ABOLITION OF THE SENSES

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BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: “NOTHING CAN CURE THE SOUL BUT THE SENSES, JUST AS
NOTHING CAN CURE THE SENSES BUT THE SOUL.” OSCAR WILDE

FADE IN:

INT. STOREHOUSE – NIGHT

A gagged girl wearing a hospital gown is seated against the
back wall of a storehouse in shadows; her cheeks stained
with dirty furrows, an iron collar placed around her neck
and attached to the wall by a chain preventing her from
escaping. It’s YOUNG OLGA, 10.

MEMORY FLASH – EXT. FOREST – DAY

A male hand forcefully grabs a girl’s arm.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. STOREHOUSE – NIGHT

Tied up behind her back with a rope, Young Olga moves her
hands frantically up and down.

The knot of the rope rubs against a broken pipe that
sticks out from the wall.

MEMORY FLASH – EXT. BOAT – MOVING – DAY

The girl’s arm hangs out of a wooden boat; her fingers
brushing the water’s surface.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. STOREHOUSE – NIGHT

The rope keeps rubbing against the pipe until it breaks.
Then Young Olga removes the gag from her mouth and starts
to turn the fastener of the slave collar.

Firmly tightened, the screw turns slowly.

MEMORY FLASH – EXT. SMALL ISLAND – DAY

A slim, green and white striped lighthouse stands on a
small island.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. STOREHOUSE – NIGHT

Young Olga keeps trying to remove the screw. Drops of
blood start to fall from her fingertips.

After a few more turns, she manages to open the clamp.
MEMORY FLASH - INT. ROOM - DAY

The male hand lasciviously strokes the girl’s legs. Groans of fear and anguish are heard.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. STOREHOUSE - NIGHT

Carefully, Young Olga pulls the iron collar from her neck and places it on the floor. Then she raises her eyes to a narrow, horizontal window high in a side wall.

MEMORY FLASH - INT. ROOM - DAY

The hand takes a sharp awl from a metallic briefcase.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. STOREHOUSE - NIGHT

After standing up, Young Olga places a wooden stool near the side wall and nervously looks at the small window.

A NOISE OF CHAINS is heard.

The girl slowly turns around to look with anxiety at something unseen as the noise gets louder and louder...

MEMORY FLASH - INT. ROOM - DAY

GIRL’S POV as a MAN with a white, blind eye wearing a balaclava stares at her while giggling. Then he rushes towards her.

The screen turns to black. A scream of horror is heard.

FROM BLACK:

EXT. SMALL ISLAND - DAY

SUPER: MASSACHUSETTS BAY. TWENTY YEARS LATER.

It’s a sunny morning. A little rocky island with a green and white striped lighthouse, some seagulls fly around it.

Twenty yards north of the lighthouse, there is a small storehouse made of white brick; twenty yards south, stands the lighthouse keeper’s house.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - WATCH ROOM’S BALCONY - DAY

Leaning on the railing of a balcony, a straw-haired woman of athletic build and soft features stares at the ocean. It is OLGA, 30. A few seconds later, something breaks her concentration.
A German Shepherd Dog is licking Olga’s right hand.

Olga looks down at the dog and smiles as she caresses its head. Then she stares at the sea again.

    MAN (O.S.)
    Nice view, isn’t it?

Hypnotized by the marine landscape, Olga doesn’t hear the voice talking to her.

    MAN (O.S.)
    You like it?

Olga turns to her right and finds an older, slightly untidy, grey-haired man with glasses and holding a typed contract. It’s BRIAN, 55. She smiles confusedly at him.

    OLGA
    (with a light Slavic accent)
    Sorry, you were saying?

    BRIAN
    I was asking you about the landscape, but I see you’re totally enchanted by it... Yeah, so much beauty can block our senses.

    OLGA
    I’m afraid it’s a bit different in my case.

Olga points at her right ear.

    OLGA
    When I was a child, I suffered a serious infection in this ear and I can’t hear very well... Well, I can’t really hear anything at all.

    BRIAN
    Oh, I’m sorry.

Brian passes behind her and places himself at her left.

    BRIAN
    Better this way, isn’t it?

Olga smiles at him and nods. He hands her the contract.

    BRIAN
    Here’s your job contract, Olga.
    Have a good look at it...
    (MORE)
BRIAN (cont’d)
If everything is correct, please
sign at the bottom of each page.

Olga starts to read the first page of the contract.

BRIAN
As I told you, it’s only for a
six month period, but it could be
extended if you feel good here;
and as long as the town council
doesn’t carry out its threat of
automating this old relic.

Without taking her eyes off the contract, Olga pulls out
a pen from her down coat and clicks it.

BRIAN
How long have you been here in
U.S.? You speak English very
well.

OLGA
Barely two years. But people say
that we, the Poles, have an
aptitude for languages.

