

THE MORBID SEVEN

RISE AGAIN

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THE MORBID SEVEN RISE AGAIN
(Script & Novel)

In this book, the Script precedes the Novel
The Script is 50 pages long but it takes more pages in this book.
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Script

written by

Charles V. Abela

Based on Novel
The Morbid Seven Rise Again
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EXT. NEAR BUCHAREST, ROMANIA - CORTEGE (TRAVELING) - DAY

December 20th 2020. A funeral cortege consisting of five black cars grinds its way through a sealed forest road. It is a dry but very dull day. It looks green for winter but with a generous scattering of trees seemingly dead. It is getting close to four in the afternoon and getting dark fast.

A few magpies and blackbirds are perched on the branches. They look attentive. The surroundings look void of life. Some squirrels run around and wild dogs cross the road.

An old house on slightly higher ground appears in the distance. It occupies a lonely place in these parts of the woods with no other abode in sight.

The cortege approaches it at a crawling pace and onto a coarse gravel path. The surface changes as they get nearer to the house and on the driveway. It has a nice cover of brown-looking pebble surfacing. The cars make their way very slowly with the wheels making a very clear crunching noise as they come to a halt.

EXT. OUTSIDE LUTHER ZOMBESCU'S HOUSE - DAY

The 'van Shorn' family members step out of the cars. It is absolutely still outside. They all stop and look around. Suddenly, there is a flutter of wings. Two magpies fly out of the trees above them and into the distance.

The strain shows on all the visitors' faces. The sound of pebble crunching under their feet is clearly heard as they walk the short distance to this creepy-looking house.

They enter and walk through a relatively wide hallway with three brown leather chairs on either side. Then past a full-glass door.

The two little boys have a look of anxiety on their faces and continuously tug at their mom's coat. The family is shown into the dimly-lit room and all sit around a heavy walnut table. They bow their heads in respect as the lead mortician walks past them. He is followed by six pallbearers carrying the casket. They head straight into the mortuary which is next door.

INT. ZOMBESCU'S HOUSE (RECEPTION) - DAY

Mrs. MARILYN VAN SHORN is almost 50 years old, well-kept, light makeup, dressed in black like all of them. A dark gray veil covers her head. Her two sons are aged six and eight. They sit on either side of her. Marilyn's sister, Pamela, is of similar age and sits next to her daughter POPPY (5). She is being cuddled by her grandmother.

Their legal representative, Mr. DONALD BRISTOW (75) - sits at the other end of the table. He is dressed in a waistcoat and suit reminiscent of the fashion from a century ago.

LUTHER ZOMBESCU (68) joins them accompanied by his assistant ELENA ADAMESCU (50). He sits at the other end of the table. Elena is on his right.

POPPY

Mom, will uncle Sam be with us soon.

PAMELA

Uncle Sam will always be with us.

LUTHER

Would the kids like to play outside?

The three little faces indicated a definite "No."

LUTHER

We have all met earlier in the year. On my right is Elena, my fellow cryogenics scientist, herself an example of a resuscitated human. That happened after a ten-year long journey. Now, a living proof in perfect radiant health.

They all look curiously at Elena.

DONALD BRISTOW

I know I recommended your services but for the family's sake can you fill us a bit more?

LUTHER

Sure, thank you. The Facility has been established for 15 years. My wife Simona is also a scientist.

MARILYN VAN SHORN

How do you choose your patients?

LUTHER

They all seem to be rich, business people, intellectuals and scientists. Most of them die from some sort of disease. We ensure the pedigree of the family and that of the deceased. And of course, his intellect. The family must be financial.

DONALD BRISTOW

The procedure, Mr. Zombescu?

LUTHER

Yes. That is straight-forward. In this case it concerns the corpse of Mr. Sam van Shorn. The body is in perfect condition apart from his unfortunate heart attack. The Cryogenics process will heal that.

At that point, Marilyn van Shorn bursts out in tears. Elena pushes some tissues towards her. Then Poppy follows, except her crying is much louder.

PAMELA

It's alright darling, we'll be finished soon.

LUTHER

Sorry about this, it always happens. With the vetting process and due diligence out of the way, the process itself starts. Excuse me, would you care for a glass of water?

Luther helps himself to a glass of water. He pours a second glass. He gently pushes it towards Mrs van Shorn. She reaches

out for it with a trembling hand. The gathering looks at each other with trepidation.

LUTHER

The first thing is the washing, embalming, and then the AI Chip is inserted inside the body, similar to a colonoscopy...

(sips water)

... the corpse is then fully dressed and put in the freezer. His only companion for the next ten years is his mobile... Mrs. van Shorn, are you all right? You're not looking well.

MARILYN VAN SHORN

I am fine, just a little on edge that's all. I'll help myself to a sip of water in a minute.

She takes a sip of water. An unexpected loud chime from the Grandfather clock in the mortuary echoes through. The family is rattled. It is four o'clock. Marilyn knocks the half-filled glass over. The water drips on her clothes and on the floor. Now all the three kids panic and start crying.

Elena promptly gets up and takes the three kids out of the room into the adjoining hall. Things slowly quieten down.

LUTHER

Apologies. Let me continue. The AI Chip software is updated regularly with new well-tested improvements. The Chip is accessed via signals through his mobile and then directly to the Chip itself. The improvements help the body to heal.

MARILYN VAN SHORN

I'm feeling better now. Mr. Zombescu, the battery can't last very long, surely.

LUTHER

Good observation. The mobile will be upgraded with a nuclear charged battery. It lasts two full lifetimes.

MARILYN VAN SHORN

How does the healing happen in a cold tank?

He reaches out to Elena who displays the AI chip resting on the tip of her forefinger.

LUTHER

The function of the Chip is twofold. First, it heals the body tissues over a period of time. Secondly, it rejuvenates the body during the process over a longer period.

MARILYN VAN SHORN

And then?

LUTHER

And then, when the body is resuscitated, the person will communicate, feel, move and act exactly as he did at the time of dying but with no symptoms of disease. Elena looks exactly the way she did at the time of her passing.

All heads turn towards Elena with yet another curious look. She is appreciative and acknowledges their curiosity.

MARILYN VAN SHORN

May I ask you what happened?

ELENA

I was in a car accident ten years ago. Now I feel, act and look as I did ten years ago, even before I was disfigured on the left side of my face.

MARILYN VAN SHORN

(deep breath)

Very reassuring. The money?

LUTHER

That has already been deposited as Mr. Bristow knows. Two hundred fifty thousand dollars for the first year, with an equal amount that will be put in trust with your bankers, the Bank of America in New York. The same amount will be paid one week before the start of a new year.

MARILYN VAN SHORN

So, when do you think ... that ...?

LUTHER

Our research indicates that Sam could be back ten years from now in perfect shape. That would be an investment of two million five hundred thousand dollars, American.

DONALD BRISTOW

Not forgetting inflation.

LUTHER

That has been allowed for in the said amounts.

Marilyn looks at Mr. Bristow who nods.

MARILYN VAN SHORN

We're happy to proceed.

LUTHER

Very well, Elena will witness the signatures and put her own, too.

They complete their signatures, then Luther looks at Elena who promptly presses a push-button remote control. Farewell Scottish bagpipe music breaks the silence. They bow their heads for ten seconds.

They all stand up and start towards the door after bowing politely. Luther sees them out. Mr. Bristow stops and shakes hands with Luther.

INT. ZOMBESCU'S HOUSE (HALLWAY) - NIGHT

Elena walks to Mrs. van Shorn who looks a bunch of nerves. She says some words of comfort to her and holds out her hands. Unintentionally, she stares at her.

ELENA

I would like to reassure you that everything will be okay.

Marilyn's mouth and lips are now trembling uncontrollably. She cannot get the words out. The kids look at their mom, panic and cry. Finally ...

MARILYN VAN SHORN

Elena, you mean ... eh ... you were a real corpse.

Elena continues to stare at her and just nods twice. Marilyn freaks out.

MARILYN VAN SHORN

(top of her voice)

Get me out here, can't take this anymore.

Marilyn starts to faint. Mr. Bristow grabs her and helps her into the car.

The door closes. Luther and Elena get inside the morgue to take a good look at their new lifeless customer - the corpse of Mr. Sam van Shorn.

INT. ZOMBESCU'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

After meeting with the van Shorn family, Luther Zombescu looks tired in his sofa. His wife Simona is sixty, looks plain and she is partly paralyzed. They sit by the fire in their living room of their large house.

SIMONA

What is the new customer like?

LUTHER

Dead.

SIMONA

I gather that.

LUTHER

Sam van Shorn. Banker from New York.
Heart attack. Quarter of a million.
Ten years in the tank.

SIMONA

My research indicates back to life in
five years. You will get your update in
a week. Elena made any moves?

LUTHER

None. Anyway, I like you better even
with one leg, the way you are. Ah, the
wrong dose of chemicals. I want to kill
myself at times. Permanently
tormented. Once this research is
done...

SIMONA

... I will go in tank and come out like
a fifty-year-old. Anticipating a
quicker healing to the body and
rejuvenation by up to twenty years.
Die at fifty, come to life at thirty.

LUTHER

Eternal Cryogenics. It's a good name.
Very true to its purpose. Ah who would
believe?

SIMONA

Believe what?

LUTHER

That all this is happening in Pitesti,
Transylvania, one hundred miles from
Bucharest, very peaceful in these
wooded foothills. Too quiet.

SIMONA

And scary. Two blackbirds were perched

on the ledge looking inside. I hope
it's not a bad omen.

Simona looks at Luther. He is fast asleep.

INT. ELENA'S ROOM (OVERLOOKS THE GRAVEYARD) - NIGHT

Elena Adamescu stands by the window looking outside.

ELENA'S POV

A starlit night. Absolutely calm. The moon looks a perfect circle. Very misty half-a-mile from the house. She looks down. A dimly-lit graveyard - a grave digger is on the job digging two plots. A blackbird perches itself up on the window ledge. Then another. Two of them, motionless looking at the inside of the room. She tries to scare them away. She waves and taps on the window pane, but they would not move.

BACK TO SCENE

She draws the curtains and sits at her desk and picks up her hand-held makeup mirror. Her fingers run across her brow, around her eye sockets and across her cheeks. Her face looks good but she has a look of concern. She takes out an old calendar and looks at the date circled with words written in red ink - 'The Accident.' It is December 1st 2009, quarter past ten at night.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- Country lane near Pitesti. Car travelling. Misty.
- Goes off the road and into the trees.
- Locals come to the rescue.
- Two people inside the wreck. Male dead. Female badly hurt.
- They are rushed to the nearest dubious facility with access to some medical help.
- The only one within 70 miles - the Eternal Cryogenics Facility.
- The only operating table is in the morgue.

- Barely alive, Elena's eyes make contact with Luther's.
- She dies shortly afterwards.
- Both victims are cleaned up and put in cryogenics freeze tanks.
- Elena is resuscitated after 10 years.
- She looks forty, feels forty but in reality, she is now fifty years old.
- Unfortunately, she is brought back to life too soon.

INT. ELENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Elena sits on the couch. She is in a pensive mood. She looks at her relatively large room with bewilderment. She grabs a little mirror on the couch and looks at the left side of her face out of the corner of her eye. It still carries a tiny scar but hardly noticeable.

The bathroom looks relatively modern. It has an ensuite, the bed at one end, and at the far end, an odd-looking clear-glass cylindrical compartment. It is an upmarket cryogenics tank permanently lit with neon-like blue lights that whizz up, down and around with surprising speed. Imported from Germany - a high-tech medical wonder.

The room next to the bedroom is a plain kitchen.

INT. ELENA'S ROOM - DAY

The time shows 6.30 on the wall. She gets out of bed, picks up a towel and heads to the shower. A perfect body for forty. Her blonde hair comes down to below her shoulders. She spends quite a while rubbing her hair down and still dripping, she steps out of the shower. She dries herself but somehow, she always faces the far corner of the shower while doing so.

She sits down in front of her full-sized mirror and to her usual horror she sees her grotesque face. It's the face of an old haggard crone but sitting on a body of forty, with not even a single wrinkle on it. She steps inside the cylindrical

cryogenics tank, puts a face mask on and at the end of ninety minutes her face looks forty again.

A quick breakfast and then she walks to the laboratory aka the mortuary. She arrives a few minutes before Luther shows up which normally is exactly at two minutes to nine.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

The laboratory is part of the morgue. It is dominated by an antique piece of furniture, a majestic German Walnut Grandfather clock with its audible tick tocks. Resonating chimes are on the hour.

Luther walks in, puts his white overcoat on and goes straight behind his desk. Elena is waiting for him. He passes her a file to read.

LUTHER

Good morning, Elena. Today's work.

ELENA

One little favor before we start, please.

LUTHER

And that is?

ELENA

The Grandfather clock. Too loud.

LUTHER

The audible tick tock, tick tock reminds us of how precious life is and that death is constantly approaching.

ELENA

I agree. Just a little less noisy.

LUTHER

Okay I will think about it. You should be used to it by now.

The morgue consists of twenty compartments occupied or otherwise waiting to be. If there is a default in payment, the corpse is taken out and disposed of in a standard burial ground at the back of the house.

A book entitled, "Cryogenics - Best Moral Practices," lay in front of him. He opens it and reads with satisfaction on his face.

ELENA

(looks at the file)

Oh good, not such a long list. Okay, new tank is on its way. It left Düsseldorf yesterday. Fast decomposing chemicals for the graveyard should be here today. Easy.

LUTHER

Remember, clean the mortuary cell Number 3. It's been empty for a while. We expect another body from New York.

ELENA

I will do that as soon as we finish.

LUTHER

Call Nikola Petrescu's family. They have not renewed the yearly subscription. We don't have an advance. We need him in the graveyard not in the freezer.

ELENA

They are poor. They paid sixty thousand dollars. Give him more time. Remember, the kind, honest, fellow-loving race that you wish to create.

LUTHER

No more generosity. We still owe two million dollars to Deutshce Fabriken Crematorium. They want the money fast.

Or shut us down. Now, why are you looking so sad today? Your after-shower problem is permanent.

ELENA

It is not getting better.

LUTHER

It will not. How long do you take?

ELENA

Shower and treatment, two hours.

LUTHER

Simona is almost there with the new treatment. Two more weeks. Then I will implement the new software immediately.

ELENA

Meaning?

LUTHER

You go in the cold tank and you're out super perfect in three years. You won't have to worry about your face ever again.

ELENA

I don't want to die again.

LUTHER

Your solution?

ELENA

I don't have one.

LUTHER

You can go to Germany for a quick fix, go in the tank after the next update or stay as you are. Your choice.

ELENA

What else?

LUTHER

Simona will go in the tank after her treatment is passed on to us. Euthanasia. You can go in the freezer at the same time. I will put you in a 'dead state' very peacefully. What do you say?

ELENA

Simona will be dead. You and I will be together. We have a good time.

LUTHER

No, no, no. I have principles. She will be coming back but you will take over when I am gone.

ELENA

Simona will be out by then. We are getting nowhere. You don't like me because of how my face looks after the shower.

LUTHER

You look perfect. We will discuss another day. Call Petrescu family.

ELENA

Is that all?

LUTHER

That's all. Tomorrow, I want you to give me a rejuvenation treatment, first thing in the morning. Things will become clearer to you.

Elena gets up, walks to her desk and gets on the phone.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

Elena looks at the day's schedule. Luther strips to the waist and climbs on the morgue table, readies himself for some

treatment.

LUTHER

Hook me up as if under anaesthetic.
Three syringes on the trolley.

ELENA

(hooking him up)
What are they for?

LUTHER

Soon, I will be sixty-nine. I need to
continue to focus, stay young-looking
and not scare people away.

ELENA

There is no problem with your looks.

LUTHER

Thank you. I hope I haven't mixed the
chemicals too strongly.

ELENA

That's what happened to Simona?

LUTHER

Yes, unfortunately. My mistake.

ELENA

Latin huh! Renovatio Dose Mitis;
Renovatio Medium; and Renovatio Gravis.
In that order? How much time in
between? Same spot?

LUTHER

In that order. First two on the left,
third on the right. Thirty minutes in
between.

ELENA

Tell me more.

LUTHER

Your husband, Novak Adamescu, when is he due?

ELENA

Another nine years, maybe five.

LUTHER

Five is possible with Simona's latest treatment. If I go before, you are in charge of the Laboratory.

ELENA

And Simona, the company?

LUTHER

Yes. After you, then Novak. Myself, I will have the same sexual prowess, so we can do something then.

ELENA

You're joking Luther, not even a mad woman would not wait ten years for a screw.

(hand on genitalia)

Firm. The monitors say all vital functions are okay. Tell me when to release. Do you want to postpone these injections?

LUTHER

Please, Elena, no time for jokes.

ELENA

Jokes huh. Okay. Here comes the first one.

(grabs him again)

I will make myself a cup of coffee and I will be back.

(laughing)

Are you sure you want me to come back?

LUTHER

(top of his voice)

Yes!

She sits at her desk sipping the coffee and smiling. She opens the drawer and takes out a book called, 'Necrophilia in the 19th Century.' It is bookmarked half-way. She opens it, continues reading it with a big smile on her face.

INT. ELENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Elena is at her desk, looking over at a plan of actions and times. Inexpensive but accurate clocks are mounted on each of the four walls. Perfectly synchronized.

The phone RINGS. It makes her jump. It is DENISA (75).

ELENA

Hello mother, how are you?

DENISA (V.O.)

I feel okay. I haven't heard from you. Are you well dear? What exactly are you doing. TV, cooking, writing?

