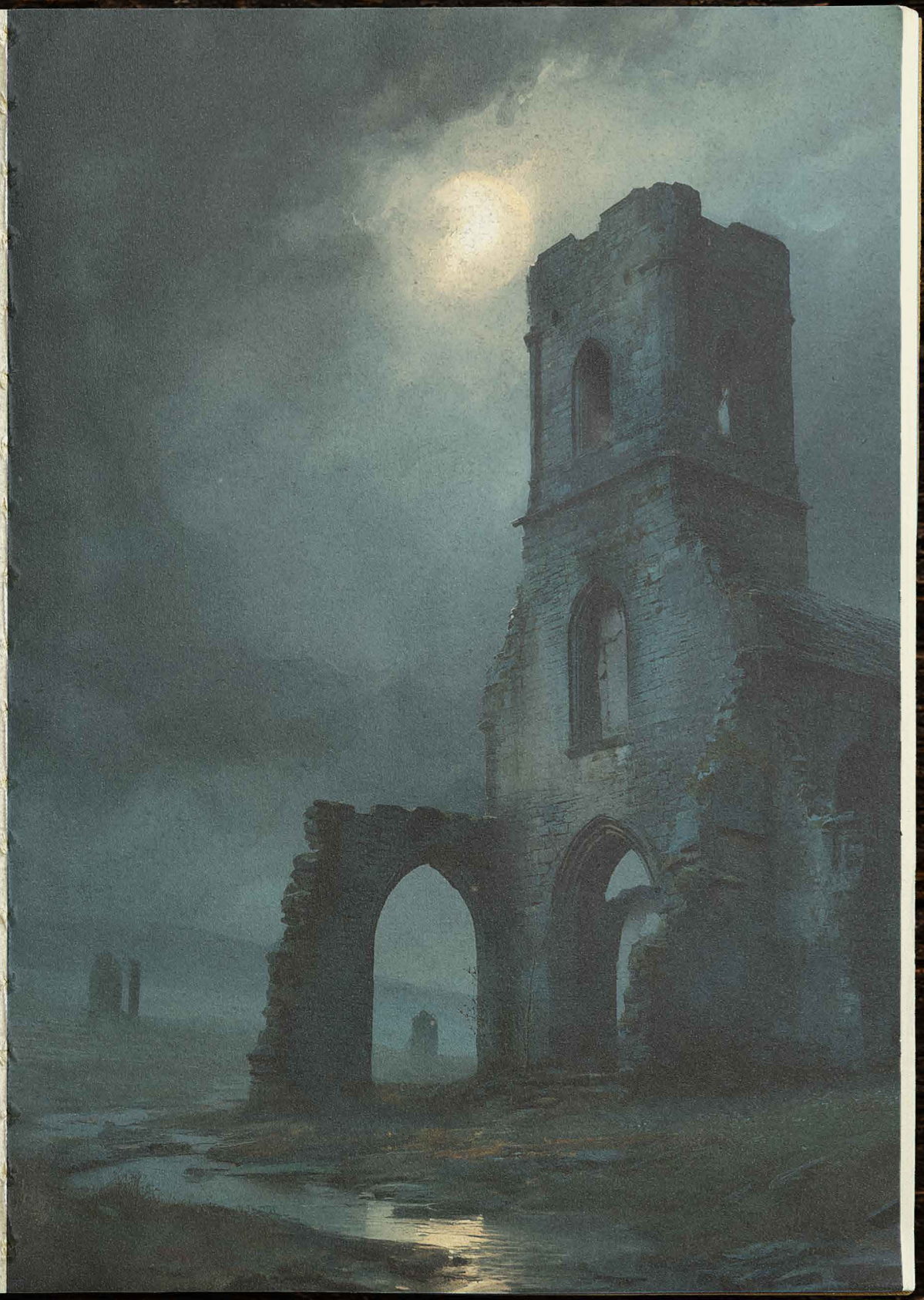
The World



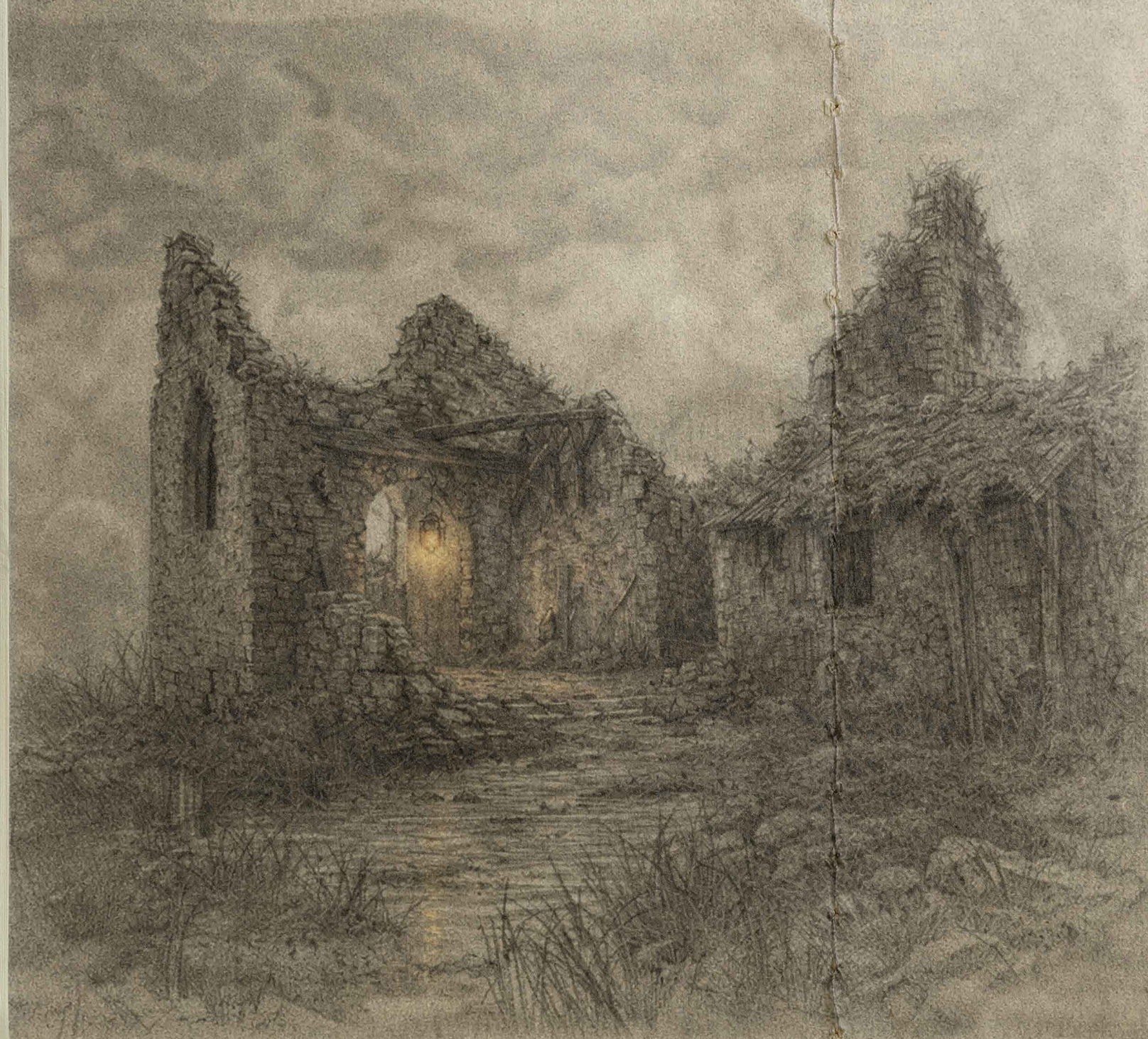
An Older Time

THE WORLD OF THE FILM IS BUILT TO FULLY IMMERSE THE VIEWER IN 16TH CENTURY SUFFOLK, CAPTURING THE RAW, WIND-BEATEN AUSTERITY OF THE MOORS AND THE SPIRITUAL UNEASE OF A LAND STEEPED IN OLD BELIEFS. EVERY PROP, GARMENT, AND TOOL IS CRAFTED OR SOURCED WITH STRICT PERIOD ACCURACY, GROUNDING THE STORY IN TEXTURES AND DETAILS THAT FEEL GENUINELY LIVED-IN.

THE RUINED CHAPEL, THE PEDDLER'S CART, AND THE WARDROBE WORK TOGETHER TO TRANSPORT THE AUDIENCE INTO AN OLDER, HARSHER ENGLAND WHERE SUPERSTITION AND SURVIVAL WALKED HAND IN HAND. THE DIALOGUE DRAWS FROM PERIOD-CORRECT SUFFOLK DIALECT, ALLOWING THE CHARACTERS TO SPEAK WITH THE CADENCE AND GRIT OF THEIR TIME, FURTHER DEEPENING THE FILM'S AUTHENTICITY.

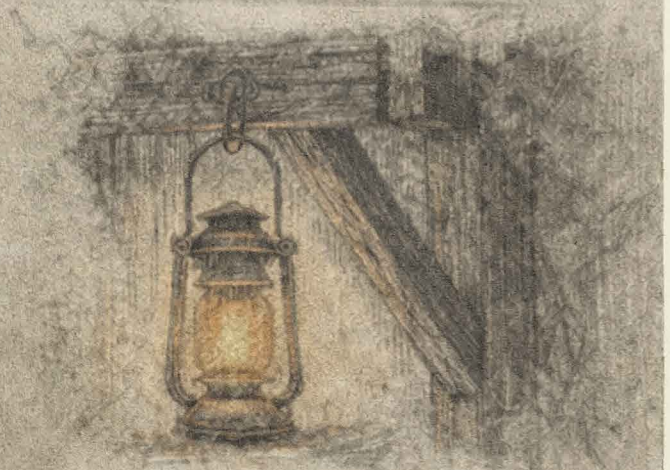


Chapel Ruins





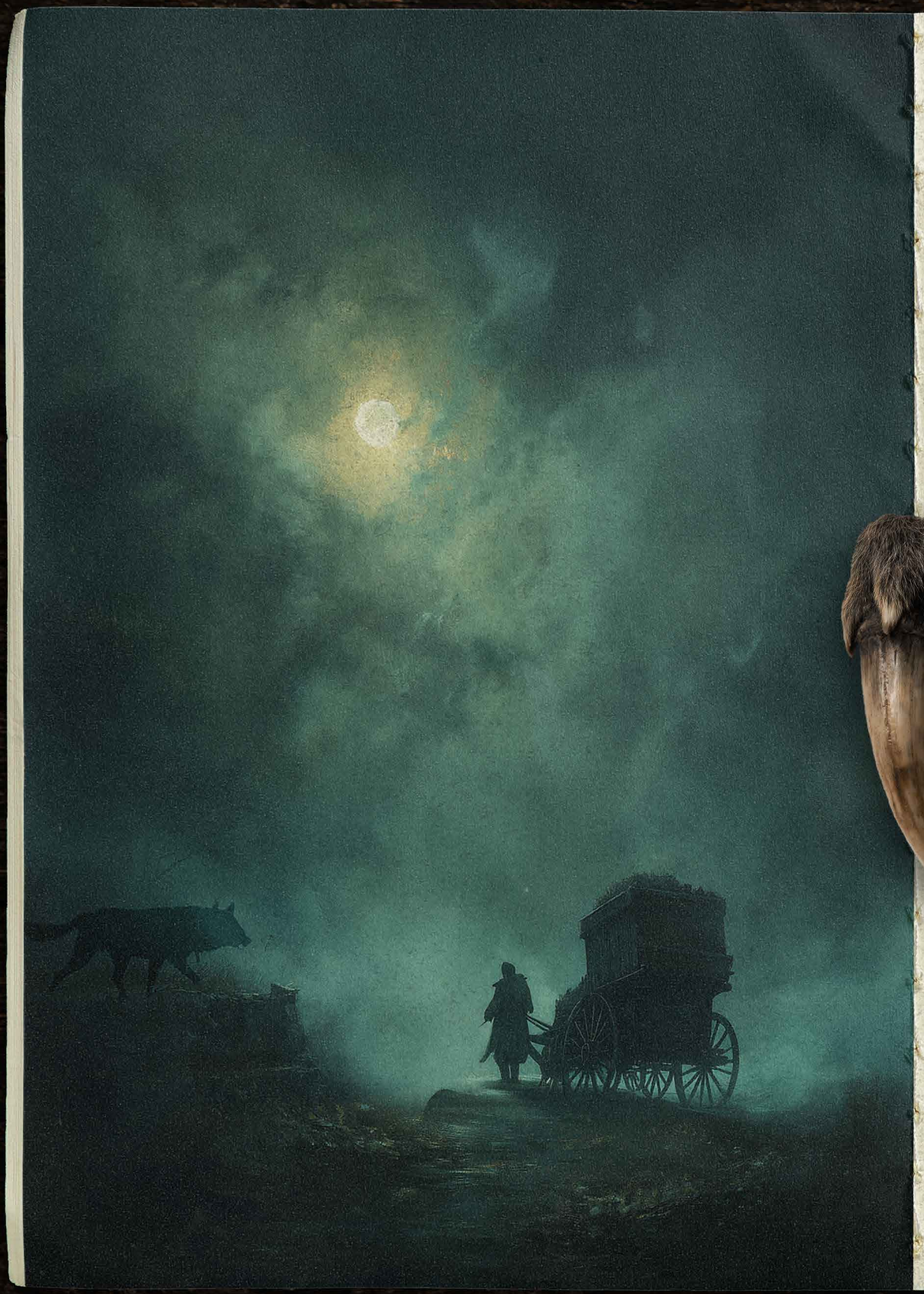
Cornerstone Detail



Lantern Detail



Moss-covered Roof



The Visual Language

CINEMATIC DESIGN

THE VISUAL AESTHETIC OF THE FILM EMBRACES LONG, UNBROKEN TAKES THAT TRAP THE VIEWER INSIDE DANIEL'S UNRAVELING MIND, ALLOWING THE STORY TO UNFOLD WITH THE RELENTLESS, BREATHLESS MOMENTUM OF A SINGLE NIGHTMARE. THIS APPROACH HEIGHTENS THE IMMEDIACY OF THE MOORS AND THE CHAPEL RUINS, MAKING THE ENVIRONMENT FEEL ALIVE AND INESCAPABLE.

SHOT IN A 1.66:1 EUROPEAN WIDESCREEN RATIO, THE FRAME IS TALL ENOUGH TO EMPHASIZE THE LOOMING VERTICALITY OF STONES AND STORMS WHILE STILL OFFERING A MODEST BREADTH TO CAPTURE THE DESOLATE SWEEP OF THE HEATH. THE RESULT IS A VISUAL WORLD THAT FEELS BOTH INTIMATE AND MYTHIC, AS IF THE LAND ITSELF WERE WATCHING.

VOLUME III

COMPANY BLOOD

a gothic western
of paranoia and greed



INTRODUCTION

WITH COMPANY BLOOD, WE SET OUT TO CAPTURE THE SCORCHED, GRITTY ATMOSPHERE OF THERE WILL BE BLOOD, A WORLD OF DUST, LABOR, AND MEN WHO TREAT THE EARTH AS AN ACCOUNT TO BE EMPTIED. AS THE CLAIM TURNS CLAUSTROPHOBIC, THE FILM SHIFTS INTO THE PARANOIA MECHANICS OF THE THING, WHERE SUSPICION BECOMES AS LETHAL AS THE THREAT ITSELF. THE HORROR IS INTERNAL AND BIOLOGICAL, DRAWING ON THE CONTAGION DREAD OF ALIEN: AN ANCIENT PARASITE THAT TURNS A BODY INTO A VESSEL LONG BEFORE IT BECOMES A VICTIM. OUR CHARACTERS ARE RUGGED, DYNAMIC MEN, SHAPED BY THE BRUTAL ROUTINES OF FRONTIER MINING,WHOSE LOYALTIES AND INSTINCTS FRACTURE UNDER THE PRESSURE OF SURVIVAL. THIS IS A GOTHIC WESTERN ABOUT WHAT GREED AWAKENS, HOW THE HUNGER TO OWN THE LAND CAN POISON THE PEOPLE WHO DIG IT.

Ryan de Quintal

RYAN DE QUINTAL
WRITER / DIRECTOR / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

THE CHARACTERS

TOMLIN KEANE

TOM IS THE FOREMAN OF CROWE MINING CO. A PRACTICAL MAN WHO MEASURES LIFE IN ROPE TENSION, TIMBER STRAIN, AND WHETHER HIS CREW MAKES IT BACK TO THE FIRE. HE'S NOT A BELIEVER IN OMENS OR SPEECHES, HE TRUSTS PROCEDURE, HARD-EARNED INSTINCTS, AND THE SIMPLE RULE THAT YOU DON'T SEND MEN INTO A HOLE BLIND.

TOM'S AUTHORITY COMES FROM COMPETENCE, NOT VOLUME, AND HE CARRIES THE QUIET GUILT OF EVERY ACCIDENT HE COULDN'T PREVENT. WHEN THE CLAIM TURNS INTO A QUARANTINE, HE BECOMES JUDGE AND PROTECTOR, FORCED TO TRANSLATE FEAR INTO RULES THAT KEEP PEOPLE ALIVE. BY THE END, TOM SURVIVES NOT BECAUSE HE'S THE STRONGEST, BUT BECAUSE HE'S THE ONE WILLING TO ACT BEFORE GREED WRITES THE LAST ENTRY.

