

THE HALO

OVER BLACK.

The sound of THICK ROPE. TWISTING AND TIGHTENING.

FADE IN.

EXT. OPEN AIR WORKSHOP - AFTERNOON

A MAN and a WOMAN, 20's, are sitting on high backed chairs, facing each other with their eyes closed, naked from the waist up. Their heads and shoulders are leaning forward. The Man is bald and the Woman has half of her head shaved. The other half has shoulder length black hair.

Thick ropes are intricately and tastefully woven through the chairs and around the Man and Woman.

THE COILER, a man in his 50's is standing between them. He is clothed in dark, working class attire.

The Coiler is holding a wooden pole that has been inserted into a length of the twisted rope.

The Coiler turns the wooden pole, tightening the rope.

The ropes pull and stretch along the skin of the Man and Woman.

After a moment, the Coiler stops turning the pole.

He holds the pole in place and glances at his watch.

THREE BEATS.

The Coiler unwinds the wooden pole and the ropes slacken.

The Man and the Woman open their eyes and smile at each other.

MAN

Don't you love me...

As the ropes fall away, dark red rope burns can be seen around their heads and necks.

MAN (CONT'D)

...in red.

The Man and Woman stand up, dress, then gather their things.

The Coiler picks up a business card and hands it to the Woman.

THE COILER

This is Darkmonk. He will now take care of the ink.

(MORE)

THE COILER (CONT'D)

It will take seventeen to nineteen hours for the markings to bruise and really show some distinction. He will be available then.

WOMAN

Thank you.

The Man smiles and nods a thank you toward The Coiler.

THE COILER

I appreciate the discount.

(NOTE: The MAN is a TRAVEL AGENT)

MAN/TRAVEL AGENT

I recommend travelling via coach in late autumn. The preserves there never spoil.

The Man and Woman leave, arms wrapped together, close.

The Coiler busies himself around his open air workshop.

The workshop is a converted street side barn with aged white walls. It is slightly out of the main part of a small tourist town.

Ropes tied into knots hang along the main counter of the workshop.

Names and prices are written on a board over the counter.

A brief glance at the board shows the names: "Lucerne's Lion", "Aesop's Web", "Startear" and "The Four".

Tattoo making tools and inks are along another bench. Most are packed into boxes.

The Coiler pulls up his sleeves and begins to pack up the ropes from the previous appointment. Tattooed ropes curl around his arms to his wrists.

It is near the end of another day and afternoon fog has settled, seeping around the workshop. Removing the glow of the sun.

The low door opens.

THE COILER

(doesn't turn around)

Good afternoon.

A HUSBAND and WIFE enter the shop. They are dressed in warm clothing. The Husband walks toward the counter. The Wife moves slowly around the edges of the workshop.

The Coiler finishes packing the rope.

HUSBAND

We are interested in a brand for  
the both of us.

THE COILER

(points to the board above  
the counter)

How can I help?

WIFE

(looks at the board above the  
counter)

It isn't there.

The Husband looks at The Coiler.

HUSBAND

I understand you can perform The  
Halo.

The Coiler's expression changes slightly. He glances at the  
Wife.

THE COILER

This is a tie I have not completed  
in a fair while.

HUSBAND

My father recommended it.

THE COILER

(glancing at the Wife)

Did he?

WIFE

Can it be done?

THE COILER

(beat)

It is delicate. I hope you have no  
other plans.

The Husband glances at his Wife.

HUSBAND

We have nothing left.

The Wife gives a slight smile.

The Coiler briefly nods to the couple.

THE COILER

Please. Over here.

The Coiler begins to ready certain ropes.

## THE COILER (CONT'D)

The nature of the halo results in the untraceable coil. It takes a line of ink along the body that will uniquely grow long after the bruising has faded, making it appear that there was nothing else constricting the body apart from the chest and head area. It will appear as a loop and will never stretch or sag along the age of the skin.

