

Consuming Dreams

loosely based on  
"The Vampire Maid" and  
"The old Portrait" by

Hume Nisbet

a screenplay by

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## Consuming Dreams

FADE IN:

1. INT. - VIENNA CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION - DAY

The platforms of the central railway station are crammed with PEOPLE, rushing every which way. The place looks like an ant colony. Streams of PASSENGERS head with their multi-colored luggage towards the exit. Other people stand in their way, disoriented and desperately checking the arrival and departure board right in front of the waiting hall. Crying children pester their mothers and men in business suits run after their trains. A RAILWAY WORKER is collecting trolleys. A family with six children in tow, bearing dozens of plastic bags and parcels, struggles through to platform number three. The LOUD distorted VOICE from a loudspeaker adds extra confusion to the madhouse.

VOICE

The train to Rumania via Budapest, Szeged, Timisoara to Bucharest will depart on schedule from platform three at 9 o'clock.

A fragile looking female body is carrying a heavy travel bag and a bunch of black tulips wrapped in red paper. CLAUDIA, the young woman, stops, puts her luggage down and looks for platform number three. The CONTINUOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS from the LOUDSPEAKER make her move even faster. She is at the other end of the railway station and dashes down the hall. Her face is panic struck as she keeps bumping into people coming the other way. When she reaches platform three she starts to run. One of the black tulips slides out of the wrapping and falls. Claudia turns around, hesitates for an instant looking down at the flower and back to the train, tightens her grip around the remaining flowers and continues the race against time. The railway worker watches Claudia from a distance. He sees the flower on the ground and sprints past a group of tourists. Dozens of feet threaten the tulip. Although nobody seems to notice the fragile flower, it remains unharmed. A WOMAN with long blonde hair, dressed in a blue old fashioned dress squats down in front of the tulip. Her hand caresses the flower and picks it up when a LOUD WHISTLE indicates the departure of the train. No sooner does Claudia jump into the first wagon, that the train begins to move along the platform. When the railway worker

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reaches the spot where the tulip was, he stares in disbelief at an empty spot.

2. INT. - TRAIN COMPARTMENTS - DAY

Claudia is out of breath. Obviously the train has too many passengers. She gasps for breath. A GYPSY FAMILY stakes out the territory between the doors of the train and the restroom with their children and plastic bags. Compared to them she looks like an alien from outer space. Claudia wears jeans and a colored T-Shirt with African artwork. Her fair complexion brings out her beautiful hazel eyes. Claudia lifts up her bag, the bunch of tulips protectively pressed against her body. She opens the door to the corridor leading to the train compartments. The first compartments she passes are packed with travelers and luggage. Her walk through the first two wagons is a bitter struggle. There is hardly enough space to make a step forward not to mention to drag along her bag. Claudia sweats and keeps on fighting her way through.

3. EXT. - RAILWAY STATION - DAY

FIRST TITLES

The train driven by an old wine-red diesel locomotive is leaving the railway station making an infernal noise.

4. INT. - TRAIN COMPARTMENT - DAY

Claudia risks another peek into one of the train compartments. The farther she goes the more hope there is to get a seat. She reaches a compartment with only two passengers but filled with bulky luggage and two metal boxes. Determined to claim a seat Claudia gets in. The two men interrupt their conversation over a map of Rumania and look at her. The younger man, RICHARD, has blonde hair and a freckled face. His boyish looks match the way he is dressed: T-Shirt, worn-out jeans and sport shoes. The older of the two, MICHAEL, is in his thirties and somehow hides his good looks behind small specs that give him a rather intellectual appearance. His brown eyes are vivid and his even face framed by short black hair.

CLAUDIA  
(very polite)  
Excuse me, is there a seat left for  
me?

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The younger man nods and gets up. The older man keeps on thoughtfully looking at Claudia.

RICHARD  
Just a sec!

He removes one of the boxes from a seat. Claudia does not take notice of Michael. She lets herself fall into one of the red manmade leather seats.

CLAUDIA  
(relieved)  
Thank you!