NATHANIEL CROWE

CROWE IS THE OWNER OF CROWE MINING CO. A MAN WHO TREATS THE EARTH LIKE A LEDGER AND BELIEVES ANYTHING BURIED IN STONE CAN BE CONVERTED INTO PROFIT WITH ENOUGH PRESSURE. HE SPEAKS WITH THE CONFIDENCE OF A PREACHER AND THE COLD ARITHMETIC OF A BUSINESSMAN, MEASURING MEN BY OUTPUT AND TIME, NOT BY BREATH OR BLOOD.

CROWE'S CHARM IS REAL, BUT IT'S ALWAYS TRANSACTIONAL, EVERY PROMISE HIDES A THREAT, EVERY KINDNESS IS AN INVESTMENT. WHEN FEAR ENTERS THE CAMP, HE DOESN'T ASK HOW TO SURVIVE: HE ASKS WHAT IT COSTS TO STOP, AND WHETHER PROOF CAN BE USED TO KEEP THE WORK MOVING. IN THE END, CROWE IS DESTROYED BY THE SAME PHILOSOPHY THAT BUILT HIM: THE REFUSAL TO YIELD, EVEN WHEN THE HILL STARTS TAKING ITS PAYMENT IN FLESH.

WALTER HARROW

CROWE'S TOOL SPECIALIST, A QUIET, COMPETENT FIXER WHOSE CALM PRECISION MAKES HIM FEEL INDISPENSABLE IN A PLACE WHERE EVERYTHING BREAKS. HE SPEAKS IN PRACTICAL TERMS, WEIGHT, STEEL, WORK, UNTIL THE PARASITE TURNS THAT SAME EFFICIENCY INTO SOMETHING PREDATORY. WHEN THE BLACK BLOOD TEST EXPOSES HIM, WALTER DOESN'T PLEAD OR PANIC; HE CALCULATES, STRIKES FIRST, AND PROVES THE MOST DANGEROUS THREAT IS THE ONE WEARING A FAMILIAR FACE.

JED WHITAKER

JED IS CROWE'S MUSCLE IN THE MINE, STRONG, RELIABLE, AND USED TO SOLVING PROBLEMS WITH FORCE AND ENDURANCE. HE'S THE FIRST HOST, THE "BOMB UNDER THE TABLE," ACTING NORMAL EVEN AS SOMETHING ANCIENT TAKES HOLD. HIS COLLAPSE REVEALS WHAT THE MEN HAVE AWAKENED, TURNING THE CLAIM FROM HARD WORK INTO A FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL.

OTIS NELSON

OTIS IS THE CAMP'S COOK AND LIFELINE, A STEADY PAIR OF HANDS WHO KEEPS WATER MOVING, FIRES LIT, AND MEN FED WHEN THE DESERT OFFERS NOTHING FOR FREE. HE'S OBSERVANT AND QUIETLY TOUGH, READING FEAR IN SMALL GESTURES LONG BEFORE ANYONE NAMES IT. WHEN THE CLAIM COLLAPSES INTO VIOLENCE, OTIS SURVIVES THROUGH GRIT AND LOYALTY, ONLY TO CARRY THE FINAL, UNSEEN COST OF THE HILL OUT INTO THE OPEN WORLD.

THE REYES BROTHERS

MATEO AND LUIS REYES ARE QUIET SONORAN MINER BROTHERS, PRACTICAL POWDER MEN WHO WORK THE DEEPER DRIFT AND KNOW ROCK BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE ON THE CLAIM. MATEO, THE OLDER BROTHER, SPEAKS A LITTLE ENGLISH AND DOES MOST OF THE TALKING FOR THEM, WHILE LUIS STAYS MOSTLY SILENT, ANSWERING IN SPANISH AND FOLLOWING MATEO'S LEAD.

THE WORLD

A BRUTAL FRONTIER

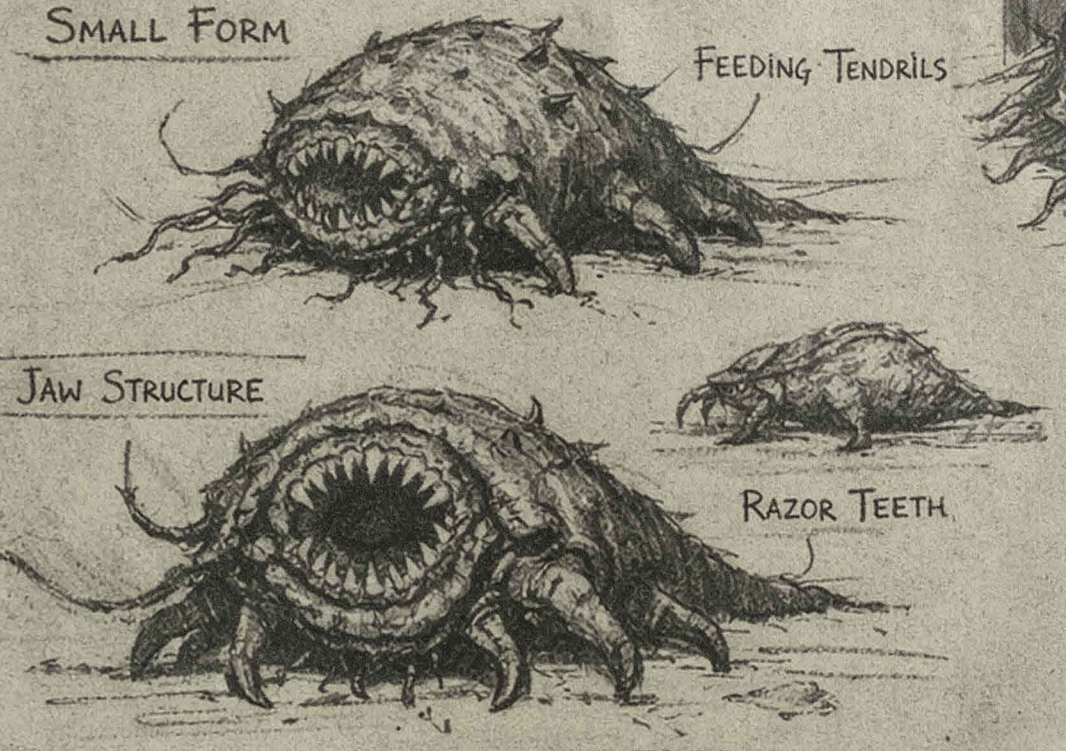
THE WORLD OF THE FILM WILL BE A HARD ROCK CLAIM IN THE ARIZONA TERRITORY, WHERE SURVIVAL IS MEASURED IN WATER, ROPE, AND ISOLATION. WE WILL BUILD AN AUTHENTIC 19TH-CENTURY MINING ATMOSPHERE, CANVAS TENTS SNAPPING IN THE WIND, TIMBERED ADIT BRACES, SOOT-BLACKENED COOKWARE, BATTERED TOOLS, AND BRANDED ORE SACKS. EVERY PROP AND SET DETAIL IS DESIGNED TO FEEL HANDLED AND NECESSARY.

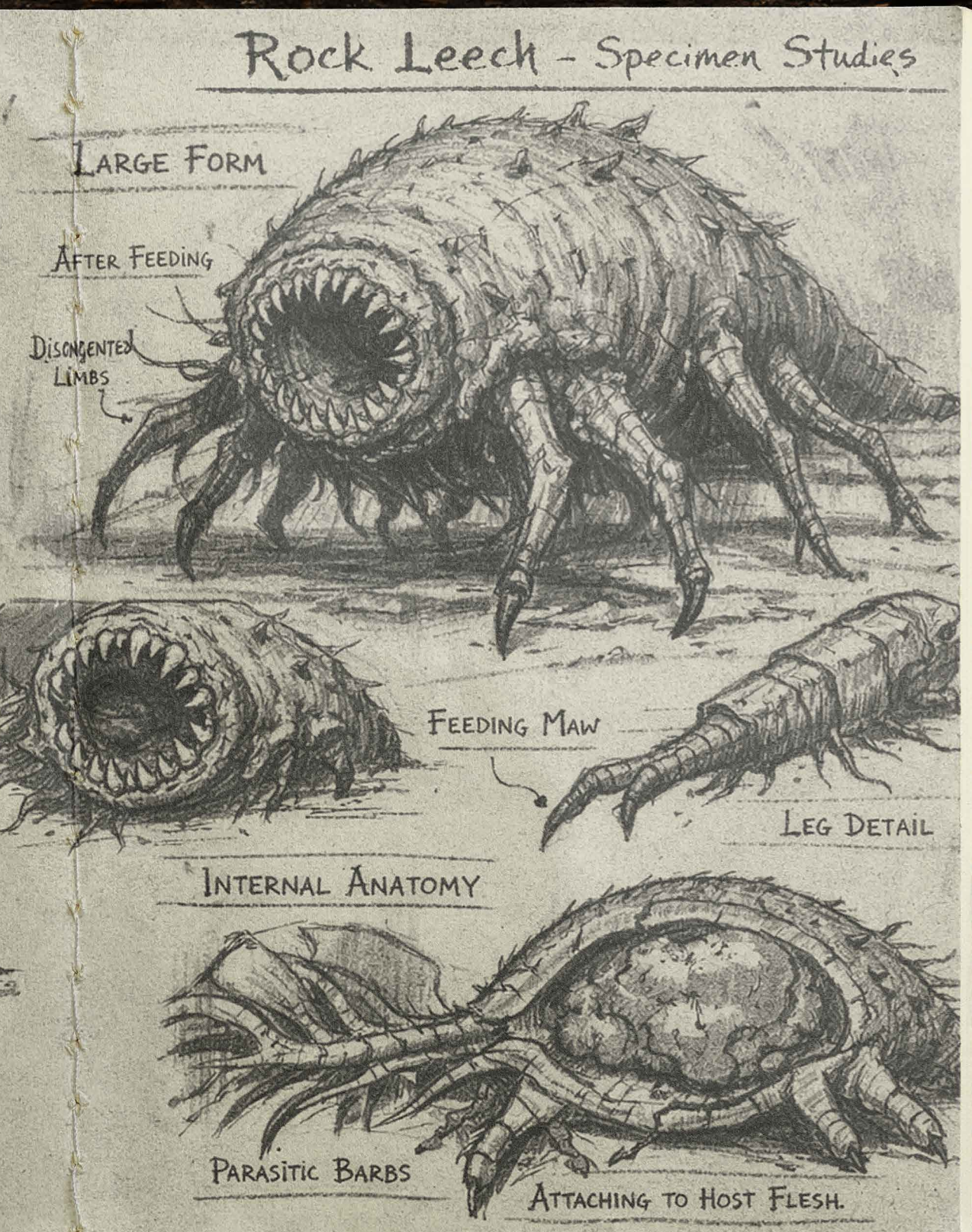
WARDROBE IS EQUALLY GROUNDED, SUN-FADED WORK SHIRTS, PATCHED TROUSERS, HEAVY BOOTS, BANDANAS, AND COATS THAT CARRY THE MINE'S DIRT INTO EVERY FRAME. THAT ATTENTION TO PERIOD ACCURACY LETS THE AUDIENCE STEP INTO THE FRONTIER'S BRUTAL ROUTINE, SO WHEN THE HORROR ARRIVES, IT FEELS LIKE IT CRAWLED OUT OF REAL STONE.



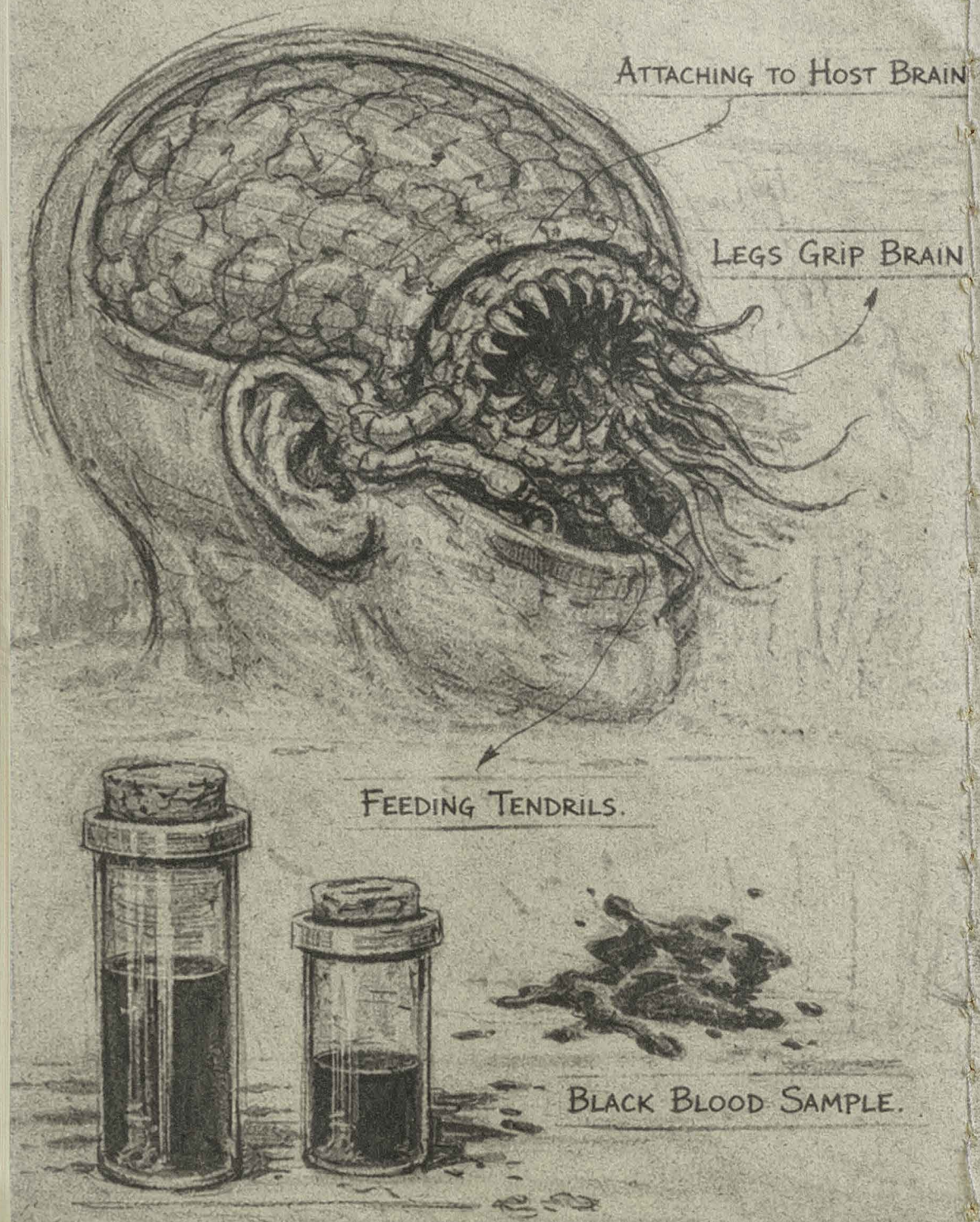
THE ROCK LEECH

SMALL, STONE-CASED PARASITE UNEARTHED IN THE MINE, AN ANCIENT, PRIMITIVE ALIEN THAT ENTERS THROUGH THE EAR AND TURNS A HUMAN BODY INTO AN INCUBATOR. DESIGNED TO FEEL BIOLOGICALLY PLAUSIBLE AND UNSETTLINGLY TACTILE, IT STARTS AS A LIVING CHIP OF ROCK BEFORE UNFURLING CRAB-LIKE LEGS AS IT FEEDS, LEAVING BEHIND THE TELL OF BLACKENED BLOOD.

