

Devil's Menagerie
an original screenplay by
Joe Keller

Registered WGA-W 1500429
Joe Keller
10530 Alvarado Way
Charlotte, NC 28277
(336) 608-1220
Joe@GroundedPictures.com

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE UP: ALISTAIRE GREENE (37). Appearance untended: several days' stubble, eyes weary with insomnia. An errant hair is moved from his forehead.

MADELEINE

Come to bed.

MADELEINE GREENE (28) stands behind Alistaire as he pores over an open book and drawings at a desk. Light glows from an oil lamp.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

You've crossed lots for them,
Alistaire. There's nothing more you
can do.

Alistaire shrugs off Madeleine's touch. She shrinks back and pads away across the hardwood. Alistaire considers calling after her then returns to his work. A KNOCK at the door. He hurries to his feet, closing the book.

PORTER (V.O.)

The butcherin' o' Stride and Eddows.
That were the turnin' point for
'spector Alistaire Greene.

PUSH IN: A book on the occult surrounded by police reports, crime scene sketches, and daguerreotypes of murdered women.

EXT. DUTFIELD'S YARD/ALLEY - DAWN

A grimy 19th century cityscape. Crimson sunrise smears a canvas of surrendering night. Society's malcontents crowd the gaslit alley entrance: prostitutes, beggars, thieves and drunks. This is the devil's menagerie.

SUPER: DUTFIELD'S YARD, LONDON - 1888

CLOSE ON CORPSE: A DEAD PROSTITUTE, cataract eyes staring. Coagulating blood glistens along an incision on the left side of her neck. Her abdomen is a mess of clotted blood and entrails.

A COACH pulls up. ALISTAIRE GREENE (37) climbs out. Hastens a path through the human castaways. He flashes a badge. CONSTABLES let him pass.

PORTER (V.O.)

I know he was gettin' pressure from
central office.

(MORE)

PORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 After all, he was touted the blue
 bottle what was gonna rid White Chapel
 of its little problem.

PORTER DUNHAM (45) greets him, overcoat swelling at his
 obesity. He speaks as though out of breath.

PORTER (CONT'D)
 'spector.

Alistaire kneels down beside the body. Removes his hat in
 reverence.

PORTER (CONT'D)
 Rowed up Salt River, savage as a
 meat axe.

ALISTAIRE
 Witnesses?

PORTER
 The usual. Some sayin' she were with
 a fair skin. Others dark. Some a
 three piece. Others some shabby
 bugger.
 (beat)
 Bloody fuck all is what we got,
 'spector. Bloody fuck all.

FLASH. Alistaire turns to see a photographer daguerreotyping
 the scene. He balls his fist and steps toward the
 photographer. Porter grabs his arm.

PORTER (CONT'D)
 'Spector.

PORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 He took it personal. He believed
 what the press men wrote 'bout how
 we were all playin' the fool to ol'
 Leather Apron. How we were all fallin'
 short on our social contract with
 the people.

Alistaire pulls against Porter's grip.

PORTER (CONT'D)
 Greene!

Alistaire turns to Porter. His eyes set upon Porter. Tension
 replaced by something else...Resolve.

Alistaire dons his hat and moves off.

ALISTAIRE

See that the body is delivered to
the morgue.

PORTER

Where you goin'?

ALISTAIRE

To figure an end to this.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alistaire crosses the room, careful not to wake Madeleine's sleeping form. She cradles the small of her abdomen while she sleeps.

PORTER (V.O.)

'Spector Greene crossed a line that
night. Like the naive child what
sets 'is house ablaze whilst lightin'
a candle, Greene condemned himself
to the conflagrations o' Hell...

He puts on his spectacles, picks up the occult book and studies it briefly...then closes the book with newfound resolve.

PORTER (CONT'D)

...And I'm ashamed to say I did
nothin' but watch 'im burn.

INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

Fly infested. The female cadaver, now draped in sheet, lies upon a crude autopsy table. Alistaire unpacks a black medical bag at the foot of the corpse: candles, chalk, the book on the occult. Porter's eyes widen at sight of the paraphernalia.