Her travel bag on her knees she leans back against the headrest and puts her tulips on the seat next to Michael. Claudia wipes the sweat out of her face, closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. When Claudia opens her eyes again she notices that the man with the spectacles keeps on staring at her tulips. She looks at the flowers and back to Michael who has a nauseated expression stamped upon his face.

CLAUDIA  
Tulips! My mother adores black tulips.

RICHARD  
The Queen of the Night!

Michael and Claudia look confused.

MICHAEL  
What?

RICHARD  
Black tulips are called "Queen of the Night". People in the middle ages believed that the black tulip was a symbol of resurrection and eternal love.

Michael listens fascinated. Claudia seems to search for something in her handbag.

MICHAEL  
I'm impressed. I didn't know that I was traveling with a flower expert.

RICHARD  
Well, my ma is Dutch, you know. I grew up with that sort of thing.

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Claudia keeps on desperately searching for something. The two men look at her digging in her handbag. Michael hands her a refreshment towel and keeps on scrutinizing the flowers.

CLAUDIA  
(confused)  
Actually, I was searching for my glasses. But thank you, anyway!

She gratefully takes the refreshing towel and cleans her face with a sigh of relief. Michael looks at Claudia and smiles. She looks even more confused, grabs her bag and digs out a pair of glasses. She puts them on and inspects Michael.

CLAUDIA  
I know your face!

MICHAEL  
Refreshed your memory as well?

CLAUDIA  
Can't escape from university, can I?  
Not even on my holidays.

MICHAEL  
Are you still angry with me?

CLAUDIA  
(provocative)  
Well, ... No, not really. I thought you didn't like women, that's all.

RICHARD  
Last year they called him a womanizer when almost all of the scholarships went to girls.

Claudia glances at an obviously embarrassed Michael.

MICHAEL  
You're on your way home?

CLAUDIA  
How do you know?

MICHAEL  
See, I still remember your file.

Michael grins.

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CLAUDIA

Where are you going?

Michael gives her a sign to move closer and takes the map from the window table. He unfolds the map to its full size on his knees. He shows her a route from Vienna via Budapest and farther South to Rumania, passing Bucharest. His forefinger points at a place where the Danube hits the Black Sea.

MICHAEL

This is the place where we hope to find the walls of an ancient Greek city.

Claudia nods.

CLAUDIA

Where exactly are you going?

Michael glances over to Richard.

RICHARD

A little village near Milo 32 or something...

Claudia laughs.

CLAUDIA

Oh, you mean Mila 23.

Michael's eyes reprimand Richard for his ignorance.

CLAUDIA

Actually, it's near the place where I live.

MICHAEL

Perhaps you could advise us where to stay, how to get around...

CLAUDIA

Why don't you stay at my family's house? When I was a kid my mother used to rent the guest house in summer. I am sure we could work something out.

MICHAEL

We'd appreciate it.

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The train is going too fast now to leave the window open. Richard gets up and closes it.

5. EXT. - VARIOUS ROMANIAN LANDSCAPES - DAY/NIGHT

Further TITLES on a MONTAGE

The train races through poor and desolate areas, abandoned villages and rural agglomerations run down by years of communism. As the train comes closer to its final destination it passes the romantic valleys of the Romanian countryside and leaves civilization behind. The landscape becomes wilder and more picturesque.

6. EXT. - SCRUFFY RAILWAY STATION - DAY

End TITLES

The train arrives at the railway station of a small village near Mila 23. The brakes of the train make a horrible noise and break the perfect silence of the morning. The railway station looks like it is from another century. The only platform is made from wooden planks and the main building is very close to being a ruin.

7. EXT. - PLATFORM OF THE RAILWAY STATION - DAY

Michael, Claudia and Richard get off the train. They are the only passengers to get off. The loud whistle of the CONDUCTOR signals the train's departure. The wagons squeak when the locomotive is set in motion. While Michael and Richard examine the place with great skepticism, Claudia, obviously in a good mood, takes her luggage and energetically heads towards the main building. Richard and Michael are laden like donkeys and have great difficulty in keeping up with her.