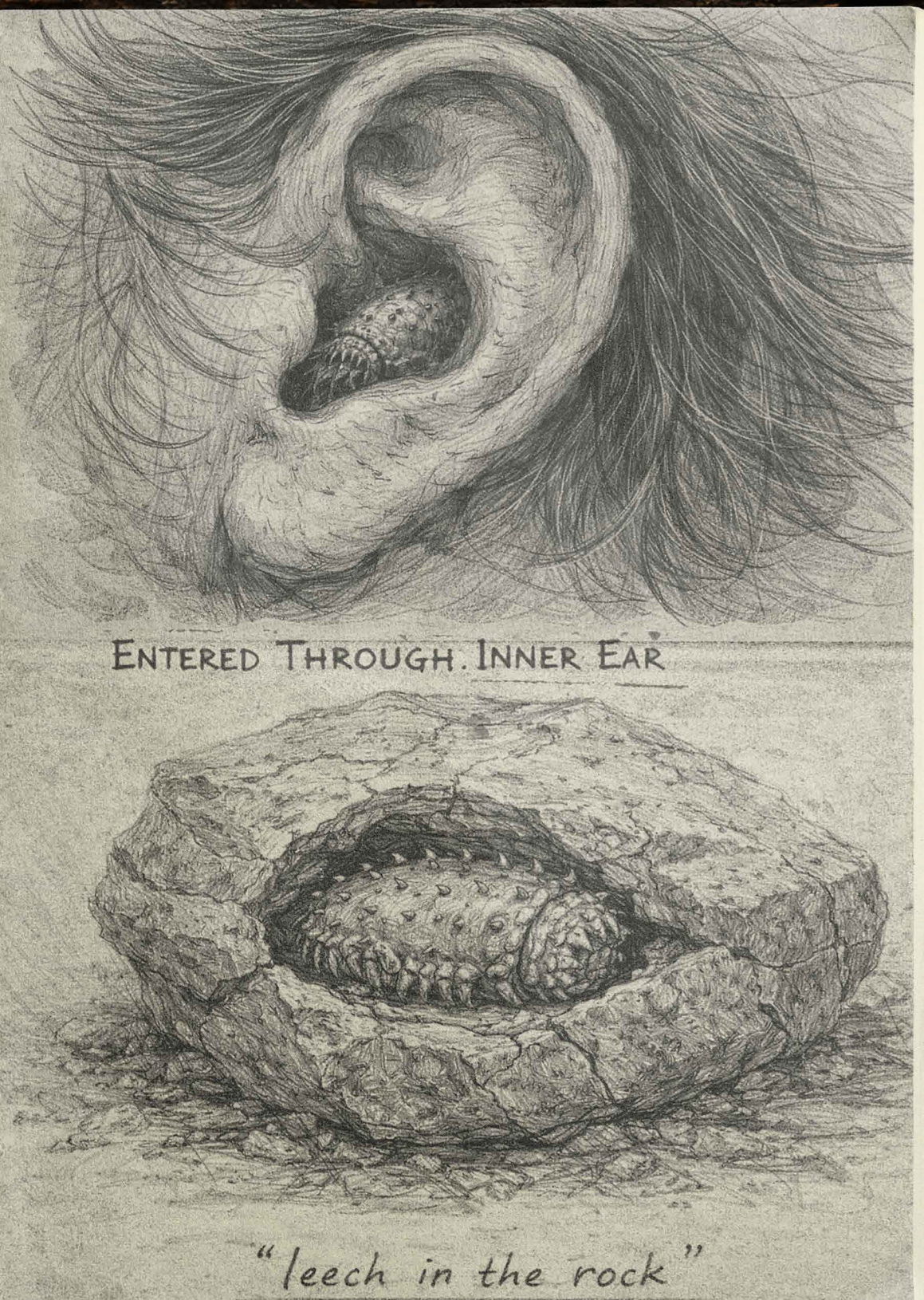




Rock Leech – Anatomical Studies



BLACK BLOOD SAMPLE.



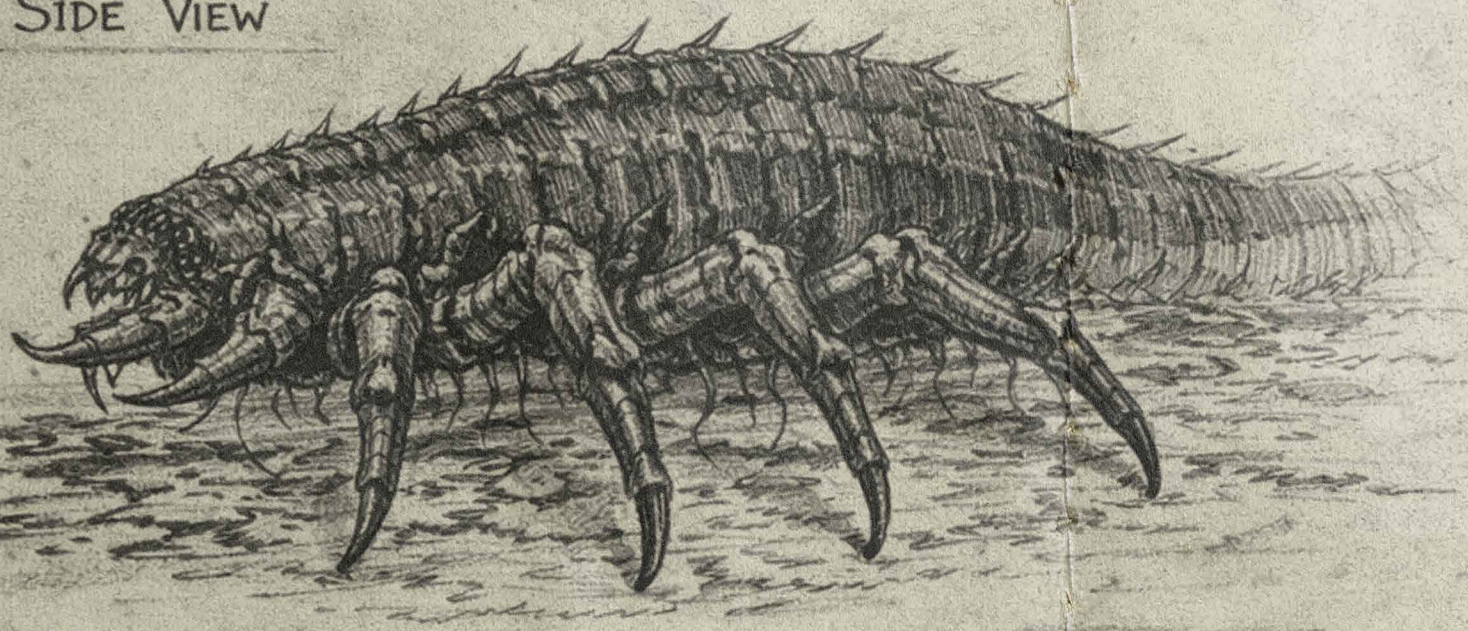
ENTERED THROUGH. INNER EAR

"leech in the rock"

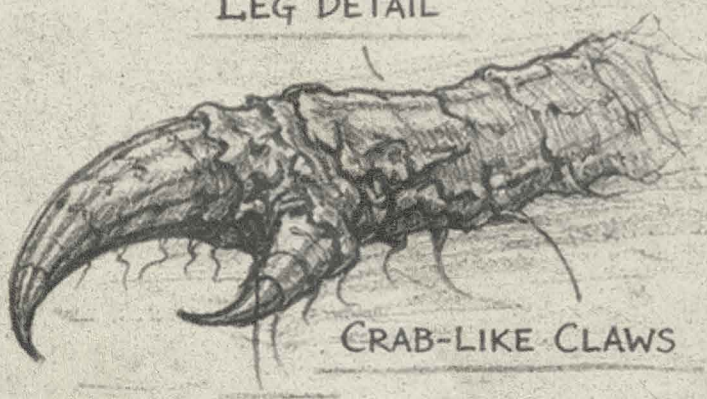
BLOOD LEECH – Second Form

Rock Crab Legs

Side View

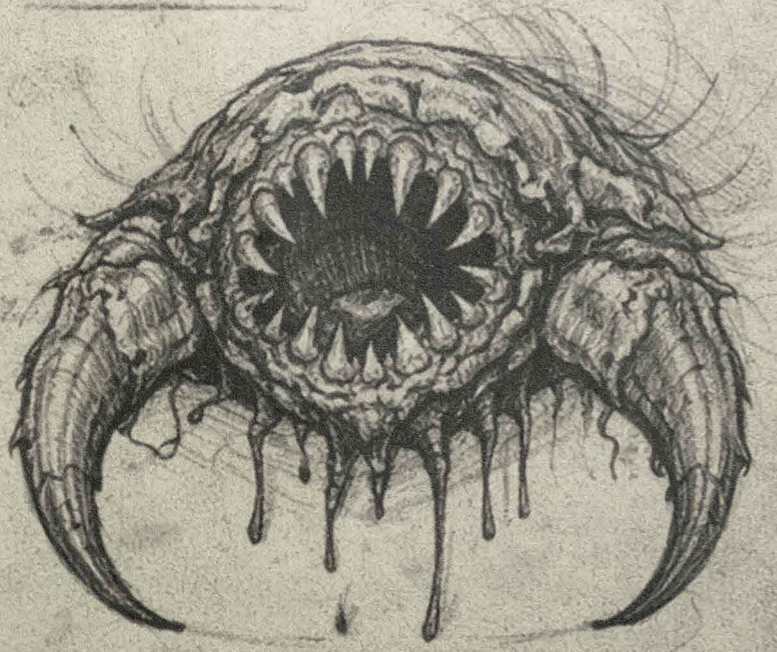


Leg Detail



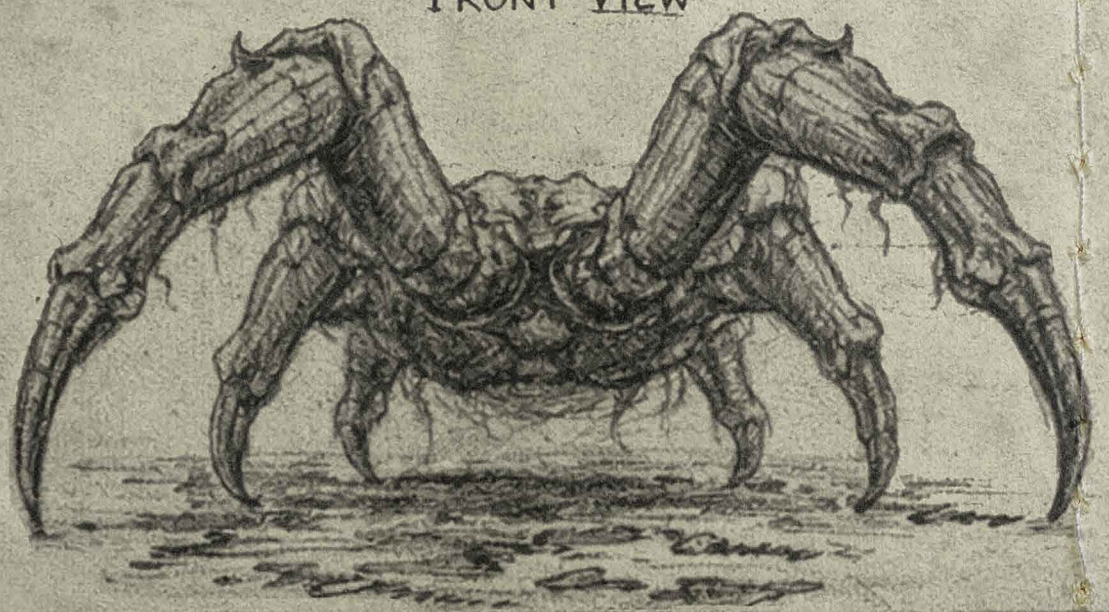
Crab-like Claws

Pincers



Drip's Black Ichor

Front View



CROWE-LEECH – Third Form

FULL VIEW



JUTTED JAW

BLACK BLOOD LEAKING





BLACK EYES

EAR DETAIL



MOUTH



BLACK BLOOD LEAKING

THE VISUAL AESTHETIC

ATMOSPHERIC DREAD

COMPANY BLOOD WILL BE FRAMED IN A 2.39:1 WIDESCREEN THAT LETS THE ARIZONA TERRITORY SWALLOW THE CHARACTERS, SMALL FIGURES TRAPPED INSIDE A BRUTAL, INDIFFERENT LANDSCAPE. THE PALETTE LEANS INTO BLACKS, GOLDS, AND BROWNS, WITH THE LANTERNS AND COOK-FIRE PROVIDING AN ORANGE, FLICKERING GLOW THAT TURNS FACES INTO CARVED RELIEF.

WE'LL FAVOR HIGH CONTRAST NATURALISM, HARD SUN BY DAY, DEEP SHADOW BY NIGHT, SO THE MINE MOUTH READS LIKE A BLACK WOUND IN THE HILLSIDE. CAMERA MOVEMENT IS CONTROLLED AND DELIBERATE, ALMOST ALWAYS IN MOTION, TRACKING LABOR AND CIRCLING TENSION AS IF THE HILL ITSELF IS WATCHING. THE RESULT IS A GOTHIC WESTERN VISUAL LANGUAGE WHERE BEAUTY AND DREAD SHARE THE SAME FRAME, AND THE HORIZON NEVER FEELS LIKE ESCAPE.









VOLUME IV

THE WIDOW

A GOTHIC RUSSIAN FOLKTALE



INTRODUCTION

WITH THIS FILM I'M DRAWN TO THE SHIFTING POWER DYNAMICS OF HERETIC, HOW A CONVERSATION CAN BECOME A TRAP, AND HOW CONTROL CAN CHANGE HANDS WITH A SINGLE QUESTION. FROM UNDER THE SKIN, WE'RE BORROWING THE IDEA OF PREDATION STAGED AS A CALM, CLINICAL PROCESS, LETTING DREAD BLOOM THROUGH MINIMALISM RATHER THAN SPECTACLE. SILENCE IS A WEAPON AND RESTRAINT IS ITS OWN FORM OF VIOLENCE. AND LIKE NOVEMBER, WE WANT OUR FOLKLORE TO FEEL LIVED-IN—DIRTY, TACTILE, AND EMBEDDED IN THE STREET'S MUD AND THE CITY'S BREATH, NOT PRESENTED AS "MYTHOLOGY" AT ARM'S LENGTH. THE RESULT IS A GOTHIC NIGHT RIDE THAT STARTS AS AN INTERROGATION AND ENDS AS A RITUAL, REVEALING THAT POWER, LIKE BELIEF, ONLY EXISTS AS LONG AS EVERYONE AGREES TO IT.

Ryan de Quintal

RYAN DE QUINTAL
WRITER / DIRECTOR / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

THE CHARACTERS

THE WIDOW

SHE IS A RECENTLY BEREAVED WOMAN IN KYIV, 1893, WRAPPED IN BLACK MOURNING AND MOVING THROUGH THE WORLD WITH A COMPOSURE THAT FEELS ALMOST CEREMONIAL. SHE PRESENTS AS THE PERFECT WIDOW, PRIVATE, ELEGANT, AND FIERCELY PROTECTIVE OF HER LATE HUSBAND'S ESTATE, PREFERRING EVERY LEGAL DISCUSSION TO HAPPEN ON HER OWN TERMS AND IN HER OWN SPACE.

BENEATH THAT REFINEMENT IS A PREDATOR'S PATIENCE, A WOMAN WHO LISTENS MORE THAN SHE SPEAKS AND SEEMS TO UNDERSTAND GRIEF AS BOTH RITUAL AND DISGUISE. HER PRESENCE SUGGESTS SOMETHING OLDER THAN SORROW ITSELF, AS THOUGH MOURNING IS NOT MERELY WHAT SHE WEARS, BUT WHAT SHE HAS BECOME.

THE PASSENGER

A MID-LEVEL LAWMAN. PRECISE, DISCIPLINED, AND BUILT FROM PAPERWORK, PROCEDURE, AND QUIET AUTHORITY. HE SPEAKS WITH THE POLISHED RESTRAINT OF A MAN USED TO BEING OBEYED, TREATING CONVERSATION LIKE AN INTERROGATION EVEN WHEN HE SMILES. HE'S METICULOUS TO THE POINT OF OBSESSION, COLLECTING DETAILS THE WAY OTHERS COLLECT TROPHIES, CONVINCED THAT NAMES AND DATES CAN TURN ANY PERSON INTO A CASE. BENEATH HIS CIVILITY IS A HARD MORAL CERTAINTY: A BELIEF THAT ORDER IS NOT NEGOTIATED, ONLY ENFORCED. A MAN WHO ASSUMES THE WORLD MAKES ROOM FOR HIM.

THE DRIVER

HE IS A SILENT, STEADY PRESENCE, MORE GATEKEEPER THAN COACHMAN, GUIDING THE CARRIAGE THROUGH KYIV'S FOG WITH THE CALM CERTAINTY OF SOMEONE WHO ALREADY KNOWS THE ROUTE.

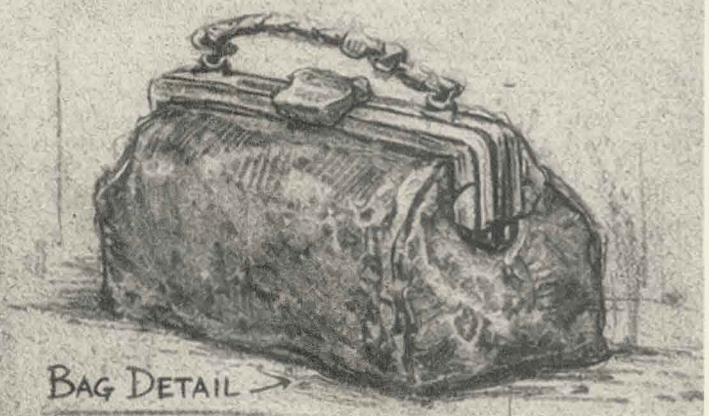
The Widow – Character Studies



Full Body



Close-Up Veil



Bag Detail →



Necklace Detail



Worn Leather

Intricate Lace



Seated Inside Carriage

The Passenger - Character Studies



Full Body



Close-Up



Case Files



In Carriage



Service Revolver

VISUAL LANGUAGE

OLD WORLD CINEMA

WE ARE EMBRACING THE BOXIER 1.33:1 ASPECT RATIO, USING ITS TIGHTER FRAME TO TRAP OUR CHARACTERS INSIDE THE CARRIAGE. THE NARROWER IMAGE LETS US COMPOSE WITH A SEVERE, OLD-CINEMA DISCIPLINE, ISOLATING FACES AND SILHOUETTES IN A WAY THAT FEELS INTIMATE, OPPRESSIVE, AND TRANSPORTIVE. THE FILM WILL LIVE IN A RESTRAINED COLOR WORLD OF MOONLIT GRAYS, DEEP BLACKS, AND COLD SILVERS, PRESERVING THE FEELING OF A BYGONE ERA WHILE ALLOWING SELECTIVE COLOR TO BECOME EXPRESSIVE. AGAINST THAT NEAR-MONOCHROME PALETTE, THE RED OF BLOOD AND THE ORANGE GLOW OF LANTERN LIGHT WILL STRIKE THE FRAME LIKE INTRUSIONS, SUDDEN, VIOLENT, AND UNFORGETTABLE. THE RESULT IS A GOTHIC VISUAL LANGUAGE WHERE COLOR IS TREATED NOT AS DECORATION, BUT AS A THREAT.



