

TO THE FORGOTTEN DEAD

Written by

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EXT. FORGOTTEN CEMETARY - NIGHT

A crescent moon hangs low in a cloudless sky. Grave markers stand withered, some crumbling from age. The sound of APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS echo throughout the graveyard.

From behind a large grave marker bedecked with a pumpkin, comes JACQUE, 24, a young man of pale skin and dark black hair wearing gothic peasant style clothing on a tall body but for his hat, a wide-brimmed fedora.

He pulls up his hat to reveal green eyes that are literally aglow in the darkness.

He walks slowly, looking at every marker that he passes. The names upon them cannot be read, the words faded and illegible, but each stone sports a statue of a mythical figure upon its head.

He stops at one particularly tall marker with the statue of a man wielding lightning in his hands. Jacque stares emotionlessly at the grave marker before walking deeper into the cemetery.

The head of the figurine turns and watches as he goes, a scowl appearing on its face.

Jacque turns around another large marker and stops. Before him are opened graves with unwritten markers. The WIND HOWLS and stirs up a cloud of dust. As the WIND DIES DOWN...-

REMNANTS (V.O.)
(whispering)
Where...

Jacque turns sharply, looking over his shoulder. Behind him is more blank stones and empty graves. He looks forward again and sees the Remnants rising from the empty graves.

REMNANTS
(whispering)
Do forgotten gods...

The Remnants are ethereal figures. Some are human, many more a far more monstrous. No details of them can be clearly seen but their eyes which are all turned upon Jacque.

REMNANTS (CONT'D)
(whispering)
... Go to die?

Jacque takes a step back and finds himself teetering before an open grave.

He catches himself upon the marker and glances at it. It is blank like the rest. He looks back at the slowly approaching mob of Remnants.

JACQUE
(whispering)
I don't know...

The Remnants continue to advance. The smaller ones shooting ahead like bullets of light. The larger ones take massive, BOOMING STEPS, their eyes larger than a small house as they glare down upon Jacques.

REMNANTS
(whispering)
Where do forgotten gods go to die?

Jacques pushes himself up to his feet.

JACQUE
I don't know.

The Remnants surround Jacques, some standing close enough for him to reach out and touch. One of the more human-shaped ones, faintly resembling a satyr and standing at the head of the mob, points at Jacques.

REMNANTS
Where do forgotten gods go to die?

JACQUE
(shouting)
I don't know!

The Remnants halt their advance. The largest of them collapses to the ground with a loud THUD. Its body fades into the rising cloud of dust. More Remnants collapse and fade away until only the SATYR REMNANT remains.

SATYR REMNANT
(whispering)
Don't you?

Unseen hands shove Jacques down, he barely catches a hold of the grave stone. He looks upon it and gasps for now there is a name on the stone which reads: "JACQUE".

INT. VON HOHENHEIM HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A large grand room, with one wall covered in cuckoo clocks of various shape and design while the opposing wall bears a fireplace with a small fire burning within.

Jacque lays on a cot sitting near two rocking chairs. In one of them sits an UNSEEN WOMAN knitting.

Suddenly, Jacque emits a loud gasp and sits upright.

The fireplace flames flare larger and gain an emerald hue as he pants for breath, his trembling hand reaching up to rub at his brow.

Now visible in the rocking chair, is MRS. VON HOHENHEIM, 60, wearing a simple dress of muted colors, her grayed hair pulled back in a small bun. A bundle of cloth and a few balls of twine lay upon her lap and in her hands she holds a pair of knitting needles.

She glances briefly at the fireplace but does not stop knitting. She shivers and looks to her knitting. She sighs, her breath visible, and looks up at Jacque.

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM

Good morning, Jacque. Do you mind...?

Jacque glances out the corner of one eye. He reaches out towards the fireplace and clenches his hand into a tight fist. The emerald hue vanishes with a puff of smoke and the fire dies down to its former size.

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM (CONT'D)

Thank you, Jacque. Would you care for something to drink? I believe some of my mama's herbal remedies might suffice for another night of ill rest.