8. EXT. - FRONT OF MAIN RAILWAY BUILDING - DAY

Richard and Michael exit the main building and put their luggage down. TWO OLD MEN dressed in old-fashioned suits interrupt their conversation when they notice the strangers. They suspiciously inspect the two young men from head to toe. Michael looks around and sees a flea market opposite the street.

MICHAEL

Watch the bags! I'll be right back.

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Richard doesn't have the time to respond as Michael dashes over to the market.

9. EXT. - FLEA MARKET - DAY

Michael strolls through the stalls of the flea market. He is the only foreigner amongst LOCALS who are all dressed in old fashioned clothes: farmers, house-wives and children running this way and that. Michael has a rather superficial look at a few art objects and moves on. One of the stalls displaying antiquities and old paintings attracts his attention. He stops.

10. EXT. - ANTIQUITY STALL - DAY

Michael closely inspects the frames of the old paintings. The VENDOR, a scruffy looking man with a beard, immediately notices that there is a potential customer.

VENDOR  
(strong accent)  
You have eye for treasures.

Michael ignores him as he is completely absorbed by the frame of a dirt smeared painting. The gilding is almost completely worn away and three of the corners are broken off. The canvas is so smothered with dirt and time stains that it is almost impossible to make out the motive of the painting.

VENDOR  
This, no good. I have better... look!

The vendor tugs at Michael's jacket trying to pull him away.

VENDOR  
No, no good... come... look!

Michael stubbornly refuses to give up the frame he has chosen.

MICHAEL  
No, sorry, I'm not interested.

The vendor's face is full of despair. He runs to the other end of his stall, swears in Rumanian and comes back with two wonderful portraits, all intact. Michael shakes his head and hands him a ten dollar bill. The vendor smiles.

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VENDOR

Good wood...

He knocks with his fingers on the frame causing it to crack on one side. Michael and a few ONLOOKERS laugh. He offers him the ten dollar bill again.

MICHAEL

Good price for good wood!

The vendor under pressure from the curious CROWD, takes the bill and curses again in the local language. Claudia appears and looks mildly shocked when she sees the frame.

CLAUDIA

You realize that you've just bought a piece of junk, do you? You can't even see the painting behind all that mud.

MICHAEL

Who cares about the painting?

Claudia looks utterly confused.

11. EXT. - FLEA MARKET - DAY

Claudia and Michael walk back to the railway station.

MICHAEL

See, old fashioned frames are a hobby of mine. I'm always on the prowl with the framers and dealers in curio shops for something quaint and unique in picture frames. I don't care much about what's inside them.

CLAUDIA

But what would you do with them?

MICHAEL

Being an amateur painter it is my fancy to get the frames first and then paint a picture which I think suits their probable history and design.

CLAUDIA

Hmm,... well, we have to rush, otherwise we miss the bus.

12. EXT. - BUS STOP AT THE RAILWAY STATION - DAY

An ELDERLY WOMAN is the only passenger waiting on the platform. Claudia, Richard and Michael arrive. Claudia shakes again her head in disbelief when she looks at the frame.

CLAUDIA  
(joking)  
I'm not sure whether this thing will  
survive the trip.

The elderly woman turns her head at the sound of Claudia's voice and glares at her. Richard lights a cigarette but has to throw it away as the bus just appears round the corner. The elderly woman hastily grabs her plastic bags and gets on the bus. She takes a seat right in front.

13. INT. - BUS - DAY

Richard and Michael are busy stowing all their bags into the luggage compartments. Claudia gets in last and takes a seat in one of the front rows. The elderly woman throws a hostile glance at Claudia, grabs her plastic bags and heads towards the other end of the bus. Richard and Michael witness her strange behavior and exchange glances.

RICHARD  
That's what I call a warm welcome.

Claudia's happy mood has faded away. She thoughtfully looks out of the window ignoring Richard's remark. The BUS CONDUCTOR starts the motor, closes the doors and drives off.