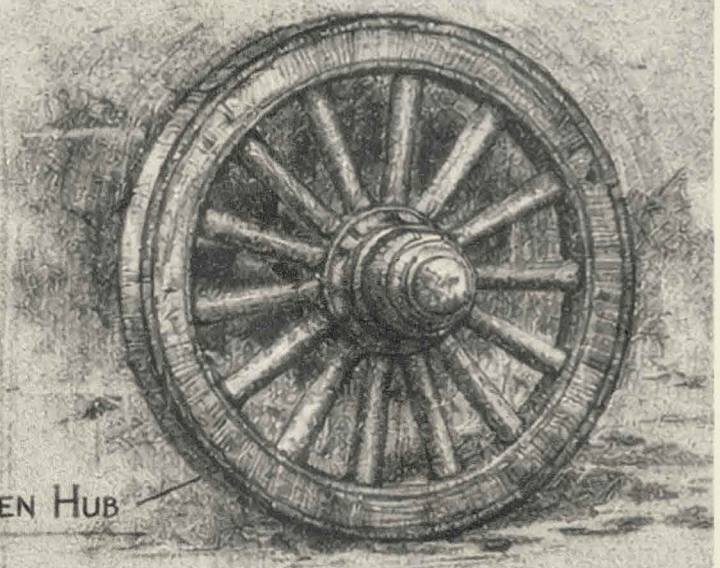
The Carriage – Design Studies

Full View



Black, Enclosed Carriage

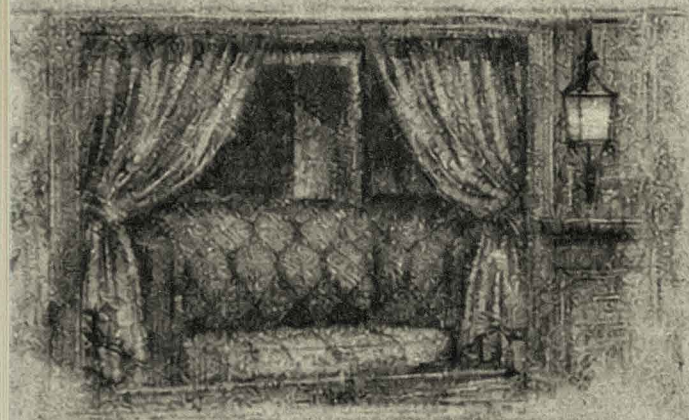
Wheel Detail



Wooden Hub

Iron Rim

Interior Details



Velvet Curtains

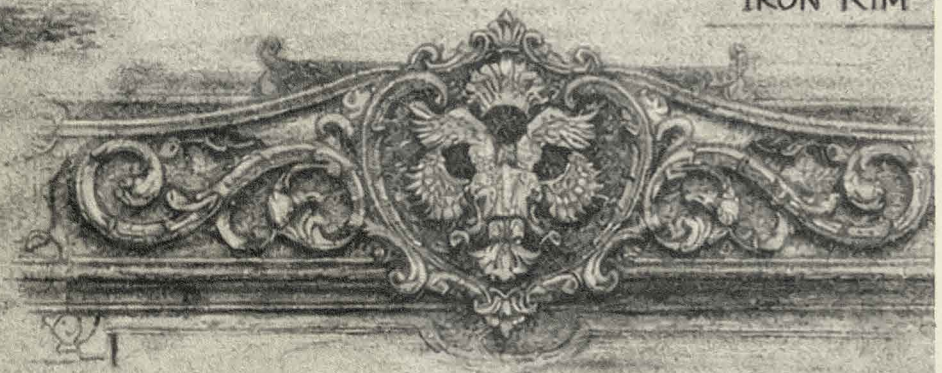
Lantern & Door



Luxurious Upholstery

Brass Door Handle

Exterior Carving



- Ornate Detail
- Carved Woodwork
- Imperial Crest
- Gilded Accents
- Decorative Trim



Driver Profile

The Passenger — Physical Aging



Starting Age – 40s



Old Age – 60s



Advanced Age – 80s



Near Death – Near 100



THE WORLD

IMPERIAL RUSSIA

THE WORLD OF THE WIDOW IS KYIV, 1893. IMPERIAL RUSSIA RENDERED WITH OBSESSIVE PERIOD SPECIFICITY IN WARDROBE, PROPS, AND SET DRESSING, FROM MOURNING CREPE AND FUR-TRIMMED COATS TO BRASS CARRIAGE HARDWARE AND SOOT-STAINED LANTERN GLASS. GASLIGHT, FOG, AND WET COBBLESTONE STREETS SHAPE A CITY THAT FEELS BOTH CIVILIZED AND ROTTEN.

THE CARRIAGE ITSELF IS A TRAVELING ROOM OF RELICS: WORN VELVET, SCARRED WOOD, LEATHER STRAPS, AND THE QUIET EVIDENCE OF COUNTLESS LATE-NIGHT RIDES. WE WILL SHOOT THE FILM ENTIRELY IN RUSSIAN, LETTING LANGUAGE AND CADENCE DEEPEN THE AUTHENTICITY AND SHARPEN THE TENSION INSIDE EVERY EXCHANGE. EVERY TEXTURE IS TACTILE AND LIVED-IN. SO THE FOLKLORE FEELS EMBEDDED IN DAILY LIFE RATHER THAN PERFORMED.

THE FOLKLORE

ANCIENT EVIL

IN EAST SLAVIC FOLKLORE, THE UPYR (AND ITS FEMALE FORMS, OFTEN RENDERED AS OPYRYTSIA/UPYRYTSIA) IS A REVENANT-LIKE VAMPIRE, AN UNQUIET DEAD BELIEVED TO RISE AND HARM THE LIVING, MOST OFTEN THROUGH BLOOD-DRINKING OR LIFE-DRAINING VISITS IN THE NIGHT.

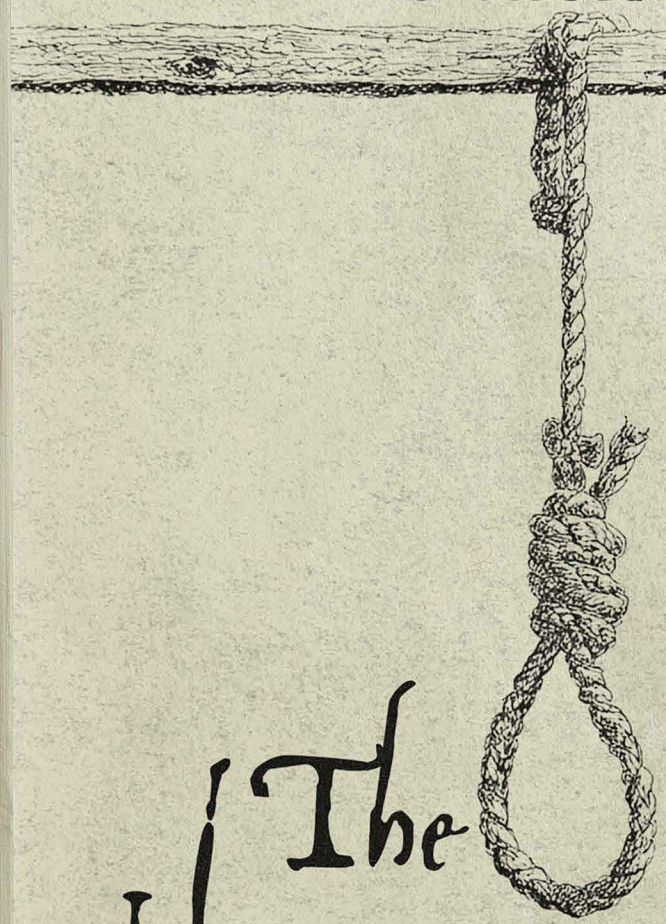
IN UKRAINIAN TRADITIONS SPECIFICALLY, THE VAMPIRE FIGURE IS EXPLICITLY NAMED ALONGSIDE FEMALE VARIANTS (UPYRYTSIA), REINFORCING THAT THIS ISN'T JUST A MALE-CODED MONSTER IN THE FOLK IMAGINATION. OUR FILM BUILDS ON THAT FOUNDATION BY TREATING THE WIDOW AS AN UPYRITSA WHOSE FEEDING ISN'T ONLY ABOUT BLOOD, BUT ABOUT TIME, A PREDATION THAT STEALS YOUTH THE WAY A WITCH STEALS VITALITY, LEAVING HER VICTIMS PREMATURELY WITHERED. (THAT YOUTH-TRANSFER MECHANIC IS OUR INVENTION, A CINEMATIC RULE ROOTED IN THE BROADER UPYR "LIFE-ESSENCE" DREAD FOUND ACROSS SLAVIC VAMPIRE LORE.) IN DOING SO, WE'RE KEEPING THE FOLKLORE DIRTY AND LIVED-IN, AN OLD BELIEF WALKING THE STREETS OF KYIV, WHILE GIVING IT A NEW, ELEGANT CRUELTY THAT CAN UNFOLD IN A SINGLE CARRIAGE RIDE.







volume v



The Hangman & the Gallows

a 17th century Bohemian folktale

Introduction

THIS FILM IS CONCEIVED AS A PRIMAL SILENT NIGHTMARE, A STORY TOLD ENTIRELY THROUGH IMAGE, MUSIC, AND SOUND. STRIPPED OF DIALOGUE SO THAT EVERY CREAK, BREATH, AND HEARTBEAT BECOMES NARRATIVE. IT IS AN ARCHAIC REIMAGINING OF POE'S THE TELL-TALE HEART, NOT IN PLOT BUT IN SPIRIT: THE CRUSHING WEIGHT OF GUILT AND THE TERROR OF A SOUL TURNING AGAINST ITSELF. VISUALLY, IT DRAWS FROM THE STYLIZED, PAINTERLY AESTHETIC OF ANEMONE, MERGING BRUTAL BEAUTY WITH STARK, FOLKLORIC MINIMALISM. ITS WORLD CARRIES THE GRIT OF STEVEN KNIGHT'S TABOO, WHERE MUD, BLOOD, AND RITUAL RULE OVER CIVILITY, AND THE ISOLATED PSYCHOLOGICAL DREAD OF THE BABADOOK. AT ITS CORE, THIS FILM EXPLORES HOW MADNESS TAKES SHAPE WHEN SILENCE IS THE ONLY LANGUAGE LEFT FOR GUILT TO SPEAK.

Ryan de Quintal

RYAN DE QUINTAL
WRITER / DIRECTOR / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

The Characters

THE HANGMAN

A STOIC, SOLITARY EXECUTIONER WHOSE ENTIRE LIFE HAS BEEN DEFINED BY RITUAL, LABOR, AND THE MACHINERY OF DEATH. OUTCAST BY TRADE YET INDISPENSABLE TO THE KINGDOM, HE SUSTAINS HIMSELF THROUGH THE GRIM ECONOMIES OF CORPSE MEDICINE, TEETH, FAT, ROPE, HAIR, AND BLOOD. HE RECORDS ONLY SINS IN HIS LEDGER, NEVER NAMES, BELIEVING DISTANCE PROTECTS HIM FROM THE WEIGHT OF WHAT HE DOES.

FOR YEARS HE HAS CONVINCED HIMSELF HE IS MERELY A TOOL OF JUSTICE, UNTOUCHED BY THE HUMANITY OF THE CONDEMNED. BUT WHEN ONE MAN DARES TO MEET HIS EYES, THE WALL HE HAS BUILT BETWEEN DUTY AND CONSCIENCE CRACKS, UNLEASHING A TERROR HE CAN NO LONGER OUTRUN.

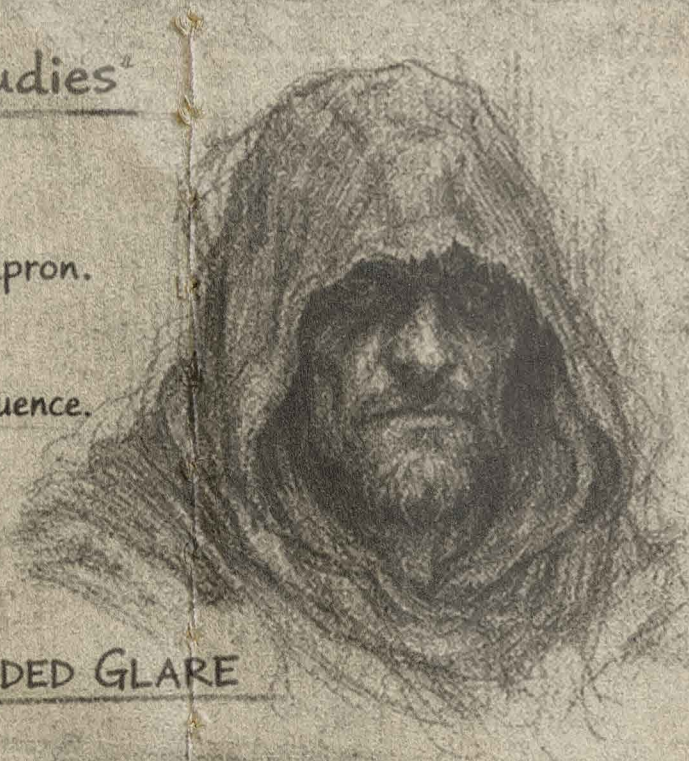


The Hangman — Character Studies

Executioner & Corpse Medicine Practitioner

- Hooded. Broad-shouldered. Weathered. Leather Apron. Tools of Death.
- A Man used to Weight — of Tools, Labor, and Consequence.

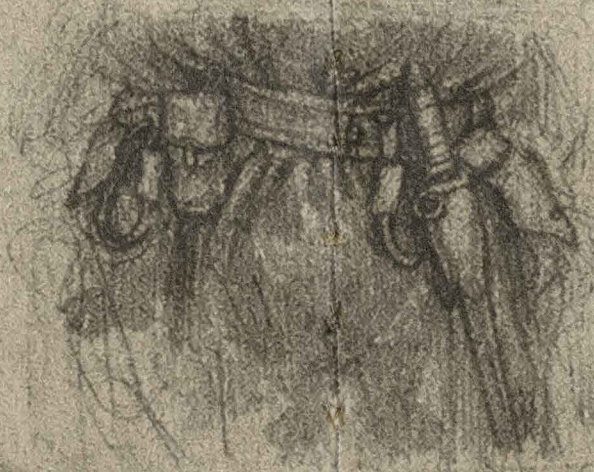




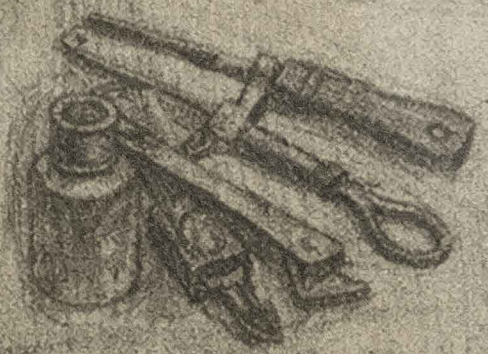
Hooded Glare



Rough Hands.

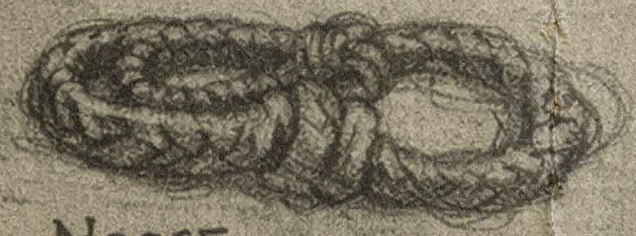


Leather Apron



Tools & Pouches.

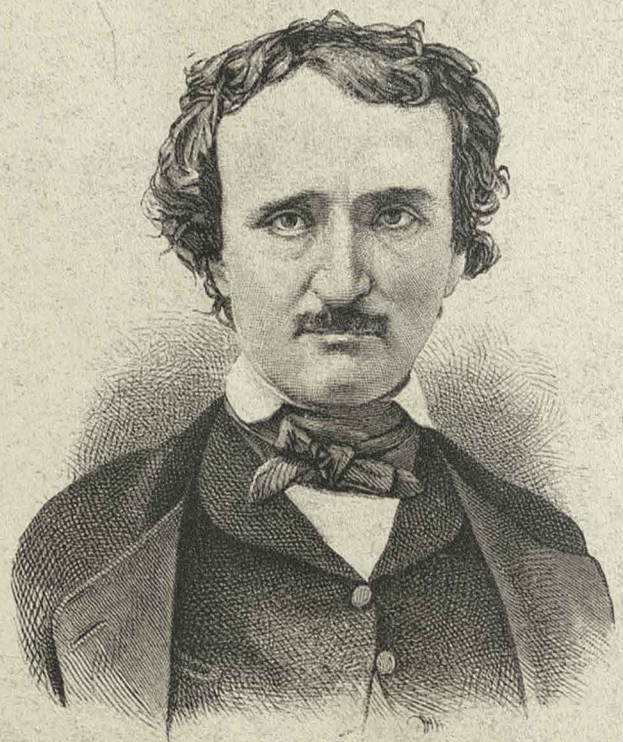




Noose



Weight of Labor...



