

"THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS"

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. OLD PRISON GRAVEYARD. NIGHT.

Old Headstones appear next to a massive medieval construction, once used as a fort. It has rusty metal bars covering small windows, watchtowers and a huge wooden door as an entrance. Some of the headstones have dried up flowers left from visitors; others have nothing but moss lying beside them.

A freshly made up grave appears with a new headstone: Maximus Lafayette, born 1850, died 1905. The grave has a bell next to it with a metal string attached to it that goes from the bell into the ground.

After a moment of silence, the bell begins to rattle. The rattling increases as the seconds go by.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GRAVEDIGGER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

A dog, chained to a post hears the faint sound of the bell and begins barking. Through the window of the small house, the shadow of a man appears with a candle light. He opens the door abruptly.

GRAVEDIGGER

What's the matter boy?

The Gravedigger looks at the dog and then hears the bell sound. He rapidly picks up a shovel resting next to the door and releases his dog.

GRAVEDIGGER

Come on boy, take me to him.

The gravedigger runs with haste after his dog towards the grave. He sees the rattling bell and quickly buries his shovel into the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL, DAY.

A loud tapping is heard within the confines of the prison cell. Maximus Lafayette, one of the prison's inmates, taps his razor blade on the corner of the metallic sink. It is a small cell with an even smaller window. There are marks on the wall

counting the days he has been there. They seem to run endlessly throughout the walls and floor of the cell.

He opens the tap, making the rusty pipes rumble and eco behind the wall. Little by little a weak stream of murky water comes out of the faucet.

He puts his hand under the tap and splashes water on his face. He looks at his own reflection in the small mirror of the cell. His teeth are yellow, his hair is grey and his body is tired. He then proceeds to place the razor underneath his jaw line to shave.

Maximus notices his cellmate, Prospero Dubois, on the reflection of the mirror. He is sitting in his cot on the other side of the cell. He is a tall, slender, man who still has the sparkle of hope in his eyes. Prospero is holding his breath and counting the seconds with his fingers.

His face begins turning red and the veins from his neck inflame to the brink of popping. He finally opens his mouth and inhales a big gulp of air, coughing loudly.

PROSPERO
Damn it!

MAXIMUS
(Irritated) How long are you going to keep doing that?

PROSPERO
Until I'm able to hold it.
According to mi calculations,
once the air runs out, I have
five minutes until I lose
consciousness.

MAXIMUS
(sarcastically) GOOD LUCK

PROSPERO
You don't think I can do it.

MAXIMUS
There's a reason why we have lungs.
If god wanted us to stop breathing,
we would be fish.

PROSPERO
It's been done before.

MAXIMUS

A minute is a very long time
when you're six feet underground.

PROSPERO

Whispering) SHHHH!!! The guards will
hear you. You might not care whether
you live or die, but I do. So shut your
mouth!

MAXIMUS

(Whispering and Mocking) Fine!

Maximus disregards the conversation and continues to shave
There is an awkward silence. He places the blade under his
Adam's apple.

PROSPERO

Careful now. What will I tell
the guards if you slice your throat.

MAXIMUS

Well shut up then and let me
concentrate.

PROSPERO

I'm just saying it because
I know you've thought about it.

MAXIMUS

Of course I've thought about it.
The odd thing would be not to
think about it after all this time.

Maximus taps his blade on the edge of the sink to get rid of
the hairs.

PROSPERO

I've never thought about it.

MAXIMUS

You're lying

PROSPERO

No I'm not. And let me tell you why.
From the first day they Locked me here
I've had the clear purpose of escaping.
And the key is in this book.

Prospero takes out a book from underneath his cot. It is a copy from "The Premature Burial" by Edgar Allan Poe.

PROSPERO (Continued)

Listen to this: "The boundaries which divide Life from Death are at best shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends, and where the other begins?" All we need to escape from this place is right here in this book.

MAXIMUS

How long have we known each other?

PROSPERO

35 years, seven months and four days.

MAXIMUS

And for 35 years, seven months and four days you've been reading that god damn book without doing anything about it.

PROSPERO

You know damn well why I haven't escaped. I need you to help me.

MAXIMUS

People like us don't escape.

PROSPERO

We do when there is no option left.

MAXIMUS

The world changes a lot in 40 years. I wouldn't know what to do out there.

PROSPERO

You can do whatever you want. Go to the beach, Taste the flavor of coffee again. See your daughter for Christ sake!

