

# THE DEVIL'S CUT

Feature Film Screenplay | Supernatural Thriller

Take what you will. Pay what you owe.



Written by Eric Lotter

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# THE CONCEPT

When disgraced maritime scholar **Arden Vale** discovers a coin leading to the legendary vault of **Jean Lafitte**, she assembles a ragtag crew to infiltrate the flooded tunnels beneath a sinking Louisiana town.

CINEMATIC WIDE SHOT



CROSS-SECTION ILLUSTRATION

But they soon discover **the vault isn't guarding treasure—it is holding a debt.** The currency is not gold, but **blood**, and the 'Devil's Cut' must be paid to leave.

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# tone & atmosphere

National Treasure meets The Conjuring



**Claustrophobic Adventure**



**Tactile Horror**



**Grounded Supernatural**

The thrill of discovery mixed with the crushing weight of deep water. The horror is mathematical and mechanical—a ledger, a tally, a trade. The tunnels 'breathe' with the tide, and the supernatural manifests as a fourth knock in the walls.

# THE SETTING: BELLE NOIRE

A Town Scrubbed from the Map



## THE LORE

Scrubbed from records in 1840, the town survives by paying a "tithe" to the tunnels beneath. Locals don't look at mirrors after dark. They count their blessings, then count their fingers.

## THE BAR

The Devil's Cut: Established 1764. Walls lined with pirate tokens and a mirror that reflects debts rather than faces.

# THE LEAD: DR. ARDEN VALE

The Disgraced Scholar



## THE MOTIVATION:

Redemption. A brilliant historian disgraced after a diving accident. She views history as a math problem to be solved.

## THE FLAW:

She believes she can outsmart history. She refuses to believe in curses until the math stops adding up.

## KEY PROP:

The Schooner Award. She smashes her own prestigious award to find the catalyst coin hidden inside.

# THE CREW: MUSCLE & TECH



## **JAX TRAVERS - The Diver**

The Anchor. Reckless charm incarnate. He brings physical capability and levity. He keeps Arden from drowning in her own obsession.



## **GHOST RIVERA - The Hacker**

The Sentry. Quiet, dangerous calm. He hears patterns others miss. He treats the supernatural like a security system to be bypassed.

# THE CREW: HEART & GUIDE



## **EZRA VERNON - The Historian**

The Warning. Brilliant but terrified. He cracks the code of the "shanties." He represents the innocent curiosity that gets punished.



## **COLE ST. MARTIN - The Local**

The Traitor with a Conscience. He knows the tunnels because his family helped seal them. Forced to betray the team, seeking redemption.

# THE ANTAGONIST: JONAS CREED



## Grief, not Greed.

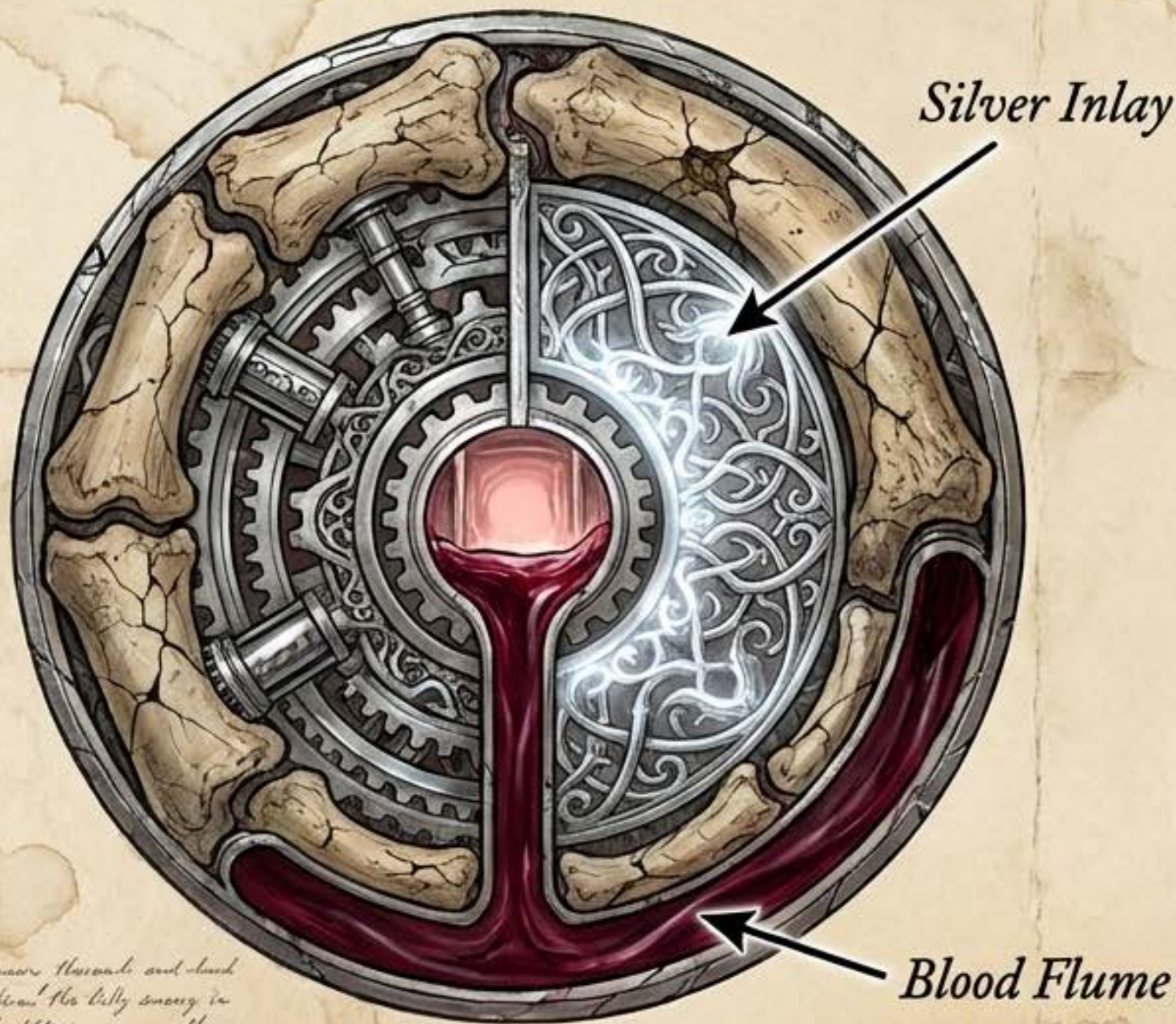
Creed isn't looking for gold. He is looking for his son, Julian, who was taken by the Vault. He believes in "A Life for a Life."