14. EXT. - COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The bus drives along the Danube river. Michael's and Richard's faces are glued against the bus windows. They obviously enjoy the wild landscape untouched by modern civilization.

15. EXT. - SMALL COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The bus suddenly stops by a lake in the middle of nowhere and spits out the three passengers. They unload their luggage and set it down in the dust of the street. The face of the elderly woman keeps on staring at Claudia as the bus leaves.

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CLAUDIA  
We're almost there!

Michael and Richard exchange glances as Claudia heads towards the lake shore and looks out for a ferry boat. She takes a look at her watch.

CLAUDIA  
Bad news, we just missed the boat!

MICHAEL  
Boat?

Claudia points at one of the small islands on the lake surrounded by thick woods on the other side.

CLAUDIA  
That's where we live.

16. INT. - CLAUDIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

A ten year old girl with long blonde hair sneaks into Claudia's room. MYRIAM walks towards her older sister's bed like a puppet on a string, her eyes gazing into space. She mechanically places a black tulip wrapped in red paper on the pillow on Claudia's bed. She looks at the flower as if she admired the beauty of the plant. She turns towards the window and glances at the lake where the sun is setting in beautiful colors.

17. EXT. - FERRY BOAT - NIGHT

Michael, Claudia and Richard are squeezed in between wooden containers, luggage and parcels of all kind. Richard has a firm grip on his photo equipment and his luggage stored at the rail of the boat. Claudia and Michael look at the sunset.

CLAUDIA  
It's a pity that you came for work.  
This is the ideal place where dry  
city brains become juicy again. A  
sort of retreat to recharge one's  
batteries. Perhaps I should have  
never gone to the city.

Michael grins.

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MICHAEL

So you prefer the quiet life in the countryside?

CLAUDIA

No, not really...it's just that I need to get out from time to time. There are too many people in Vienna, too much work. I fill my brain with loads of information every day, write academic paper after paper and almost break down afterwards. Then I have this strange unrest in my blood, a lust for the real life.

MICHAEL

This is the mood which comes upon every sensitive and artistic mind when one is overworked or living too long in one groove. It is nature's hint to seek new pastures.

Claudia's eyes can't hide the sympathy she feels for Michael.

RICHARD

Are you sure that we can stay at your mother's house?

CLAUDIA

Don't worry, I'll manage!

As they come closer to the shore they see a huge estate consisting of three buildings that look less impressive than at first glance from a distance.

18. EXT. - LARGE ESTATE - NIGHT

When they arrive in front of the estate they see a big red brick house. Although its architecture and design should bring to mind ideas of former days of glory and pompous life, its current state is deplorable. There are holes in the wall, the garden looks uncared-for and the small verandah made from wood is already in decay. The building opposite the main house looks rather basic although it seems to be in a good shape. A third building turns out to be a barn. In the middle of the court yard there is a well with a flower bed around it that is generously filled with black blooming tulips. Claudia abruptly stops in front of the flower bed and sadly looks at her bunch of tulips. After a

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moment of hesitation, she unwraps her flowers and throws them into the well.

MICHAEL  
Tulips in summer?

Claudia is unable to respond and stares pale-faced at the flower bed. Richard drops his bags and rushes towards the well. He kneels down and enthusiastically inspects the tulips.

RICHARD  
(all excited)

They're fuckin' black! I mean, not wine-red black or something. They are completely black. Dark black.

MICHAEL  
(completely lost)  
So what?

RICHARD  
Listen, tulips are not supposed to be black. Cultivated tulips can be dark wine red or dark blue, almost black, but all the real black stuff is artificially colored. They're not supposed to grow like that.

CLAUDIA  
(pensive and fearful)  
But they do, sometimes... they do.

RICHARD  
This is great, I mean your family could make a fortune... Just think of...

A woman in her seventies opens the door of the main building. She is dressed in black and her face is lined and creased.

CLAUDIA  
Barisca!

When Claudia arrives at the front door BARISCA, Claudia's Hungarian nanny, has great difficulty in recognizing her. Barisca hesitates, but finally gives her a warm hug. Richard and Michael follow.