Mrs. Von Hohenheim sets aside her needlework and stiffly rises from her chair. She shuffles/hobbles off through the kitchen door. Jacque remains on the cot, one hand clutching the blanket tightly.

He raises his other hand up before his eyes. He clenches and unclenches his hand before his eyes narrow. His eyes slowly start to glow with a faint green light.

Emerald-tinted flames appear with a flash in the open palm of Jacque's hand.

His breath comes out in a slow wisp.

JACQUE

Why is it so cold...?

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM (O.S.)

Oh my!

Jacque flinches and the fire vanishes from his hand. He looks over his shoulder and sees Mrs. Von Hohenheim returning with two cups in her hands.

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM (CONT'D)
 Oh dear, pray forgive me Jacque. I
 don't think I'll ever quite get
 used to seeing you do that.

She smiles with a faint trembling to her lips.

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM (CONT'D)
 But then, a power so like that of
 the Remnants is a sight no one can
 prepare themselves for.

She hands one cup to Jacque before returning to her rocker. She sits with a relieved sigh.

JACQUE
 (whispering)
 Apologies... for startling you Mrs.
 Von Hohenheim...

Mrs. Von Hohenheim looks at him with wide eyes. She leans back in her chair with a slow CREAKY ROCKING.

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM
 Well will wonders never cease. I
 thought I'd never see the day!

Jacque, cheeks slightly red, winces and looks down at his cup.

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM (CONT'D)
 I didn't think that you could do
 it, Jacque!

He looks confusedly at her through his bangs.

JACQUE
 That I couldn't offer apologizes?

Mrs. Von Hohenheim shakes her head.

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM
 That you could feel that you
 should.

Jacque takes a sip of his drink. The CLOCKS STRIKE NINE and a DISCORDANT SYMPHONY OF BELLS AND THE CALLING OF CUCKOOS fills the room.

Mrs. Von Hohenheim appears unaffected by the noise, calmly rocking in her chair as she enjoys her drink.

Emerald fire ignites in Jacque's hands but it doesn't harm the cup he's holding. Its sudden appearance startles Jacque into splashing his drink upon his face.

The flames vanish and Jacque glares at the empty cup. Mrs. Von Hohenheim laughs.

He turns his glare upon the many clocks. His eyes widen at one with twin skeletal figures taking turns pounding a bell.

REMNANTS (V.O.)

Where do forgotten gods go to
die...?

EXT. VON HOHENHEIM FARM FIELDS - DAY

Upon an old tree stump sits MR. VON HOHENHEIM, 62, a slightly bow-backed man with a receding hairline and oversized overalls. He carves away at a wooden block with a small knife. At his side are other tools and more pieces of wood that would resemble another cuckoo clock if the pieces were put together.

He blows away the dust and examines the piece before setting it to his left. He reaches over to his right and pulls up another block of wood and starts to chisel.

He glances up at the fields of long grass that sits between his cottage home and the Black Forest. The stems of long grass bend to a gentle wind.

Suddenly, they are cut down by a massive farming scythe revealing- Jacque with a large patch of cut grass behind him. He whirls the scythe like a master, cutting down the long reeds with frightening ease.

MR. VON HOHENHEIM

You've got quite a swing with that
scythe, Jackie. Sure you weren't a
farmer yourself before your little
accident?

Jacque stops swinging the scythe. He half-turns to look over his shoulder down at the cut grass. The cut stalks aren't taller than the cuff of his boots.

He looks questioningly at the scythe in his hands and takes another swing, visibly higher than his last. It cleaves the grass stalks at the same short height.

JACQUE
Perhaps I might have been for a
time. However...

Emerald fire ignites upon the blade of the scythe. Mr. Von Hohenheim drops the wood block in shock.

MR. VON HOHENHEIM
(shouting)
Sweet merciful-!

Mr. Von Hohenheim grips at his heart and takes a few deep breathes.

JACQUE
Apologies but I have to see.