The Coiler opens an old wooden box, lined with satin.

## THE COILER (CONT'D)

I will use implements that may appear like trinkets, but they should be considered as learned objects that isolate memories you will carry with you, long after you have both separated from this tie.

The Coiler takes out a long diamond encrusted bookmark and places it next to the ropes.

He pulls a worn rusted hook from the wall and slowly wraps a dark red corded ribbon around it.

The Coiler then opens a drawer and removes a selection of black ebony and white ivory piano keys. He then opens another drawer and removes two plastic white piano keys.

He lays them next to the bookmark.

## THE COILER (CONT'D)

The nature of this will require the direction of the chairs to be reversed. Please over here.

The Coiler rotates the high backed wooden chairs and positions them back to back.

The Husband and Wife remove their extraneous apparel and sit in the high backed chairs. They are naked from the waist up.

The Coiler closes his eyes and touches his forehead for a moment. He opens his eyes and begins the process of wrapping the large thick coiled ropes.

He weaves the ropes intricately and beautifully through the holes in the chairs and around the Husband and Wife.

He makes knots, braids and folds of rope around their bodies and the chairs.

The Coiler starts to pull the slack off the ropes.

The Husband and Wife are pulled back carefully to the chairs, their shoulders and heads leaning forward slightly.

The Coiler places the ropes around the necks and heads of the Husband and Wife.

He increases the tension. It begins to tighten around their skin and clothing.

The Coiler takes one of the twisted ropes and begins to push the piano keys between the turns.

He picks up the white plastic piano keys and places them in a deep cast iron ashtray with a single indentation for a cigar.

Igniting a blow torch, he melts the plastic keys in the ashtray.

The Coiler picks up the ashtray and pours the melted plastic over the other piano keys and the rope.

The Coiler then finds another twist of rope and wraps the bookmark through the twists and turns, leaving a small piece dangling.

He inserts the large hook into a slackened area and begins to turn the hook. It starts to tighten the entire set of ropes and coils.

The Wife closes her eyes. The Husband closes his.

The Coiler turns the hook and the ropes tighten further.

A few turns in and the ropes begin to stretch and pull on the skin of the Husband and Wife.

The Coiler takes in more slack and grabs onto a loose rope. Pulling it tighter.

The Coiler pulls back his sleeve and looks at his watch.

THREE BEATS.

Suddenly.

The Wife begins to choke.

The Husband's eyes snap open. His expression changes and he stares straight ahead into the distance.

The Coiler tightens the rope.

The Wife is struggling now. The rope pulling further around her neck and chest.

The Husband continues to stare straight ahead.

The Wife is really straining now, trying to pull her neck loose.

The Coiler makes a final turn and checks his watch.  
(beat)

The Wife pulls a final time and stops.

Her shoulders and head slump forward. Eyes closed.  
(beat)

HUSBAND  
Is it done?

THE COILER  
It's done.

The Wife is leaning forward. Eyes closed. Silent.

HUSBAND  
And now?

THE COILER  
And now...

The Coiler walks around to face the Husband.

THE COILER (CONT'D)  
This.

The Coiler lurches forward and pulls the bookmark out of the ropes. Two of the ropes shift amongst the elaborate set of ties.

The ropes tied around the piano keys tense rapidly, sending melted plastic into the air.

A rope around the Husband's head slips over his face and clenches tightly around his throat, instantly snapping his neck.

The Husband's head and shoulders fall forward. His eyes open.

The Coiler moves in and looks closely at the Husband. He gently raises the Husband's forehead. A broken bone in his neck sticks out oddly, almost piercing through the skin.

The Coiler lowers the Husband's head and closes his eyes.

He then walks around to the Wife and moves in close to her face.

(beat)

Her eyes snap open.

(beat)

A smile crosses her face.

WIFE

My love.

The Wife stretches her neck forward and kisses The Coiler.

BLACKOUT.

THE END.