19. INT. - MAIN BUILDING-ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

Michael and Richard are awed by the entrance hall. Although it is sparsely furnished there are a few antique pieces that catch their attention. Claudia introduces the strangers.

CLAUDIA  
This is Barisca, my good old nanny.  
And this is Michael and Richard,  
friends from Vienna.

Claudia points to the living room.

CLAUDIA  
Why don't you make yourself  
comfortable in the living-room? In  
the meantime, I'll talk to my mother.

Claudia runs up the huge stairway. Barisca takes Michael and Richard's jackets and turns on the light in the living room.

20. INT. - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The light of an electric chandelier reveals a huge room furnished with old furniture and expensive looking carpets. Heavy silk curtains hide the door to the verandah that leads into the garden and to the lake shore. Richard and Michael inspect the paintings on the wall and the antiques in the room.

RICHARD  
Wow, look at all these paintings. I  
don't know about art but there must  
be a fortune at these walls.

MICHAEL  
(reverential)  
I wonder how this place must have  
looked like before all these years of  
communism. Just imagine, pompous gay  
receptions, men in uniforms, ladies  
in fancy evening dresses... can you  
still feel it?

Michael takes a closer look at one of the old picture frames. His hands caress the lavish wooden carvings. Michael beckons to Richard.

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MICHAEL

I've never seen such a fine piece of work. Look at the carvings. There are so many details.

Richard doesn't have an eye for the frame but is fascinated by the painting. It is the portrait of a young man dressed in an old-fashioned uniform and wearing a crown.

RICHARD

Do you know this guy?

Michael steps back, takes a look at the painting but finally gives Richard a shrug. They turn around as they perceive a strong authoritative VOICE.

MRS. POPESCU (O.S.)

King Michael I. Forced to abdicate at the age of 26...

Michael and Richard turn around and see Mrs. Popescu, an elegant woman with smooth black hair, and cool brown eyes. She is of middle age and when young must have been remarkably good-looking.

MRS. POPESCU

...expelled from his country by the communists and never allowed to set foot on his homeland again. One of the tragedies of our country.

Claudia and Mrs. Popescu enter the living room.

MRS. POPESCU

I am very pleased to welcome you as my guests. We haven't had visitors for...

As she comes closer to the two men something in Michael makes her react. As if something in his face was strangely familiar.

MRS. POPESCU

(absent minded)  
...for such a long... long time.

Claudia notices the sudden reaction.

MICHAEL

We don't want to be a burden.  
-more-

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MICHAEL (cont'd)

Perhaps we should just stay for one night and try to find a hotel or pension tomorrow morning.

MRS. POPESCU

No, you must stay, I insist. Please sit!

POV of someone watching the strangers from the entrance hall.

They all sit down on old fashioned red sofas and chairs. Myriam secretly peeks into the living room. She is especially fascinated by Michael and watches every move, every gesture he makes.

MRS. POPESCU

My daughter told me that you are an archeologist. What do you hope to find in our country? Churches were plundered, historic sites have remained unprotected for decades. I wonder what brings you here?

MICHAEL

The Greeks! You see, one of my British colleagues found an antique vessel near a small chapel, something very precious. People used it for festivities. We want to prove that there was a Greek cultural link to Romania in the fifth century before Christ. The site should be close to Mila 23.

MRS. POPESCU

Mila 23, yes... there is an old chapel ..., my mother's birth place... and I got married there. Claudia was baptized in the little chapel, in fact, all members of our family were except... for my older sister.

MICHAEL

Oh, Claudia didn't mention that...

Michael catches a glimpse of the girl hiding in the entrance hall. Claudia guesses the reason for Michael's distraction. Everybody turns around.

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CLAUDIA

Myriam, I know it's you. Come in!

Myriam steps out of the dark corridor. As she comes closer she suspiciously examines the two men and her sister. When she steps into the light, her blue eyes shine like sapphires and her golden hair makes her look like an angel. To everybody's surprise she heads towards Michael with great determination, ignoring the sister whom she hasn't seen for a long time. Richard and Michael are astounded. Myriam lets her white slender hand remain in Michael's hand longer than most people do at an introduction. She then slowly withdraws it, still looking at Michael with steadfast eyes.