Jacque carefully lowers it to the uncut grass. He watches as the flame sits upon the blade but does not burn the grass. He pulls back the scythe, the flames vanishing into smoke. He frowns at the small patch of frost on the ground.

JACQUE (CONT'D)
What use are these flames if they
do not burn as fire should?

Mr. Von Hohenheim sighs and leans back on the stump.

MR. VON HOHENHEIM
Jacque, for my peace of mind if
nothing else, please don't play
with your fire so close to the
Black Forest. You'll likely invite
back that same trouble that brought
you to us.

Jacque turns to regard the nearby forest. He pushes back his hat and leans forward. He peers through the trees.

JACQUE
That is where you found me?

Mr. Von Hohenheim shakes his head.

MR. VON HOHENHEIM
That's where you came stumbling out
nearly dead on your feet.

EXT. BLACK FOREST EDGE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The sky is black with storm clouds and the trees tremble and sway as SOMETHING WHICH SOUNDS LIKE THUNDER BOOMS from deep within the forest. Flocks of birds flies away from the forest as another THUNDERING BOOM ECHOES.

MR. VON HOHENHEIM (V.O.)

There was quite the storm the night before too. Thunder like you've never heard but hardly a stroke of lightning or a spot of rain..

The Von Hohenheims open their cottage door and peer out into the night. The WIND BLOWS HARSHLY but no rain falls. A massive flash of emerald light shines through the trees before it fades to a muted glow.

The trees of Black Forest tremble to another THUNDEROUS BOOM.

Mrs. Von Hohenheim, her mouth agape, grips the shoulder of her husband and points into the forest. Mr. Von Hohenheim lifts his lantern high. His jaw drops and moves in a soundless prayer.

Through the trees comes- Jacque stumbling as he walks while emerald flames burns on his body. Neither he or his bloodied clothes appear to be hurt by the fire.

MR. VON HOHENHEIM (V.O.)

You were like a living torch, but there was no smoke. You were being burned alive but you did not scream. Honestly, I had thought that you were one of them at first. One of the Remnants...

Jacque's right hand clutches his fedora while the other outstretches and weakly grasps at the air. Jacque trips over a root and his hand catches the branch of a tree. He visibly trembles with the effort to stay upright.

Blood spills over Jacque's left eye. He turns and looks across the field to the Von Hohenheims. They flinch but remain standing where they are.

MR. VON HOHENHEIM (V.O.)

You were all but covered in blood though there was hardly a scratch on you.

The flames slowly fade away before Jacque collapses to the ground. A beat. The Von Hohenheims quickly run to Jacque.

Mrs. Von Hohenheim kneels down beside Jacque while her husband stands beside her. She hesitantly touches Jacque's face and quickly retracts her hand.

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM
(gasping)
He's freezing!

Mr. Von Hohenheim holds the lantern high. He tries to aim the light towards the Black Forest.

MR. VON HOHENHEIM
Did a Remnant try and place a curse
upon him? Why hasn't it come to
finish the job or...

He glances down at his wife as she places her ear over Jacque's chest.

MR. VON HOHENHEIM (CONT'D)
Did it already succeed?

Mrs. Von Hohenheim sits up.

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM
He breathes still but we need to
warm him up or he'll catch his
death soon enough!

She pulls out a handkerchief and wipes away at the blood upon his brow and finds unblemished skin.

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM (CONT'D)
No wounds? Then... This isn't his
blood?

MR. VON HOHENHEIM
If it's not his, then whose is it?
The Remnants? They don't leave
blood behind.

Jacque tiredly opens his eyes and looks up at the elderly couple.

JACQUE
The forgotten...

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM
What? I don't-

JACQUE
The forgotten... where do they
go...?

MR. VON HOHENHEIM
What's he mumbling?

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM
(to Mr. Von Hohenheim)
Shush!
(to Jacque)
Where do the forgotten go...?

JACQUE
Where do they go... to die?

The Von Hohenheims look at each other in open concern. An AGONIZED ROAR makes them turn sharply to face the Black Forest. Mrs. Von Hohenheim looks back down at Jacque.