ELENA

I have four clocks. They tell the same time and the same story... Time is flying.

DENISA (V.O.)

Come to Bucharest, many handsome men.

ELENA

Mama, I am frustrated. Fifty with a body of a forty-year-old, no man in my life, this is like a prison.

DENISA (V.O.)

Darling, I feel so sad for you. It's your choice, surely you must love your scientific work.

ELENA

That's a joke. I don't see nobody and I don't speak to nobody. Only corpses.

Clean them, embalm them and push them in the freezer. Then I check the graveyard from my window.

DENISA (V.O.)

Look, this is breaking my heart. I love you, make a plan and return.

ELENA

Working on it, mama. Good night.

She calls Luther.

ELENA

Luther sorry it's late. I am sick.

LUTHER (V.O.)

Okay, take care, see when you feel better. Don't rush.

She stares at her notes. Hard to decipher. She runs a line over some key words. Her pen moves up and down the list crossing and highlighting words.

She crosses off jealousy, puts a question mark on love, cancels wealth, she circles sex a few times. She keeps underlining the word revenge, looks at the paper and her mind wanders.

She scribbles times taken during the morning preparation.

She writes down - shower 10 minutes, treatment 90, quick reaction reverse-effect injection 10, makeup 15. Then she looks at the times again and continues to re-write and organize the lines neatly, one underneath each other.

She gets on her computer and searches for 'praying mantis.' She reads some details and keys in 'black widow spider.' A large variety is displayed. She skips details and moves on the bold headings.

She looks at the time on the wall. It's past eleven at night. She jumps in bed. She sets the alarm for six in the morning.

INT. ELENA'S ROOM - DAY

Elena gets out of bed. In the bathroom, brushes her teeth. Her eyes are constantly on the time. Her note pad is on the dressing table. She gets in the shower. She comes out and records the time. She dries up and goes straight in the cryogenics tank for rejuvenation treatment. Once out, she injects herself with fast chemical rejuvenation treatment. She makes a note how long it takes. She looks good in about two hours after the shower.

KITCHEN

She walks in the kitchen and prepares a light breakfast; a boiled egg, toast and coffee.

BEDROOM

Goes to her desk and goes over the times again. Altering, adjusting and scribbling. It's noon and she drinks the rest of the cold coffee. Then she goes back in bed for another nap.

She gets up at three in the afternoon and heads to the shower and repeats the whole process of showering and treatment. She goes over the plan consistently looking at the times and refining them.

Very methodically, she re-writes the exact plan. Her eyes keep moving from the paper to the clock in front of her and she just fills in the times. 8.33, 8.43, 8.58, 9.00, 9.01, 9.05, 9.20, 9.22.

She takes out a fresh sheet of paper and writes - Fast Reversing Action. Beauty back to Horror in 47 minutes. Underneath, she writes the heading, "The Empire Strikes Back." She ponders, crosses the word Empire and replaces it with Vampire. She is happy and taps her forehead three times.

She spends the rest of the day reading, "Necrophilia in the 19th Century," watches TV and then off to sleep.

INT. ELENA'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING - DAY

It is six-thirty in the morning. Elena gets out of bed. Brushes her teeth. Looks in the mirror. Straightens herself and looks

confident.

She looks at the clock regularly but with apprehension.

The time now is 6.53 am. She gets in the shower, finishes showering walks out and straight in her Treatment Tank at 7.03.

Out of the tank at 8.33, fetches the fast-acting Facial Rejuvenation injection 'FacieiRenovatioX934' and injects at 8.33. Puts her makeup at 8.43. She is now ready and heads for the morgue at 8.58.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

It is two minutes to nine. Luther enters his office. He looks for Elena.

LUTHER

Elena? Where are you hiding?

Few seconds before nine, the handle turns. Elena steps in. At exactly nine, the Grandfather clock chimes.

LUTHER

Elena how nice to see you. I was worried. Feeling good now?

ELENA

(unusual sexy voice)
Much better and ready to go to work.

LUTHER

Your perfume smells heavenly today.

ELENA

The reason it took a little longer.

She creeps in from behind Luther. She smells like a rose; her face as serene and beautiful as expected. Her hands are now on his shoulders. She gives Luther a gentle rub and then around his neck. Her hands smell of the most beautiful soothing lotion.

Standing behind Luther, her breasts push against the side of his head, she whispers in his ear.

ELENA

What are writing ... Dear... ?

LUTHER

My usual love letter to Simona.

ELENA

Always with that expensive pen?

LUTHER

Ah yes, Mont Blanc, a gift from Simona thirty years ago. Unlike her, this pen is in perfect shape.

ELENA

Then, why are you waiting Luther?

LUTHER

I don't think this is appropriate.

ELENA

You don't think I am a praying mantis or a black widow spider, do you?

LUTHER

No, no. Nothing like that.

ELENA

Then enjoy life Luther. Life is short. Believe me, very short.

Overtaken by the scent of the woman and by her gentle movements, he stops writing and rests the pen still open on the desk.

Elena looks at the Grandfather Clock. It is 9.05. Overwhelmed by this largesse, he succumbs, looks up to her and ...

LUTHER

Simona tells me she has broken the return-to-life problem so you could be in and out of the freezer in less than five years.

She undoes the top two buttons on her blouse.

ELENA

Surely you don't want to wait that long
before you see what I have for you.

Luther looks at her, his body almost paralyzed. His eyelids move increasingly fast, almost twitching.

LUTHER

Please no, no, not that. I can't.

She loosens his belt, then undoes his trousers. Now she is on him. He is still in his chair. She looks at him, at the same she keeps an eye on the Grandfather clock facing her.

ELENA

Listen, listen carefully, Luther.
Tick... tock, tick... tock. Life is
too short. Enjoy it before you hit the
freezer.

LUTHER

I cannot accept this, Elena. You
coerced me, I am pinned down as if in a
vice grip. I don't have any more
resistance to offer. I just have to
accept and enjoy it.

ELENA

Finally... We have been in this
position for a whole fifteen minutes.
The Grandfather tells me it's almost
nine-twenty. Tick... tock, tick...
tock. Soon we reach Crescendo.

LUTHER

Almost there, yes, tick... tock,
tick... tock. Keep ticking Elena.

Exhaustion and satisfaction show on his face. But things change rapidly.

Her eyes bulge out of their sockets and her gaze locks on his face. His eyes are wide open. Then, her own eyes start to sink slowly in the back of her head leaving two deep black holes. Her fangs

spring out. He tries to move but he is nailed in. He tries to fight but his strength is gone. Her mouth starts moving towards the left side of his neck. Her fangs sink in.

Luther struggles and continues the futile attempt; his arms swing violently at first then they drop to his sides. The tusks stay buried in his neck.

His eyes start to dilate, his body loses all its strength and then, she kindly and gently closes his eyelids. She gets up, cleans herself and tries to stop the bleeding from the pen wound in her back. She drags him to the far-end of the room and draws the curtains.

INT. MORGUE - NEXT DAY - DAY

Within 18 hours of his death, the corpses stir in their freezer compartments. They start to come to life. Distinctive ringing from their phones reach Elena's ears. The telephone rings deactivate the locking mechanism on the

freezer compartments.

Elena is petrified. Dead silence. Handles start to turn but not in unison. Then the sound of rubber seals separating from the metal frames, the sound being exactly like the one you hear when a refrigerator's door is opened.

Then corpses emerge, feet protruding first. She watches the whole morgue come to life. The corpses slide out carefully, with the exception of one. Within twenty-one minutes, all the seven were on their feet examining their new surrounds.

NARRATION

First out was Zach Golding. He is the head of Golding Securities. He is from New York, dressed like a bank executive, fifty-five, died of a heart attack ten years ago. He looks around and takes a seat on the chair at the end of the row. Preferred date back in 2030.

He is followed by Nikola Petrescu, sixty years old, died of pneumonia 12 years ago. He is a grave digger from Bucharest. He

sits two chairs up from Zach.

Next one out is Doc Garner from Fort Worth, Texas. He leaps out of a top compartment as if leaping out from a saddle. He died at age 41, gored by a bull in a rodeo mishap. He takes the next vacant seat. He is dressed accordingly; Stetson, a red colored shirt, neckerchief, leathers, and smarting his favored high-heeled boots with spurs and all. He takes a seat next to Nikola who looks to be the least fashionable up to that point ... and beyond.

Doc is followed by Eli Golding, Zach's twin brother. One could not tell them apart. He is in an immaculately tailored blue suit which is a perfect replica of the one his brother is wearing. Eli died of a broken heart six months after Zach had passed. He sits in the vacant chair next to his brother.

Next one to rise is Lazarus Heisenberg, died at the age of thirty-eight following complications from severe sexually transmitted incurable diseases. He boasted a count of 3750 conquests. The culprit or culprits could not be traced. He was Germany's best-known playboy and still retained his good looks despite the toll taken by the dreaded disease. He spent most of his money on medication including \$240,000 at the Cryogenics Facility. And that was for the first year.

The next one to spring out has a touch of Belgian royalty. It is Baron Frederick von Garten. He looks magnificent in all his pomp and glory. Perfectly manicured hair, moustache and beard like that worn by Britain's King George V. He was thrown off his horse while practicing show jumping in Warendorf, Germany. He died at age forty-five.

And the last one to join the living is Elena's husband himself, Novak Adamescu, died at age 40, in the car accident, resuscitated at 51 but looks and feels exactly 40 and without the disfigurements.

END OF VOICE OVER

INT. MORGUE - SAME DAY - DAY

The morbid seven do things in unison, but in a rather rigid robotic

fashion. They are programmed to act like synchronized robots during the first thirty minutes after resuscitation.

They all get up together, and in weird jerky movements, walk around in different directions, examine the morgue surroundings. They move around, stop, look at each other but with no recognition whatsoever. Then they stop.

Then, as if on cue, they all look at the ceiling. Walk back to their seats, sit, cross their legs, check the time on the wall, on their watches, and then on their mobiles, give themselves a nod of approval, stand up, look from left to right, then right to left, and then, still with jerky movements, turn towards the door and make their way out of the building ... in a perfect line.

They never focus on the person next to them and they never utter any words.

INT. MORGUE - SAME DAY - DAY

NOVAK (51) stays back. He looks at Elena who now sits in Luther's chair. They exchange a gentle smile. But there is a puzzled look in Novak's eyes. She now has a worried look. Novak still sits motionless.

Elena picks a piece of paper and covers her face from Novak. She uses her thumb to feel if her fangs are out. Then, a sigh of relief.

ELENA

(drops the paper)

Boohoo! There you are. You're smiling at last, as you used to. Life could at least be as good as it used to be. I look great. We both look forty.

NOVAK

My old friend... Luther. Where is he?

She points in the opposite direction. Novak looks the way she is pointing. She quickly checks her fangs. She points at the far end of the room which was curtained off. Behind it lies

Luther's body. Judging by the claw-like look on his fingers, the body seems to be getting rigid fast.

NOVAK
How did this happen?

She points out to her neck, then points to Luther's.

NOVAK
(shocked)
A vampire bite?

Novak looks puzzled. She then motions him to follow her and walks towards a locked room.

EXT. VAMPIRE ROOM - DAY

She inserts the key, turns the handle, the door opens.

An immediate burst of shrieking follows. It reveals a dimly-lit room. Inside, nine vampire bats hang upside down on a washing line. Novak is taken aback by the sudden shrilling.

She closes the door.

ELENA
I think Luther was experimenting.

INT. MORGUE - SAME DAY - DAY

Novak and Elena are still inside. He asserts control of running the morgue - immediately.

NOVAK
Help me to drag him out. Embalming table. Fetch the instruments. We'll wash him, dress him, insert the Chip, put him back in the freezer and will decide later.

Elena fetches his shoes, socks and proceeds to put them on.

NOVAK

Stop, Stop, Stop. No shoes.

ELENA

Still full of superstitions. Nancy Sinatra. You find her sexy huh. Boots are meant for walking. Luther wears shoes, not boots. Idiot.

NOVAK

Don't call me an Idiot. Here, put this tag around his toe. Let's put him in the one I was in. Okay let's push him in.

ELENA

No nuclear battery in his phone?

NOVAK

Will figure it out later. Get my own file out please.

ELENA

(slamming it on desk)
There you are.

NOVAK

(examines file)
This all looks good. I'll make a couple of notes.

He examines an AI Chip under the microscope.

NOVAK

I will alter some coding on this old computer. See if my body gets a better boost. Bring the other six files.

ELENA

Who the fuck you think you are. Fresh from the box and talking to me and treating me like shit. Fuck you.

Elena chucks the rest of the files on his desk - the Goldings, Garner, Petrescu, von Garten and Heisenberg. She walks away.

INT. MORGUE - SAME DAY - DAY

Novak decides to study the files further. Elena walks towards the door. Novak's eyes follow her, examining the curves on her body as she makes her way out. The door is slammed shut. Elegant, but ... he moves his head from one side to the other almost in slow motion.

He looks briefly at all the files. Then he opens Zach's file again and reads it carefully. He closes it. He puts it to one side. He is in a pensive mood. He opens it again and examines it further. His gentle nodding indicates the content is of interest. He dials Zach.

NOVAK

Zach, this is Novak. I was the one sitting at the end. I control the Cryogenics Facility now. Looking at your file, it seems you are on track to make big money.

ZACH (V.O.)

The name on my phone shows otherwise. Where is Luther? He's the man.

NOVAK

Still around. I know jack shit about banking. But I know a lot about behavioral change controlled by the AI Chip that's inside you. I am the master of this piece of technology.

ZACH (V.O.)

What does that mean?

NOVAK

It means you and I will make heaps of money beyond our dreams. And without the Chip inside you, or with it turned off, you're back to being a corpse. I control your destiny. I control if you live or if you die.

Novak terminates the call. He looks at the portrait on the wall.

It is Luther's. The gaze seems to be focused on Novak. Novak feels a shiver down his spine every time his eyes make contact with Luther's. After all, Luther was the pioneer and founder of Eternal Cryogenics.

Although Zach was in the same profession at the time, he had never met Luther in person. So, his conscience is clear, more precisely, he does not need to look him in the eyes before he makes any controversial decision.

INT. ON DELTA PLANE - TAXIING (BUCHAREST AIRPORT) - DAY

Lazarus Heisenberg sits in a window seat on a flight to Munich. He looks at pictures of the girls he had just met.

He looks at and turns the first picture. On the back, he writes Ivanka (5) and \$5,000. On to the next picture, Natasha (4) \$2,000. Taps his forehead with the pen and writes Jan? Janka? Junka? (3) \$900. He is stumped on the last two pictures. He jots down (2) \$600, the least attractive - (1) \$200. Total (15).

He looks at the photos and adds up the total amount owing. He writes \$7,700. He puffs his chest, crosses his arms, relaxes back in his seat, closes his eyes and wears a smile of contentment. Five seconds later, he looks alert again, looks at the pictures restarts the adding-up. He crosses the old number and writes the new one - \$8,700. Then, he writes 3750, crosses it, and writes 3765. He throws his arms up in a "What-the-hell-type" gesture. He pumps his chest out again and giggles.

The STEWARDESS stops by.

STEWARDESS

Excuse me Sir, we're taking off. Belt on please.

LAZARUS

We are? Really?

STEWARDESS

Yes, take off is in five minutes.

LAZARUS

(looks seductively)

That would be 3766, right?

STEWARDESS

No, you're on a 767, not 766. It's a Boeing.

LAZARUS

(giggles)

Ok, I got my numbers wrong again.

STEWARDESS

(smiles politely)

We all do from time to time. Would you care for a drink, sir?

LAZARUS

Champagne please. Would you like to join me?

STEWARDESS

No thank you. I'm on duty.

LAZARUS

Thank you, madame, I found our conversation very encouraging.

STEWARDESS

Many people do. Have a good flight, sir.

Lazarus relaxes and starts thumping gently on his chin

EXT. OUTSIDE LUTHER ZOMBESCU'S HOUSE - DAY

Once out of the morgue, they pick up their stride and act and move about like the rest of us.

Doc Garner gets lucky. A taxi was going past, hails it and asks to be taken to Bucharest Airport.

Nikola Petrescu hails a passing tractor and asks the farmer to drop him at the nearest bus station.

Eli joins his brother Zach. Together with Baron Frederick von Garten they get in a car. For a sum of money, the driver takes them to Bucharest Airport.

Lazarus Heisenberg seems stranded until a young girl riding a Harley in a bandido-looking outfit, goes past. He waves at her; she does a 360 and he hitches a ride.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Nikola is seen buying a ticket on the bus to take him to Bucharest.

-- Lazarus is next seen in a shanty house. Half a dozen Harleys and their cheap Chinese versions are parked outside. He soon gets back on the action.

-- Doc, Eli and Zach are seen exchanging telephone numbers and short notes in the airport cafeteria. Baron Frederick von Garten joins them. He tells them he can hop on to a plane to Brussels any time so he wants to spend some time with them.

INT. ON PLANE - TAXIING (BUCHAREST AIRPORT) - DAY

Zach and Eli are on a Delta Flight to New York. It is on the taxiway readying for take-off from Bucharest Airport.

Zach's cell rings.

ZACH

This is Zach, I told you not to call again.

NOVAK (V.O.)

Have you thought about what I said the other day?

ZACH

You said many things.

NOVAK (V.O.)

True, the most important, I decide if you live or if you die.

ZACH

I don't believe that.

NOVAK (V.O.)