MYRIAM

I'm Myriam.

CLAUDIA

Hey, what about me?

Myriam switches back to normal when she turns to her sister.

MYRIAM

You promised me a gift. Remember, the fairy tales, you promised. You didn't forget, did you?

CLAUDIA

I won't tell you before I get a kiss.

Although Myriam hesitates for a second, she gives her sister a kiss on her cheek. Mrs. Popescu seems to be relieved and smiles.

CLAUDIA

How many books did I get you?

MYRIAM

Two?

Claudia shakes her head.

MYRIAM

Three?

CLAUDIA

No!

MYRIAM

Tell me, how many?

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CLAUDIA

Six and something else. A surprise.

MYRIAM

Can I see them now? Please!

MRS. POPESCU

I suggest we have dinner.

Barisca enters the room carrying a huge silver tray loaded with plates, bowls, a big steaming casserole and glasses. She unloads everything on the table. The family and her guests sit down when all of a sudden, the light begins to flicker and finally fades away.

MRS. POPESCU

Sometimes, especially in summer we have problems with the electricity. Barisca...

Barisca lights a match and ignites the candles of an old chandelier. She puts it down in the middle of the table pushing the big casserole aside.

MICHAEL

Dinner with candle light is so much more romantic.

For the first time Mrs. Popescu smiles but continues to scrutinize her guests, her eyes fixed upon Michael. Barisca lights a few more candles.

CLAUDIA

Well..., let's dig in.

Claudia grabs the silver ladle and ladles out the strange smelling stew. When she pours the first load of the steaming brownish sludge into Michael's plate Richard and Michael discretely exchange glances. Claudia is embarrassed as she can read the message in Richard's and Michael's eyes.

MRS. POPESCU

It's nothing special but... we didn't expect guests for tonight.

MICHAEL

I certainly appreciate your hospitality.

Mrs. Popescu nods a "You're welcome". Myriam who sits next to her mother meticulously observes every movement, every gesture Michael makes. She doesn't even bother to watch her

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own plate when she lifts her spoon up and down from and to her mouth. Claudia notices that Michael does not feel comfortable being stared at like a zoo animal. She nervously looks at her younger sister impatiently waiting to make eye contact. Barisca releases the tension when she serves the main course. Richard and Michael both stare at the grayish piece of meat on their plate decorated with some potatoes. Claudia is even more embarrassed but does not say a word. She has another glass of wine instead and gives Richard and Michael a refill.

MRS. POPESCU  
You don't like mutton?

MICHAEL  
(embarrassed)  
Not necessarily.

Richard protects his plate with his hands discouraging Barisca to serve him.

RICHARD  
I am a strict vegetarian, you know.

Attracted by the stench of rotten meat, a pair of fat flies circles around the plate in the middle of the table. Nobody speaks for a while. The unnaturally loud noise of the flies seems to fill the room for an eternity.

MRS. POPESCU  
Romania hasn't recovered yet. Meat is something precious and hard to get a hold of. We have to eat what we get.

Barisca reproachfully looks at Michael.

BARISCA  
If we get something!

MICHAEL  
Really, I am sorry.

Barisca's persistent eyes make Michael literally rip off a big piece from the mutton steak. Observed by Popescu and Myriam he shovels it into his mouth. Another glass of wine helps him swallow the most disliked piece that seems to move from one cheek into the other. Claudia's face is tomato red. Mrs. Popescu has a serious expression on her face but seems contemptuous.

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MRS. POPESCU

Myriam, it's time for you to go to bed.

Myriam gets up and kisses her mother on the cheek. She goes to her sister and gives her a rather shy kiss. As Barisca and Myriam leave the little girl keeps staring at Michael.

21. INT./EXT. - ENTRANCE HALL - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Claudia hands the two men a key and points at the house opposite the court yard.

CLAUDIA

Barisca has prepared two rooms on the first floor. Do you think you can manage?

