

TEASER

INT. DARK ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

ARIS (20s, cynic), is LEISURLY walking with their fists in their pocket, as VARIAN (20s, prestigious), desperately sprints for an exit. He is exhausted and frantic, now hiding behind a stack of wooden crates, a knife shaking in hand. For all his talk, he's never used it once in his life.

FOCUS ON: Pendant tucked away in Varian's other hand.

ARIS

(monologuing out loud)

The patrons of the tavern are an indulgent crowd, parading their smiles on the street. Their stories spill out with a single drink.

It's a dead end.

In the distance, laughter and music plays from a luxurious manor. Outside, dozens of PERFECTLY-KEPT bodies line the passageway. No one would be coming for them now.

ARIS

Still, I will be whatever they want me to be. It is customary, being a keeper of so many secrets.

Amused, Aris stomps loudly into the clearing, looking around to see any signs of his startled accomplice. Varian holds his breath, tears in his eyes. He looks around for any possible out.

ARIS

(lowered voice)

But what do you suppose when you slip up, when someone gets too close? When you cannot even keep one truth through your labyrinth of lies?

They make eye contact. Aris smiles. Checkmate.

ARIS

(outloud)
This cyclical, endless
performance. Contingent on the
roles this mendacious
world---these people--- have given
us. Just to keep itself inebriated
enough to function. A game they
try to convince, that if you just
play it with the right hand, you
will eventually win.

Varian pulls at a linen, where the stack of wooden crates
rest, and runs. The wood splinters with fine winery and
glass, blocking the path behind them. Aris, subtly annoyed,
manages to parkour over the mess, and scans for signs of the
boy.

ARIS
You know, I always hated your kind
the most.

He addresses the clearing.

ARIS
Masquerading as 'good people'.
Pretending to give a damn about it
all. Waiting to watch others fall.
(Beat)
But let us make one thing clear.

Abruptly, Varian TACKLES Aris, and the two brawl. It's
clearly a losing game, as Aris begins to STRANGLE them to
death. Varian writhes beneath him.

ARIS
(guttarally)
You are shit. I am shit. We are
all pieces of shit. And one day,
we will pay the price for it.

He says it as if he's trying to convince himself.

Debris of glass is scattered around them. At the last
second, Varian manages to slash a shard across Aris's face,
catching him off guard. The killer is more surprised and
vexed to the stains on his clothes than to any actual
damage.

Varian takes their knife and STABS Aris right in the chest.
Then again. And again.

Aris falls lifelessly to the floor.

Varian, in horror and panic, stands completely frozen for a moment. Turning, he heaves on the ground, wild and frenzied. He considers checking the corpses for any signs of life, before staggering back to his feet.

VARIAN
(shaking, calling out)
H-hey...I-i-is anyone here? I-i-is
anyone still a-alive?

He concludes it is far too late. Varian begins lurching hurriedly in search of any point of contact.

VARIAN
(shouting and trembling)
H-hello? C-c-can anyone h-hear me?

The Manor was nearby. Surely, someone must be on the streets.

VARIAN
Somebody help, please!

He is about to escape the passageway when--a blade slices into his heel. He crumples to the floor.

ARIS
You really are no different than
them.

He attempts to crawl away, turning to see Aris with the knife EXTRACTED in his hand. Despite his blood-stained clothes, the wound is completely closed.

VARIAN
(in complete shock)
No...no-no-NO! Please!

Aris takes a booklet out of his pocket, and draws a red line across.

OVER BLACK:

UNCANNY SOUND.

Title Card: Fallen

END OF TEASER

ACT 1

INT. BEDROOM - DAWN (FLASHBACK)

VARIAN (V.O.)
I am the loneliest person you will
ever meet.

We see the young man writing quickly in fine ink, seated at a wooden desk. His hand flicks meticulously as he tries to write.

We see him set down the papers, seal them in an envelope, and stash it away in a drawer.

He reaches for his satchel, takes one last look at his orderly and pristine room, before closing the door.

CUT TO:

INT. FLOATING WHARF - DAWN

VARIAN(20s, obscure), rushes discreetly through a slumbering, dreary city. There are overgrown flowers and vines that overtake it, and crumbling, marble architecture.

VARIAN (V.O.)
I can tell you almost anything; my
mind is the archive of nearly
every consequential reading. I can
chart the stars and create wonders
from earth and tar. I can tell you
a being's intentions and heart
within two minutes of talk.

FOCUS ON: Pouch of coins in his hand.

VARIAN (V.O.)
I carry whispers that only the
wind and I know, and I preserve
them in a sanction that no being
can unfold. There is scarcely a
person to share anything with at
all.

The markets would open soon. He tries to conceal his awe of the passerbys, dressed in worn-out, grey clothing.

VARIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
That feeling...it never leaves. It follows me, it reminds me, in every slither of the dark. In nearly every passing conversation. In every waking thought: I do not belong.

He tries not to draw too much attention to himself, but his curious demeanor and embroidered cloak immediately catches the jaded eyes of early passerbys.

VARIAN (V.O.)
Is there someone out there? Do you feel these things too? Are you like me; calling upon the dark for things in which we cannot yet see? Does this lack make you feel so empty? Are you variegated with superficiality?