You better do. And don't think about taking that chip off your ass. It would mean one thing. Instant death. Being so insolent I have upped my price. Now I want fifty per cent. Five, Zero.

ZACH

No deal, Novak, I will give you a quarter of a million dollars for coming out ten years too early. That's it. Bye, asshole.

(turns to Eli)

The prick wants us to short the mortgage market. Fuck him.

ELI

What's that?

ZACH

In short, wreck the financial market for our personal gains.

INT. GUN SHOP (DALLAS) - DAY

Doc Garner walks in a gun store at Jake's Gun Gallery, in Highland Park Village, Dallas, Texas. He acknowledges the GUN OWNER (55) a burly mustachioed man with his left arm loaded with tattoos and the Lone Star emblazoned on his forehead. He looks Doc up and down while his customer glances at the various gun displays. Doc hands him a list.

GUN OWNER

Hey buddy, who you shooting? Heading to Tombstone, Arizona?

GARNER

They tell me you're the best to turn me into a Wyatt Earp - head to toe. I got ten big ones in cash.

The gun owner reaches under the bench and gets a picture out. Doc looks at it.

GARNER

That's exactly the Wyatt I want. Give me the closest to the real McCoy.

GUN OWNER

Not much change from ten. Stay by the counter. The camera is on you. Your name?

GARNER

They call me Doc. No worries, man. Happy to be back from the dead. It's been two days now.

The gun owner takes all the wares to the counter.

GUN OWNER

Tick 'em off. I'll hit the till. Every time it rings, you drop a few hundred dollars. Okay Doc, call them, I'll ring them.

GARNER

Hat, shirt, black vest, badge, black pants, black cravat, black trench, pocket watch, cowboy belt, holster belt, boots and spurs.

GUN OWNER

I noticed you're about size 12, it's what we call a 115. Check the boots out, cowboy. I'll get you the guns.

Doc looks carefully at the boots. Tries them on. Perfect fit.

GUN OWNER

Okay, your 12-gauge .45 caliber Buntline Special and one Winchester lever-action shotgun. You got ammo to kill four dozen men. You want a Pump too? It's on special.

Doc nods. He looks the guns over, checks them.

GARNER

All good.

GUN OWNER

You're handsome, like Mr. Kurt Russell. You're growing your own stache or you want a replica?

GARNER

Replica and the bill.

GUN OWNER

Rounded up, eight five.

GARNER

Here's eight big ones and one half. Thanks buddy.

GUN OWNER

Go shoot 'em up cowboy. So long man.

Doc walks out of the shop with his merchandise.

EXT. ZACH GOLDING'S HOUSE - (NEW YORK) - DAY

Zach hands the fare to the cab driver. Eli is with him. He walks up the steps to the door. Zach's wife MAGDA (60) is dressed in plain clothes and looks like the average housewife.

ZACH

Magda, darling, I am back.

MAGDA

(in shock)

Zach, Eli, I can't believe this.

Who's who? That's you Zach. Your eyes are a shade darker. Come inside, quick.

INT. ZACH GOLDING'S HOUSE - (NEW YORK) - DAY

MAGDA

So glad to see you back. Tell me.

ZACH

Accidentally, prematurely resuscitated. That's all I know.

(turns to Eli)

Eli, you are without a house. You can stay with us and kick-off your legal practice from here.

ELI

Delighted.

MAGDA

Great! Let me make you a coffee.

Zach's phone RINGS.

NOVAK (V.O.)

Last time you called me asshole. My name is still Novak. You need to short the mortgage market. We'll make a motza. Remember my percentage... Fifty percent. As it stands at the moment.

ZACH

Nonsense. I am not in this. An appointment with the colonoscopy professor... and this chip will be out and off my ass in no time flat.

NOVAK (V.O.)

Fool. Your nuclear battery phone and your AI Chip keep you alive. You tamper

with any of them, you die.

The phone goes dead. Magda comes in with the coffee.

MAGDA

You're looking terrible all of a sudden, darling. Did they take the Chip out, what about your special battery phone. You still have them?

ZACH

Yes, one is in my hand now, the other is in my back side. Both need to stay; they keep me alive. Magda, I need you to transfer all the Bank Shareholding back to me and put all the affairs in my name again. Eli will prepare the legal documents.

MAGDA

But of course, darling, I never understood what I had to do.

INT. ZACH GOLDING'S HOUSE - (NEW YORK) - DAY

Eli never had a woman in his life. So, he is determined to do something about it. Living in his brother's house offers certain temptations.

He calls the optometrist.

OPTOMETRIST (V.O.)

Hoffner Opticians. Yes, Mr. Golding. I remember you called yesterday about contact lenses and got interrupted. I can guarantee that they don't hurt to put on or take off.

ELI

How long would they take. I would like to surprise my partner.

OPTOMETRIST (V.O.)

I would say about ten days after your

initial visit. You would need to explain clearly to me the color you want, there are no in-betweens.

ELI

Mr. Hoffner, I just need new contacts just slightly, only slightly darker than the color of my eyes.

OPTOMETRIST (V.O.)

I will give you a color chart.

ELI

Mr. Hoffner, a better idea is to get you a close-up picture of somebody I know. Just his eyes. That should do it.

OPTOMETRIST (V.O.)

I'm afraid not, Mr. Golding. As an amateur person taking a photo, it very much depends on the light, time of day, even the subject's disposition at the time, but if that's the best, well. Oh, by the way with regards to price...

ELI

Price is not a problem. I want to make sure that I get no infections and I can still use my glasses for the legal work that I do. One more question if I may?

OPTOMETRIST (V.O.)

Just go ahead and ask.

ELI

How quickly can I take them off once I have been wearing them, say for a couple of hours.

OPTOMETRIST (V.O.)

I never had that question put to me before, but you need to make sure you don't contaminate them.

ELI

How long will this take?

OPTOMETRIST (V.O.)

A couple of days will do.

ELI

Okay, I will drop by your eye clinic in two days and take it one from there. My wife is coming, so I better end this call. Bye.

Magda knocks and comes in with coffee and biscuits.

MAGDA

I'll pour you a cup, I always do this for Zach. Yummy, his favorite biscuits. Hope you like them.

ELI

Very British. Thank you, Magda. You must get lonely here.

MAGDA

Zach devoted his life to the Bank but he never appears to be greedy.

ELI

Yes, I noticed that. We're both lucky to be back with the living. This time I would like to find some love but at my age, it's difficult.

MAGDA

But you look young. In my books you look fifty-five. And I bet you could act fifty-five, huh. Many a women would welcome your advances.

ELI

Possibly yes. Well, identical twins.

MAGDA

Even I cannot separate you apart. Not

even in a close situation I would not be able to tell, except your eyes look a touch lighter.

ELI

Maybe I can do something about it.

MAGDA

Very commendable. Do that Eli.

Magda, gets up, picks the tray, stops by Eli, looks at him and gives him a kiss on the forehead.

MAGDA

Oh, Eli, you're so much like Zach.

INT. PIZZUTO ESPRESSO (NEW YORK) - DAY

Eli walks in Pizzuto Espresso on the corner West 76th Street and goes straight in the Men's Bathroom.

BATHROOM

He takes out his new contact lenses. He looks in the mirror and keeps blinking his eyelids. He puts in the lenses and suddenly they feel comfortable. And a sigh of relief. He looks in the mirror once more, adjusts his tie, shirt collar and moves out.

COFFEE SHOP

He takes a seat near the entrance. And waits. His latte is getting rather cold. At 11.30, Magda comes in and is greeted by one of the waiters.

WAITER

The usual Mrs. Golding.

She nods and looks for a seat. Eli calls her.

MAGDA

Oh Zach, what a surprise. What you're doing here, you're supposed to be at work. Let me join you.

ELI

Too much pressure the last few days. I thought I relax a little and hear your beautiful voice in more pleasant surroundings.

MAGDA

(stares at his eyes)

That's unusual Zach, but thank you. Tell me about your experience in Bucharest.

ELI

I didn't have any. I was cold dead.

MAGDA

That's true. You haven't changed one bit, but I meant to ask you. The tattoo you have on your rump, is it still there?

Eli hesitates for a while. No answer is forthcoming.

MAGDA

Well, Zach what do you say?

ELI

You never asked me personal questions like this before. Of course, it's still there. What else would you like to talk about?

MAGDA

Zach never had any tattoos and his eyes were always a shade lighter. Exactly like yours when you take your lenses off.

ELI

But Magda ...

MAGDA

Stop fooling around. You don't need to go through all this. Follow me and I will give you an induction lesson.

Just this once, you understand.

Eli is absolutely stunned. He leaves a \$50 bill, wipes some light sweat off his brow and follows Magda out of the door like a good sheep.

INT. MOTEL RECEPTION - DAY

Doc Garner checks in at the 'DEAD COWBOY MOTEL,' in a small nondescript township in South Dallas. The RECEPTIONIST takes his credit card.

RECEPTIONIST

Visa is fine, payment accepted, here's your keys. There is five hundred dollars extra security.

GARNER

Just checking aloud ma'am. Room 114, looks out on the car park, window faces afternoon sun, full-sized wooden easel mirror which I can move around. I want to see my whole persona in it. All good ma'am.

RECEPTIONIST

(frowns)

You got it. You wonder about the name 'Dead Cowboy Motel?'

GARNER

Well of course, ma'am.

RECEPTIONIST

All end up dead. That's why I wanted extra security.

MOTEL ROOM

Doc walks in the room. The sun was really bright. He positions the mirror in front of the window. Changes into the Wyatt Earp outfit.

Puts the television on, inserts a DVD and watches clips from 'Tombstone'. It is a standoff between Ringo and Doc Holliday. Gun spinning tricks.

He tries to replicate but he is rather slow. He puts on the moustache, looks in the mirror, gets in the right posture, adjusts his hat for the sun and moves fast to draw.

He tries this routine again. Then he practices the fast loading of ammo and empties the magazines again. And then a few more times.

He picks the shotgun and fires blanks. Then, looking away from the mirror he picks the pump, turns fast and pulls. It is loaded. He blows the window out of the wall. Mirror glass on the inside and window glass litters the outside.

Cop cars and sirens are heard and five minutes later, they show up at the scene of the crime, lights still whirring and sirens still blaring.

Officer Hank Jenkins looks a replica of Major 'King' Kong in 'Dr Strangelove.' He storms out of the car. He charges, shotgun in hand, pointing towards the broken window. Then he crouches and moves carefully towards the door, shouts out some orders, then looks left and looks right.

OFFICER

This is Officer Jenkins, drop your weapon, come out with your hands up or we're coming in.

GARNER

It was an accident, ain't coming out, need to clean up first.

Officer Jenkins, still with a mouthful of chewing tobacco, shoots out a spit, hits the wall, straightens himself, sinks his boot in the door and he busts it open.

EXT. MOTEL CAR PARK - DAY

They drag him out, slam him against the car, frisk him and bundle him in. All his weapons are dumped in the trunk.

EXT. DALLAS POLICE CAR - TRAVELING - DAY

Sirens blazing towards Dallas downtime Police Station.

INT. DALLAS POLICE STATION CELL - DALLAS - DAY

Jenkins questions Doc Garner. Officer Benton is also present.

OFFICER

Okay Doc, my name is Jenkins, this is Officer Benton. Tell us what happened. Why so many weapons?

GARNER

Practicing for a short movie like 'Tombstone.'

OFFICER

You kidding me, you think you're Wyatt Earp.

Doc's phone RINGS. It's an overseas call. He looks at the Officer.

OFFICER

Take it.

GARNER

Doc Garner here. Who's that?

NOVAK (V.O.)

It's Novak Adamescu. I am in charge now. You need to come to Bucharest urgently. Remember, the nuclear battery on your phone. You will die if it's damaged.

GARNER

I am in trouble ... in a South Dallas police cell. You told me to practice for the new 'Tombstone' movie. I fired. Accident. No injuries.

Damage only. You say, I'm... I'm...
out of this movie? The Officer?...
Huh, no, he is okay. Do you want to talk
to him. His name is Officer Jenkins.

He passes the phone to the Officer. Benton is with Jenkins.

OFFICER

Mr. Garner tells us he was practicing
and the gun misfired. We did not
believe the movie business story.
Well, he needs bail if you understand.
It's a funny situation here in Texas.

NOVAK (V.O.)

Got your drift. Three thousand.

OFFICER

(looks at Benton)

Officer Benton, give us some privacy.
Thank you, Benton. Now Mr. Novak?...
you make it five?

NOVAK (V.O.)

Novak is my name. I'll give you six,
but take him now to the airport and book
him on the next flight to Bucharest.

OFFICER

How you spell that? How about the
money.

NOVAK (V.O.)

You go to the Bank of America. Claim it
there. Under your name. Airport,
now, urgent. Garner will spell
Bucharest for you.

OFFICER

Better not jerk me off Novak, or I'll
shoot this son of a bitch now, on a Texas
street, not on the set.

NOVAK (V.O.)

Scouts Honor. Message coming up.

OFFICER

Okay you got it.

Novak hangs up.

OFFICER

(to Doc Garner)

Where the fuck is Bucharest? Here, SMS text coming in for you Doc. Stay in Hotel Transyl ... fucking foreign words, whatever, for 3 days. Let's go to the airport now. Better make sure he sends that fucking money. I hope he doesn't think I'm some dumb ass from Texas.

Still chewing 'dipping tobacco.' Drippings show at the right corner of his mouth. He calls Officer Benton.

OFFICER

Officer Benton, give me an escort to Dallas International, you got five minutes.

Doc gets bundled in the back of a car with another burly Dallas cop. Officer Jenkins rolls the window down and fires a spit missing an old pedestrian by an inch.

OFFICER

Goddam it lady, move faster.

Four motor cycles and four cars speed towards the airport.

INT. MORGUE - (DAY)

Novak Adamescu works the phone.

NOVAK

Nikola, have you thought about whether you want to live or die.

NIKOLA PETRESCU (V.O.)

Fii Draku. That's Fuck you in any language. I don't like to come back. *Rahat. La Draku...* Means Shit if you forgot your language. If I come, I will probably bury you. Remember those words.

NOVAK

We have a secure job for you. Do not try to get that chip out of your ass because you die. Or I can turn the chip off. You also die. Your choice. Maybe you should start digging your own grave. They will bury you as a zombie. Asshole.

Novak dials the next number.

VON GARTEN (V.O.)

How can I be of help? This is His Excellency Baron Gustav Romanoff von Garten speaking, that's my full name.

NOVAK

I can see that. This is Novak Adamescu - in full control of the Bucharest Facility. We need you here urgently. Your name may be long, but your life may not be so long.

VON GARTEN (V.O.)

Morbid place. Sorry, not coming. I don't care about the Chip. I am having a great time with my young man Amadeus. So, *Verpiss Dich.*

NOVAK

Don't understand.

VON GARTEN (V.O.)

You ignorant piece of shit. It's German. Fuck off.

Novak looks at his note pad on the desk. He runs his pen in anger over von Garten's name.

He brings up von Garten's file on his computer screen. Enters his password. He reads the AI Chip coding instructions. He proceeds to adjust them; End of Life Date: Enters '31 January 2021;' Deterioration in weeks from today: Enters '2;' Expiration Date of AI Chip: Enters 'Immediate;' Life Extension: Enters 'Nil.' He sends the text to von Garten.

NOVAK

*Frederick, you have started to die.
Unless you come to Bucharest. Your
best friend - Novak.*

Novak calls the Golding twins.

NOVAK

Zach this is Novak. Your last chance.

ZACH GOLDING (V.O.)

Novak, no more. And I am not moving. I have an appointment with the endoscopy professor to get the Chip out of my ass. I am done.

NOVAK

Your AI Chip keeps you alive. It needs immediate maintenance. Without it, you die. Eli too. Check with von Garten now. See how he feels. He refused, two days ago.

INT. GOLDING SECURITIES (NEW YORK) - DAY

Twenty bank executives gather in the boardroom. On the large screen, in large letters, 'Golding Securities - The Next Decade.'

SIMON WEINER, the CEO (55), slightly obese, bald, and is impeccably dressed in banker's attire. He points to the screen. The Golding twins make their sudden entrance. Unexpected, unannounced and seemingly unprepared. They stand next to each

other.

ZACH

Thank you, please remain seated.

(looks at Eli)

The document please.

(looks at Weiner)

Simon, read this. Urgent.

WEINER

(looks at both)

But of course, Mr. Golding. You're

Zach?

Zach points to his chest to identify himself from Eli.

WEINER

Ladies and gentlemen, there has been an Executive leadership change. Zach is back, he is the new CEO. As of now, I become COO. The Legal papers are in order.

ZACH

I will be brief, fast and to the point. Time is not on our side. Eli and I have been gone and back. Extra-terrestrial journey, literally.

Scary but an eye-opener. We're back.

(points to ceiling)

You do exactly what I say.

They all look up in a panic.

ZACH GOLDING

You can't see the aliens you fools. But they are there asking you to do what they want you to do. If not, you are doomed, we are all doomed. Your families will perish. We're all fucked. You go first. The ETs have changed our personalities.

WEINER

Zach, what does this all mean?

ZACH

Simon, it means you speak when you are spoken to. We have to make a motza in the securities and mortgage market. My instructions from above are skimpy. I don't even understand them myself. Eli, the DVDs.

Eli places a stack of DVDs on the table. Zach picks one up and flashes it back and forth for everybody do see. It's 'The Long Short' movie.

ZACH

In my hand I have 'The Long Short.' We need to short the mortgage market, buy short and sell long. Your bonuses will skyrocket. The ETs expect a large cut, we are all under their radar. So, get it right.