MICHAEL

Sure!

CLAUDIA

It's the last two rooms at the end of the corridor, you can't miss them.

MICHAEL

Thank you, see you tomorrow.

RICHARD

Thanks.

Richard and Michael turn to leave.

CLAUDIA

I'm sorry about my mother. Sometimes she is a little bit peculiar.

MICHAEL

No, I think she was right. Don't worry. Good night.

CLAUDIA

Good night.

22. INT. - GUEST HOUSE-STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Michael and Richard climb the stairs in total darkness. The dim light of the candles they hold flickers and reveals decay and mould on the walls.

RICHARD

It was nice of her to take us in.  
Where do you know her from?

MICHAEL

Claudia applied for a scholarship and  
I was the bad guy.

RICHARD

I'd have given her my vote. That's  
for sure.

MICHAEL

Don't confuse beauty with academia.

RICHARD

So you're saying that all beautiful  
women are either hookers or bimbos.

MICHAEL

No, of course not, but for some funny  
reason all the projects submitted by  
women were not good enough this year.  
Besides, I was not the only guy on  
the committee.

23. INT. - GUEST HOUSE-FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT

When they reach the first floor, they stand at the beginning of a long corridor. They can't see too well, but they find their way to the first room. Michael pulls out the keys from his trousers and manages to unlock the door.

24. INT. - GUEST HOUSE-MICHAEL'S ROOM - NIGHT

The ghostly shimmer of the candle light reveals a big, spacious room with a small balcony and a view out on the courtyard and the lake. The room has an old wooden bed which stands in the corner, a wardrobe, a basic sink, two chairs, an elegant writing-table and a scruffy chaiselongue. The furniture seems to be lost in the enormous room. Michael and Richard enter the room. Michael opens the window and lights a cigarette.

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RICHARD

Do you think that all the other rooms  
are empty?

MICHAEL

Sure, I suppose the family lives in  
the other building.

He throws out the cigarette and inhales the cool air of the  
night. Richard comes closer.

MICHAEL

What a night. Close your eyes and try  
to smell the Danube, its clay from the  
riverside, the stench of marsh plants.  
It's all so familiar.. Strange, isn't  
it?

Richard looks at Michael and raises his eyebrows.

RICHARD

(grins)  
Good archeologists smell that sort of  
thing, I suppose.

All of a sudden they hear the LOUD BANG of a DOOR slamming and  
footsteps running downstairs. Michael immediately runs to the  
door, opens it and looks outside but does not see anything but  
the darkness of the stairway. The FOOTSTEPS stop. SOMEONE  
SLAMS THE MAIN DOOR. Michael runs back to the window and  
checks the courtyard. Nobody is there. Richard goes pale.

RICHARD

Freddie Krueger on his quest for  
blood.

Richard approaches the window and looks down as well.

MICHAEL

Boo!

Michael gives him a good fright.

MICHAEL

Probably the kid.

RICHARD

She's under your spell.

Michael looks surprised.

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RICHARD

I mean, didn't you see that she devoured you with her eyes. The kid adores you.

MICHAEL

Nonsense! I am tired.

Richard obviously doesn't get the message as he starts to inspect Michael's room.

MICHAEL

(impatient)  
Waiting for a goodnight kiss or what?

RICHARD

(nauseated)  
No, thanks, I am off.

Richard grins and leaves the room.

25. INT. - GUEST HOUSE-DARK CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Richard closes the door behind him. In his left hand he carries a candle. Richard stumbles. This sudden move extinguishes the flame of the candle.

RICHARD

This goddamn house!

Embraced by darkness, Richard searches for matches in his pocket. There is the unexpected noise of SOMEONE SCRATCHING at the walls. The scarce light of a match lights Richard's frightened face. His eyes frantically scan the walls. He does not dare to move, not to mention to breathe. When the match burns down there is a violent move from behind. A bulky body passes by and brushes Richard's shoulder although there is no noise of footsteps. It makes Richard jump emitting a sound of fear. He lights another match and scans the floor until he recovers the fallen candle-stick. His hands shake out of control when they try to ignite the candle. Breathing heavily, he heads towards Michael's room. He hesitates, obviously deciding whether or not to knock but finally turns away.