BRIAN
Yeah, so it seems.

They smile at each other.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER’S HOUSE FAÇADE – DAY

Accompanied by the dog, Brian and Olga leave the house.
He locks the door.

BRIAN
Comfort, clean and quiet. That’s
what my mother always said about
a good house. She was a very
smart woman. Here, take the key.

Brian gives her the key of the keeper’s house.

BRIAN
Lock it every time you leave,
especially at night.

OLGA
Why?

BRIAN
Don’t worry, nobody’s gonna try
to break into it...

(MORE)
BRIAN (cont’d)
It’s only that sometimes the town’s boys... Teen pranks, you know.

Olga pockets the key. Then she glances at the small storehouse beyond the lighthouse.

OLGA
And that place?

Brian turns to look at the storehouse for a second. Then he turns back toward her.

BRIAN
It’s nothing, just a storehouse. Junk and dust are the only things you’ll find in there, especially the second one. It’s not worth it.

(beat)
C’mon, follow me, I’ll show you the rest of the island.

They walk away from the house.

EXT. PIER – DAY

Olga unties a rope from a wooden pier and tosses it to Brian, who is standing in a skiff with the dog.

A second boat, older and smaller, is moored next to the first one.

Brian starts coiling up the rope as Olga raises her eyes towards the green and white striped lighthouse.

OLGA
I had never seen a lighthouse painted like that before.

BRIAN
You like it?

OLGA
Yes, it’s funny.

BRIAN
Just a tribute to my ancestors' homeland: Ireland, the land where the green is greener. Sadly, it needs a new coat of paint. The lighthouse, I mean.

OLGA
So it seems.
BRIAN
If you like the risk, I still have a couple of harnesses and some ropes in the storehouse. Do you dare?

OLGA
Hmm… I think I’ll decline for now.

BRIAN
(smiling)
I understand.

Brian drops the coiled rope and approaches the rear of the boat.

BRIAN
Why did you choose this job? A pretty young woman like you… I find it odd.

OLGA
Well, the recent year has been a bit hard for me. I need some time alone to…
(beat)
My parents died some months ago; one after another, in a matter of weeks.

BRIAN
Sorry to hear that. I also went through something similar with mine. Sometimes couples are so close together that they end up becoming one person. If one falls, the other falls as well. Like dominoes.

Brian sits at the stern.

BRIAN
Well, I guess it’ll be good for you to spend a few months trying to recompose yourself. Sure you’ll get it.

Olga nods. They exchange smiles.

BRIAN
I’ll come back the day after tomorrow to see how things are going. Maybe I’ll bring a little surprise for you… Yeah, I think you deserve a good welcome gift.
OLGA
Oh, don’t bother.

BRIAN
It’s no bother at all. You’ll see, you’ll see...

Brian starts an outboard motor. It sputters loudly.

BRIAN
Have a good first night, Olga!
See you soon!

OLGA
Thanks, Brian!

As the skiff moves away from the pier, the dog starts barking at Olga. Confused, she watches the animal.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - LANTERN ROOM - NIGHT

It’s a small circular lantern room. Olga cleans the Fresnel lens and the electric-filament lamps of the lantern with a cloth.

When she finishes cleaning, she opens a trap door and climbs down an access ladder to a lower room.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - WATCH ROOM - NIGHT

Once in the watch room, a circular room whose far wall contains a wide window, Olga pulls a billfold from her pocket and takes out a photo portrait of a smiling mature couple on light background. She kisses it and hangs it on the wall with a thumbtack.

After looking at the picture with a bitter smile, Olga approaches a control panel and pushes some buttons and switches.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - WATCH ROOM’S BALCONY - NIGHT

Olga enters the balcony and glances up at the lighthouse lantern. It shines luminously.

After smiling proudly, she turns to gaze down at the island, her eyes focused on the storehouse...

FLASHBACK - INT. STOREHOUSE - NIGHT

Young Olga carefully climbs on the wooden stool and opens the small window’s latch and the window.

A thick thread of blood runs down from her right ear.

The NOISE OF CHAINS is heard.
Young Olga turns again towards the noise, hesitation and fear on her face... The noise gets louder and louder.

BACK TO PRESENT

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - WATCH ROOM’S BALCONY - NIGHT

Olga is no longer smiling. She turns around and comes back into the watch room.

EXT. SMALL ISLAND - DAY

A new day dawns over the island. The lighthouse lantern, still lit, is turned off.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER’S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

It’s a small bathroom. Olga, in pyjamas and dressing gown, brushes her teeth...

A mysterious SINGING VOICE comes from a nearby room.

VOICE (O.S.)
“There’s a school of fish way down deep in the sea, where the little fish studied geography.”

Surprised, Olga turns toward the bathroom door.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Holding the toothbrush in her hand and with her mouth full of toothpaste foam, Olga cautiously enters a rustic living room.