## The Threat

He intends to feed the crew to the mechanism to balance the ledger and free his son. He is a dark mirror of Arden: obsession taken to its violent limit.

# THE MYTHOLOGY: THE LEDGER

## THE BONE-GEAR DOOR



## THE RULES

1. Silver & Blood: Blood opens the door (life). Silver seals it (purity).
2. The Mirror: Reflections in the tunnels show your debt. If you deny what you see, the trap triggers.
3. The Tally: The number 4 is cursed. "Three knocks to ask, the fourth to pay."

THE BLACKENED COIN  
Charred Spanish piece of eight



The Key

*The blackened coin, T  
can of our lot to gain  
this coin on other games  
in the ledger's portals.*

*Faded, illegible handwritten text.*

*Altogether, of 13 bones  
- 13 bones of the 13 parts of  
- 13 bones, 13 bones, 13 bones.*

*Remove the door, and blood  
- 13 bones, 13 bones, 13 bones.  
- 13 bones, 13 bones, 13 bones.  
- 13 bones, 13 bones, 13 bones.*

# ACT I: THE INVITATION



- **The Catalyst:** Arden smashes her award to find a hidden coin.
- **The Assembly:** The team gathers in Belle Noire. They meet Marlene, the keeper of the bar.
- **The Inciting Incident:** They decipher the shanty carved under the bar ('Enter only with the Devil's coin'). They crack the entrance to the pirate tunnels at low tide, expecting history but finding a slaughterhouse.

# ACT II: THE DESCENT & THE TRAP

## THE COUNTING ROOM



- **The Environment:** The tunnels breathe. The team survives crushing ceilings by sharing air from a trapped bronze bell.
- **The Twist:** The treasure is alive. It demands payment.
- **The Betrayal:** Jonas Creed ambushes them. He triggers a flood wall to separate the team, using them as currency for the vault.
- **The Loss:** Ezra is tricked by a will-o'-wisp mimicking his daughter's voice. He is found dead—eyes gouged, mouth stuffed with shredded gold leaf.

# ACT III: THE REVENANT



- **The Stakes:** A supernatural storm stops time in the town above. The team races Creed to the sunken ship.
- **The Final Confrontation:** A battle inside the ship's mirrored gut. Creed tries to blow up the ship to free his son.
- **The Sacrifice:** Arden realizes destroying the vessel will erase the boy. Creed is dragged into the chest by the water-vortex, joining his son in the void. Arden reseals the vault using blood, silver filings, and the correct rhythmic knock.

# RESOLUTION: THE BALANCE



- **The storm breaks.** The team survives. Julian returns home, seemingly safe. But the mirror reveals the truth: The ledger is balanced, but the interest remains. He is home, but he isn't back.

# VISUAL SIGNATURES

THE BREATHING TUNNELS



THE MIRROR GAUNTLET



WET GOLD



THE UNDERWATER SCREAM



# PRODUCTION & POTENTIAL

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- **Market Positioning:** A 'Smart Creature Feature.' Appeals to the National Treasure demographic but layers in the genuine dread of The Haunting of Hill House.
- **Franchise Potential:** The 'Beaufort Honors' history opens the door for Arden Vale to investigate other historical occult mysteries.
- **Production Viability:** High-concept scares with contained locations (The Bar, The Tunnels, The Ship) allow for focused budget allocation on practical water effects.



## What is your history costing you?