PORTER

I'll 'ave no part of it, 'spector.
It's witchery, simple.

Alistaire follows the book's instruction, chalking a large pentagram on the floor.

ALISTAIRE

Steady yourself, Porter. Just because
we don't understand it doesn't mean
it's something to be afraid of.

PORTER

People 'ave hung for the practice,
mate. That should be enough.

ALISTAIRE

People also once believed comets to
be harbingers of death and heralds
of war. Unfounded superstition fueled
by fear of the unknown.

Alistaire finishes the pentagram and positions the candles
on each of the points.

ALISTAIRE (CONT'D)

In 1759 Halley predicted the return
of the great comet of 1652. A pattern
emerged...

Alistaire returns the chalk to the bag.

ALISTAIRE (CONT'D)

Scientific truth convinced the fearing
public that comets, like other
celestial bodies, were a knowable
natural phenomenon.

Porter thumbs through the open book. Various symbols of
witchcraft and diagrams adorn the pages.

PORTER

But this ain't science, 'spector.
It's magic. Magic o' the black
variety.

(gestures with book)

How'd you come by this anyway?

ALISTAIRE

Part of my investigation. I thought
the murders might be ritualistic.

PORTER

Have you read this? Says you have to
be willin' to sacrifice your own
blood for the spell to work.

Alistaire rolls up his sleeve.

ALISTAIRE

That was the bit that cinched it,
Porter. The symmetry of the thing...

Alistaire picks up a knife.

ALISTAIRE (CONT'D)

Sacrificing ourselves, our blood, is
something we do everyday. Isn't it?
We wager our lives to uphold the
law.

(MORE)

ALISTAIRE (CONT'D)

(beat)
Where's the black in any magic used
for good?

Alistaire nods at the floor. Porter's foot is inside the pentagram.

ALISTAIRE (CONT'D)

Step back.

Porter obliges, stepping back into the shadows. Alistaire closes his eyes, blade poised above his forearm.

ALISTAIRE (CONT'D)

(sotto)
Ego sum unus per universum. Ego sum
unus per universum.

Alistaire makes an incision on his arm. Porter cringes.

PORTER

(sotto)
Not like this.

Alistaire kneels down beside the cadaver, milking his blood into a small silver cup. He pores the contents of a small vial into the cup and drinks it down. He suddenly doubles.

Porter moves to assist him.

PORTER (CONT'D)

Greene!

Alistaire holds up his hand, staying Porter's approach, head bowed.

ALISTAIRE

Stay back. Stay Back!

Alistaire's eyes dilate. He looks down at the pentagram.

CHANGING SPACE

Transparent waves of the pentagram pattern rise from the floor, ascending around Alistaire. Gravity reverses within the pentagram. Alistaire's hair dances on end as though he were being held upside down in water. All sound is deadened save for the sound of each ascending pentagram pattern accompanied by the sound of a mechanical gear clacking into place.

Alistaire's gaze shifts to Porter. Porter reaches out for him in slow motion.

NORMAL SPACE

Normal motion. No ascending patterns. No reverse gravity.
Alistaire still sits doubled over.

PORTER

Greene. You alright?

CHANGING SPACE

Alistaire watches as he ascends from his own body, caught up in the ascending rings. He hears Porter's voice in slow motion.

PORTER (CONT'D)

(slow motion)

GREEEEEEEEENE....

Porter slows until he freezes mid-step. Alistaire looks up. He ascends into a circle of light.

NON-CORPOREAL SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Alistaire stands in complete darkness save for the subtly dimming luminance of a round portal at his feet: the same pentagram pattern. He steps out of the portal. Hears whimpering.

Alistaire turns to see Eddows laying in the blackness, crying. She suddenly stops, smelling something. She turns to Alistaire.

EDDOWS

Who are you?

ALISTAIRE

Inspector Alistaire Greene. I'm the one...I'm investigating your murder.

(beat)

You're dead, you know. I'm very sorry.