A wooden TV stand houses an old television and a video tape recorder. Both are switched on.

TV SCREEN - It’s the old “Captains Courageous” movie, just the sequence where Manuel (Spencer Tracy) sings the famous “Yeah, ho, little fish” song to Harvey (Freddie Bartholomew). His is the mysterious voice.

MANUEL
“There they write on a slate and they read from a book, learn to run with the bait then just leave them the hook.” I got to sing every time I get mad. It ‘drive’ those flying fish out of my stomach, do you know?

Olga stares at the television, perplexed and motionless.

TV SCREEN - Manuel keeps singing and playing his peculiar instrument. Harvey watches him fascinated.
MANUEL

"Yeah, ho, little fish, don't
cry, don't cry, you'll be a
baleia, by and by..." Baleia, that
mean big fish, like a whale, you
know? "With fins and a tail to
help you sail, and maybe some
wings to help you fly. Yeah, ho,
little fish, don't cry, don't
cry. Yeah, ho, little fish, don't
cry, don't cry."

Once the song ends, both television and video turn off
all of a sudden by themselves. Then the VCR ejects a
black videotape with no label.

Olga keeps staring at the now blackened television
screen, still more astonished.

EXT. STOREHOUSE FAÇADE - EVENING

Olga approaches the double door of the storehouse and
looks at the padlock that keeps it locked. She reaches
for one of the handles and shakes it. It’s firmly locked.

After taking a look around, she reaches into her down
coat and pulls out a small iron bar. Then she uses it on
the padlock to lever the door open...

It’s an impossible task, the padlock is too thick. Olga,
frustrated, drops the bar and hits the double door.

EXT. STOREHOUSE SURROUNDINGS - EVENING

Carrying a flashlight and a wooden chair, Olga walks
along the storehouse’s outer wall. She stops just below a
closed small window high in the wall and looks up at it.
An expression of uneasiness appears on her face...

After placing the chair on the ground, she switches on
the flashlight and climbs onto the chair. Then she tries
to open the window. It is locked from the inside.

Resigned, Olga stands on tiptoes on the chair and points
the flashlight beam toward the window to see inside the
storehouse...

Everything is dark. The only thing she can see is some
dirty and ruined furniture.

OLGA’S FEET - Olga’s feet on tiptoe, the chair creaks...

Stretching out her neck, she keeps observing the inside
of the building...

A loud CREAKING is heard. Olga falls off the chair.
Lying on the ground, Olga rubs her ankle as she looks at the chair. One of its legs is broken.

OLGA
Shit!

After standing up, she looks away from the window, to the sea. Then she sees something that surprises her...

Far from the island and wrapped in a mist, a wooden boat floats on the ocean. There is somebody standing still on it, a mysterious VISITOR that seems to be watching her.

EXT. ROCKY SHORE – EVENING

Olga approaches the rocky border of the island. Then she notices that the visitor wears dark clothes and seems to be a man.

She raises a hand and waves to the stranger. He doesn’t respond. She waves again.

OLGA
Hello!

The visitor doesn’t react. Some seconds later, he sits down and starts rowing away from the island.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE – WATCH ROOM – NIGHT

TABLET SCREEN – It’s a photo viewer. Several photographs of a brunette woman with short hair and intensely blue eyes are displayed on the screen.

Seated at a radio station table, Olga looks at the photos on a tablet computer while drinking from a bottle of coke; an expression of sadness on her face.

A loud SQUEAKING coming from the bottom level of the lighthouse is heard.

Surprised, Olga puts the bottle and the tablet aside and stands up.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE – SPIRAL STAIRCASE – NIGHT

After going down a few steps, Olga leans out over the balustrade and looks down the spiral staircase that leads to the bottom of the tower.

The squeaking sound is heard again; then a loud SLAMMING noise coming from the lowest level.

She straightens up. Then she hears a naughty LAUGH as she sees a fleeting SHADOW going up the stairs. Scared, she goes back to the room.
INT. LIGHTHOUSE - WATCH ROOM - NIGHT

Olga closes the door and looks around for something. Then she grabs the coke bottle and drinks it in one gulp.

After some hesitating, she places herself by the door hinges and waits nervously.

The laugh is heard again, now together with FOOTSTEPS going up the staircase. Olga stands still near the door, holding the bottle, her breathing quick.

Just as they reach the other side of the door, the footsteps and the laugh cease.

The door opens slowly, inwardly, with a squeaking sound and stops just when it is in a position making a right angle with the frame...

Hidden just behind the door, Olga wraps her fingers around the bottle neck...

OLGA’S POV

Brian comes up in front of her.

BRIAN

Boo!

BACK TO THE SCENE

Olga, startled, jumps back. Brian smiles widely.