Edgar A. Poe

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809–1849) WAS AN AMERICAN WRITER AND POET WHOSE MASTERY OF GOTHIC ATMOSPHERE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TERROR HELPED DEFINE MODERN HORROR. HIS ENDURING WORKS, THE TELL-TALE HEART, THE RAVEN, AND THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER, CONTINUE TO SHAPE LITERATURE AND CINEMA WITH THEIR HAUNTING EXPLORATION OF THE HUMAN MIND.

The Tell-Tale Heart

INSPIRATION

THIS FILM SERVES AS A DARK HOMAGE TO EDGAR ALLAN POE'S THE TELL-TALE HEART, DRAWING FROM ITS CORE THEMES OF GUILT, PARANOIA, AND THE HORROR OF A CONSCIENCE TURNED INWARD. RATHER THAN RETELL POE'S PLOT, THE GOAL WAS TO DISTILL THE ESSENCE OF HIS PSYCHOLOGICAL TERROR AND RE-EXPRESS IT THROUGH A NEW STORY ROOTED IN 16TH-CENTURY BOHEMIA.

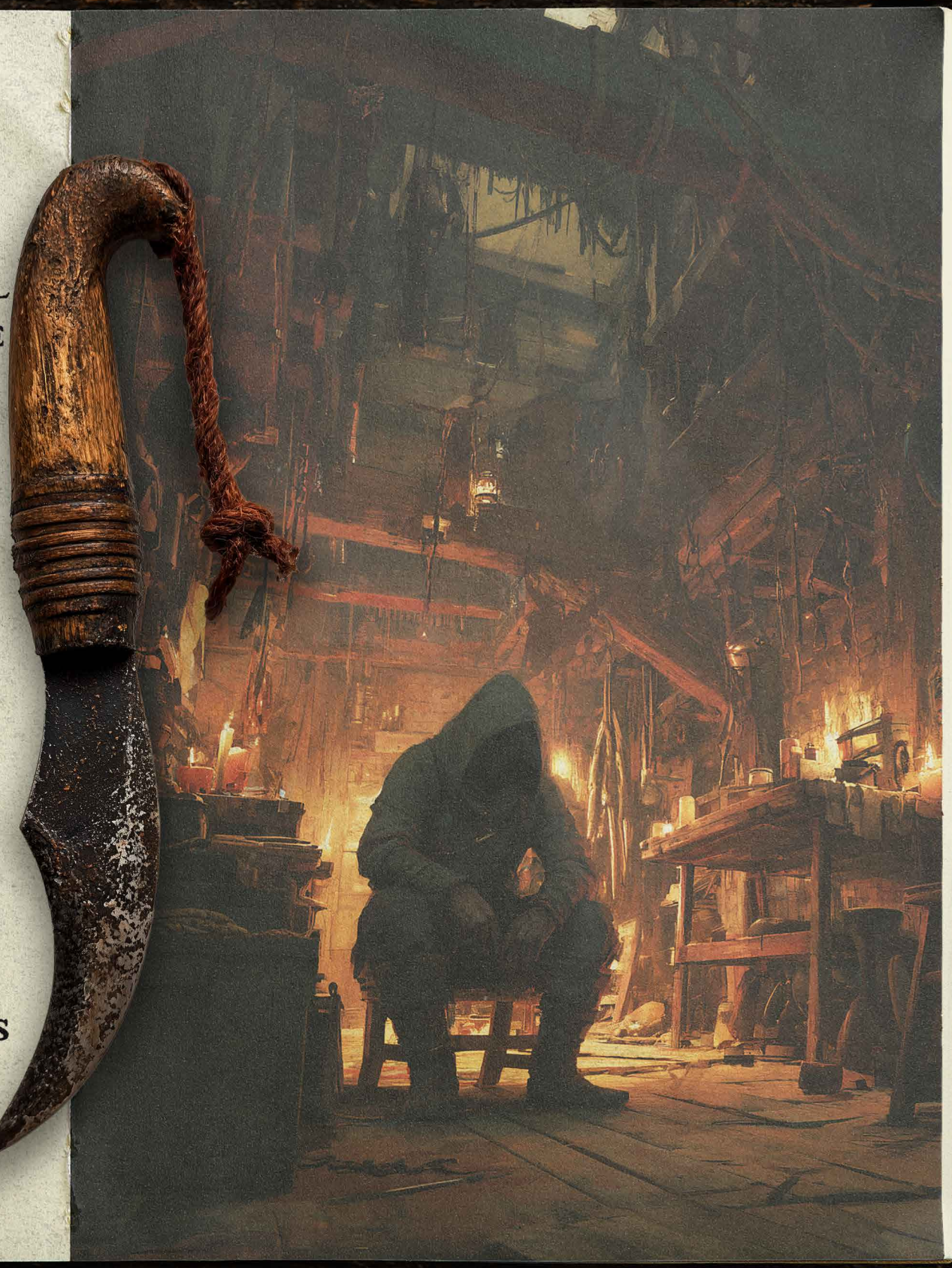
THE HANGMAN BECOMES A SPIRITUAL DESCENDANT OF POE'S NARRATOR, AN EXECUTIONER WHO BELIEVES HIMSELF JUSTIFIED UNTIL THE WEIGHT OF HIS DEEDS GROWS TOO LOUD TO IGNORE. THE ESCALATING SOUNDSCAPE ECHOES THE INFAMOUS HEARTBEAT, TRANSFORMING CREAKS AND ROPE TENSION INTO A RISING, INESCAPABLE DREAD. IN THIS WAY, THE FILM HONORS POE WHILE FORGING A FRESH, FOLKLORIC AESTHETIC.

The Visual Aesthetic

GRIT ON FILM

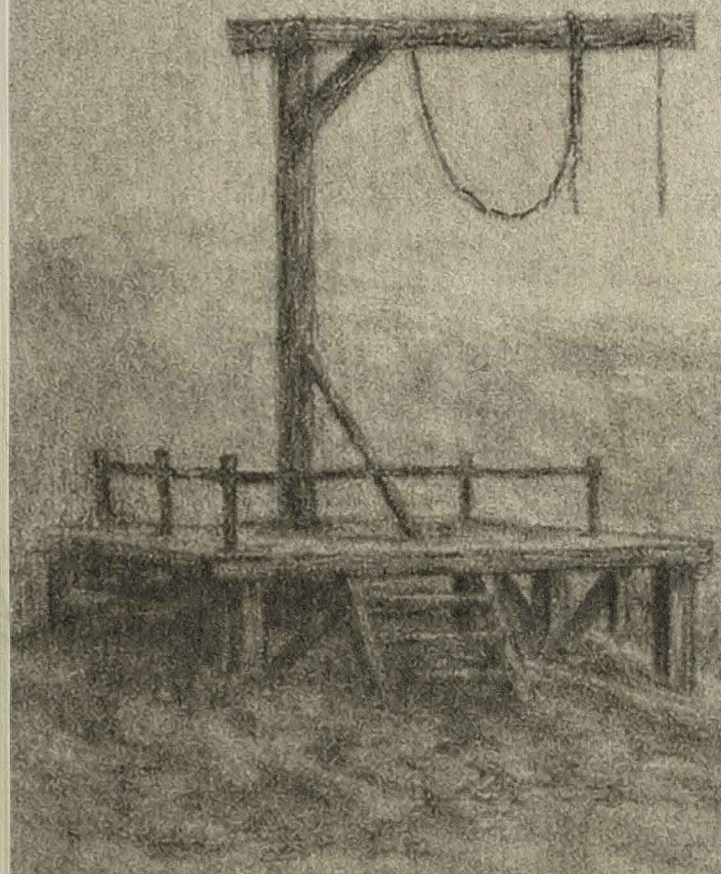
THE FILM'S VISUAL AESTHETIC EMBRACES A 1.55:1 ASPECT RATIO, BALANCING CLASSICAL COMPOSITION WITH A SLIGHTLY WIDER, MORE IMMERSIVE FRAME. THIS FORMAT ALLOWS FOR SINGLE-SUBJECT ISOLATION WHILE GIVING THE ENVIRONMENT, PARTICULARLY THE GALLOWS AND LANDSCAPES, ROOM TO BREATHE, AND ENCROACH UPON THE HANGMAN. THE FRAME HOLDS TENSION, LETTING NEGATIVE SPACE AND LOOMING VERTICALS PRESS INWARD WITH MENACE.

OUR COLOR PALETTE LEANS INTO BLOOD REDS, THE ORANGE GLOW OF CANDLES, AND THE MUTED GRIME OF NATURAL LIGHT TO CREATE A WORLD BOTH FOLKLORIC AND BRUTAL. A RESTRAINED, ELEMENTAL APPROACH TO LIGHTING AND TEXTURE KEEPS THE IMAGES RAW. IN EVERY FRAME, THE VISUALS AIM TO FEEL ANCIENT, WEATHERED, AND VIOLENTLY ALIVE, AN IMAGE-DRIVEN DESCENT INTO MADNESS.



The Gallows — Setting Studies

A Barren Rise Overlooking a 17th Century Bohemian Village.



FULL WIDE SHOT



MANDRAKE.



DEADLY NIGHTSHADE.



RUSTED LANTERN.



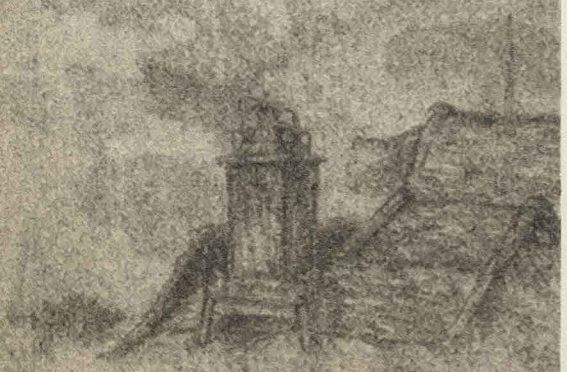
FROSTED ROPE.



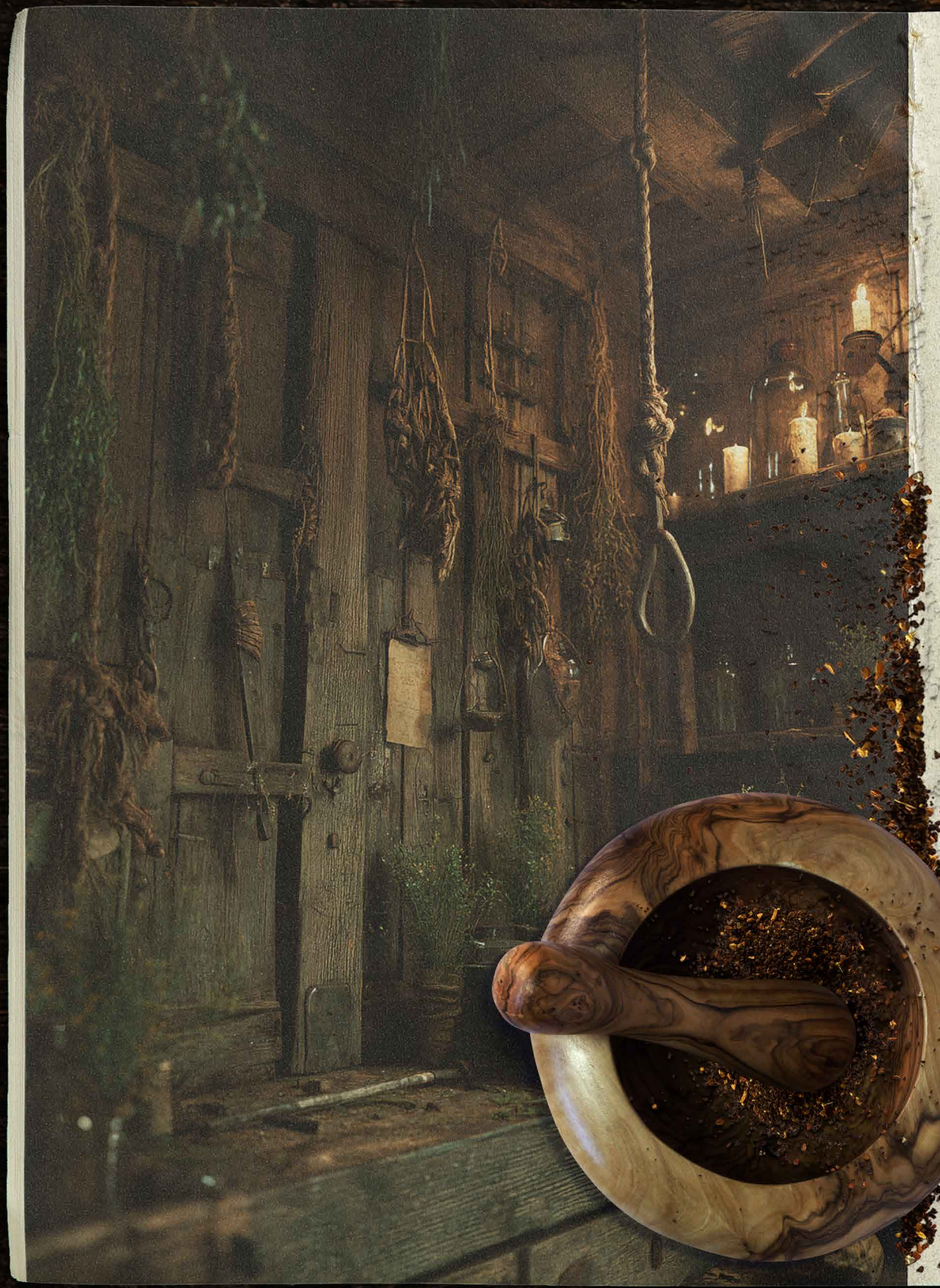
DANGLING SHADOW.



HERB GARDEN.



SMOKE DRIFT, CROOKED CHIMNEY



Props & Set Design

CRAFTSMANSHIP

EVERY PROP, COSTUME, AND PIECE OF SET DECORATION WILL BE CRAFTED AS AN AUTHENTIC REPRODUCTION OF 17TH CENTURY BOHEMIAN LIFE, GROUNDING THE FILM IN A WORLD THAT FEELS LIVED-IN, HARSH, AND HISTORICALLY CREDIBLE. FROM HAND-BRAIDED ROPE AND WROUGHT-IRON TOOLS TO TALLOW CANDLES, BONE-HANDLED KNIVES, AND EARTHENWARE JARS,

THE OBJECTS THAT FILL THE FRAME ARE DESIGNED TO CARRY THE WEIGHT OF REAL USE AND REAL CONSEQUENCE. WARDROBE WILL DRAW FROM PERIOD TEXTILES, MUTED EARTH TONES, AND COARSE FABRICS THAT SPEAK TO LABOR, SUPERSTITION, AND THE RIGID HIERARCHIES OF THE ERA. EACH DETAIL IS SELECTED TO TRANSPORT AUDIENCES DIRECTLY INTO BOHEMIA IN 1625, MAKING AUTHENTICITY A VITAL STORYTELLING FORCE.

The Hovel — Setting Studies

The Hangman's Workshop of Death & Medicine.