Then Eli stands up and flashes a couple of DVDs himself. 'Wall Street.'

ZACH

For those in Stocks, Shares, Pension Funds, watch 'Wall Street.' In Gekko's words, 'Greed is Good.'

WEINER

How ... How... do we ...

ZACH

I will spare you the agony. I don't understand, I have been away for a decade. You should, otherwise you will be sucked up and join a few other losers up there, somewhere.

The directors are terrorized.

ZACH

Watch these DVDs, once, twice, three

times, ten times. We need to net a billion dollars in 3 weeks' time. Simon, dish them out. Go to work. Have a great day.

Eli and Zach bow and walk out. The meeting ends in a controlled uproar.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

Elena is upset.

It is six-thirty in the morning. Elena gets out of bed. Brushes her teeth. Looks in the mirror. Straightens herself and feels extremely confident.

She checks the time regularly. The time now is 6.53 am. She gets in the shower, finishes showering, walks out and straight in her Treatment Tank at 7.03. Out of the tank at 8.33, fetches the fast-acting Facial Rejuvenation injection 'FacieiRenovatioX934' and injects at 8.33. Puts her makeup at 8.43. She is now ready and heads for the Laboratory at 8.58.

It is two minutes to nine. Novak enters his office. He looks for Elena.

NOVAK

Elena? Where are you hiding?

Few seconds before nine, the door handle turns. Elena steps in. The Grandfather clock chimes Nine.

NOVAK

We have a busy day ahead of us. All the zombies will be coming back.

ELENA

(unusual sexy voice)

I am ready to go to work. They are not expected here till noon. There is plenty time clean up old cobwebs.

NOVAK

Your perfume smells heavenly today.

ELENA

The reason it took a little longer.

She creeps in from behind Novak. She smells like a rose; her face is as serene and beautiful as expected. Her hands are now on his shoulders. She gives Novak a gentle rub, and then some more around his neck. Her hands smell of the most beautiful soothing lotion.

Standing behind Novak, her breasts push against the side of his head, she whispers in his ear.

ELENA

Eleven years to the day since you last made love to me, my darling. It was on the day of the accident.

NOVAK

That long. True, it happened just before we were covered in blood. Less fun when you're dead.

ELENA

Precisely, so what are you waiting for? Do you think I am a praying mantis or a black widow spider?

NOVAK

No, no. Nothing like that.

ELENA

Then enjoy life Novak. Life is short. Believe me, very short.

NOVAK

Let's just finish the morning's work.

ELENA

The time for work starts now. Listen carefully to the clock behind you. Tick... tock, tick... tock.

It is 9.05. He is overtaken by Elena's scent and by her gentle movements; he succumbs to her charm, looks up to her and...

NOVAK

Like the old days, Elena.

Novak looks at her, his body almost paralyzed. His eyelids move increasingly fast, almost twitching.

She loosens his belt, then undoes his trousers. He is still in his chair. She is now on him. She looks at him while keeping an eye on the Grandfather clock.

ELENA

Listen, listen carefully, Novak.
Tick... tock, tick... tock. Life is too short. Enjoy it before you hit the freezer.

NOVAK

I am and I will enjoy it, all the way.

ELENA

Ah, 'all the way' huh, you little brat, you love the Sinatras don't you. That's Frank Sinatra. Are you as good as Frankie?

NOVAK

Better.

ELENA

Prove it then.

NOVAK

Please Elena, give me a break.

ELENA

We have been in this position for a whole fifteen minutes. The Grandfather tells me it's almost nine-twenty. Tick... tock, tick... tock. Soon we reach Crescendo.

NOVAK

Almost there, yes, tick... tock,
tick... tock. Keep ticking Elena.

Her eyes bulge out of their sockets and her gaze locks on his face. His eyes are wide open. Then, her own eyes start to sink slowly in the back of her head leaving two deep black holes. Her fangs spring out. He tries to move but he is nailed in. He tries to fight but his strength is gone. Her mouth starts moving towards the left side of his neck. Her fangs sink in.

Novak struggles and continues the futile attempt; his arms swing violently at first then they drop to his sides. The tusks stay buried in his neck.

His eyes start to dilate, his body loses all its strength and then she kindly and gently closes his eyelids.

ELENA

Dying gently in my arms. How sweet.
Remember, I love you darling.

Elena gets up, cleans herself and drags Novak's body behind the curtains. She calls the Hotel.

ELENA

This is Elena Adamescu from Eternal
Cryogenics. Drive my guests to my
address in your best limousine.
Immediately.

Noon. First to enter was Zach. He almost collapses as soon as he sees Elena's face. He is followed by Eli who slumps on the floor with fright. Lazarus follows Eli and crashes to the floor on top of him. Then Doc Garner starts to vomit. Finally, Nikola shows up carrying Baron Frederick and drops him on a chair. Then he helps the other three men off the floor.

NIKOLA PETRESCU

These Westerns, no balls. I put some
water on their faces Mrs. ...

ELENA

Adamescu. Elena Adamescu. I am in

control now. Novak threatened you. He is a bad man and paid the price. He is behind the curtains, dead.

LAZARUS

(points at his face)

What happened... Mrs. Adamescu?

ELENA

(mischievous smile)

Lazarus, save your energy for later. Believe me, you will be needing it.

LAZARUS

Yes, Mrs. Adamescu.

ELENA

To prove that I am a good woman, but also a very horny one, I will turn Baron Frederick's chip to 'on' right now.

(keys in the info)

Watch his lifeless body come to life again. Five seconds and counting.

LAZARUS

How did you do that?

ELENA

Are you dumb, I just told you. Your brains must be in your balls. Speak when spoken to. Dimwit. You all will live if you do exactly what I say. Otherwise, I will turn all of you into zombies.

GARNER

Mrs. Adamescu, I need to take a piss.

ELENA

Hold on to it, cowboy. Nikola, this \$10,000 is for your family. Pick Novak's body, put him in the first hole you find, finish the job nicely, then return to your family. Mouth shut.

Move.

NIKOLA PETRESCU

Yes, Mrs. Adamescu.

Nikola drags the body to the door, he runs back and grabs his money, and then out of the door dragging Novak's body behind him.

ELENA

The rest of you stay for the show.
Learn and tell me what you think after
you witness the finale. Baron, are you
feeling better?

Baron Frederick nods.

ELENA

Better be, otherwise I'll turn your chip
off.

The Baron hiccups and covers his mouth.

ELENA

I want to reassure myself that I am still
worthy of attention. Do you understand
what I mean or do I have to be crude, I
mean, explicit?

The Goldings nod.

ELENA

Zach, you indicate you understand? Are
you volunteering? Your face went
white. Means a NO. Eli, what about
you. I see, Eli, your face is even
whiter. Cowboy, get me some water.

Doc Garner, gets up in hesitation, walks sideways and fills her
glass.

ELENA

You wet your pants! Piss pants. I
cannot believe this. You will be shot
dead in Texas. The Baron is out.

She takes a sip of water while she mulls her next move.

ELENA

That leaves me with just one option.
Lazarus, you're the European stud.
Their fate is in your hands. Do you
want them to die and you with them?

Stammering and shaking he gets up.

LAZARUS

I, I. I want to say, this is 3766, not
the Boeing 3767. Getting my numbers
wrong again. God help me.

ELENA

Over here, do your number before I get
angry, belt off, pants down, sit, arms
out. And handle me with care and
affection.

He is now ready but looks unusually very nervous.

LAZARUS

I'm ready. Can I keep my eyes closed,
Mrs. Adamescu?

ELENA

You keep them open or my fangs will open
holes in your neck even bigger than my
eye sockets.

LAZARUS

I am really enjoying this Mrs. Adamescu,
and my eyes are wide open.

The other four watch.

ELENA

Are you guys keeping an eye on our
performance. I can see you from the
back of my head too, so watch out.

Doc Garner helps Baron to lift his hand. They answer in unison.

ALL FOUR

Yes, Mrs. Adamescu.

ELENA

We have been in this position for a whole fifteen minutes. The Grandfather tells me it's almost twenty past twelve. Tick... tock, tick... tock. Soon it's Crescendo time.

LAZARUS

Almost there, yes, tick... tock, tick... tock. How many ... how many more tick tocks?

ELENA

Not sure, lover boy. Cowboy, can you hear those tick tocks?

GARNER

Yes ma'am, I can.

ELENA

Cowboy, can you get a clear shot on that grandfather?

GARNER

Sure can, ma'am.

ELENA

Shoot that motherfucker. Noooooow!

BANG BANG BANG.

GARNER

Shit I am getting good at this. Motherfucker is dead ma'am. He'll tick no more.

ELENA

Good job, cowboy. Well done. You might be the next one here. You ran out

of ammo I suppose.

Doc appears to be wetting his pants again.

ELENA

Don't worry about him Lazarus, he won't take your place. He's out of ammo anyway. Lazarus, Lazarus, are you with me? You wanna go in the freezer again. Shit, the son of a bitch fell asleep.

Lazarus' head slumps to one side.

ELENA

(gets up)

Okay boys, curtains down. Who gives me 10 out of ten? Look, even Lazarus has his hand raised. Cowboy, help the Baron. He looks as if he needs some help. That's better, now I count one, two, three, four and five. A perfect hand.

ELENA

Final count is six.

ZACH

I am a numbers man, Mrs. Adamescu. Anybody can tell the count is five.

ELENA

(raises her hand)

Zach, are you saying you don't have faith in my numbers?

Zach now looks even whiter than before. Elena lets out a loud Dracula-type laugh.

She encourages them to join in. And they all do in unison.

ELENA

Some of you help this man out of my chair and get your asses out of here. Walk out very slowly and in unison. The last

one out will close the door.

Another Dracula-type laugh.

She walks to the window, watches, giggles and laughs intermittently as the scenes move from the house to the outside.

ELENA'S POV

First out is Doc who helps Lazarus still holding on to his pants. They both drag the Baron out.

Eli is next, followed by Zach who pulls the door behind him. The twins move in unison.

BACK TO SCENE

Elena walks to the door and walks out.

EXT. OUTSIDE LUTHER ZOMBESCU'S HOUSE - DAY

She stands on the porch and watches them struggle down the driveway. Then she follows them keeping about thirty steps away. She giggles and laughs.

ELENA'S POV

At the roadside, the Golding twins hail an approaching taxi and they're off. The other three look in amazement.

Another cab stops by. He flashes a sign in Romanian, 'Doar Doi - Two Only.' They drop the Baron on the driveway and run towards the cab. Doc is in first, then Lazarus. The cab door slams shut. One of trouser legs hangs out of the car. The cab speeds away.

Baron Frederick just cannot believe his eyes.

BACK TO SCENE

Elena laughs and looks at Baron von Garten helpless on the ground.

ELENA

Don't worry Baron, I will get you a taxi.

She lets out increasingly louder Dracula-type laughs, turns back and walks to the house.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. ZOMBESCU'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Simona is ready to go to bed. She notices that Luther starts stirring after laying almost motionless the whole day. She nudges him with her stick. He wakes up.

LUTHER

What's? What's happening?

SIMONA

You have been asleep for a whole day.
And talking nonsense. You must have
had a bad dream.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

Luther walks in at his usual time, two minutes to nine.

LUTHER

Good morning, Elena, nice to see you
again. You look refreshed.

ELENA

Glad to see you back, Luther. I haven't
seen you for almost two days. What's
the first job for today?

LUTHER

Well, cleaning up the Sam van Shorn's
corpse. My nose tells me he smells a
bit. A dab of your perfume performs
wonders.

ELENA

True, it is a bit suffocating.

Different strengths Luther. Parfum,
Toilette or Cologne?

LUTHER
You're the expert on that Elena.

ELENA
Just a dab to try it out first?

LUTHER
(stiffens)
Oh no, not that again, Elena!

THE END

INTENTIONALLY
LEFT
BLANK

THE MORBID SEVEN RISE AGAIN

THE
MORBID
SEVEN
RISE
AGAIN

CHARLES V. ABELA

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THE MORBID SEVEN RISE AGAIN

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THE VAN SHORNS IN BUCHAREST

December 20th, 2020. A funeral cortege of five black cars grinds its way through the quiet countryside on a sealed forest road. The road meanders constantly but the scenery hardly ever changes.

It is dry and dull. Glimpses of the countryside past the foliage look green, but many of these deciduous-type trees lining the road are barren of leaves and look seemingly dead. After all, it is winter on the Continent and therefore such scenery is expected.

It is getting close to four in the afternoon with some clouds forming in the distance.

Magpies and black birds abound, mostly perched on the branches. They look attentive. As expected, blackbirds, ravens and crows, like all passerine birds, tend to look bored. They are more at home in resting grounds surrounds, perched on gravestones guarding the dead. To the unobservant traveller, these birds would be overlooked, making this road trip look void of life. But some squirrels are seen running up and down trees while wild dogs cross the road regularly, maybe in packs.

This is evident by the occasional double-fatality carcasses on the side of the road, hosting one or two scavengers, mainly small vultures. Even by lovers of nature, these birds often come across as an unloved species. Indeed, these days a rare sight, since these buzzards had been wiped out in Romania during the last century. This lucky bird may have belonged to the bearded vulture. Of recent times, it had been spotted in this part of the country. Today, it certainly deserves its treat.

An old house on slightly higher ground appears in the distance. The cortege approaches it, crawling on a coarse gravel path, but the surface changes as they get closer to the house. Now they are on a proper driveway with a nice cover of brown looking pebble surfacing. The cars move very slowly with the wheels making a crunching noise becoming somewhat louder as they come to a halt.

The 'van Shorn' family members step out of the cars. It is absolutely still. They all stand by the vehicles and look around. Suddenly there is a flutter of wings and two blackbirds fly out of the trees above them and into the distance.

The strain shows on all the visitors' faces. Pebbles crunch under their feet as they walk the short distance to this creepy-looking house.

They were expected but nobody is out there to greet them. The instruction given on the phone was to proceed to the room past the hallway. The reason given was

that this is a very private establishment. They move inside and walk through a relatively wide hallway with three brown leather chairs on either side. They go past the full-glass door and into a dark room dominated by a rectangular heavy table. The finish looked dark walnut and with ten chairs of the same era and finish. The furniture would be classed as antique probably a labor of love by some unknown European artisan.

It is surprisingly warm in here and they feel thankful for this fact. They expect to meet and discuss how the cryogenics procedure works.

A crystal jug with fresh water sits at the middle of the table and five sparkling clean glasses on either side.

The two little boys have a look of anxiety on their faces and continuously tug at their mom's coat. The family take their seats and wait. They bow their heads as the lead mortician walks past them followed by six pallbearers. They carry the six-foot six-inches corpse in the casket. The adjoining room is the mortuary.

Mrs. Marilyn van Shorn is almost 50 years old, well-kept with light makeup. She was dressed in black like all the rest. A dark gray veil covers her head. Her two sons aged six and eight sit on either side of her. Marilyn's sister is of similar age and sits next to her daughter Poppy aged five who is being cuddled by her grandmother.

Their legal representative is Mr. Donald Bristow, aged seventy-five. He sits at one end of the table. He is dressed in a waistcoat and a suit reminiscent of a fashion from a century ago.

Luther Zombescu joins the van Shorn family. He is followed by Elena Adamescu who looks stunning, in excellent shape and in perfect health. She looks forty, feels forty, but in reality, her age is fifty. Luther looks his age, very much like your typical aging scientist dressed in his usual impeccably white overcoat, craggy face, thick eyebrows with grayish hair rather unkept, wearing rimless silver-frame spectacles, but otherwise, has a charming personality.

The grandmother, Poppy and her mother get up and take up seats at the opposite side of the table freeing one end of the table. Luther takes up the seat at the top of the table and now faces Donald Bristow with Elena sitting in the corner seat next to Luther.

Elena helps the Grandmother and Poppy to move the chairs back in position since they all seem to struggle with the heavy furniture.

Luther opens on a light but heavy note, "Thank you for your patience, the furniture is rather heavy. This table and chairs are part of the family heirloom. They

have been here for three generations – the proud work of Alexandru Zombescu, my great grandfather. He was a master carpenter, more appropriately an artisan.”

“Mom, will uncle Sam be back with us soon?”

“Darling, Uncle Sam will always be with us,” replies her mother.

“Perhaps, the kids would like to play outside?” continues Luther.

The three little faces indicated a definite “No.”

“We have all met earlier in the year. On my right is Elena, my fellow cryogenics scientist, herself an example of a resuscitated human. That was ten years ago. A living proof in perfect radiant health.”

“I know I recommended your services, but for the sake of the family, can you tell us a bit more, please,” comments Mr. Bristow.

“Sure, thank you,” continues Luther. “The facility has been established for 15 years. My wife Simona is also a scientist. Likewise, Elena. But she is more in administration rather than research and development.”

“Mr. Zombescu, how do you choose your patients?” asks Mrs. van Shorn.

“They all seem to be rich, business people, intellectuals and scientists. Most of them tend to be victims of some form of disease. We ensure the pedigree of the family, the background of the deceased, his or her intellect... and the family must be financial.”

“What about the procedure itself, how do you handle the corpse, once you assume responsibility?” asks Mr. Bristow.

“The procedure is simple. In this case, it concerns the corpse of Mr. Sam van Shorn. The body is in perfect condition apart from the unfortunate heart attack. Our process will heal that. That will eventuate from the intelligence that the AI chip inside him carries. I can assure you ...”

At that point, Marilyn van Shorn bursts out in tears. Elena pushes some tissues towards her. Then Poppy follows on with a cry except hers is much louder.