MRS. VON HOHENHEIM
What are you...?

JACQUE
She named me... Jacque...

He falls unconscious.

EXT. VON HOHENHEIM FARM FIELDS - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT DAY)

MR. VON HOHENHEIM
It wasn't until later that you
started adding "gods" into that
question.

Jacque's gaze remains on the edge of the Black Forest. The older man tiredly sighs before rising to his feet. He walks over to Jacque and stands at his side. He looks over the cut field of grass.

MR. VON HOHENHEIM (CONT'D)
I think I've had my share of the
sun today. Time to head inside and
help the Mrs with lunch. You know
how distracted she gets when she's
setting a meal.

Mr. Von Hohenheim turns towards the cottage but stops, looking aside at Jacque. He puts a hand on Jacque's shoulder.

MR. VON HOHENHEIM (CONT'D)
Sometimes there's no need to waste
time trying pay that which was
offered freely. Just something you
should consider, Jacque.

He firmly squeezes Jacque's shoulder and gives him a small smile. Mr. Von Hohenheim walks down the short slope and into the cottage.

Jacque watches the door shut behind the man. He looks back to the forest before turning to the remaining field of long grass. He takes up the scythe and starts towards the grass before he pauses at the sound of a small, childish VOICE.

VOICE

The forgotten...

Jacque shakes his head and slowly raises the scythe up.

JACQUE

And sometimes, even the most important things must wait until all debts are paid.

Jacque starts to swing-

VOICE

Got to find the Gates, got to reach the Gates, must follow after the forgotten!

Jacque halts mid-swing. He slowly glances about. His eyes slowly trail to a patch of twitching grass.

Jacque cautiously approaches it.

JACQUE

Hello?

VOICE

(shouting)

HAVE TO FIND THE GATES!

Something leaps up from the long grass-too fast to see. The WINDS BLOW HARSHLY from the thing's passing and Jacque stumbles to remain upright. The WINDS DIE DOWN and he turns towards the forest to see a horned shadow leaping between the trees.

JACQUE

Wait... Wait!

With the scythe still gripped tightly in his hand, Jacque chases after the shadow and into the Black Forest.

EXT. THE BLACK FOREST - CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

Jacque shoves his way through the underbrush and comes to a halt in a small clearing between the trees. Before him is the horned shadow in its full form.

Larger than a house cat, it vaguely resembles a rabbit with the wings and forepaws of an eagle and the horns of a deer upon its brow.

It pants loudly for air with spittle dribbling from its fangs. It flaps its wings tiredly and with every beat, a small gust of wind blows.

An openly amazed Jacque stares at the WOLPERTINGER.

JACQUE
A wolpertinger...

The wolpertinger speaks erratically, going back and forth between hushed whispers and loud exclamations.

WOLPERTINGER
(erratically)
Promises. LIES! Remnant becoming.
To the north was sung. To the
Gates! To the FORGOTTEN!

The wolpertinger turns to face Jacque. Its bloodshot eyes twitch about, never settling in its head.

WOLPERTINGER (CONT'D)
To the Gates!

The wolpertinger lunges at Jacque.

JACQUE
Ah!

Jacque backs away and the horns of the wolpertinger misses his head and tears through the bark of a tree. The WIND HOWLS from the wolpertinger's passing.

It lands on the ground and turns to bare its fangs at Jacque.

WOLPERTINGER
Take me back to the GATES, NAMELESS
DEATH!

Jacque's eyes widen before he cradles his head with his free hand. He shakes his head, wincing in pain.

JACQUE
What...?

The wolpertinger roars and flaps its wings, creating a fierce gale. A surprised Jacque heaves the scythe into the ground, imbedding the blade up to the shaft. He grips the scythe tightly with one and holds down his fedora with the other as the wind blows against him.

He blinks through the gale and sees the lunging wolpertinger.

