

EXT. UPSTATE NEW YORK - EARLY MORNING (1947)

Opening segment in BLACK and WHITE...

...Behind the credits, HE is introduced, a loner, going his own way. A infinitesimal figure approaching CAMERA, growing larger and larger...

...MONTGOMERY CLIFT, twenty-seven, walks the painted white line of a two lane country road. Moving against a cold autumn wind, his clothes hang loosely from his slight frame...

...Monty walks with a cruising swagger, a rhythmic stride that is only slightly disturbed by the fact that he has been drinking all night. He removes a half empty bottle of cheap brandy from under his coat, smiles and takes a long drink...

...In the distance, behind Monty, we see a SEMI TRUCK moving on the same pathway at great speed. Monty, in his condition, is oblivious...

INT. SEMI-TRUCK CABIN

A heavy-set, bearded DRIVER sits behind the wheel. The tedium of the long haul is instantly snapped as he notices SOMEONE in the road before him...

...He hits the HORN and nervously puts both hands on the wheel, as the truck comes closer and closer...

EXT. ROAD - MONTY

unaware of the imposing danger, as he staggers along the center of the roadway...

VARIOUS SHOTS - THE SEMI TRUCK

the wheels HUM a low moan, carrying the semi at a pace too fast for stopping...

WIDE ANGLE

the truck is almost on top of Monty now...

INT. CABIN

...The Driver SCREAMS obscenities as he makes one final effort and reaches for the horn. He pulls the cord and the HORN BLASTS out...

BACK TO MONTY

...he is suddenly JOLTED to consciousness...

...as if slapped by the "Hand of God", he THRUSTS himself to the side of the road. The truck ROARS by as he STUMBLES down a small, grassy embankment into a meadow...

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...He casually straightens up and looks back to where the truck almost ran him over. He begins to laugh. He is untouchable. Pushing fate is a game to him...

...Monty pulls out the brandy bottle from his coat pocket, amazingly not broken. He takes off the top, toasts to the heavens and takes a mighty drink. Monty removes the debris that covers his hair and clothing. In a single moment, he is *mythically* drawn to something...

MONTY'S POV

a forest in front of him; ominous, impenetrable. Tightly woven trees make it difficult to see beyond the first few layers of foliage...

..Monty cautiously gets up and moves toward the darkness of the woods; guided into the shadows by some unseen force. The bottle of brandy drops from his hands as his pace quickens...

...He is at full run by the time he enters the forest. He fights the overgrowth, running **FRANTICALLY** through the long grass, until he reaches a clearing...

...**STUMPS** from what used to be large and powerful trees form a circular emptiness in the center of the forest. The early morning light filters through from above, creating an angelic arena...

...At the center of this clearing, a **BODY** lies listless. A beat up fedora covers the man's face. Monty approaches. His brow drips of sweat as he kneels down next to the fresh corpse...

Monty reaches out and slowly removes the hat, exposing a scarred and disfigured image of **HIMSELF**. The thin, gaunt body, appears asleep as Monty stares, trance like into the face....

...**SUDDENLY** the eyes pop open...

**DOPPLEGANGER**

Live this lie...soon you die.

...The face begins to laugh. An angry, **DEMONIC CACKLE**, that pierces through the silence...

**DOPPELGANGER POV - MONTY**

in shock, as he jerks **UPWARD**, fainting out of **FRAME**...

...**HOLD** on the **CLEAR WHITE SKY**. The laughter gives way to a single rhythmic **HEARTBEAT**...a man's impassioned **BREATHING** builds...

...A **SLOW DISSOLVE TO COLOR**...