“It’s alright darling, we’ll be finished soon,” says her mother.

Luther is forced to apologize, “Sorry about this, it always happens when little kids are around listening to such an unusual conversation”.

And then he continues, “As I briefly mentioned, apologies for repeating myself on such an important topic. A vetting process, due diligence if you like, takes place.

We ensure the deceased is, more appropriately has been, of good character, possibly of high intellect and had a good standing in the community. And importantly, the family is financial. Excuse me, would you care for a glass of water?"

Luther helps himself to a glass of water. He pours a second one for Mrs. van Shorn and gently pushes it towards her. She reaches out for it with a trembling if not shaking hand. The family members look at each other with trepidation.

"The first thing is the washing, embalming, and then the AI Chip is inserted inside the body. Very similar to a colonoscopy in its mechanics... after that procedure is completed, the business suit is put back on the corpse, and the body is put in the cryogenics compartment."

Luther stops and takes another sip of water.

"We refer to it as a 'freezer.' No disrespect intended. His only companion on the lonely journey for the next ten years is his mobile... Mrs. van Shorn, are you feeling all right? You're not looking too well I'm afraid."

"Yes, I am fine," answers Mrs. van Shorn, "just a little on edge, that's all. I'll help myself to a sip of water in a minute."

But she was having trouble handling this simple task. She presses the glass firmly on her lips to mitigate the shakes of her trembling hand.

At that very moment, there is an unexpected loud chime from the Grandfather clock in the mortuary next door. It is four o'clock. All the family is rattled as they hold on to the furniture. Marilyn knocks the half-filled glass over. The water drips on her clothes, literally soaking her, then continues to trickle on the floor. Now all the three kids start screaming in panic.

Elena promptly gets up and takes the three kids out of the room into the adjoining hall. Things slowly quieten down. All of a sudden, there is weird silence broken only by the meowing of two black cats. Their luminous green eyes emit a curious laser-like, if not ominous piercing look.

The kids take a liking to the cats and they soon have them on their laps. Their purring help calm the kids' nerves down. Maybe they had been judged and labelled 'mischievous' prematurely. Elena leaves them with their new feline friends and returns to the table. She signals all is okay with the kids and Luther continues where he left off.

"Apologies. Let me continue. The AI Chip software is continuously being developed and regularly updated. It is accessed via signals to the deceased's mobile,

and then directly to the AI Chip. That's how the body heals."

"I'm feeling better now," says Mrs. van Shorn. "Surely, the battery can't last very long."

"Good observation. The mobile is upgraded with a nuclear charged battery, it lasts two full lifetimes."

"But Mr. Zombescu, how does the healing process happen in a cold tank?"

He reaches out to Elena who displays an AI chip. It rests on the tip of her forefinger.

"The function of the Chip is twofold. First, it heals the body tissues over a period of time. Secondly, it rejuvenates the body during the process over an even longer time-span."

Mrs. van Shorn continues, "And then?"

"Then, when the body is resuscitated, the person will communicate, feel, move and act exactly as they did at the time of dying, but without exhibiting any symptoms of disease. The reason – they would have been cured of the disease, most of the times."

Mrs. van Shorn interjects, "How can you be so sure?"

"We cannot, but our research indicates that such progress is continuously being made and our objectives are achievable. In the case of heart attacks, the tendency to have a repeat would disappear completely."

Luther stops and looks at Elena. "Elena looks exactly the way she did at the time of her passing. In her case, though, it was an accident."

All heads turn towards Elena with a curious look. The look on their faces is akin to witnessing an incomparable beauty. She is appreciative and acknowledges their curiosity if not admiration.

"May I ask you what happened?" asks Marilyn.

"I was in a car accident ten years ago. Now I feel, act and look as I did before that tragedy, which had left me disfigured on the left side of my face."

Mrs. van Shorn takes a deep breath and looks more relaxed and turns to address Luther, "Very reassuring, Mr. Zombescu. Now the money?"

"The requested amount has already been deposited as Mr. Bristow knows. Two hundred fifty thousand dollars for the first year, with an equal amount put in trust

with your bankers in New York - the Bank of America. That makes it half a million dollars. The same sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars will be paid one week before the start of a new year.”

“So, what do you really think with regards to Mr. van Shorn? Is our money well invested? And... what?...”

“Our research indicates that Sam could be back in ten years in perfect shape. That would be a total investment of two million five hundred thousand dollars, American.”

Mr. Bristow looks at Luther, “Inflation?”

“All included come what may,” answers Luther Zombescu promptly.

Marilyn looks at Mr. Bristow who nods.

“We’re happy to proceed,” answers Mrs. Van Shorn.

“Elena will witness the signatures, put her own, and that would conclude the business for the day. We thank you for your patience.”

They all stand up and leave after politely bowing. Luther sees them out. Mr. Bristow stops and shakes hands with Luther.

Elena walks to Mrs. van Shorn who looks a bunch of nerves. She tries to calm her down with some choice words of comfort. She holds out her hands while giving her reassurance but unintentionally, her gaze gets fixed on Mrs. van Shorn’s face.

“I would like to reassure you that all will be okay.”

Marilyn’s mouth and lips are now trembling uncontrollably. She cannot get the words out. The kids look at their mom, panic and cry. Finally...

“Elena, you mean... eh... you really were a corpse? And got back... with the living?”

Elena continues to stare at her and nods twice. No words. Marilyn freaks out.

She screams at the top of her voice, “Get me out of here, I can’t take this anymore.”

Marilyn starts to faint. Mr. Bristow grabs her and helps her into the car.

The cortege start on their trip back to Bucharest. They crunch the pebbles on the driveway, seemingly in more haste, as if they were bidding a quick goodbye to these spooky surroundings. The blackbirds and magpies aplenty are perched on the

surrounding branches, curiously looking down, and motionless.

The door closes. Luther and Elena get inside the morgue to take a good look at their new lifeless customer - the corpse of Mr. Sam van Shorn.

MR. AND MRS. ZOMBESCU

After meeting the van Shorn family, Luther Zombescu, looks tired and is half-asleep in his sofa. His wife Simona is sixty and partly paralyzed. Unfortunately, they are barren.

They sit by the fire in the huge living room of this 120-year-old house which they own. They occupy the front part of the building; the rest consists of empty cold rooms. But there is one fully-serviced room at the back, and that is occupied by Elena.

“What is the new customer like?”

“Dead,” answers Luther. “Sam van Shorn. Banker from New York. Heart attack. Quarter of a million. Ten years in the tank.”

“Luther that would help pay the bills. My research indicates five years. You get your update in a week or so. Elena made any moves on you as yet? Watch out. I am not sure I trust her. Unlike me, paralyzed and inadequate, she looks young and in perfect health.”

“I like you better with one leg. Ah, the wrong dose of chemicals. I want to kill myself so often, I think I will do it one day. I am permanently tormented. Once this research is done...”

Simona chips in, “... I will go in the tank and come out like a fifty-year-old. Anticipating a quicker healing to the body and rejuvenation. I believe I can cut the usual minimum of ten years by at least five years.”

“That would be excellent Simona. Eternal Cryogenics. It’s a good name. Very true to its purpose. Ah who would believe?”

“Believe what?” interjects Simona.

“That all this is happening in Pitesti. It’s obvious why the van Shorns were scared. People get curious, what else would one expect in Transylvania. The only time they hear of the name is when they read a book or go to the movies to see Count Dracula. You agree, Simona?”

“Entirely.”

“No one believes that we are one hundred miles from Bucharest, and so very peaceful in these wooded foothills. I wonder if destiny has put us here. Pity you have a bad leg. We would spend more time in the woods enjoying each other.”

“I also have some doubts, Luther. Maybe soon we would be playing surrogates of

the Count in the future.”

“Your imagination is running wild again, just keep your powder dry for the research. Use your brains for something useful and don’t contaminate it with the common trivia. Don’t debase yourself.”

“Anything seems possible and certainly scary. Two black birds were perched on the ledge looking inside. I hope it’s not a bad omen. By the way, those three or four bats swarming around the place seem to have disappeared,” says Simona.

She looks at Luther who is fast asleep.

THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT

Elena Adamescu stands by the window looking outside.

There is nothing much to do when she needs to relax. Her life is one empty cycle lacking of any human contact except her business interactions with Luther and staring at the dead.

Yet her mission is to bring people back to life again. As always, she stares at the view outside the window comes hail or shine. Her current TV set is a pain and she has been thinking of replacing it. She gives it a bit of a thump every now and then, and often thinks of chucking it out of her window and straight in one of the holes below.

It is a starlit night and absolutely calm. She gazes at the moon which looks a perfect circle. She is convinced it is more interesting up there than it is down in Pitesti, even though the far planet is barren.

It looks misty half-a-mile from the house. Below in the dimly lit graveyard there seems to be some activity. A grave digger is on the job digging two fresh plots yet unmarked.

A black bird perches itself up on the window ledge. Another bird joins in. Two of them, motionless looking at the inside of the room. She tries to scare them away. She waves, she taps on the window pane, but they would not move. She reckons they belong on one of the tombstones below which is the abode of many of them.

It is now seven o'clock and Elena starts preparing her evening meal – strictly vegan. A few minutes later, the sound of the chapel bell stirs her up and she rushes to the window. A couple of cars must have driven from a nearby village. A one-hundred-year-old chapel, hastily erected but still stands the test of time, adjoins the graveyard. It consists of a single candle-lit space, ten feet by ten feet, the only structure above ground on these burial grounds.

From time to time, this resting place is disturbed when it's necessary to remove bodies from the mortuary's 'cryogenics tanks.' They are transferred into the ground but without conducting any service. Inevitably, the reason would be a default on the yearly payment for the 'storage' of the body in the mortuary compartment. The family would have run out of funds; hope; or both. Around half the number of the mortuary residents tend to be moved to the burial grounds after two years.

The sound of the chapel bell, the car and the time of day indicate that 'default' is certainly not the case. The local hooded monk, Marcus Tedescu is nearing seventy. He is a complete illiterate but with a heart of gold. Always dressed in the traditional

dark brown garb, he is well-known and loved by the locals who make up the majority of this ageing community in the surrounding villages. He acknowledges all those who give him a cursory look although he never shows his face. His bright blue eyes, luminous even at his old age, reveal a sad face underneath.

He normally comes and attends the funeral burial service ‘pro bono.’ Ringing the bell is assumed to be his only duty now, since he is heavily supported by his new walking cane which sports a polished handle giving him a solid grip. It was a little gift donated by Luther Zombescu. Luther’s generosity also includes a supply of six-inch candles, two boxes of matches, and an old German wicker chair, the type you find in old-style churches. Due to his lack of mobility, Marcus positions his chair under the bell, he hooks the handle-end of the stick through a loop in the bell rope, and pulls the stick down every five seconds. On a still night the bell could be heard for one mile around.

The living relics about town hope for the best treatment they can get once they reach that inevitable stage, when in reality, their treatment should be of no concern. Nobody gave two hoots while they were ticking along, let alone when the clock stops. However, everybody expects to be treated with respect. And Marcus Tedescu was certainly there to oblige.

Elena closes the window and cries. She wonders how a beautiful woman of fifty with a body of forty, lucky to be back from the dead could find herself in such a situation. Her only evening entertainment in her prime years is watching graves being dug up and bodies put into the holes. During the day it is more of the same albeit more clinical but equally sombre. She feels a rebellion deep down, but she is not too sure how to go about it.

The old grave digger employed by Luther is Nikola. He himself is now being preserved in the mortuary. Even though his family could not afford the full fare for such a long journey, Luther decides to give him a well-desired recuperation chamber in one of the cryogenics tanks out of respect and compassion. Luther accepts a quarter of the fees, in this one case only. It is in line with Luther’s general principles and keeping with his intended moral feelings about the cryogenics project.

Nikola was too stiff for a satisfactory cleaning and embalming process. He is the victim of a heart attack. Luther finds him face down on top of another corpse he had just laid to rest in the ground. He must have been gone for a few hours because he is stone-cold and as stiff as a poker when discovered at dawn. The night must have been freezing cold. She remembers Luther saying that he was at wits’ end to bring the body back to a meaningful temperature required.

Her observations chores out of the way, Elena draws the curtains and sits at her desk. She picks up her hand-held makeup mirror. Her fingers run across her brow, around her eye sockets and across her cheeks. Her face looks good but the look itself is that of concern. She takes out an old calendar for the year 2009. She flips the pages until she reaches the intended month. Her eyes lock on a date circled with words written in red ink - 'The Accident.' It is December 1st 2009, 10.15 at night.

The memories race through her mind. They are as vivid today as when the accident happened, except they are even clearer.

Scenes race through her mind.

A country lane near Pitesti. Car travelling. Misty.

The car goes off the road and into the trees.

The locals come to the rescue.

Two people inside the wreck are Elena and her husband.

They are rushed the nearest dubious facility with some medical skills.

It is the only one within 70 miles - the Eternal Cryogenics Facility.

She remembers vividly the operating table is the preparation table in the morgue.

Barely alive, Elena's eyes make contact with Luther's.

He runs a gentle hand across her forehead. His touch is tender with a look of anxiety. His affection on his face looks like a father's.

She felt comfortable and not the least frightened dying in his company.

And from here, she can only conjure what actions would have followed.

She dies shortly afterwards.

Both corpses are cleaned up and put in cryogenics freeze tanks.

Elena is resuscitated after 10 years.

She looks forty, feels forty, but in reality, she is fifty years old, now.

Unfortunately, she is brought back to life a bit too soon.

Her husband Novak Adamescu must have accompanied her on the long lifeless journey, and his corpse is still in one of the cold tanks.

ELENA – THE BEAUTY AND THE GROTESQUE

Elena relaxes on the couch lost in a pensive mood. Her eyes seem to look at her relatively large room with bewilderment. She grabs a little mirror and looks at her face from the corner of her eyes, particularly the left side. It carries a tiny scar but hardly noticeable.

The bathroom looks modern with an ensuite, the bed at one end, an odd-looking glass cylindrical compartment at the other. It is an upmarket cryogenics contraption of a tank always lit with blue neon-like lights. They whizz and flash all over the surface, up and down the height of the tank with surprising speed. Imported from Germany - a high-tech medical wonder.

The room next to the bedroom is a simple kitchen.

The time shows 6.30 on the wall. She gets out of bed, picks up a towel and heads to the shower. A perfect body of forty. Her blonde hair comes down to below her shoulders. She spends quite a while rubbing her hair down and rinsing it forever, then with her hair still dripping water, she steps out of the shower. She dries herself, but always facing the far corner of the shower as if she is frightened to look in any other direction.

She sits down in front of her full-sized mirror and to her usual horror, she sees the same grotesque face, a daily facial transformation which immediately follows her showering. Best described as ‘looking like a witch.’

But here lies the stark difference. No skinny creature wearing a hat and floating on a broom handle. In short, it’s the face of an old haggard crone but sitting on a perfect body of forty, with no single wrinkle on it – the body that is – a description which certainly cannot be attributed to the face.

One might call her a wicked witch, yes, because she plans everything to the nth degree. Her strategy to conquer always involves manipulating her prey with persuasive, if not gentle talk.

But her face did indeed carry hollow cheeks, the size of caverns you find in a hilly region in this part of the world, the wrinkles in her face resemble crevices. Her blue eyes are as clear as crystal. They appear to be comfortably housed in what one might call one-inch wrench sockets. Car mechanics know what I am talking about here. Large deep sockets in layman’s terms.

She steps inside the magic cylindrical cryogenics tank, the technical name of which has not even as yet appeared on Google. She puts a face mask on, the blue neon lights change to a rainbow of colors, and at the end of a ninety-minute-long

session, her face is back in perfect harmony with her body. At minimum, she would certainly have won the Miss Transylvania Beauty Contest, any time hands down, with plenty of admirers ready for that special moment.

Hence, she wonders why she is so lonely, with not even one single pass coming her way from her sole work mate, her boss Luther Zombescu. At 68, a few years older yes, but there are famous actors who are fathering kids at the tender age of 80 and beyond. This mystery figures very much in her plan.

A quick breakfast and then she walks to the laboratory. She arrives a few minutes before Luther shows up always on time like clockwork.

A DAY AT THE MORTUARY

The laboratory is part of the morgue. It is dominated by an antique piece of furniture, a majestic German Walnut Grandfather clock. The eerie silence in this sacred space is only accentuated by audible tick tocks. But with charm and vengeance, it reminds us of its presence on the hour with distinctive resonating chimes.

Luther walks in, puts his white overcoat on and goes straight behind his desk. Elena is waiting for him. He passes her a file to read.

“Good morning, Elena. What have we got on today?” asks Luther.

“One little favor before we start, please,” replies Elena.

“And that is?”

“The Grandfather Clock. Too loud Luther.”

“The audible tick tocks remind us of how precious life is and that death is constantly approaching.”

“I agree. Perhaps, just a touch less noisy.”

“Okay I will think about it. You should be used to it by now,” says Luther.

The mortuary consists of twenty compartments occupied or otherwise waiting to be. If there is a default in payment, the body is taken out and disposed of in a burial ground at the back of the house.

New software updates to the AI Chips keep the bodies alive while they are dead. The upgrades are implemented regularly with the hope that one day the corpses will be brought back amongst the living will enjoy a new life. Luther's intention is to create a mini-race which sets exemplary good behavior for the rest of mankind.

Of late, new software has been developed that allows the resuscitated bodies to interchange with another fellow corpse's persona and personality.

Elena looks at the file with the day's highlights.