His eyes shine with an emerald glow. Green flames appear as a burning wall between him and the deranged beast. The wolpertinger flies through the fire and crashes into the scythe, breaking the blade free from the shaft.

WOLPERTINGER
(agonized)
Aiiiiiee!

It bounces off the scythe and rolls along the grounds until it halts with its back to Jacque.

JACQUE
No!

The flames vanish instantly, the forest completely unharmed save for a stretch of frost upon the ground.

The wolpertinger struggles to its feet, patches of fur and flesh burnt black and one wing bent at an unnatural angle. One of its horns is mired with cracks while the other breaks off.

WOLPERTINGER
(panting)
Pain...! I am alive! Just as was
sung to me!

Its bloodshot eyes widen and stare unblinkingly as it turns to Jacque.

WOLPERTINGER (CONT'D)
Forgotten but alive! Take me to
them! Take me back to them,
Nameless Death!

Jacque steps towards the wounded wolpertinger, waving a hand.

JACQUE
Stop trying to kill me then! How
can I help you if you won't let me?

WOLPERTINGER
Kill... me? Help... you? Me? You?
(beat)
Yes, HELP YOU!

The wolpertinger leaps and rakes its claws on Jacques's face. It lands upon the branch of a tree and turns to glare down at Jacques. It shivers with delight.

WOLPERTINGER (CONT'D)
(giggling)
Kill to help! Help to kill!

Jacques drops the scythe. He reaches up with a trembling hand and touches his face. He holds out his hand and sees it stained with blood.

His eyes widen. They start to shine with the emerald light as the same colored fire ignites in Jacques's bloodied hand.

He whirls around as the wolpertinger lunges. A BALL OF FLAMES EXPLODES from Jacques's hand. As it flies through the air, the flames gain a semblance to a human skull with jaws opening wide.

The FIREBALL STRIKES the wolpertinger with a MUFFLED BOOM. The wolpertinger crashes to the ground and lays on the forest floor burning like a torch.

Jacques's eyes return to normal and the fires cease to burn upon the wolpertinger's flesh. He collapses to his knees.

JACQUE
No... No, I didn't mean to... What
have I done?

The wolpertinger breathes in ragged gasps as blood dribbles from its closed eyes like tears. It smiles.

WOLPERTINGER
(gasping raggedly)
Thank you... to the Gates of
Avalon... to where the forgotten
gods go...

Jacques's eyes widen and he scrambles over to the wolpertinger. He leans down close to it.

JACQUE
Where is it? Where do I go to find
the Gates?

WOLPERTINGER
(weakly)
The Gates of Avalon... back to the
North I fly... home...

It breathes a final sigh and stills.

It is dead.

For a long moment, Jacque remains perfectly still. He doesn't blink and he barely breathes.

He slowly bows his head and takes off his hat and places it over his heart.

JACQUE
(whispering)
Forgive me...

With a FAINT HISS, the BODY OF THE WOLPERTINGER CRUMBLES INTO ASH, leaving only a few solitary feathers behind.

Jacques reaches down and takes the largest feather in the pile. He turns it slowly. Its edges are withered and blackened like ash.

JACQUE (CONT'D)
Nothing but ashes remain?

A SUDDEN GUST OF WIND BLOWS the remains away into the Black Forest. He looks over his shoulders towards the way he had come.

WOLPERTINGER (V.O.)
To the north...

Jacque places the feather into the brim of his hat and replaces it upon his head. As the hat passes by his face, the deep cuts left by the wolpertinger's claws heal into faint scars. The dried blood flakes away into the breeze.

Jacque rises to his feet with the aid of the broken scythe. He looks at its splintered top with narrowed eyes.

WOLPERTINGER (V.O.)
To where the forgotten go...

Jacque closes his eyes and a blade of emerald fire burns upon the broken farming scythe. He opens his eyes and the blade of emerald flames vanishes leaving the top of the shaft frozen over with frost.

Jacque gazes forlornly up into the sky before he turns away from the Von Hohenheim farm and walks deeper into the forest.

JACQUE
To the Gates of Avalon...