At last he arrives at the dock and is preceded by a FERRYMAN (unknown entity), garbed from head to toe entirely in all black.

Varian signs to them.

VARIAN
(In sign language)
Hello, are you headed for Meliora?

FERRYMAN
(In sign language)
FOR A PRICE.

Varian clatters the coins before him clumsily. The Ferryman simply observes.

VARIAN
(nervous)
I-is it not enough?

FERRYMAN
(nonchalant, but weary)
YOU CANNOT TRAVEL BY COIN, BOY.

VARIAN
(slightly embarrassed)
R-right. Excuse me.

Varian pulls out a PENDANT, it looks as though a star pulled from the sky.

The Ferryman lingers, before turning and reaching for his oar. Varian quickly places it back into his satchel. They would be departing.

FERRYMAN
REVEAL YOURSELF.

Varian hesitates for a moment, almost unnaturally.

VARIAN
...Varian. Varian Dupont.

VARIAN (V.O.)
I want to believe that there's
more to life than this. There must
be. There must be someone,
something, out there.

He steps onto the gondola, with an empty urgency rather than anticipated enchantment. He looks back at the city briefly.

VARIAN (V.O.)
That's why I have to go.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. UNDERGROUND CITY TAVERN - DAY

ALAISTER (60s, jaded), the taverner, walks into the establishment hurriedly. She notes the small pocket of tired patrons conversing.

ALAISTER
(grumbling)
Der hasn't been any food let
through the borda' in days. At
this rate, we'll all starve to
death.

Aris stands behind the counter, polishing cups.

ARIS
(smiling)

I am optimistic we will, my lady.
Seems the Surface will not be
reconsidering anytime soon.

ALAISTER

Why can't those 'bastards just get
a life and let us live our own?

ARIS

Such things are beyond human
comprehension.

ALAISTER

(slightly annoyed)

You're always a treat to talk to.

ARIS

I do my best, my lady.

ALAISTER

Why don'tcha go make ya'self
useful and check inventory? Only a
matta' of time 'till this place
turns to a rehab facility.

Aris sets down the cup. As if it were brand new.

ARIS

Certainly.

Out back, there are stacks of crates filled with liquor.
Aris writes, taking out the same notebook we saw before.

NOX

(nonchalant)

So, we're all royally fucked.

NOX (late 20s, apathetic) approaches, and Aris smoothly puts
the booklet away.

Nox notices anyways.

ARIS

(seemingly delighted)

It would appear so. Not fit to
live on the surface, and yet too
good to live in this hellhole. I
only can imagine where they want
to ship us off to next.

Nox reaches for a bottle, opens it, and takes a swig. Their eyes are blood-shot. Certified insomniac.

NOX
(cutting)
You missed a spot.

Nox nods at a half-broken wine bottle.

Silence.

ARIS
Well, it appears I have.

NOX
Look, I don't care what you get up
to on your nightshift. But if you
start making me clean up after
your messes---

ARIS
You need not worry, friend.
I assure you, it was a mere
miscalculation. Certainly.

NOX
We're not friends. And of
course it had to be the fine
wine. Just do your damn job.

ALAISTER
Somethin' ya'll wanna fess up?

The two immediately go quiet.

ALAISTER
Well?

ARIS
Why yes, my lady. You see,
our good friend, Nox, has
been drinking themselves--

NOX
I swear to fucking god.
You're the reason our stores
are bloody empty--

ALAISTER

Ya know what? I don't care. I have
a new assignment for the two of
ya. You'll be going to the
Surface.

The two gawk at her.

ARIS
I beg your pardon?

ALAISTER
The Masked Festival. It's
happening tonight. You two will be
serving for the Brigade.

NOX
Hell no.

ALAISTER
I wasn't asking.

NOX
Never said you were.

ALAISTER
Well, if you both want to keep
your 'jobs,' I'd say you better be
fitted and out the door by this
afternoon. This might be our only
chance at an upperhand from the
inside.

ARIS
My lady, in all do respect, even
if we were to entertain the
surface, how on earth do you
suppose we get there?

ALAISTER
The same way you managed to chase
off a boy--a noble, least to
say--and cost us an entire
inventory of wine the other night.

More silence.

ARIS
(cautiously)
Very well.

ALAISTER
Good. It's decided then.

INT. DARK ALLEYWAY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A PERSON(20s, unknown), reaches out their hand and wields the Pendant we saw Varian carry from before.

Their right arm is missing, replaced with a machinery.

Varian lays inches away from them, marvelling at both the mysterious person and the magical energy summoned. Aris remains completely unfazed, as though he was expecting this sudden intrusion.

ARIS
(sarcastically)
My, my. Our esteemed guest.

The Person does not say a word, but wields a flame in their hand. Threatening.

ARIS
You know, as much as a good host I
pride myself as, I would rather
not cause a scene. Blood is not an
easy one to remove, I would know.

Varian and Aris both eye the pendant, now claimed in the person's hands.

ARIS
Give it here. Or perhaps, the
Surface would care to learn about
yet another magic wielder?

VARIAN
(Aghast)
M-my pendant...

The person turns to Varian, inclining their head for him to run. He lingers for a moment, before staggering off.

ARIS
So be it.

SCREAMING.

END.