“Oh good, not such a long list. Okay, new tank is on its way. It left Düsseldorf a few days' ago. Fast decomposing chemicals for the graveyard should be here today.”

“Remember, please clean mortuary cell Number 3. It's been empty for a while. We expect a body soon. Currently ticking on life-support in a New York hospital, his family tells me he is heading south.”

“I will do that as soon as we finish our desk work.”

“Call Nikola Petrescu’s family. They have not renewed the yearly subscription. We don’t have an advance. We need him in the graveyard not in the freezer.”

With a surprise tone as if begging Luther, Elena replies, “They are poor. They only paid \$60,000. Give him more time. Remember, the mini, kind, honest, fellow-loving race you wish to create.”

“No more generosity. We still owe two million dollars to Deutschce Fabriken Crematorium. They want the money fast. Or they will shut us down. Now, why are you looking so sad today? You know the after-shower problem is permanent.”

“True, it is not getting any better.”

“It will not. How long do you take?”

“Shower and treatment, two hours.”

Luther continues, “Simona is almost there with the new formulae. Two more weeks and we will have a new treatment.”

“Meaning?”

“You go in the cold tank and you’re out 200% perfect in three years.”

“I don’t want to die again,” retorts Elena.

“Your solution?”

“I don’t have one.”

“Well Elena, you can go to Germany to our friendly Fabriken Crematorium now or wait here, or stay as you are. Your choice,” says Luther.

“Oh, you’re so cold Luther. What else?”

“Simona will go in the freezer after her treatment is passed on to us. You can go with her. What do you say?”

Elena’s face lightens up. “Your wife will be dead. You and I will be together? We can have a good time.”

“No no no. I have principles. She will be coming back. You go soon, you will then take over when I am gone.”

“Simona will be out by then. We are getting nowhere. You don’t like me because my face looks grotesque after the shower.”

“You look perfect. Will discuss another day. Call the Petrescu family.”

“Is that all Luther?”

“That’s it for today. Tomorrow, I want you to give me a rejuvenation treatment, first thing in the morning. Things will become clearer to you.”

Elena gets up and walks away to her desk and gets on the phone.

LUTHER GETS THE TREATMENT

Inside the Laboratory, Elena sits at her desk and looks at the day's schedule. Luther strips to his waist and climbs on the embalming table. He readies himself for his quick dose of rejuvenation treatment.

"Hook me up as if under anaesthetic. Three syringes on the trolley."

Elena starts the hooking process.

"What are they for?"

"Soon, I will be sixty-nine. I need to continue to focus, stay young-looking and not scare people."

"There is no problem with your face."

"Thank you. I hope I have not mixed the chemicals too strongly."

"Is that's what happened to Simona?"

"Unfortunately, yes. It was my mistake," admits Luther.

Elena looks at the syringes and reads the labels aloud. "Renovatio Dose Mitis; Medium; and Gravis. In that order? How much time in between? Same spot?"

"In that order. Thirty-minutes in between. First two on the left, third on the right."

"Tell me more," says Elena.

"Your husband, Novak Adamescu, when is he due?"

"Another nine years, hopefully five."

"Five is possible with Simona's latest treatment. If I go before, you are in charge of the Laboratory."

"And Simona, does she get the company?" asks Elena.

"Yes. After you, then Novak. As for me, I will have a better sexual drive and prowess, so we can do something then."

"You're joking Luther, not even a mad woman would not wait ten years for a screw."

She places her hands on his genitals.

"Firm. The monitors say all vital functions are okay. Do you want to postpone

these injections?”

“Please, Elena, no time for jokes.”

“Jokes, uh-huh. Okay.”

She grabs him again.

“Here comes the first one.”

“I will make myself a cup of coffee and I will be back.”

She starts giggling.

“Luther, are you sure you want me to come back?”

At the top of his voice, “Yes!”

She sits at her desk sipping the coffee and smiling. She opens the drawer and takes out a book. It is entitled, ‘Necrophilia in the 19th Century.’

Elena came across the book while looking at a collection of death-related subjects in an old bookshelf. The bookshelf itself is hidden from sight in the far corner of the mortuary which is curtained off. It was a book well-worth reading.

She sneaks at chapter here and there as time allows. The book is bookmarked half-way, opens it, continues reading it with a big smile on her face. Could Luther have ever practiced such macabre techniques on any of the corpses? Was there a reason behind the tenderness she displayed on the embalming table on that unfortunate night? She doubted if she would ever get a straight answer. Even then she would never have the courage to ask him. Maybe she could try another way to put some light on the matter.

ELENA – LONELINESS AND FRUSTRATION

Elena is at her desk inside her one-bedroom living quarters. She examines her plan. There are plenty of times written down. Inexpensive but accurate clocks are mounted on each of the four walls.

The phone rings. It makes her jump. It is her mother Denisa who is in her seventies.

“Hello mother, how are you?”

“I’m well. I haven’t heard from you. You’re well? What exactly are you doing? TV, cooking or writing?”

“I have four clocks. They tell the same time and the same story... Time is flying.”

“Come to Bucharest my child, many handsome men around here. Great coffee shops.”

“Mama, I am frustrated. Fifty with a body of a forty-year-old, no man in my life, this is like a prison, I don’t see nobody and I don’t speak to nobody. Only corpses, clean them, dress them, then push them in the freezer. A daily check on the temperature inside and my day is done.”

“I love you darling, make a plan and return to your family.”

“Working on it, mama. Good night.”

She calls Luther. “Luther, sorry it’s late. I am sick.”

“Okay, take care, see later when you feel better. Don’t rush.”

She stares at her notes. They are hard to decipher. She runs a line over some key words. She moves the pen up and down the list, crossing and highlighting words. She crosses off jealousy, puts a question mark on love, cancels wealth, but she circles sex a few times. She keeps underlining the word revenge, looks at the paper and her mind wanders.

She scribbles times taken during the morning preparation.

She writes down; shower 10 minutes, treatment 90, reverse-effect injection 10, makeup 15, then she looks at the times again and continues to fill in the blanks, one underneath each other.

She gets on her computer and searches for the words ‘praying mantis.’ She reads some details and googles in ‘black widow spider.’ A large variety is displayed on the screen. She skips the details and just reads the headings.

She looks at the time. It's past eleven at night, so she sets the alarm for six o'clock in the morning and jumps in bed.

PLANNING FOR D-DAY

Elena gets out of bed and goes straight to the bathroom to brush her teeth. Her eyes constantly scan the time. Her note pad now is on the dressing table and she looks at it as she gets ready for her shower. She comes out and records the time. Then she dries up and goes straight in the cylindrical tank for the rejuvenation treatment. It starts by putting on a facial mask and leaves the tank after an excruciating long ninety minutes and proceeds to an unusual unorthodox treatment. She injects herself with fast-reverse-rejuvenation chemical and takes note of how long it takes to settle down.

Then she walks to the kitchen and prepares a light breakfast consisting of a boiled egg, toast and coffee.

She goes to her desk and goes over the times. She alters, adjusts and generally scribbles all over a sheet of paper and refreshes it by re-writing clean details on a fresh page. Then she goes back in bed for another nap. It's noon when she gets up and finishes the rest of the cold coffee from breakfast time.

She heads to the shower to repeat the whole process again - showering, treatment and reverse-rejuvenation. She goes over the plan meticulously and keeps looking at the times and refining the steps.

Satisfied with the basics, she sets out to write the plan in a disciplined way she will understand without the possibility of misreading any of the times. Her eyes keep moving from the paper to the clock and back. She re-checks the times 8.33, 8.43, 8.58, 9.00, 9.01, 9.05, 9.20, 9.22.

She takes out a fresh sheet of paper and writes – Fast-Reversing Action. Beauty back to Horror in 47 minutes. Then, with a sigh of relief and satisfaction she writes in bold **The Empire Strikes Back**. She changes the word Empire to Vampire. She is happy with that line and taps her forehead three times. Lines like that could land her a job in a glamorous advertising agency in Dusseldorf.

She spends the rest of the day reading, 'Necrophilia in the 19th Century' and then watches TV before she drops off to sleep again. It was busy day, showering, tanking, injecting, planning, writing and sleeping – eventful, repetitive and boring.

D-DAY

It is 6.30 in the morning. Elena gets out of bed. She brushes her teeth, looks in the mirror and straightens herself out with a look of confidence.

She looks at the clock regularly but with apprehension. The time now is 6.53 am. She gets in the shower, finishes showering, walks out and straight in her Treatment Tank at 7.03. Out of the tank at 8.33, fetches the fast-acting Facial-Rejuvenation injection, 'FacieiRenovatioX934.' She injects at 8.33. Puts her makeup at 8.43. She is now ready and heads for the Laboratory at 8.58.

At that time, Luther enters his office. He looks for Elena.

"Elena? Where are you hiding?"

A few seconds before nine, the handle turns. Elena steps in. At exactly nine, the Grandfather clock chimes.

"Elena, how nice to see you. I was worried. Feeling good now?"

In an unusual sexy voice, Elena answers, "Much better and ready to get to work."

"Your perfume smells heavenly today."

"That's the reason it took me a little longer to prepare."

She creeps in from behind Luther. She smells like a rose; her face looks as serene and beautiful as expected. She places her hands on his shoulders and gives Luther a gentle rub and then closer to his neck. Her hands smell of the most beautiful soothing lotion.

She stands behind Luther, with her breasts pushed against the side of his head she whispers in his ear.

"What are you writing... Dear..."

"My usual love letter to Simona."

"Always with that expensive pen?"

"Ah yes, Mont Blanc, a gift from Simona thirty years ago. Unlike my wife, this pen is in perfect shape."

"Then, what are you waiting for Luther?"

"I don't think this is appropriate."

"Perhaps you think I am a praying mantis or a black widow spider, do you?"

“No no. Nothing like that.”

“Then enjoy life Luther. Life is short. Believe me, very short.”

Overtaken by the scent of the woman and by her gentle movements, he stops writing and rests the pen, still open on the desk.

Elena looks at the Grandfather Clock. It is 9.05. Overtaken by this largesse, he succumbs, looks up to her and...

“Simona tells me she has broken the longevity problem so you could be in and out of the freezer in less than five years.”

She undoes the top two buttons on her blouse.

“Surely you don’t want to wait that long before you see what I have for you.”

Luther looks at her, his body nearly paralyzed. His eyelids move increasingly fast, almost twitching.

“Please no, no, not that. I can’t.”

She loosens his belt, then undoes his trousers. He is still in his chair. She is now on him. She looks at him at the same time keeping an eye on the Grandfather clock right by the wall facing her.

“Listen, listen carefully, Luther. Tick... tock, tick... tock. Life is too short. Enjoy it before you hit the freezer.”

“I cannot accept this, Elena. You coerced me, I am pinned down as if in a vice grip. I don’t have any more resistance to offer. I have but to accept and enjoy it.”

“Finally.”

“Luther, we have been in this position for a whole fifteen minutes. The Grandfather tells me it’s almost 9.20. Tick... tock, tick... tock. Soon we reach Crescendo.”

“Almost there, Yes, tick... tock, tick... tock. Keep ticking Elena.”

Exhaustion and satisfaction show on his face. But things change rapidly.

Her eyes bulge out of their sockets and her gaze locks on his face. His eyes are wide open. But her own eyes start to sink slowly in the back of her head leaving two black holes. Her fangs spring out. He tries to move but he is nailed in. He tries to fight but his strength is gone. Her mouth starts moving towards the left side of his neck. Her fangs sink in.

Luther struggles and continues the futile attempt; his arms swing violently at first then they drop to his side. The tusks stay buried in his neck.

His eyes start to dilate, his body loses all its strength and then she kindly and gently closes his eyelids.

She gets up, cleans herself and tries to stop the bleeding from the pen wound in her back.

RISING CONSEQUENCES

To put it mildly, Elena must have taken up Luther's time in a very inappropriate moment. He was in the middle of a most important software update. It was meant to start the corpses' next cycle in the freezer for the next phase. In retrospect, it was bad programming on Luther's side. He should have had a more automated process and one with ample warnings.

Within 18 hours of his death, the corpses stir inside their freezer compartments. They start to come to life. Distinctive ringing from their phones reach Elena's ears. The telephone ringing sounds deactivate the locking mechanism. Elena is terrified watching the whole morgue coming to life. The corpses slide out carefully within 3 minutes of each other.

First out was Zach Golding. He is from New York, dressed like a bank executive, fifty-five, died of a heart attack ten years ago. He looks around and takes a seat in the chair at the end of the row. His preferred date back is some time in 2030.

He is followed by Nikola Petrescu, sixty years old, died of pneumonia followed by a heart attack 12 years ago. He is a grave digger from Bucharest. He sits two chairs up from Zach.

Next one out is Doc Garner from Fort Worth, Texas. He leaps out of a top compartment as if leaping out from a saddle. He died at age 41, gored by a bull in a rodeo mishap. He takes the next vacant seat. He is dressed accordingly; Stetson, a red colored shirt, neckerchief, leathers, and smarting his favored high-heeled boots with spurs and all. And of course, he carries his favorite Winchester pump shotgun. He takes a seat next to Nikola who looks to be the least fashionable up to that point... and beyond.

Doc is followed by Eli Golding, Zach's twin brother. One could not tell them apart. He is in an immaculately tailored blue suit which is a perfect replica of the one his brother is wearing. Eli died of a broken heart six months after Zach had passed. He sits in the vacant chair next to his brother.

Next one to rise is Lazarus Heisenberg, died at the age of thirty-eight following complications from severe sexually-transmitted incurable diseases. He boasted a count of 3750 conquests. The culprit or culprits could not be traced and unfortunately, they are still spreading misery across the fashionable parts of Munich. Lazarus was Germany's best-known playboy and still retained his good looks despite the toll taken by the dreaded disease. He spent most of his money on medication including \$250,000 at the Cryogenics facility. And that was just for the first year.

The next one to spring out has a touch of Belgian royalty. It is 'His Excellency Baron Frederick Gustav Romanoff von Garten,' but preferred to be addressed simply as Baron Frederick von Garten. He looks magnificent in all his pomp and glory. Perfectly manicured hair, moustache and beard like that worn by Britain's King George V. He was thrown off his horse while practicing show jumping in Warendorf, Germany. He died at age forty-five.

And the last one to join the living is Elena's husband himself, Novak Adamescu, died at age 40, in a car accident, resuscitated at fifty-one but looks and feels exactly 40 and without the disfigurements.

The Morbid Seven do things in unison, but in a rather rigid robotic fashion. They are programmed to act as such during the first thirty minutes after resuscitation.

They all get up together, and in weird jerky movements, walk around in different directions and examine the morgue surroundings. They wander around, stop, walk, stop, look at each other as if struggling to make some kind of contact and then come to a complete halt.

Then, as if on cue, they all look at the ceiling, walk back to their seats, sit, cross their legs, check the time on the wall, on their watches, and then on their mobiles, give themselves a nod of approval, stand up, look from left to right, then right to left, and then, still with jerky movements, turn towards the door and make their way out of the building ... in a perfect line.

They never focus on the person next to them and they never utter any words. But Novak stays back.

ELENA AND NOVAK FACE-OFF

He looks at Elena who now sits in Luther's chair. They exchange a gentle smile. But there is a look of puzzlement in Novak's eyes. Elena has now a worried look while Novak still sits motionless.

Elena picks a piece of paper and pretends she is reading from it. Her real intention is to cover her face while she checks if her fangs are out. But she soon heaves a sigh of relief.

She lets the paper drop on the desk and utters, "Boohoo! There you are. You're smiling at last, as you used to. Life could at least be as good as it used to be. I look great. We both look forty."

"My old friend... Luther. Where is he?" asks Novak.

She points in the opposite direction. Novak looks the way she is pointing. She quickly checks her fangs again. She points at the far end of the room which was curtained off. Behind it, there lies Luther's body, which by now is pretty cold but supple enough to be worked upon.

"How did it happen?"

She points out to her neck, then points to Luther's.

In a shocked voice Novak asks, "A vampire bite?"

Novak looks puzzled. She then motions him to follow her and walk towards a locked room.

She inserts the key, looks momentarily at Novak as if warning him of some pending surprise, turns the handle and the door opens.

A burst of shrieking follows to reveal the inside of a dimly-lit room. It's a tiny hole six feet by six feet with just one small window less the window frame, measuring no more than two feet by two feet. Inside, nine vampire bats hang upside down on a washing line. A ridge of excrement three inches in height formed directly below the washing line and extended the length of the line. Novak is taken aback by the sudden shrilling, but more so by the macabre spectacle as if it is a scene from Frankenstein's movie.

She closes the door, looks at Novak and says with some hesitation, "I think Luther was experimenting." Occasionally, two black cats bring in dead mice, which are promptly picked up by Luther and served to the vampire bats as a delicacy.

She closes the door and both return back to Luther's desk.

Novak's demeanour indicates that he will be taking charge very soon; sooner than Elena expected.

"Elena, help me drag him out. Let's lift the body on the embalming table. Fetch the instruments. We'll wash him, dress him, insert the Chip and put him in the freezer and will decide later what the next step might be."

After the cleaning, Elena fetches his shoes, socks and then proceeds to put them on when Novak started to assert his newly-found authority as the new head of the Facility.

"Stop, Stop, Stop. No shoes."

Elena snaps back, "Still full of superstitions. Nancy Sinatra. You find her sexy, huh. Boots are meant for walking. Luther wears shoes, not boots. Idiot."