FULL WIDE SHOT

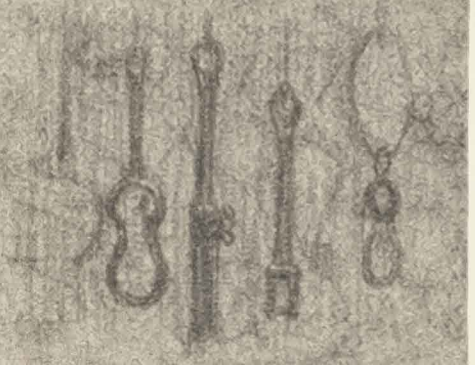


CURVED KNIFE





COILED ROPES



BONE SAW & TONGS



LEATHER APRON



JARS & SUPPLIES

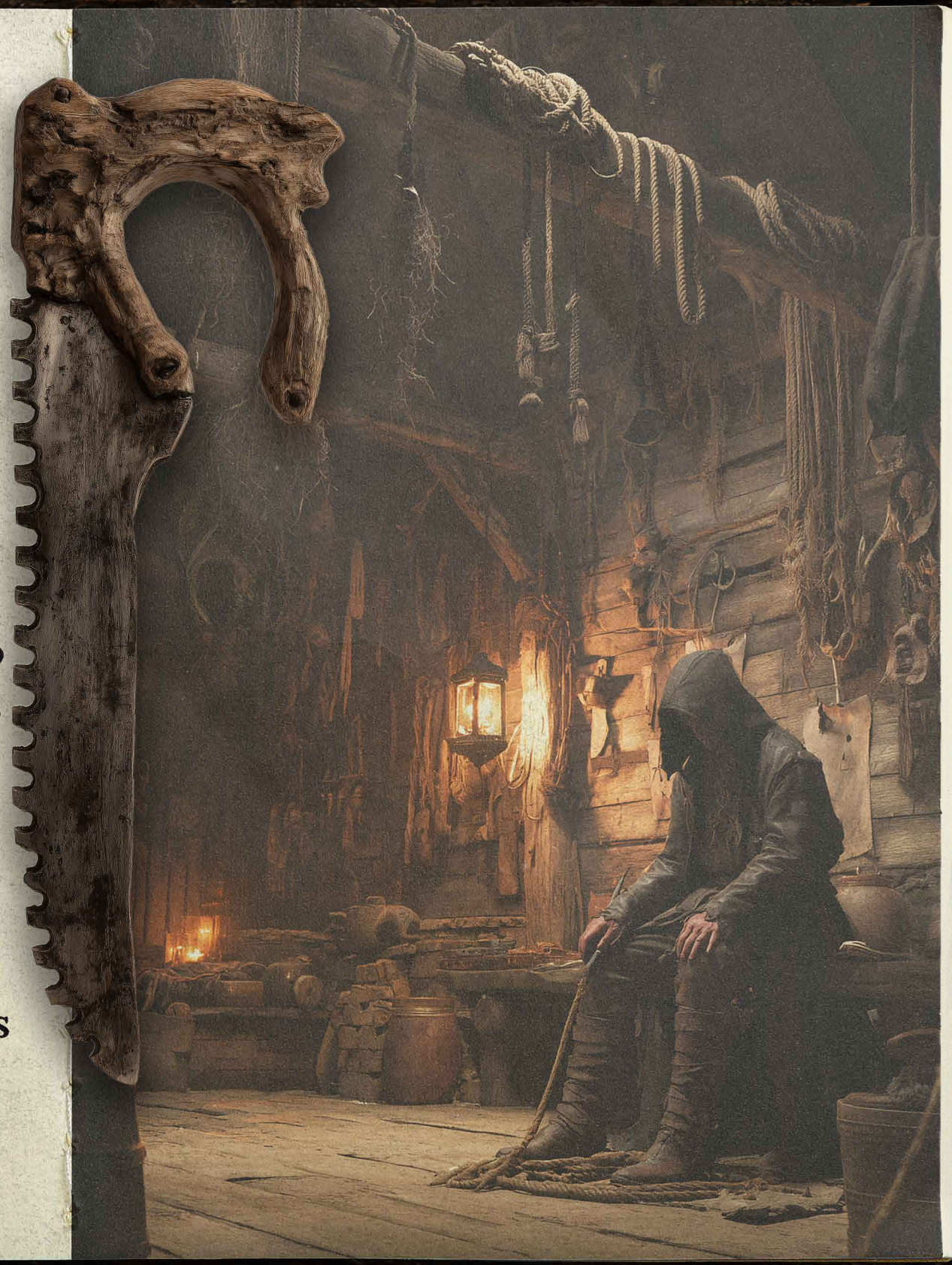


MORTAR, HAIR, TEETH

Practical Effects
IN CAMERA

THE FILM RELIES HEAVILY ON PRACTICAL EFFECTS, WIRE WORK, AND OLD-WORLD HOLLYWOOD TRICKERY TO MAKE THE HANGMAN'S DESCENT INTO MADNESS FEEL TANGIBLE AND IN-CAMERA. SHADOW PLAY, PUPPETEERED PROPS, HAND-BUILT RIGGING, AND SUBTLE FORCED-PERSPECTIVE TECHNIQUES WILL DISTORT REALITY WITHOUT BREAKING THE PERIOD AESTHETIC. EVERY SUPERNATURAL MOMENT IS DESIGNED TO FEEL PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN THE SPACE, CAPTURED THROUGH LIGHT, MOVEMENT, AND CRAFTSMANSHIP RATHER THAN DIGITAL ARTIFICE.

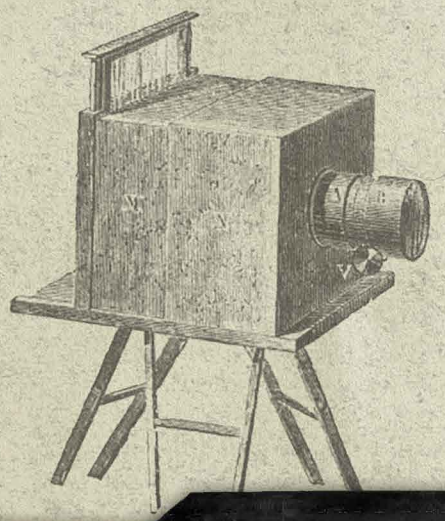
THIS GROUNDED APPROACH HEIGHTENS THE TERROR, ALLOWING THE AUDIENCE TO EXPERIENCE THE HANGMAN'S UNRAVELING AS REAL. THE ILLUSIONS WILL BE ENGINEERED TO ECHO THE CRAFT OF EARLY CINEMA, HONORING THE HANDMADE MAGIC OF HORROR'S EARLY STORYTELLERS.

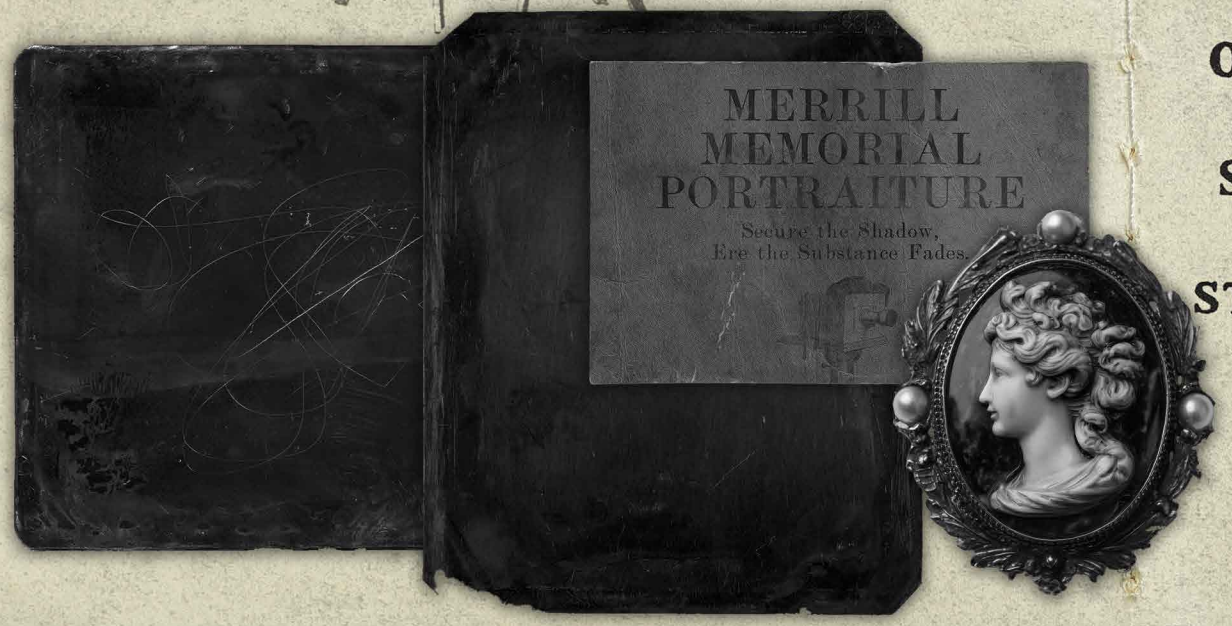


VOLUME VI

THE DARK VEIL

a gothic western





INTRODUCTION

THE DARK VEIL IS A GOTHIC WESTERN SHORT SET ENTIRELY WITHIN A FRONTIER POST-MORTEM PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO, WHERE GRIEF, RITUAL, AND VIOLENCE COLLIDE IN A SINGLE CONFINED SPACE. THE FILM DRAWS TONAL INSPIRATION FROM THE HATEFUL EIGHT, USING ISOLATION AND MOUNTING SUSPICION TO TURN ONE ROOM INTO A PRESSURE COOKER, WHILE ITS SUDDEN, UNFORGIVING VIOLENCE ECHOES THE BRUTALITY OF BONE TOMAHAWK.

STRUCTURALLY, THE FILM IS BUILT AS A CONTAINED SIEGE, INSPIRED BY THE CLAUSTROPHOBIC SIMPLICITY OF THE OUTFIT, FORCING EVERY CHARACTER TO CONFRONT DEATH WITHOUT ESCAPE. SHOT IN STARK BLACK AND WHITE WITH MINIMAL DIALOGUE, THE FILM TREATS STILLNESS, LABOR, AND MEMORY AS ACTS OF SURVIVAL IN A WORLD WHERE THE DEAD ARE NEVER TRULY GONE.

Ryan de Quintal

RYAN DE QUINTAL
WRITER / DIRECTOR / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

THE CHARACTERS

Annabelle Merrill

THE QUIET, CAPABLE DAUGHTER OF A FRONTIER DAGUERREOTYPIST, RAISED ABOVE A MEMORIAL STUDIO WHERE DEATH WAS TREATED AS LABOR RATHER THAN SPECTACLE. TRAINED FROM A YOUNG AGE TO ASSIST IN POST-MORTEM PHOTOGRAPHY, SHE HAS LEARNED PATIENCE, STILLNESS, AND THE DISCIPLINE REQUIRED TO HOLD THE DEAD IN PLACE WHILE MEMORIES ARE MADE. BENEATH HER RESERVED EXTERIOR LIES A STEEL BORN OF GRIEF, SHARPENED BY LONG HOURS SPENT IN THE COMPANY OF LOSS.

HER FAMILIARITY WITH DEATH HAS MADE HER OBSERVANT RATHER THAN FEARFUL, ATTENTIVE TO DETAILS OTHERS OVERLOOK. WHEN VIOLENCE ENTERS HER WORLD, ANNABELLE SURVIVES NOT THROUGH STRENGTH OR RAGE, BUT BY MASTERING THE SAME TOOLS AND RITUALS HER FATHER TAUGHT HER TO HONOR THE DEAD.

Thomas Merrill

A SEASONED FRONTIER DAGUERREOTYPIST WHO HAS MADE A LIVING PRESERVING THE LIKENESSES OF THE NEWLY DEAD FOR THOSE LEFT BEHIND. WIDOWED AND WEATHERED BY YEARS OF QUIET LABOR, HE TREATS POST-MORTEM PHOTOGRAPHY AS BOTH A CRAFT AND A MORAL DUTY, INSISTING ON DIGNITY WHERE OTHERS SEE ONLY DECAY. HE HAS TRAINED HIS DAUGHTER NOT OUT OF AMBITION, BUT NECESSITY, BELIEVING SKILL AND PATIENCE ARE THE ONLY SAFEGUARDS AGAINST A CRUEL WORLD.

THOMAS IS CAUTIOUS, PRINCIPLED, AND DEEPLY PROTECTIVE, YET CARRIES A WEARINESS THAT SUGGESTS HE HAS SPENT HIS LIFE STANDING TOO CLOSE TO GRIEF. WHEN DANGER ARRIVES, HIS INSTINCT IS NOT TO FLEE, BUT TO PLACE HIMSELF BETWEEN VIOLENCE AND THE ONLY FAMILY HE HAS LEFT.

Annabelle Merrill

20s – Thin, well kept, innocence in her eyes.



About Annabelle

- Daughter and apprentice to Thomas Merrill, the town's post-mortem photographer.
- Gentle, observant, and reverent. She finds beauty in quiet things.
- Innocence remains in her, but the work has taught her stillness and discipline.
- Deeply devoted to her father. The studio is her world.

Expressions



Thoughtful



Gentle



Concerned

Turnaround



"She sees them in peace... and helps others remember."

Details



Innocence in her eyes.



Hair always neat, tied up in a bun.



Modest, well kept clothing.

At Work



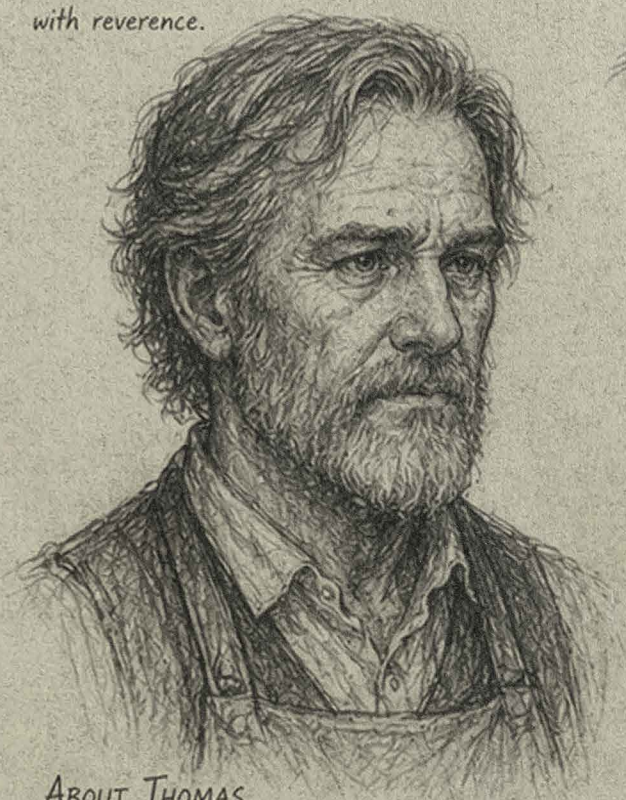
Preparing the deceased with care and reverence.



Adjusting the reflectors for the light.

Thomas Merrill

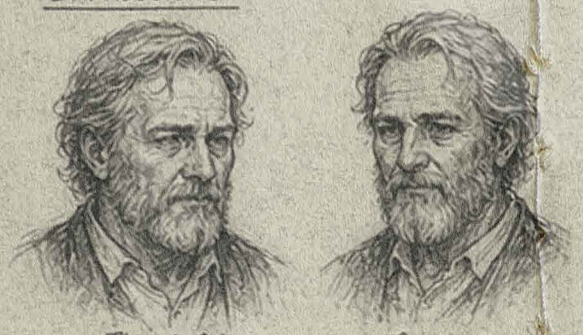
50s – Weathered but gentle. A man who has made peace with death, and treats it with reverence.



About Thomas

- A post-mortem photographer.
- Runs the only studio in town that offers this service.
- Deeply devoted to his craft and to his daughter, Annabelle.
- Believes every soul deserves to be remembered.
- Kind, patient, and principled. He will not be bullied.
- Carries quiet sorrow, but leads with love and dignity.

Expressions



Thoughtful | Gentle | Proud | Concerned

Turnaround



Front | 3/4 View | Side | Back

At Work



Polishing a silvered plate with care and reverence.

Measuring flash powder with steady hands.

Checking the ground glass image before exposure.

Details



Eyes
Kind eyes. Seen much, judges little.



Hair
Slightly wavy, graying, kept tidy.



Beard
Well kept, salted with gray.



Hands
Steady, experienced, gentle.

In His World



His studio is both his life and his sanctuary. A place of shadows, chemicals, and sacred duty.

Jane

A HARDENED FRONTIER OUTLAW WHO SURVIVES BY READING PEOPLE FASTER THAN THEY CAN LIE, TRUSTING INSTINCT OVER SENTIMENT. SHE APPROACHES VIOLENCE AS A TOOL RATHER THAN AN IMPULSE, MOVING WITH PATIENCE AND CALCULATION INSTEAD OF BRUTE FORCE. YEARS OF THEFT AND BLOODSHED HAVE STRIPPED HER OF SUPERSTITION, LEAVING HER DISMISSIVE OF BOTH THE DEAD AND THE LIVING ALIKE.

BENEATH HER COMPOSURE LIES A PREDATORY INTELLIGENCE THAT SENSES WEAKNESS AND EXPLOITS IT WITHOUT HESITATION. WHEN CONFRONTED BY ANNABELLE, JANE FATALLY MISJUDGES STILLNESS FOR FEAR, MISTAKING RESTRAINT FOR THE ABSENCE OF RESOLVE.



Frank

FRANK IS A VOLATILE FRONTIER THIEF DRIVEN MORE BY APPETITE THAN FORESIGHT, QUICK TO MOCK WHAT HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND. HE FOLLOWS STRONGER PERSONALITIES BUT CHAFES AT AUTHORITY, MASKING FEAR WITH BLUSTER AND CRUELTY. HIS DISREGARD FOR THE DEAD MIRRORS HIS DISREGARD FOR CONSEQUENCE, TREATING BOTH AS OBSTACLES TO BE PUSHED ASIDE. FRANK'S IMPATIENCE MAKES HIM CARELESS, AND HIS CURIOSITY DRAWS HIM INTO THE MOST DANGEROUS CORNERS OF THE STUDIO.

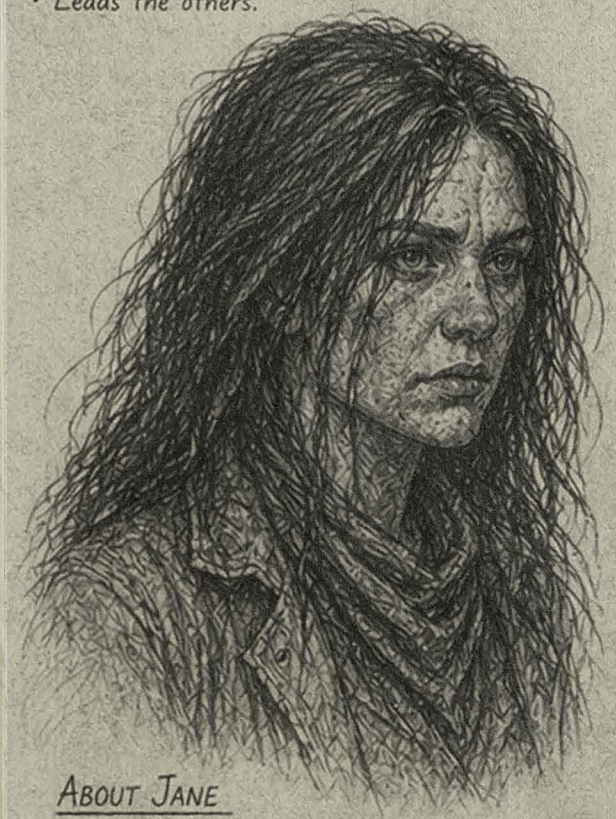
Butch

A PHYSICALLY IMPOSING FRONTIER CRIMINAL AND EXPERIENCED HUNTER WHO RELIES ON SIZE, INSTINCT, AND INTIMIDATION RATHER THAN THOUGHT. ACCUSTOMED TO TRACKING ANIMALS RATHER THAN PEOPLE, HE UNDERESTIMATES THE DANGER OF A QUIET, THINKING OPPONENT.