EDDOWS

You carry the stink of the living.

Eddows crawls toward Alistaire across the floor.

ALISTAIRE

I need to know more about what happened. You're murderer. How it happened. If you knew him.

Eddows grins as she slides up Alistaire's leg, caressing him with sexual overtones. She flashes a seductive and sinister grin.

EDDOWS

Aye. I knew him. As did Ms. Stride here...

STRIDE emerges from the darkness, also sliding about Alistaire in seductive movements. Each inhales his scent deeply as if in ecstasy. They begin unbuttoning his shirt.

ALISTAIRE

Who was he? Who...

Alistaire closes his eyes, succumbing to Eddows' kiss. She buries her face into his neck, caressing his body. Stride kisses Alistaire. Alistaire kisses her back.

Eddows begins sucking on the incision on Alistaire's arm. Blue arteries branch up his arm. His face winces in pain. He pushes her off. Steps back, gripping his bleeding arm.

ALISTAIRE (CONT'D)

Stop! What are you doing?

EDDOWS

Just a taste, Inspector. All we want is a taste.

STRIDE

You're at our mercy, Inspector. You have no power here.

Stride approaches. Alistaire takes a step back, holds up his hands.

ALISTAIRE

I aim to kill your attacker.

STRIDE

Kill him?

ALISTAIRE

To send him here for you to do your bidding with.

Stride and Eddows exchange looks. Stride steps forward again. She walks around Alistaire, running a finger along his arm...

STRIDE

Arthur Vogler...

...across his shoulder...

STRIDE (CONT'D)

...Resident of 336 Bellingwood Yard, Manchester...

..she whispers in his ear...

STRIDE (CONT'D)
But you need to hurry.

EDDOWS
We won't be able to hold them off
for long.

Alistaire turns to see other SPIRITS clawing their way against one another to reach him. Eddows and Stride brace themselves for the impact of the descending wave. They are engulfed by the wave. The SPIRITS descend upon Alistaire with supernatural speed. He dives for the portal, but his leg is snatched by a gaunt spirit.

Stride jumps on the SPIRIT's back.

The spirit claws a gash in Alistaire's leg as he pulls himself into the portal.

INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

Porter steps toward Alistaire.

PORTER
Greene!

Alistaire throws himself backwards onto the floor. He chokes. Blue arteries branch up his arm from the incision. His eyes cataract white, mouth agape. Porter kneels down, shaking him.

The Pentagram pattern crashes from the ceiling erupting in a burst of air and sound. Dust settles from the impact. Porter hunches his back in defense.

Alistaire breathes. Color returns to his eyes. Blue arteries fade. He gasps for air. Porter trembles as he attends to him, cradling his head in his lap.

PORTER (CONT'D)
(sotto)
Bloody fucking hell. Bloody fucking
hell.

Alistaire looks up at Porter. He flashes a weary grin.

ALISTAIRE
I know his name. I know Jack the
Ripper.

EXT. BROWNSTONE BUILDING - DAY

ARTHUR VOGEL (29) walks down the street with top hat and cane. He bows at a passing woman. Then hurries up the steps to the building, unlocking the door. He turns to watch as she moves away.

PORTER (V.O.)

What followed I cannot refute my involvement wit'. Only that my allegiances were to the man and 'is well-bein'.

Porter watches nervously from across the street.

INT. BROWNSTONE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Alistaire hides in the shadows of a closet. He watches through the slightly opened door.

PORTER (V.O.)

It were my every intention to uphold the law and to see the Murderer of White Chapel arrested, arraigned, and hung in the due course o' the law. But the 'spector didn't see it that way.

Vogel enters the room, hanging his top hat. He turns to see something on the bed.

All of the Rippers' tools are spread out across the bed on top of a fold out leather satchel. Vogel takes a step back, startled. He turns as Alistaire steps out of the closet. The men stand face to face.

ALISTAIRE

Hello, Jack.

Vogel dives for Alistaire, grabbing him by the throat. The men topple back into the wall. Vogel gets on top of Alistaire, strangling him. Vogel tries to reach a blade on the bed. Alistaire knifes Vogel in the side. Then again. And again. And again. Vogel SCREAMS.