"Don't ever call me an Idiot. Here, put this tag around his toe. Let's put him in the one I was in. Yes, shut up, I know what you're thinking, it has not even been cleaned out and purified as the procedures demand. Quite honestly, at this stage, I don't care. Okay let's push him in."

War has now officially been declared.

"No nuclear battery for his phone," says Elena.

"We will figure it out later. Get my own file out please."

"There you are, Sir."

Novak runs his eyes quickly on the detail inside and exclaims, "All looks good. I'll make a couple of notes."

He then examines an AI Chip under the microscope.

"I will alter some coding on this old computer. I would like to see if my body gets a better boost. Bring the other six files pronto. I want things to move faster around here. Move it."

"Who the fuck you think you are? Some big shot in Silicon Valley? Just out of a cold box and treating me like shit. Hello darling, it's so nice to see you back after eleven years, you look beautiful and you look ten years younger. Thank you for the compliment. Asshole."

Elena slams the rest of the files - the Goldings, Garner, Petrescu, von Garten and Heisenberg on Luther's desk, more precisely now, Novak's desk.

"Fuck you, I had enough of you already. Prick."

Novak ignores the compliments. He decides to study the files further. Elena walks towards the door. Novak's eyes follow her out as she walks examining the curves and contours on her body, easily visible because of her tight dress.

The door is slammed shut. Elegant, but... he moves his head from one side to the other almost in slow motion. He does not seem impressed, intrigued or interested.

He moves the files around. He opens Zach's file and reads it carefully. Then he puts it on to one side and withdraws in a pensive mood. He stays in this state for about 15 minutes, retrieves it again examines it, this time in further detail. His gentle nodding indicates the content is of interest. Without further ado, he dials Zach.

"Zach, this is Novak. I was the one sitting at the end. I run the Cryogenics Facility now. Looking at your file, it seems you are on track to make big money."

"Hold on, the name on my phone shows otherwise. It shows Luther Zombescu. Where is he? He's the man."

"Don't worry Zach, he is still around. I know jack shit about banking. But I do know a lot about behavioral change. Your behavior is controlled via the AI Chip that's inside you, which now, I am the master of."

"Well put, but what does that mean?"

"It means Zach, that you and I will make heaps of money, fortunes beyond our dreams. And without the Chip inside you or with it turned off, you're a corpse again. A fresh one I might add. I control your destiny. I control if you live or if you die."

Novak terminates the call.

The portrait of Luther on the opposite wall looks down on Novak with a permanent gaze. He feels a shiver down his spine every time his eyes make contact with Luther's. After all, Luther was the pioneer and founder of Eternal Cryogenics. Although Novak was in the same profession at the time, he had never met him in person. Therefore, he does not have Luther's shadow following him, so his conscience is relatively clear. More precisely, Novak does not need to look him in the eyes before he makes any controversial decision.

MORBIDS ON THEIR WAY HOME

Once out of the building, the morbid six pick up their stride and act and move about, like the rest of us.

Doc Garner gets lucky. A taxi was going by, he hails it and asks to be taken to Bucharest Airport.

Nikola Petrescu hails a passing tractor and asks the farmer to drop him at the nearest bus station.

Eli joins his brother Zach. Together, with Baron Frederick von Garten, they get in a car. For a sum of money, a substantial sum judging by the excitement in the female driver's eyes, she takes them to Bucharest Airport. She thought she was going to get lucky and she does indeed.

Lazarus Heisenberg seems stranded until a young girl riding a Harley in a Bandido-looking outfit, goes past and looks curiously at this man from out of town. He waves at her; she does a 360 and Lazarus is in luck. He hitches a ride.

-- Nikola is seen buying a ticket on the bus to take him to Bucharest.

-- Lazarus is next seen in a shanty house with half a dozen Harleys, or their cheap Chinese versions, parked outside the house. He soon gets back in the action.

-- Doc, Eli and Zach are seen exchanging telephone numbers and short notes in the airport cafeteria. Baron Frederick von Garten joins them. He tells them he can hop on to a plane to Brussels at any time. Flights to the continent were frequent. He spends time with them to find out more about the group.

That afternoon, the morbid six less Nikola were on the move out of Romania.

Lazarus Heisenberg sits in a window seat on a flight to Munich. He looks at the pictures of the girls who had surrendered their wares to him on credit.

He looks at one on top and turns it over. On the back, he writes Ivanka (5) and \$5,000. On to the next picture, Natasha (4) \$2,000. On to the next one; he then taps his forehead with the pen and writes Jan? Janka? Junka? He cannot remember the name, but he does remember the number of times; (3) \$900. He is stumped on the last couple of pictures. He jots down (2) \$600, the least attractive - (1) \$200. Total (15).

He looks at the photos and adds up the total amount owing. He writes \$7,700. He puffs his chest, crosses his arms, relaxes back in his seat and closes his eyes wearing a smile of achievement, contentment and satisfaction – in equal proportions. Five

seconds later, he is alert again, looks at the pictures and restarts the adding-up. He crosses the old number and writes the new one - \$8,700. Then, he writes 3750, crosses it, and writes 3765. He throws his arms up in a 'What-the-hell-type' gesture. He pumps his chest out again and giggles.

The stewardess stops by. "Excuse me Sir, we're taking off. Belt on please."

"We are? Really?"

"Yes, take off is in five minutes."

Lazarus now looks seductively at the stewardess, "That would be 3766, would you say, that is correct?"

"No, you're on a seven six seven, not seven six six. It's a Boeing."

He giggles, "Ok, I got my numbers wrong again."

The stewardess smiles politely and continues, "We all do from time to time. Would you care for a drink, sir?"

"Champagne please. Would you like to join me?"

"No thank you. I'm on duty."

"Thank you, ma'am, I found our conversation very encouraging."

"Many people do. Have a good flight, sir."

Lazarus relaxes and starts gently thumping on his chin. He whispers to himself, "Will she, won't she?"

Zach and Eli are on a Delta Flight to New York preparing for departure from Bucharest Airport. It is on the taxiway readying for take-off.

Zach's cell rings. Eli is also on the same call.

"This is Zach, I told you not to call again."

"Have you thought about what I said the other day?"

"You said many things."

"True, the most important, I decide if you live or if you die."

"I remember that clearly, but I don't believe that."

"You better do. And don't think about taking that chip off your ass. It would mean one thing. Instant death. Being so insolent, I have upped my price. Now I

want fifty per cent. Five, Zero.”

“No deal, Novak, I will give you \$2,500,000 for coming out ten years early. That is it. Bye, asshole.”

Zach looks at Eli. “The prick wants us to short the mortgage market. Fuck him.”

Doc Garner walks in a gun store at Jake’s Gun Gallery, in Highland Park Village, Dallas, Texas. He acknowledges the gun shop owner, a burly mustachioed fifty-five-year-old man. His left arm was loaded with tattoos and the Lone Star was emblazoned on his forehead. He looks Doc up and down as he glances at the various gun displays. Doc hands him a list.

“Hey buddy, who you shooting? Heading to Tombstone, Arizona?”

“They tell me you’re the best to turn me into a Wyatt Earp – head-to-toe. I got ten big ones in cash.”

The owner reaches under the bench and gets a picture out and slams it down under Doc’s nose who looks at it and nods.

“That’s him all right. That’s exactly the Wyatt I want. Give me the closest to the real McCoy.”

“Not much change from ten. Stay by the counter. The camera is on you. Your name?”

“They call me Doc. No worries, man. Happy to be back from the dead. It’s been two days now.”

The gun owner takes all the goodies to the counter.

“Okay, you tick ’em off. I’ll hit the till. Every time it rings, you drop a few hundred dollars. Okay Doc, call them, I’ll ring them.”

“Hat, shirt, black vest, badge, black pants, black cravat, black Trench, pocket watch, cowboy belt, holster, belts, boots and spurs.”

“I noticed you’re about size 12, so it’s what we call a one one five. Check the boots out. I’ll get you the guns.”

Doc looks carefully at the boots, then tries them on.

“Perfect fit, boss.”

“Okay, your 12-gauge .45 calibre Buntline Special and one Winchester lever-action shotgun. You got ammo to kill four dozen men. You want a pump too?”

It's On Special."

Doc nods. He looks the guns over, checks them, looks really happy and gives him thumbs up.

"All good."

"You're handsome, like Mr. Russell. You're growing your own stache or you want a replica?"

"Replica and the bill."

"Rounded up, eight five."

"Here's eight big ones and one half. Thanks buddy."

"Go shoot 'em up, cowboy. So long man."

Doc walks out of the shop with his merchandise.

ZACH RE-UNITES WITH MAGDA

Zach hands the fare to the cab driver. Eli is with him. He walks up the steps to the door. His wife Magda is now sixty, she is dressed and looks like the average housewife.

“Magda, darling, I am back.”

“Zach, I’m in shock. Eli, I can’t believe this. Who’s who? That’s you Zach. Your eyes are a shade darker. Come inside, quick. So glad to see you back. Tell me what happened.”

“Accidentally and prematurely resuscitated. That’s all I know.”

Zach turns to Eli.

“Eli, you are without a house. You can stay with us and kick-off your legal practice from here.”

“Delighted.”

“Great! Let me make you a coffee.”

Zach’s phone rings.

“Last time you called me an asshole. My name is still Novak. You need to short the mortgage market. We’ll make a motza. Remember my percentage... Fifty percent. At the moment.”

“Nonsense. I am not in this. An appointment with the colonoscopy professor... and this chip will be out and off my ass in no time flat.”

“Fool. Your nuclear battery phone and your AI Chip keep you alive. You tamper with any of them, you die.”

The phone goes dead. Magda comes with the coffee.

“You’re looking terrible all of a sudden, darling. Did they take the Chip out, what about your special battery phone. You still have them?”

“Yes, one is in my hand now, the other is in my back side. Both need to stay; they keep me alive. Magda, I need you to transfer all the Bank’s Shareholding in my name again. Eli will prepare the legal documents.”

“But of course, darling, I never understood what I had to do. They used to ask me to sign here, sign there, sign on the side... and I just signed accordingly. And I was out like a flash.”

ELI'S PROBLEMS

Eli never had a woman in his life. So, he is determined to do something about it. Living in his brother's house offers certain temptations.

He calls the optometrist who answers.

"Hoffner Opticians. Yes, Mr. Golding, I remember, you called yesterday about contact lenses and got interrupted. I can guarantee that they don't hurt to put them in or to take them off."

"How long would it they take before I can pick them up. I would like to surprise my partner."

"I would say about ten days after your first visit. You would need to explain clearly the color you want because there are no in-betweens."

"Mr. Hoffner, I need contact lenses just slightly, only slightly darker than the color of my eyes."

"I will give you a color chart."

"Mr. Hoffner, a better idea is to get you a close-up picture of somebody I know. Just his eyes. That should do it."

"Not the best, Mr. Golding, as an amateur person taking a photo, it very much depends on the light, time of day, even the subject's disposition, but if that's the best, well. Oh, by the way with regards to price..."

"Price is not a problem. I want to make sure that I get no infections and I can still use my glasses for the legal work I do. That's my profession."

"Rest assured Mr. Golding."

"One important question, not sure how I put it."

"Don't worry, just go ahead and ask."

"How quickly can I take them off once I have been wearing them, say for a couple of hours."

"I never had that question put to me before, but you need to make sure that you don't contaminate them."

"Do I need a lot of practice or would I get an irritation. And how long before I can pick them up?"

"No irritation whatsoever and a couple of days will do."

“Okay, I will drop by in two days and take it from there. My wife is coming, so I better end this call. Bye.”

Magda knocks and comes in with coffee and biscuits.

“Hello Eli, I’ll pour you a cup, I always do this for Zach. Yummy, his favorite biscuits. Hope you like them.”

“Very British. Thank you, Magda. You must get lonely here.”

“Zach devoted his life to the Bank and he never appears to be greedy.”

“Yes, I noticed that. We’re both lucky to be back with the living. This time I would like to find some love but at my age, it’s difficult.”

“But you look young. In my books you look fifty-five. And I bet you could act fifty-five, huh. Many a women would welcome your advances.”

“Possibly yes. Well, identical twins,” says Eli.

“Even I cannot separate you apart. Not even in a close situation I would not be able to tell, except your eyes look a touch lighter.”

“Maybe I can do something about it.”

“Very commendable. Do that Eli.”

Magda, gets up, picks the tray, stops by Eli, looks at him and gives him a kiss on the forehead.

“Oh, Eli, you’re so much like Zach.”

A few days later, Eli walks in Pizzuto Espresso on the corner of West 76th Street and marches straight in the Men’s Bathroom.

He takes out his new contact lenses and puts them on. He looks in the mirror and keeps blinking his eyelids. He puts in one drop in each eye. Suddenly they feel comfortable. He lets out a sigh of relief. He looks in the mirror one more time, adjusts his tie and shirt collar and moves out.

He takes a seat near the entrance. And waits. His latte is getting rather cold. At 11.30, Magda shows up and is greeted by one of the waiters.

“The usual, Mrs. Golding.”

She nods and looks for a seat. Eli calls her.

“Oh Zach, what a surprise. What are you doing here, you’re supposed to be at

work. Let me join you.”

Eli answers promptly, “Too much pressure the last few days. I thought I relax a little and hear your beautiful voice in more pleasant surroundings.”

Magda stares at his eyes.

“Oh, how sweet of you Zach. That’s rather unusual, hearing such beautiful words coming out of your mouth, but thank you. Tell me about your experience in Bucharest.”

“I didn’t have any. I was cold dead,” says Eli.

“That’s true. You haven’t changed one bit, but I meant to ask you. The tattoo you have on your rump, is it still there?”

Eli hesitates for a while. No answer is forthcoming.

“Well, Zach what do you say?”

“You never asked me personal questions like this before. Of course, it’s still there. What else would you like to talk about?”

“Zach never had any tattoos and his eyes were always a shade lighter. Exactly like yours Eli, when you take your lenses off.”

“But Magda...”

“Stop fooling around. You don’t need to go through all this. Follow me and I will give you an induction lesson. Just this once, you understand.”

Eli is absolutely stunned. He leaves a \$50 bill, takes a clean white handkerchief out of his pocket, wipes a few nervous sweat beads off his forehead and follows Magda out of the door like a good sheep.

DOC GARNER REHEARSES WYATT EARP

Doc Garner checks in at the 'DEAD COWBOY MOTEL.' in a small nondescript township in South Dallas. The receptionist takes his credit card.

"Visa is fine, payment accepted, here's your keys."

"Let me read this ma'am. Just checking aloud if you don't mind. Room 114, looks out on the car park, window faces afternoon sun, full-sized wooden easel mirror which I can move around. I want to see my whole persona in it. That's just fine, ma'am."

The receptionist frowns, "You got it. Mr. Garner, you wonder about the name 'Dead Cowboy?'"

"Yes ma'am I do," says Doc Garner.

"All end up dead. That's why I wanted extra security."

Doc walks in the room. The sun was really bright. He positions the mirror in front of the window. He changes into the Wyatt Earp outfit. He puts the television on, inserts a DVD and watches clips from "Tombstone." It is a standoff between Ringo and Doc Holliday. Gun spinning tricks. He tries to replicate the action but he is rather slow. He puts on the moustache, looks in the mirror, gets in the right posture, adjusts his hat for the sun and moves fast to draw.

He tries this routine a few more times. Then he practices the fast loading of ammo and empties the magazines again. And then again and again a few more times.

He picks the shotgun and fires blanks. Then, looking away from the mirror, he picks the pump, turns fast and pulls. It is loaded. He blows the window out. Mirror glass on the inside and window glass on the outside.

Cop cars and sirens fill the surrounding streets. Five minutes later, they show up at the scene of the crime, lights still whirring and sirens still blaring.

The cops, from the nearby South Dallas station get ready to bust in his room.

Officer Hank Jenkins storms out of the car. Shotgun in hand, he looks a replica of Major 'King' Kong played by Slim Pickens in the movie 'Dr. Strangelove,' a master piece by Stanley Kubrick, based on the thriller novel 'Red Alert' (1958) by Peter George (credit Wikipedia)... just a bit of irrelevant relevancy that gives you a better picture of the character of the Dallas Officer.

Back to Officer Jenkins, he charges out of the cop car with shotgun pointing

towards the broken window. He crouches and moves carefully towards the door, shouts out some orders, then looks left and looks right.

“Drop your weapon, come out with your hands up or we’re coming in.”

Doc shouts back, “It was an accident, I ain’t coming out, need to clean up first.”

Officer Jenkins, still with a mouthful of chewing tobacco, shoots out a spit, the missile hits the wall, he straightens himself up, sinks his boot in the door and busts it open.

The cops subdue Doc Garner and take him out.

They slam him against the car, frisk him and bundle him in. All his weapons are confiscated and dumped in the trunk.

Sirens blaze towards Dallas downtime Police Station. Five minutes later he is locked in the cell and being interrogated.

The police officer questions Doc Garner.

“Okay Doc, my name is Jenkins, tell us what happened. Why so many weapons.”

“Practicing for a short movie like ‘Tombstone.’”

“You kidding me, you think you’re Wyatt Earp.”

Doc’s phone rings. It’s an overseas call. He looks at the Officer.

“Take it,” says the Officer.

“Doc Garner here. Who’s that?”

“It’s Novak Adamescu. I am in charge now. You need to come to Bucharest urgently. Remember, the nuclear battery on your phone. You will die if it’s damaged.”