Jane

30s – Wiry and filthy,
A survivor. Ruthless, cunning,
and unshakable.

- Leads the others.



About Jane

- Outlaw and gunslinger.
- Fights to survive.
- Protects no one but herself.
- Sees weakness as a luxury.
- Carries the weight of hard choices.
- Knows how to read people.
- Always thinking three steps ahead.
- Fear is a tool, not a burden.

Expressions



Defiant



Wary



Cold / Calculating

Turnaround

Front



3/4 View



Side



Back





At Work



Lights the way.
Always watching.



Quick to draw.
Quicker to decide.



Plans three moves
before anyone else.

Details

Pistol



Well used.
Keeps it clean
Trusts it with
her life.

Lantern



Her light in
the dark.
Useful.
Unreliable.
Like everything
else.

Details



Dirt, scars, and
a thousand miles.



Pistol on her hip.
Always within reach.

Frank

40s – Lean, scarred, and grimy.
A ruthless opportunist.
Loyal to no one but himself.



About Frank

- Drifter. Gunslinger.
- Lives for the score.
- Quick to violence.
- Enjoys the fear he inspires.
- Scar across his cheek from a blade.
- Grew up in the gutter.
- Trust is weakness.
- Survival is everything.

Expressions



Cold / Watchful



Sneering



Irritated

Turnaround

Front



3/4 View



Side



Back



Belt Detail



Worn leather.
Practical.
Everything
has a purpose.
Nothing is
for show.

Details

Bowie Knife



Well used.
Keeps a keen edge.
Close and personal.
His first choice.



Scar from
a fight
that went
wrong.



Hands are
calloused,
scarred, and
always dirty.

At Work



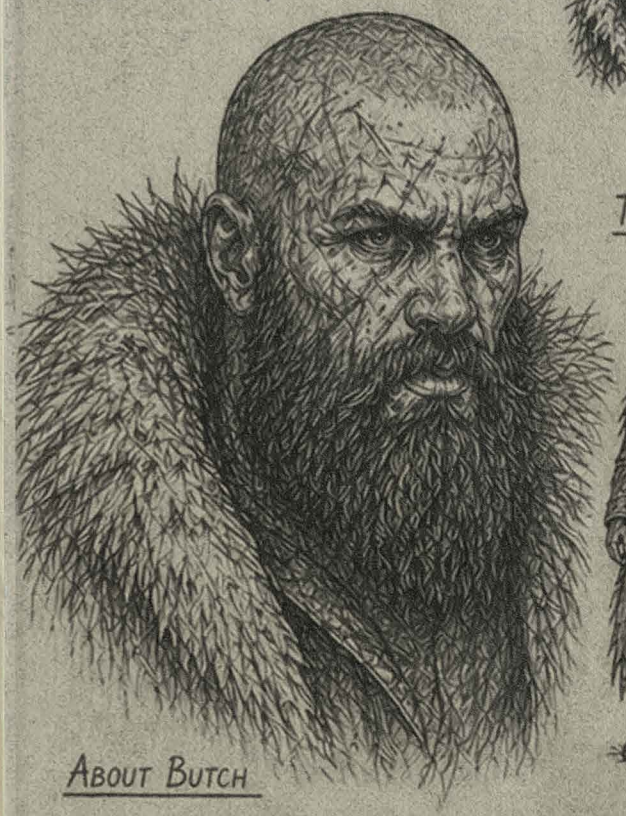
Moves quiet.
Strikes fast.



Enjoys being
the most dangerous man
in the room.

Butch

30s – Brawny, tall,
and draped in a buffalo pelt.
Brutal. Intimidating.
Loyal to no one but strength.
Enjoys hurting people.

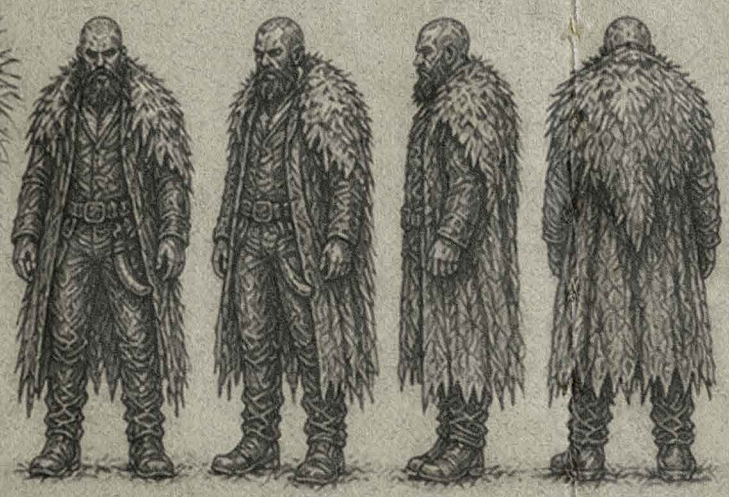


Expressions



Menacing | Amused | Enraged

Turnaround

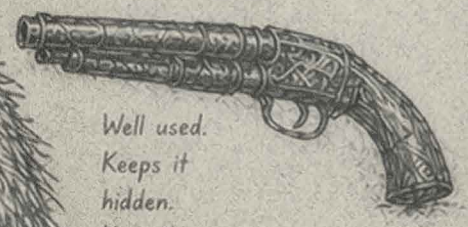


Front | 3/4 View | Side | Back

Details



Sawed Off Shotgun



Well used.
Keeps it
hidden.
Uses it
up close.
Every time.

Fur Detail



Thick. Heavy.
Keeps out
the cold.
The buffalo
head is a
trophy.
A reminder.

Hands



Calloused,
scarred,
and brutal.
Built for
violence.

About Butch

- Enforcer. Brute.
- Lives for dominance.
- Solves problems with violence.
- Respects power.
- Despises weakness.
- Quick to anger.
- Slow to think.
- Enjoys intimidation.
- Survival is strength.

Belt Detail



Practical.
Rugged.
Carries what
he needs.
Nothing extra.

Horn Detail



At Work



Intimidates first.
Talks less.



Prefers close range.
Ends it fast.



Enjoys the fear
in their eyes.

THE VISUAL LANGUAGE

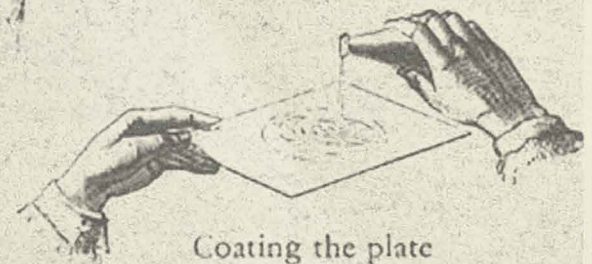
Vintage Cinema

THE VISUAL AESTHETIC OF THE DARK VEIL DELIBERATELY NODS TO THE EARLIEST ERA OF CINEMA AND THE WORLD OF 19TH CENTURY PHOTOGRAPHY. SHOT IN STARK BLACK AND WHITE WITH VINTAGE LENSES, THE FILM CARRIES A TIMELESS, TACTILE QUALITY THAT RECALLS THE TEXTURES AND IMPERFECTIONS OF EARLY PHOTOGRAPHIC PROCESSES.

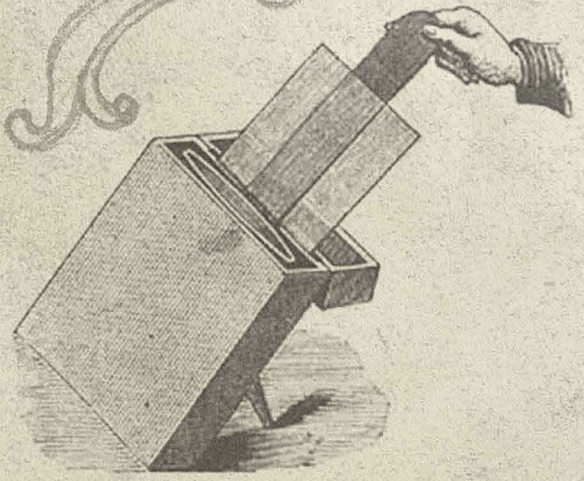
THE ACADEMY ASPECT RATIO OF 1.37:1 REINFORCES THIS SENSIBILITY, FRAMING FACES AND INTERIORS WITH A FORMAL, ALMOST DEVOTIONAL PRECISION. CAREFULLY COMPOSED SHOTS EMPHASIZE STILLNESS AND NEGATIVE SPACE, ALLOWING MOOD AND SHADOW TO CARRY AS MUCH NARRATIVE WEIGHT AS ACTION. THE RESULT IS A TRANSPORTIVE, ATMOSPHERIC EXPERIENCE THAT DRAWS THE VIEWER INTO A WORLD SHAPED BY RITUAL, MEMORY, AND QUIET MENACE.



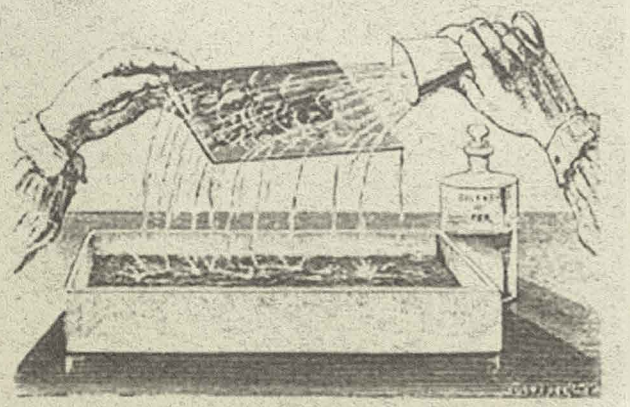
Polishing the plate



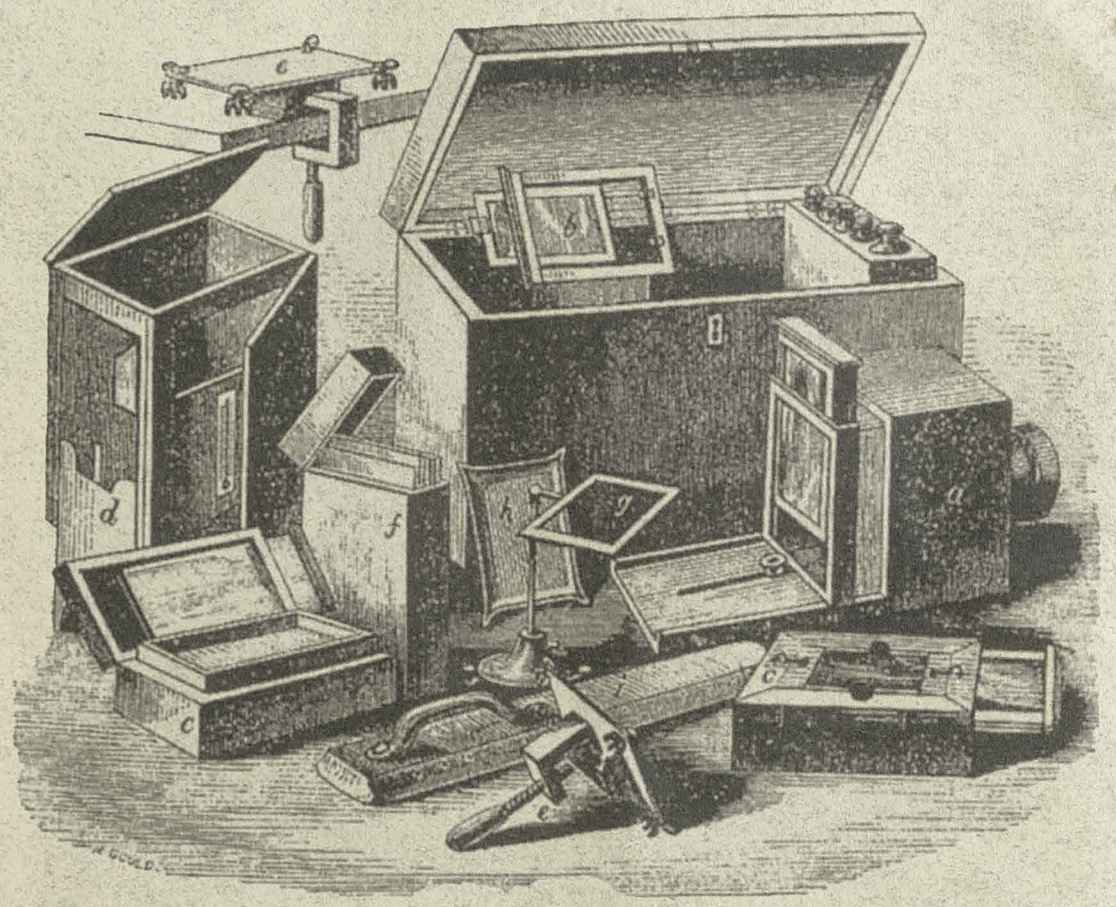
Coating the plate



Sensitizing the plate



Developing the plate



a. Camera obscura

b. Silver plate

cc. Iodine and Bromide Boxes

d. Improved Mercury Cabinet with sliding legs

ee. Plate holders with clamps

f. Box for Plates

g. Levelling stand

h. Flat peculiar dish for washing

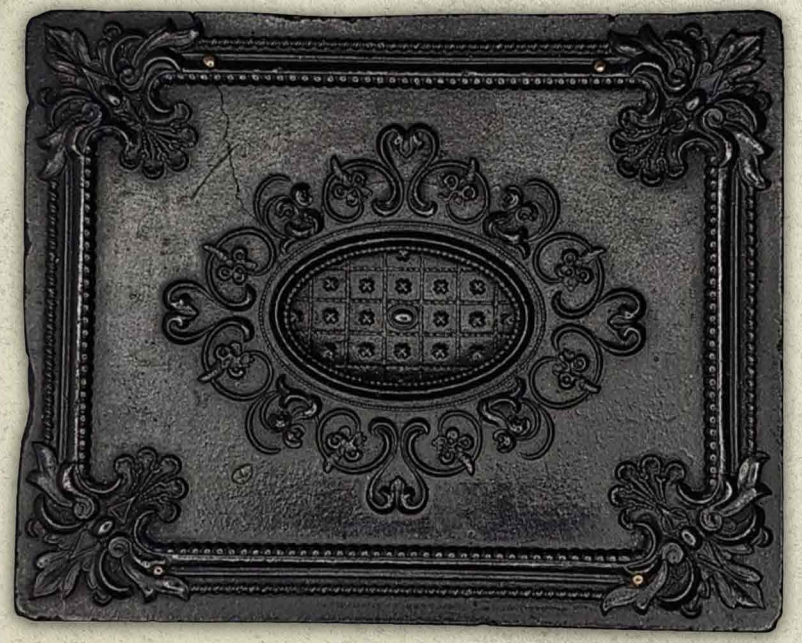
i. Hand-buff

RESEARCH

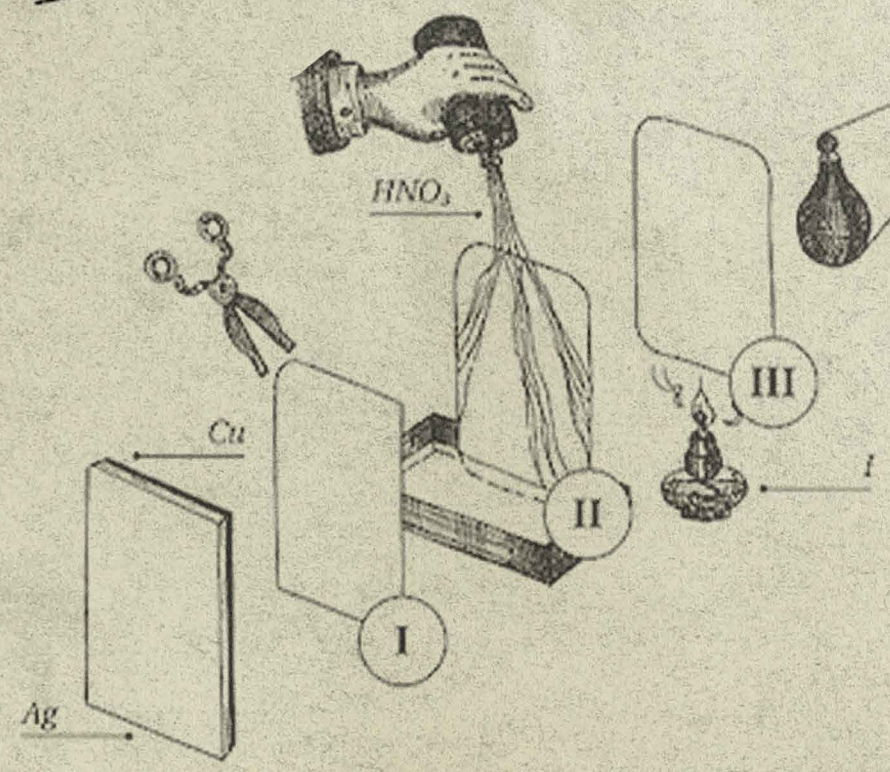
Attention to Detail

THE FILMMAKERS PUT EXTENSIVE RESEARCH INTO DAGUERREOTYPE PHOTOGRAPHY. THIS PLAYED A FOUNDATIONAL ROLE IN SHAPING BOTH THE WRITING AND THE WORLD OF THE DARK VEIL. THE TOOLS, CHEMICALS, AND RITUALS OF 19TH-CENTURY PHOTOGRAPHIC PRACTICE ARE NOT TREATED AS BACKGROUND DETAIL, BUT AS ACTIVE ELEMENTS OF THE STORY.