26. INT. - CLAUDIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Her hair and body done up in towels Claudia exits the bathroom adjacent to her bedroom. Rubbing her hair dry she

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almost stumbles over her travel bag. When she sits down at the edge of her bed, one hand holds her towel having come loose, the other hand fumbles at the light switch of her lamp above the bedside-table. The light reveals a black tulip wrapped in red paper on her cushion. Claudia fixes the towel on her head and dries her face. When she turns around she startles at the sight of the flower. She takes the tulip and pensively examines the red wrapping paper which looks exactly like the one she bought in Vienna. After a while, she puts the flower on her bedside table and turns off the light.

27. INT. - MICHAEL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Michael lights a petroleum lamp. He holds the old picture up to the lamp and inspects his purchase. After a while he gets up, crosses the room to take a towel out of his travel bag. He holds it under the water tap until it is entirely wet and rubs some soap on it. Michael turns back to the table and wipes off the first layer of dirt from the painting. The cleaned spots reveal the pattern of a bloated, piggish face of a man with lots of jewelry displayed. Michael emits an apathetic grunt. Two more strokes with the towel and he abandons his work, putting the painting aside. C.U. on painting, we see Michael heading towards his bed, stripping off his shirt. The colors of the painting continue to dissolve. A slight mark underneath the thin color coating appears and grows bigger finally revealing a black tulip.

28. EXT - GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

Someone watches the guest house from the court yard. The weak, flickering light of a candle appears at the first floor window and scarcely lights Michael's silhouette who is about to close the curtains. The person watching hides behind the stone well. A female hand tenderly strokes a black tulip. The candlelight fades away and the house is enveloped in darkness.

29. EXT. - FOREST - NIGHT

Michael runs completely naked through a dark forest. The only thing we hear is his heartbeat. All of a sudden he stops and hides behind a bush. Something moves, not ten feet to his left. A rabbit runs out of the underwood and fearfully observes the bushes and trees. Michael crouches down, ducking behind some brittle weeds and readies himself to pounce. There is another movement. Something is lumbering through the bushes in front of him, something huge, hulking. His breath is ragged and panting. When he realizes someone

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is there Michael withdraws slowly and begins to run. Behind him there is a CRACK of SPLINTERING WOOD and the NOISE of SLAVERING JAWS, CRACKING BONES and a short painful DEATH CRY of an ANIMAL. Michael runs in panic. The woods become an endless implacable barrier. Roots and rocks rise up to trip him, branches claw at his flesh, trees loom and throw themselves in his path. Michael glances back, catches a flash of animal eyes, hears the SOUND of MASSIVE LIMBS coming after him from the right. He turns around and sees Myriam dressed in a white night-gown. Her loud laughter echoes in the forest.

30. INT. - MICHAEL'S ROOM - DAY

The sound of Michael's heavy breathing fills the room. He throws his head from left to right and sweats heavily. The bed looks messy: pillow on the floor, blanket turned upside down, bed ruffled. Michael freezes in fear when BOISTEROUS KNOCKS at the door break the perfect silence of the morning. Michael sits up at the edge of his bed. The knocks at the door drag him out of bed.

MICHAEL

(husky)  
Yeah!

He stretches his arms and bends backwards and forwards. Finally he goes to the door and opens it. It's Richard who looks as fresh as a daisy. He looks at Michael with pity.

RICHARD

It's seven thirty. Time for  
breakfast.

MICHAEL

Hmm!

Michael asks him in. Without a comment he slips in his jeans and puts on his socks.

MICHAEL

Do you think they've got a shower?

Richard shakes his head and points to the washbasin. Michael raises his eyebrows and emits a sigh. He has a hard time dragging his body over to the sink. He turns on the tap uttering a sound of dissatisfaction when he feels the cold water on his skin.

RICHARD

You look quite energetic today.

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