“I am in trouble... in a South Dallas police cell. You told me to practice for the new ‘Tombstone’ movie. I fired. Accident. I blew half the wall out using a Winchester Pump. No injuries. Damage only. You say, I’m... I’m... out of this movie? The Officer? Huh, no, he is okay. Do you want to talk to him. His name is Officer Jenkins.”

He passes the phone to the Officer.

“Officer Jenkins here, Mr. Garner tells us he was practicing and misfired. We did not believe the movie business story. Well, he needs bail if you understand. It’s a funny situation here in Texas.”

“Got your drift. Three thousand.”

“Officer Benton, give us five minutes of privacy will you.”

“Mr. Novic? Novak? I’m no good with foreign names. You make it five?”

“I’ll give you six, but take him now to the airport and book him on the next flight to Bucharest.”

“How you spell that? How about the Money.”

“You go to the Bank of America. Claim it. It’s under your name. Airport, now, urgent. Garner will spell Bucharest for you.”

The Officer looks at Doc Garner.

“Where the fuck is Bucharest, Doc? Got to get you to Dallas International on the double and then we get you a ticket to wherever this place is. Here, this SMS coming in for you. Stay in Hotel Transyl... fucking foreign words, whatever, for 3 days. Let’s move.”

Still chewing ‘dipping tobacco’ in a definite mechanical crushing rhythm with drippings showing at the right corner of his mouth, he calls Officer Benton, “Officer Benton, give me a police escort to Dallas International, you got five minutes.”

Doc gets bundled in the back with another burly Dallas cop. Officer Jenkins rolls the window down and fires a spit missing an old pedestrian by an inch. “Goddam it lady, move faster.”

He turns to Doc, “Better make sure that son of a bitch from Book, Backrust, whatever the fucking name is, sends that fucking money. I hope he doesn’t think I’m some dumb ass from Texas. If not, you may have to shoot him when you get there, otherwise you get it yourself when you surface back in Texas.”

“Trust me, Officer,” says Doc.

NOVAK RUNS THE PHONES HOT

Novak Adamescu works the phone.

“Hello, Nikola.”

“I told you; I don’t like to come back. Rahat. La Draku... Means Shit. Fuck off.”

“We have a secure job for you. Do not try to get that chip out of your ass because you die. You refuse to show up and I turn the chip off. You also die. Your choice. Maybe you should start digging your own grave. Asshole.”

Novak dials the next number.

Von Garten answers the phone. “Can I help you? This is His Excellency Baron Frederick Gustav Romanoff von Garten. It’s a long name.”

“I can see that. This is Novak Adamescu - in charge of the Bucharest Laboratory. We need you here urgently. Your name may be long, but your life is not.”

“Morbid place. Sorry, not coming. I don’t care about the Chip. I am having a great time with my young man Amadeus. So, Verpiss Dich.”

“I don’t understand, Baron.”

“You ignorant piece of shit, in German it means, ‘Fuck off.’”

Novak looks at his note pad and crosses out von Garten’s name. He brings up von Garten’s file on the computer screen and enters the Baron’s password. Then he reads the AI Chip coding instructions. He then proceeds to adjust them; End of Life Date: Enters ‘31 January 2021’; Deterioration in weeks from today: Enters ‘2’; Expiration Date of AI Chip: Enters ‘Immediate’; Life Extension: Enters ‘Nil.’ He sends a text message to von Garten.

Frederick, you have just started to die - unless you come to Bucharest. Your best friend – Novak.

Novak calls the Golding twins.

“This is Zach, Novak you are about to siphon five hundred million after I talk to my boys. No more. And I am not moving. I have an appointment with the endoscopy professor to get the AI Chip out of my ass. And I am done.”

“Your AI Chip keeps you alive. It needs immediate maintenance. Without it, you die. Eli too. Check with von Garten now. See how he feels. He refused, two days ago.”

YOU NEED TO 'SHORT THE MARKET'

Twenty Bank executives gather in the boardroom at Golding Securities, in Wall Street, New York. On a large screen, with equally large letters, 'Golding Securities - The Next Decade.'

Simon Weiner is the CEO. He is fifty-five years old, slightly obese, bald, but impeccably dressed in banker's attire. He points to the screen.

The Golding twins make their sudden entrance. Unexpected, unannounced and seemingly, unprepared. They stand next to each other. They are impossible to tell one from the other.

"Some of you know me, some of you don't. My name is Golding, and I am back. Thank you, please remain seated."

He looks at his brother. "The document please."

From a Golding to another Golding to Simon. "Simon, read this. It's urgent."

Simon looks at both of them. He tries to figure out who is who.

"But of course, Mr. Golding. You're Zach?"

Zach taps his chest to identify himself from Eli.

Simon addresses the gathering, "Ladies and gentlemen, there has been an Executive leadership change. Zach is back, he is the new CEO. As of now, I am the Chief Operating Officer. The Legal papers are in order."

"Thank you, Simon, I will be brief, fast and to the point. Time is not on our side. Eli and I have been gone and back. Extra-terrestrial journey, literally. We still don't know if we have been up there, down there, East or West. Scary but an eye-opener. We're back. You do exactly what I say."

He points to the sky. The gathering looks up at the ceiling.

"You cannot see them, you fools, we certainly couldn't. If we don't follow their instructions, you are doomed, your kids are doomed, your families will perish. In short, we are all fucked. You go first before we do. The ETs have changed our personalities - in a mild way."

The executives look at one another with disbelief not knowing what to believe or treat as a joke.

Zach continues, "My instructions to you come from above."

Simon poses a question, “Zach, what does this all mean?”

“Simon, it means, speak when you are spoken to. We have to make a motza in the securities and mortgage market. My instructions from above are skimpy. I don’t even understand them myself. Eli, the DVDs.”

Eli places a stack of DVDs on the table. Zach picks one up and flashes it back and forth for everybody to see. It’s ‘The Long Short’ movie.

“In my hand I have ‘The Long Short.’ We need to short the mortgage market, buy short and sell long. Your bonuses will skyrocket. The ETs expect a large cut, we are all under their radar. So, get it right.”

Then Eli stands up and flashes a couple of DVDs himself. ‘Wall Street.’

Eli continues, “For those in Stocks, Shares, Pension Funds, watch ‘Wall Street.’ In Gekko’s words, ‘Greed is Good.’”

“How... How... do we...”, asks Simon Weiner.

“I will spare you the agony. I don’t understand and I don’t have a fucking clue. I have been away for a decade. You should, otherwise you will be sucked up and will join a few other losers up there, somewhere.”

The directors and members in the gathering are terrorized.

“Watch these DVDs, once, twice, three times, ten times. We need to net a billion dollars. We have 3 weeks to do this. Simon, dish them out. Go to work. Have a great day.”

Eli and Zach bow and walk out. The meeting ends in an uproar.

ELENA'S REVENGE IS ON THE HORIZON

It is early in the morning and Elena is upset to put it mildly.

She gets out of bed and checks the time. It is 6.30. She brushes her teeth and looks in the mirror. She straightens herself out and feels extremely confident.

She checks the time regularly. The time now is 6.53 am. She gets in the shower, finishes showering, walks out and straight into her Treatment Tank at 7.03. Out of the tank at 8.33, fetches the fast-acting Facial-Rejuvenation injection 'FacieiRenovatioX934'. She injects at 8.33. Puts her makeup at 8.43. She is now ready and heads for the Laboratory at 8.58.

At that time, Novak enters his office. He looks for Elena.

"Elena? Where are you hiding?"

A few seconds before nine, the door handle turns. Elena steps in. At that exact time, the Grandfather clock chimes Nine.

"We have a busy day ahead of us. All the zombies will be coming back."

In an unusual sexy voice, Elena whispers, "I am ready to go to work. They are not expected here till noon, so there is plenty of time to clean up old cobwebs."

"Your perfume smells heavenly today."

"That's the reason it took me a little longer."

She creeps in from behind Novak. She smells like a rose; her face is as serene and beautiful as expected. Her hands smell of the most beautiful soothing lotion. She places them on his shoulders and gives him a gentle rub; and then some more around his neck.

Standing behind Novak, with her breasts pushed against the side of his head she whispers softly in his ear.

"My darling, it's been eleven years to the day since you made love to me. It was on the day of the accident."

"That long? True, it happened just before we were covered in blood. It's less fun when you're dead."

"Precisely, so what are you waiting for? You think I am a praying mantis or a black widow spider?"

"No, no. Nothing like that."

“Then enjoy life, Novak. Life is short. Believe me, very short.”

“Let’s just finish the morning’s work.”

“The time for work starts now. Listen carefully to the clock behind you. Tick... tock, tick... tock.”

It is 9.05. He is overtaken by Elena’s scent and by her gentle movements; he succumbs to her charm, looks up to her and...

“Like the old days, Elena.”

Novak looks at her, his body is virtually paralyzed. His eyelids move increasingly fast, almost twitching.

She loosens his belt, then undoes his trousers. He is still in his chair. She is now on him. She looks at him at the same time keeping an eye on the Grandfather clock.

“Listen, listen carefully, Novak. Tick... tock, tick... tock. Life is too short. Enjoy it before you hit the freezer.”

“I am and I will enjoy it, all the way.”

“Ah, you little brat, you love the Sinatras don’t you. That’s Frank Sinatra. Novak, are you as good as Frankie?”

“Better.”

“Prove it then.”

“Please Elena, give me a break,” says Novak.

“We have been in this position for a whole fifteen minutes. The Grandfather tells me it’s almost 9.20. Tick... tock, tick... tock. Soon we reach Crescendo.”

“Elena, almost there, Yes, tick... tock, tick... tock. Keep ticking on, Elena.”

Exhaustion and satisfaction show on his face. But things change rapidly.

Her eyes bulge out of their sockets and her gaze locks on his face. His eyes are wide open. But her own eyes start to sink slowly in the back of her head leaving two black holes. Her fangs spring out. He tries to move but he is nailed in. He tries to fight but his strength is gone. Her mouth starts moving towards the left side of his neck. Her fangs sink in.

Novak struggles and continues the futile attempt; his arms swing violently at first, then they drop to his side. The tusks stay buried in his neck.

His eyes start to dilate, his body loses all its strength and then she kindly and gently closes his eyelids.

“Dying gently in my arms. How sweet. Remember darling, I love you.”

Elena gets up, cleans herself and drags Novak’s body behind the curtains. She calls the Hotel.

ELENA PUTS ON A SHOW

“This is Elena Adamescu from Eternal Cryogenics. Drive my guests to my address in your best limousine. Immediately.”

It is noon. First to enter was Zach. He almost collapses as soon as he sees Elena’s face. He is followed by Eli who slumps on the floor with fright. Lazarus follows Eli and crashes to the floor on top of him. Then Doc Garner. He starts to vomit. Finally, Nikola. He carries Baron Frederick and slumps him on a chair. Then he helps the rest and lifts them off the floor.

“These Westerns, no balls. I splash some water on their faces Mrs. ...”

“Adamescu. Elena Adamescu. I am in control now. Novak threatened you. He is a bad man and paid the price. He is behind those curtains, dead.”

Lazarus looks scared, points to the face and asks timidly, “What happened... Mrs. Adam... escu?”

With a mischievous smile, Elena replies, “Lazarus, save your energy for later. Believe me, you will be needing it.”

“Yes Mrs. Adamescu.”

“To prove that I am a good woman, but also happen to be a very horny one, I will switch Baron Frederick’s AI Chip to ‘ON’ right now. Novak had switched it off.”

Hands on the keyboard and with just a few strokes completed she utters, “Watch the Baron’s lifeless body come to life again. Five seconds and counting.”

“How did you do that?” asks Lazarus.

“Are you dumb, I just told you. Your brains must be in your balls. Speak when spoken to. Dimwit. You all will live if you do exactly what I say. Otherwise, I will turn all of you into Zombies.”

“Mrs. Adamescu, I need to take a piss,” says Doc Garner.

“Cowboy, hold on to it. Nikola, this \$20,000 is for your family. Pick Novak’s body, take him out and drop him in the first hole you find, finish the job nicely, then return to your family. Don’t spend it before you get home. Mouth shut. Move.”

“Yes, Mrs. Adamescu.”

Nikola drags the body to the door, he turns back in a rush and grabs his money, and then out of the door dragging the body behind him.

“The rest of you stay for the show. Learn and tell me what you think of it afterwards. Like a Google review. Ha. Baron, you’re feeling better?”

Baron Frederick nods.

“Better be, otherwise you will be missing the finale of a potential chart-busting movie.”

The Baron hiccups and covers his mouth.

“Now, I want to reassure myself I am still worthy of attention even with my grotesque face. My body will do the talking. One of you will do the walking... to this chair that I am sitting on. Do you understand what I mean or do I have to be crude, I mean explicit?”

The Goldings nod.

“Zach, you indicate you understand? Are you volunteering? Your face went white. It means a ‘NO.’ Weak ass. Eli, what about you? I see, Eli you’re turning whiter than white. Cowboy, get me some water.”

Doc Garner, gets up with hesitation, somehow, he walks sideways and fills her glass.

“You wet your pants! Piss pants. I cannot believe this. You will be shot dead in Texas. Let’s see, the Baron will not be offered the opportunity, he is out.”

She takes a sip of water while she mulls her next move.

“That leaves me with just one choice. Dick brains, aka Lazarus Heisenberg, the European stud. Their fate is in your hands now, Lazarus. Your reward is this little stash here. Soon you’ll be breaking bad. She lets out a ‘Dracula-like’ laugh. You don’t want them to die, and you with them?”

Stammering and shaking, Lazarus gets up.

“But, but... I... I want to say, this is seven six six, not the Boeing again. And not 3767. Getting my numbers wrong again. God help me.”

“Over here, do your number, start counting before I get angry, belt off, pants down, sit, arms out.”

Lazarus is a well-trained stallion and he does his thing.

“I’m ready. Can I keep my eyes closed Mrs. Adamescu?”

“You close them, you die on the job. Keep them open and you will see my fangs.

You will feel them as they sink in your neck opening holes even bigger than my eye sockets. But you will survive. However, if your engine cuts off prematurely, you will die.”

“No chance of that, I am really enjoying this, Mrs. Adamescu, and my eyes are open, and will stay open, till you turn your... engine off.”

She leans over and kisses him.

“That’s my boy.”

The other four morbids watch; they have no choice.

“Are you guys keeping an eye on this finale. Remember, I can see you from the back of my head too.”

Doc Garner helps the Baron to lift his hand. They answer in unison.

“Yes, Mrs. Adamescu.”

“Lazarus, we have been in this position for a whole fifteen minutes. The Grandfather tells me it’s almost twenty past twelve. Tick... tock, tick... tock. Soon we reach Crescendo.”

Lazarus joins the conversation, “Almost there, yes, tick... tock, tick... tock. How many more... tick tocks?”

“Not sure, lover boy. Cowboy, can you hear those tick tocks?”

“Yes ma’am, I can.”

“Cowboy, can you get a clear shot on that grandfather?”

“Sure can, ma’am.”

“Shoot the motherfucker. Now!”

“Bang bang bang.”

“Shit I am getting good at this. Grandfather is dead, ma’am.”

“Good job, cowboy. You did a really good job. You ran out of ammo I suppose. Now Lazarus, you wanna go in the freezer again. Shit, the son of a bitch fell asleep.”

Lazarus’ head slumps to one side.

“Okay boys, curtains down.”

Elena now stands up, straightens herself, brushes her hair back and looks at her audience, “Who gives me 10 out of ten. Cowboy, the Baron looks as if he needs some help. That’s better now. Let’s see, one, two, three, four, even Lazarus still has his hand up, but obviously struggling a little. A perfect hand, five.”

“And the final count is... six.”

They all look puzzled. How can such a simple addition that one can count on the fingers of one’s hand, go wrong? She may be a scientist but she’s no mathematician.

“You empty-heads, you still haven’t figured it out. I counted myself in. HA HA HA HA.”

That was a ‘Dracula-type’ laugh.

“Some of you help this man out of my chair, pull his trousers up and get your asses out of here. Walk out in unison and very slowly. The last one out, closes the door.”

Yet, another ‘Dracula-type’ laugh.

First out is Doc dragging Lazarus still holding on to his pants before he loses them completely. The Baron is dragged out.

Eli is next followed by Zach. The twins move in unison. They hail an approaching taxi and they’re off. The other three look in amazement.

Another cab stops by. He flashes a sign in Romanian, ‘DOAR DOI’. ‘TWO ONLY.’ They drop the Baron by the wayside and run towards the cab, Doc is in first, then Lazarus. The cab door slams shut. One of the trousers’ legs hangs out of the car and flutters in the wind as the cab speeds away.

Baron Frederick just cannot believe his eyes. He lays spent on the ground waving back at them in anger and disbelief.

TIME TO RISE AGAIN ... OR WAKE UP

Simona is ready to go to bed. She looks at Luther. He starts stirring after laying almost motionless the whole day. She nudges him with her stick. He wakes up from his dream.

“Simona, what’s? What’s happening?”

“You have been asleep for a whole day. And talking nonsense.”

BACK IN THE MORTUARY

He walks in at his usual time of two minutes before nine.

“Good morning, Elena, nice to see you again. You look refreshed.”

“Luther, I am so glad to see you back. I haven’t seen you for almost two days. What’s the first job for today?”

“Well, cleaning up the Sam van Shorn corpse must be first-off the list. My nose tells me he is starting to smell a bit. Perhaps, a dab of perfume.”

“Different strengths Luther. Parfum, Toilette or Cologne?”

“You’re the expert on that Elena.”

“Some parfum to try yourself first, Luther?”

Luther stiffens. “Oh no, not that again, Elena!”

THE END