MAXIMUS

It's too late for that, stop insisting.

PROSPERO

I won't let you give up.

MAXIMUS

I'm not giving up, I'm just accepting my situation.

PROSPERO

Aren't you scared?

By this point Prospero has gotten out of his bunk bed and is standing behind Maximus's, looking at his eyes through the mirror's reflection and visibly altered.

MAXIMUS

I'm terrified, but there is nothing we can do.

Maximus resumes shaving, Prospero pounces on Maximus, causing the blade to make a deep cut in the right cheek and breaking the mirror in several places.

PROSPERO

Come with me you stubborn old fool!

Prospero shouts as he grabs Maximus's neck. His cold hands squeeze Maximus's neck, cutting off his breath to the point of nearly breaking his windpipe.

Maximus grabs the blade and slices Prospero's left hand.

Prospero shouts in pain, and immediately let's go of Maximus. By pure reflex, Maximus sends his head back and hits Prospero in the nose.

The impact makes Prospero's eyes watery as if a dam gate had opened, he takes his bloody hands to his face and falls to the ground.

MAXIMUS

You and I both know that you are not going anywhere, so cut the crap!

Maximus inhales sharply and coughs, trying to place up some lost air into his crushed neck. He senses that he is about to faint, so he crumbles down next to his partner on the floor, while still coughing.

MAXIMUS (CONTINUED)

Are you alright?

PROSPERO

I think he broke my nose.

MAXIMUS

If that were true you wouldn't be able to talk from the pain. You'll

be fine. Your Hand though is
definitely in bad shape. (Continued)

PROSPERO

How is your neck?

MAXIMUS

At least I know now what
it'll feel like when they
hang me.

Silence invades the cell, interrupted only by the panting of
the two wounded men.

PROSPERO

If you repent maybe they'll let
you live.

MAXIMUS

Never.

PROSPERO

What do you have to lose?

MAXIMUS

I refuse to repent for something I
did to save my daughter's life.
Besides, things do not work that way.

PROSPERO

I don't want you to die.

MAXIMUS

Neither do I. But at least my
daughter is alive. I will exist
now through her memories I suppose.

Maximus picks up one of the pieces of the mirror that fell in
the fight and raises it to his face see the cut of the cheek.
The blood, which has mixed with his sweat and murky water of
the sink, makes a defined path from his face to the tip of
his jaw.

He does not try to cover the wound or get up to the sink to
dilute the blood with the water. He simply lets the red
mixture drop onto his white shirt. He stare at his reflection.

He turns the mirror and suddenly realizes that Prospero is no
longer at his side.

He raises his gaze to the cell and sees that there is nothing in the cell except one cot, Edgar Allan Poe's book, the sink, and a broken mirror that he is holding in his hand.

Maximus's face gets distorted into a deep and profound cry. He hugs the book and let his tears fall to the concrete.

He continues to drain his sadness and faith loss with each tear. After a moment, in an act of desperation, he resorts to the only friend he has left, himself.

He stares down at the broken mirror beside him.

Inside the mirror is Prospero, looking at him from inside the reflection with a smile and a copy of "*The premature burial*". While the last tears fall silently, Prospero consoles the old hopeless man, reading him a chapter from the book. He then points at the window and urges Maximus to go to the window.

Maximus gets up and walks towards the window, it is dusk. He soaks in the warmth of the sun. He then looks at the graveyard and the gravedigger in the distance. He notices the bells attached to the gravestones and realizes what needs to be done.

He looks inside the mirror at his friend Prospero, him and inhales a big gulp of air and stabs himself in the gut, letting out a big scream.

Running footsteps are heard in the background as the guards open the door to his cell.

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD PRISON GRAVEYARD, DAWN.

The gravedigger, almost out of breath, has just finished digging out the last of the dirt from the grave whose bell was rattling. He pulls out a body from the unburied grave, cuts the cloth that raps it and checks for any sort of life response. It is Maximus. His eyes are closed and his body does not flinch. He shakes the unmoving corps.

The gravedigger cuts the bell chord and sits next to the body Defeated. After a long moment he gets up.

GRAVEDIGGER

Stay here boy, I gotta go tell the warden.

As the gravedigger walks away from graveyard, the dog continues to stare at the body. The body lays there motionless.

There is a long moment of silence. After the silence, the dog barks. Suddenly, Maximus's eyes open wide, his bloody flinches and he draws breath.

CUT to BLACK.

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