DESIGNING A NARRATIVE WHERE ANNABELLE MUST RELY ON PERIOD-ACCURATE PHOTOGRAPHIC PROCESSES TO SURVIVE FORCED EVERY MOMENT OF VIOLENCE TO EMERGE ORGANICALLY FROM THE CRAFT ITSELF. THIS APPROACH GROUNDED THE FILM IN HISTORICAL AUTHENTICITY WHILE ALLOWING THE MECHANICS OF MEMORY-MAKING TO BECOME INSTRUMENTS OF SURVIVAL.



THE DAGUERREOTYPE PROCESS



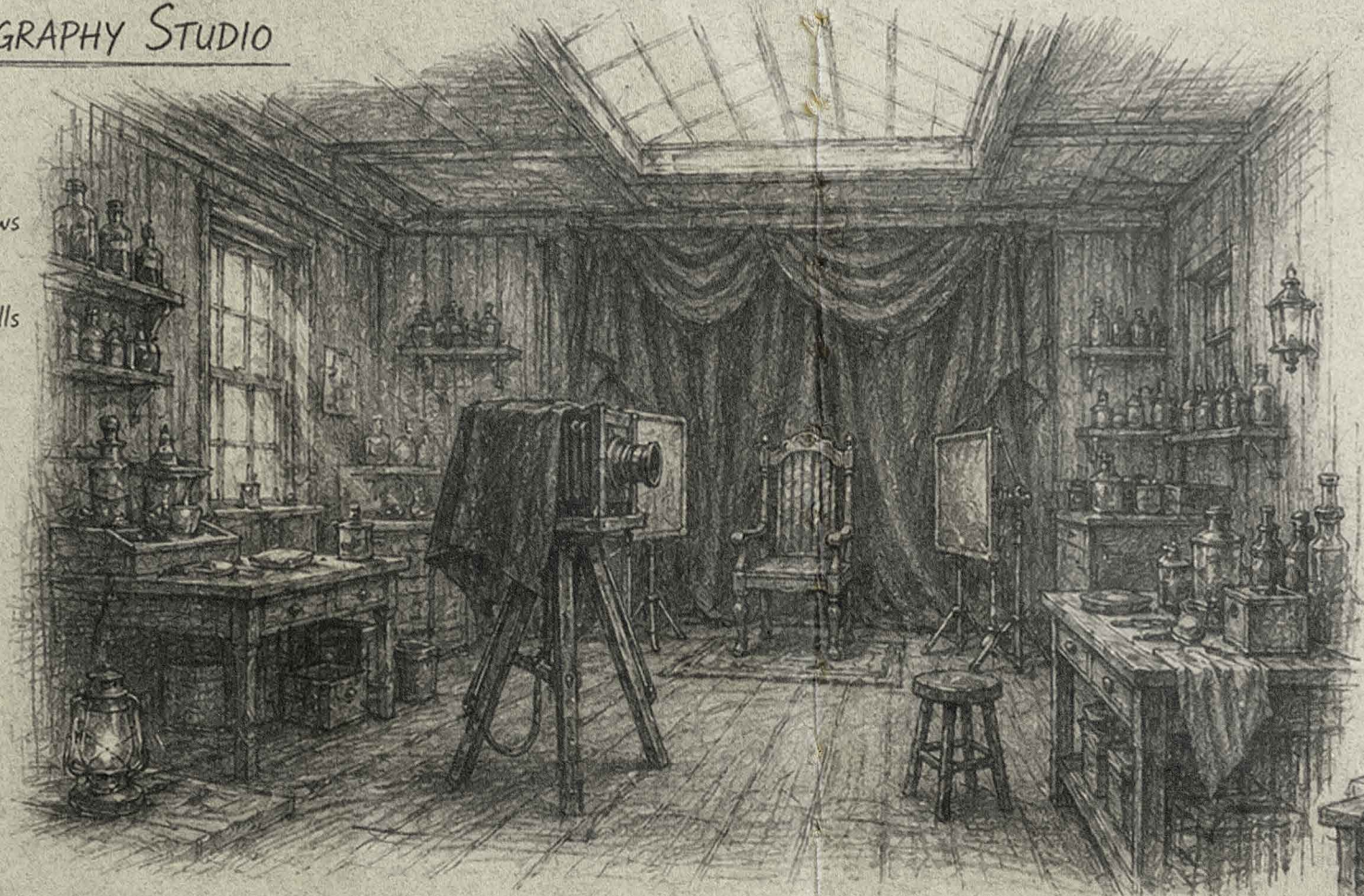
I. *Clipping the corners and bending the edges of the plate*
II. *Polishing*
III. *Sensitization*
IV. *Exposure*
V. *Development*
VI. *Fixing*
VII. *Gilding*
VIII. *Sealing, casing and other display options*



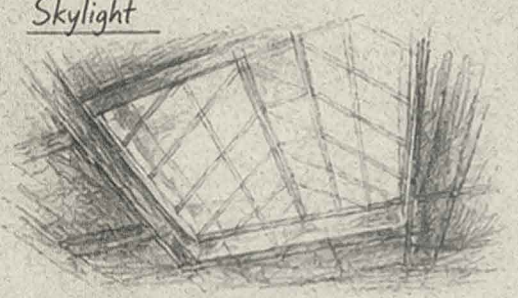
The Photography Studio

Overall View

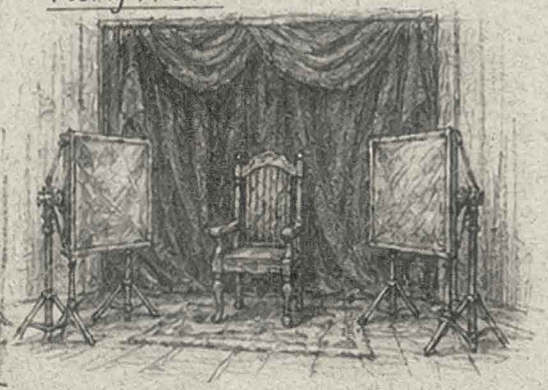
- Dim and solemn. A chapel of shadows and chemicals.
- Large skylight spills the last light of evening across the room.
- Massive black curtain behind the posing area.



Skylight



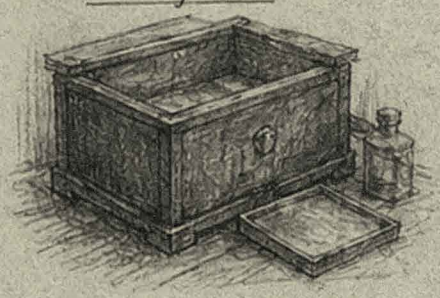
Posing Area



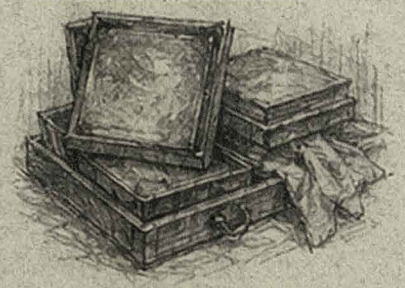
Worktable (Chemistry)



Mercury Box



Silvered Copper Plates



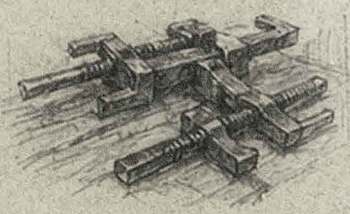
Iodine Crystals



Brushes & Tools



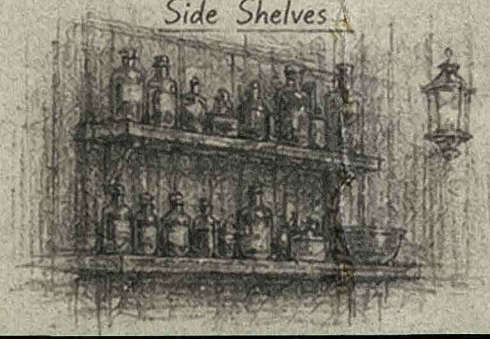
Clamps



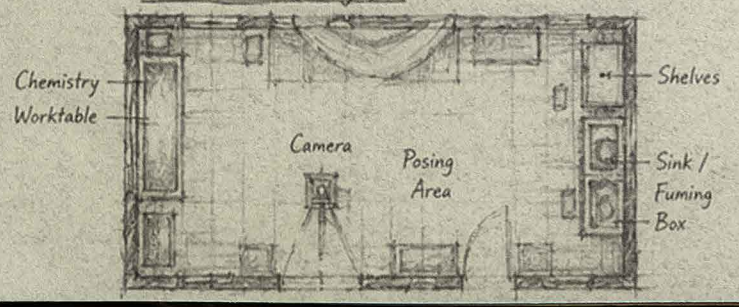
Oil Lamp & Lantern



Side Shelves



Floor Plan (Rough)



Notes

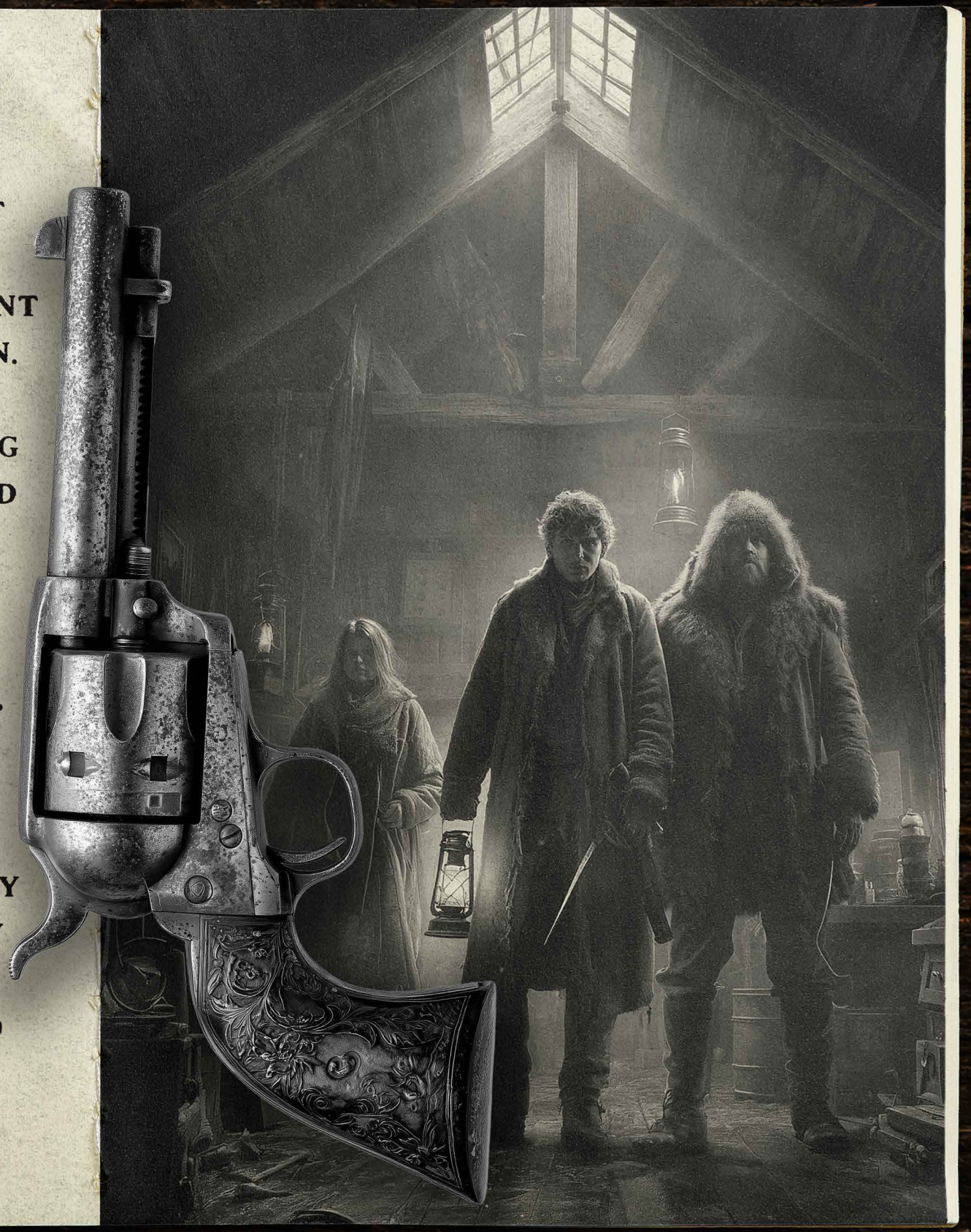
All surfaces worn. Everything functional.
No ornament without purpose.
The dead are treated with reverence.
The work is both art and devotion.

THE WORLD

Brutal Cinema

THE WORLD OF THE DARK VEIL IS BUILT WITH A STRICT COMMITMENT TO PERIOD ACCURACY, FROM EVERY PROP AND GARMENT TO THE SMALLEST DETAILS OF SET DESIGN. THE MID-19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN FRONTIER WAS A HARSH AND UNFORGIVING PLACE, WHERE SURVIVAL OFTEN DEPENDED ON CRAFT, VIGILANCE, AND RESTRAINT RATHER THAN FORCE.

THE FILM EMBRACES THIS REALITY, PRESENTING A WORLD SHAPED BY LABOR, SCARCITY, AND CONSTANT THREAT. VIOLENCE IS TREATED NOT AS SPECTACLE, BUT AS AN INTRUSION INTO DAILY LIFE, SUDDEN AND IRREVERSIBLE. BY GROUNDING THE STORY IN HISTORICALLY AUTHENTIC ENVIRONMENTS, THE FILM ALLOWS ITS TENSION AND BRUTALITY TO FEEL RAW, IMMEDIATE, AND EARNED.




Curzeit





Franchise Potential

The Next Chapters

THE WORLD OF THE LAST CARRIAGE IS DESIGNED AS AN ONGOING GOTHIC HORROR FRANCHISE, WITH THE NEXT TWO FEATURE FILMS ALREADY WRITTEN AND READY TO EXPAND THE HIDDEN LIBRARY. ACROSS THOSE INSTALLMENTS, TWELVE MORE BLACK-BOUND VOLUMES OPEN INTO NEW CENTURIES, CULTURES, LANGUAGES, AND SUB-GENRES OF HORROR, CONTINUING THE RITUAL OF DEATH, TRADE, AND STORYTELLING THAT BEGINS IN THIS FIRST COLLECTION.

The Last Carriage

chapter two

DEAD MAN'S RAZOR

A YOUNG MORTUARY APPRENTICE CUTS HIMSELF ON A DEAD GRAVE ROBBER'S RAZOR AND IS HAUNTED BY STOLEN BODIES THAT FORCE HIM TO CONFRONT THE COST OF MEDICAL PROGRESS.

THE BONES AT RÖKKUR

A FEARLESS ICELANDIC BOY VENTURES INTO THE WILD, ENCOUNTERING GHOSTS, TROLLS, AND THE RESTLESS DEAD, ONLY TO DISCOVER FEAR THROUGH THE THOUGHT OF LOSING HIS MOTHER.

THE WHITE DEATH

WHEN FOUR WHALEMEN BOARD A SHIP TRAPPED IN THE ARCTIC ICE, THEY DISCOVER A DEAD CAPTAIN'S JOURNAL, A POLAR BEAR STALKING THE WRECK, AND WHAT A CAPTAIN OWES HIS MEN.

The Silent Symphony

A SCARRED FRONTIER COMPOSER HAUNTED BY THE HUSBAND WHO STOLE HER WORK MUST WREST HER MASTERPIECE FROM A BURNED HOUSE, A VIOLENT DUST STORM, AND HER OWN UNRAVELING MIND.

THE IRON GOSPEL

A TRAIN ROBBERY TURNS INTO A DESPERATE SIEGE WHEN OUTLAWS AND LAWMEN DISCOVER THEY'RE GUARDING A MONSTER, FORCING THEM INTO A LAST STAND AS THE TRAIN BARRELS WEST.

THE WOLF OF RAT RIVER

FOUR MEN SHELTER IN A WINTER SHACK WITH A BALE OF PELTS, BUT WHEN THE FRENCH OWNERS ARRIVE, LANGUAGE BARRIERS AND SUSPICION IGNITE A DEADLY STANDOFF OF BLOOD & BULLETS.

