

"THE SADNESS WILL LAST FOREVER"

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. A SMALL CAFE - NIGHT

A table. Two chairs. A crust of bread. A candle. A bottle of Absinthe, glasses, a spoon and sugar.

Vinny sits sipping a glass of absinthe. Paul enters, sits down at the table with Vinny.

PAUL

I had to get out of there. It's nice outside. Smells like laurel.

VINNY

Paul out of doors. A miracle. You can't imagine it just as well?

PAUL

I used to go out in Paris. But in the city there was somewhere to go.

VINNY

I've grown more the past few weeks here than I ever did in Paris.

Paul pours himself a glass. First the absinthe, then the spoon with the sugar. Then the water. Stir.

VINNY

(continuing)

I've had a letter from Theo today. He's going to marry that Bonger woman.

PAUL

Well, good for him. You have to have a wife before you can leave her.

VINNY

Everyone wants to get married. No one believes in higher callings.

PAUL

It's the women that get you.

VINNY

It's not just that. People do it without even considering another life.

PAUL

That's your problem Vinny. You're such a purist. Art is a way of life but it isn't a religion, thank God.

VINNY

Art is a religion. You have to be willing to sacrifice everything to it if it's to be any good.

PAUL

That's what you did in Borinage. But you sacrificed everything including your religion, you see? You're too pure. Even for the church.

VINNY

I'm not that pure. There was Sien.

PAUL

Three weeks in hospital with the clap. And that's the only reason I believe you had sex with her. I tell you, Vinny. You can't save a pregnant hooker.

VINNY

There was Eugénie.

PAUL

Proving once more that you are a crazy bastard. We're in our late thirties. Several failed careers between us. Failed relationships. We've turned to art as our inescapable vocation. We're kindred spirits in that. But you honestly tell me you wouldn't give it up if the perfect pair of tits came along. I would.

VINNY

Being an artist is like entering the priesthood of truth. It doesn't require celibacy, but probably requires bachelorhood.

PAUL

Have it your way. Live in a monastery, sequestered among the brotherhood of mad prophets. I'll live in the world.

VINNY

Did I ever tell you I had a brother that was stillborn?

PAUL

Yes.

VINNY

My parents gave us the same name. There's a tombstone in Zundert that says 'Vincent Willem.' What kind of thing is

that to do?

(pours himself another)

So when I say you're like the brother I never had-

PAUL

You see a side of you that never had a chance to be.

VINNY

Why did I turn you bitter?

PAUL

(swirling his glass)

I'm not bitter, just distilled.  
Wormwood. Harbinger of end times.

VINNY

We worked so hard. It's not fair.

PAUL

Where do you get this sense of entitlement from? What's fair. That I should be miserable?

VINNY

It's not entitlement. I want you to keep your promises. It's justice.

PAUL

That's the preacher in you, Vinny.

VINNY

It's not. Justice and truth and beauty are the noblest ends of man. And you could be noble Paul, if you tried.

PAUL

In Arabia, it's justice to cut off the hands of a thief.

VINNY

I didn't take your razor.

PAUL

You just wanted a memento of me when I leave.

VINNY

It's a lie!

PAUL

Horse shit. There's no justice in the world, Vinny. There just isn't. I thought you learned to see in Paris.

VINNY

All I see is a man who's giving up.

PAUL

Why go into it again? This place is a wreck, you're a wreck. I shouldn't have let your brother's money convince me I could stomach you.

Vinny throws his glass of absinthe at Paul who ducks, and stands up. Vinny produces the razor threateningly. Paul stares him down, and Vinny crumples.

PAUL

You see.

Paul, nodding his head, slowly turns and walks offstage.

VINNY

The murderer took flight.

Vinny empties Paul's glass of absinthe. He holds the razor to his left ear, prepares to cut.

VINNY

This is justice.

BLACK OUT

THE END