EXT. BROWNSTONE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Porter hears the scream and runs across the street.

PORTER

No. No. No. No!

INT. BROWNSTONE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Porter runs into the bedroom. Alistaire straddles Vogel, breathing heavily. Blood is everywhere. Alistaire drops the knife and climbs off Vogel, slumping against the wall.

ALISTAIRE

It's over.

Alistaire looks at the fresh kill. Blood puddles from Vogel's wounds as life slowly ebbs from him. Alistaire's relief gives way to concern.

ALISTAIRE (CONT'D)

It's over.

PORTER (V.O.)

Were that this was where the story did end. But it ain't.

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DAY

Alistaire sits across from the CHIEF OF POLICE. He looks pale and sickly. The CHIEF explains (M.O.S.) Alistaire's transfer.

PORTER (V.O.)

Central office thought it best not to go public with the story. The public out cry over the means by which Jack the Ripper were found would challenge the merit of the deed. The 'spector would receive a transfer along with the good will and hand shakes o' those he worked with.

The Chief pushes a transfer slip across the desk to Alistaire.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Alistaire lies in bed. Madeleine cleans the oozing wound on his arm. Hints of blue arteries have returned. Sweat glistens upon his bare chest and body.

PORTER (V.O.)

But the 'spector came on sick days. Days in which the piper came calling for his due: the sacrifice of his blood.

Madeleine carries a sponge and bowl back across the room. She suddenly collapses on the floor. The bowl shatters.

ALISTAIRE

Madeleine!

Alistaire gets out of bed. He walks his way toward Madeleine, using the bed for balance. He slumps onto the floor beside her.

PORTER (V.O.)

Although it came in a way not even the 'spector could have expected.

Madeleine reaches down between her legs and then examines her hand covered with blood. A puddle of blood expands from beneath her.

ALISTAIRE

Madeleine!

Madeleine slumps backwards. Alistaire tries to wake her...

ALISTAIRE (CONT'D)

MADELEINE!

...but she is dead.

EXT. CEMETERY PLOT - DAY

A casket. Alistaire watches, hat held in hand, as a PRIEST says a blessing.

PORTER (V.O.)

A sacrifice of his blood. His *Blood*.
His unborn son.

REVEAL: a small casket rests on the other side of the large one. It's the size of a baby.

CLOSE ON ALISTAIRE: Eyes welling. Despite his grief he looks as though his health has returned.

INT. GOVERNMENT OFFICE - 1916 - DAY

A GOVERNMENT AGENT types. An elderly Porter sits nearby as another agent, FITCH (38) listens.

PORTER

And that's all I know, or all I care to know about the whereabouts of 'spector Alistaire Greene. May the Good Lord watch o'er 'im and spare 'im from the eternal fires o' Hell for what he done.

The GOVERNMENT AGENT stops typing. Removes the report from the typewriter.

FITCH

Thank you for your time, Mr. Porter.

Porter slowly gets up, relying heavily upon his walking cane. He starts to walk toward the door then stops.

PORTER

Uh. Ahem. If you don't mind the askin'. What is this all about?

FITCH

It's a difficult time for our country, let alone the world, Mr. Porter. Germany has had our forces entrenched on the Western Front for well over three months. Her Majesty is in need of an upper hand.

Porter laughs.

FITCH (CONT'D)

Where's the humor in that?

PORTER

I hope to Hell you don't find him, or there will be a curse upon this country the likes o' which you've never seen.

Porter steps out.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

ON CANVAS: A beautiful oil painting of the forest beyond.

A BRITISH OFFICER slowly approaches the PAINTER from behind.

BRITISH OFFICER

It's a beautiful world worth saving. Isn't it?

The painter pauses his brush.

BRITISH OFFICER (CONT'D)

...No matter what the cost.

CLOSE UP EYES. Weary aged eyes. They slowly close.

ALISTAIRE (O.S.)

Or so they say.