BRIAN

The hunter hunted! You wanted to scare me, didn’t you? Confess, young lady, or I’ll feed you to the sharks!

Olga sighs, relieved. Then she gives a hint of a smile.

OLGA

Yeah, you caught me... You said you’d come back tomorrow.

BRIAN

I couldn’t wait to give you your surprise.

OLGA

Oh, you didn’t have to.

BRIAN

C’mon, get out of there. Someone very important wants to meet you...
Brian grabs Olga by the arm and draws her out of her hiding place.

BRIAN
Let me introduce you to Lucifer, the Lord of Darkness himself!

Olga stops just in front of the door, but she sees nobody.

OLGA
I don’t see-

A MEOW is heard. She looks down to see a small black cat sniffing around at the doorway.

BRIAN
But he likes to be called just Luc.

Surprised, Olga squats down to better see the cat, which starts sniffing her. She smiles.

BRIAN
He’s your welcome gift. As you can see, I’m a man of his word.

OLGA
He’s lovely.

BRIAN
C’mon, don’t just stand there, pick up him. Don’t be afraid, he only bites priests and nuns.

Olga picks up the cat and holds him in her arms.

BRIAN
Do you like him? I thought he could help you to feel less alone.

OLGA
Sure. Thank you, Brian.

BRIAN
Oh, and that’s not the only surprise...

Brian pulls out a bottle and a couple of glasses from a bag.

BRIAN
We have to celebrate your arrival as you deserve. And what better way to do it than with a few swigs of Polish vodka?
Brian starts filling the glasses with vodka.

OLGA
(hesitating)
I don’t know if I...

BRIAN
Let me tell you what you don’t know... You don’t know the good time we’re gonna have!

Brian hands one of the filled glasses to Olga.

BRIAN
As they would say in the old Ireland: Céad mile fáilte! A hundred thousand welcomes!

They raise their glasses and swallow the vodka in one gulp. After drinking, Brian laughs. Then he starts pouring another round of shots.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - WATCH ROOM’S BALCONY – NIGHT

Leaning on the railing of the balcony, Olga watches the storehouse with thoughtful eyes. Brian enters with two glasses filled with vodka and gives her one of them.

BRIAN
The last two swigs. They make smaller bottles every day.

Olga takes a sip of vodka while Brian places himself next to her good ear.

OLGA
How long have you worked here?

BRIAN
Thirty five years. My father and grandfather also did it; three generations of lighthouse keepers that will end with me. Modernity sweeps away everything in its path.

OLGA
It’s a shame.

BRIAN
How about you? You told me your last job was as night concierge.

OLGA
Yes, I’m used to this kind of job. I like quiet and solitude.
BRIAN
Don’t be too overconfident, young lady. A lighthouse like this is a very special place. When you spend weeks with no one to talk to, with no human contact...

(beat)
Every time you see a boat, you’ll want to jump into the water and board it.

They briefly laugh.

OLGA
Speaking of which, I saw someone in a boat prowling around the island a few hours ago. Was it you?

Brian shakes his head.

BRIAN
Surely it was someone from the town, a fisherman.

OLGA
It’s strange. He seemed to be watching me.

BRIAN
People in small towns are a bit nosey. Don’t give it too much importance.

Suddenly, the lighthouse lantern stops spinning and the inner lamps turn off. They raise their eyes towards it. Then it starts flickering slowly.

OLGA
What happens?

BRIAN
Did you clean it?

OLGA
Yes, I did yesterday.

BRIAN
I’m afraid you’ll have to apply yourself a little more. If you don’t clean it thoroughly, the tiniest speck of dust can cause flickering or can even blow the lamps. As I told you, it’s an old and ailing relic.

The lantern starts working normally again.
BRIAN
Well, this time we were lucky.

A MEOW is heard. They look down to see the cat rubbing against Olga’s legs.

OLGA
Hey! What about you?

Olga picks up the cat and holds him in her arms.

BRIAN
That’s his way of telling us that the party is over.

OLGA
(to the cat)
You’re tired and this pair of damn drunks doesn’t let you sleep, right?

BRIAN
I’m leaving. It’s getting later and my wife has the strange habit of squeezing my privates when I come home from drinking late at night. A last toast?

They raise their glasses and swallow the vodka in one gulp. Then they smile at each other.

BRIAN
Good night. See you soon.

OLGA
Good night, Brian.

Brian leaves. Holding the cat in her arms, Olga raises her eyes towards the lighthouse lantern, intrigued.

EXT. SMALL ISLAND – DAY

A new day dawns over the island. The lighthouse lantern is turned off.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM – DAY

Olga rummages around in a wood chest of drawers as if looking for something. Soon she finds a paper clip and examines it.

After putting the clip into her pocket, something catches her attention in the same drawer...

It’s a little notebook with strange notes written by someone. Olga glances through it.