

THE TWILIGHT ZONE
"The Howling Man"

Written by
Charles Beaumont

ACT ONE

INT. ELLINGTON'S ROOM - NIGHT

FADE IN and PAN DOWN to a dark and stormy NIGHT.

A man looks out of an open window at the storm and then turns to reveal his anguished FACE. This is DAVID ELLINGTON -- grim, wild-eyed, graying around the temples -- as he addresses some unseen person urgently, amid the ROAR of thunder, the HOWL of the wind, and the PATTERN of rain.

ELLINGTON

I know. It's -- it's an incredible story. I, of all people, know this. And you won't believe me. No, not at first. But I'm going to tell you the whole thing. Then, you will believe, because you must. You must believe. It happened many years ago, after the First World War. I was on a walking trip through central Europe. But one night, I... One night, I got lost in a storm.

Ellington turns back to the open WINDOW just over his shoulder where the storm RAGES.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CASTLE

A similar stormy night, decades earlier. A FLASHBACK to central Europe, where an imposing, ornate, medieval CASTLE looms out of the darkness. A younger David Ellington staggers through the blinding rain to the huge wooden door of the castle and KNOCKS. A heavily-accented voice from behind the door answers.

CHRISTOPHORUS

Yes? Who is it?

The door swings open to reveal BROTHER CHRISTOPHORUS, a bearded giant in robes, carrying a long wooden staff and an ancient lantern.

ELLINGTON

Please, please let me in. I'm lost.

CHRISTOPHORUS

I'm sorry. We don't allow visitors in the hermitage.

ELLINGTON

Oh, I-I-I-I'm not a visitor. I-I'm a stranger here. I-I got lost.

Ellington tries to enter but Christophorus blocks the way with his staff.

ELLINGTON

Oh, you don't understand. I'm lost.

Christophorus looks Ellington over warily and with a barely perceptible nod, clears the way for him to unsteadily enter, and closes the door behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTRY HALL

The castle's torch-lit ENTRY HALL, primitive, like something out of the Middle Ages. A soaked, shivering Ellington, clutching a traveling bag, looks the entry hall over as Christophorus leads him through it. Other men, dressed like Christophorus and carrying staffs, appear in adjacent doorways, staring at Ellington. Ellington, already weak, suddenly grows dizzy, staggers against a stone doorway, and has a COUGHING fit. Christophorus turns to look at him.

ELLINGTON

I-I'll be all right once I dry out.

CHRISTOPHORUS

Wait here. I have to speak to Brother Jerome.

Christophorus disappears through a doorway as Ellington drops his traveling bag and puts his back to the doorway, trying to regain his composure. His eyes widen at the sound of a wicked HOWL. Is it a wolf? Is he dreaming? The storm continues to RAGE. Ellington looks around for the source of the howling as Christophorus returns.

CHRISTOPHORUS

Brother Jerome will see you now.

A puzzled Ellington reacts to another evil-sounding HOWL.

ELLINGTON

What was that?

CHRISTOPHORUS

The wind. Come.

Unconvinced, Ellington gives Christophorus a long look before they proceed.

INT. OFFICE

Christophorus leads Ellington into what passes for an OFFICE. Seated at an ancient wooden desk before huge windows that reveal the ongoing storm is

BROTHER JEROME -- flowing white hair and beard and robes, very much like Moses -- a commanding presence even while sitting. Jerome glances at Christophorus and then at Ellington.

JEROME

Why have you come here?

ELLINGTON

My-my name is Ellington. I-I'm on a walking trip. I got lost in the storm.

Ellington has another COUGHING fit. He is clearly in bad shape, and getting worse.

ELLINGTON

Excuse me. I saw light here.

JEROME

What do you want from us?

ELLINGTON

Shelter. Maybe some food.

Jerome shakes his head sorrowfully.

JEROME

We cannot help you. You will have to leave.
(rises majestically)
Now, Mr. Ellington. Now.

In disbelief, a silent Ellington slowly turns and staggers out of the office.

INT. ENTRY HALL

But the effort becomes too much for him. Ellington collapses and passes out. Jerome, Christophorus and the other men gather around him, making no move to help. An omniscient NARRATOR has a few things to say about this.

NARRATOR

(voice over)

The prostrate form of Mr. David Ellington, scholar, seeker of truth and, regrettably, finder of truth. A man who will shortly arise from his exhaustion to confront a problem that has tormented mankind since the beginning of time....

An image of the narrator, in suit and tie, hands folded before him, magically appears over the scene, as he finishes his comments.

NARRATOR

... A man who knocked on a door seeking sanctuary and found instead the outer edges of the Twilight Zone.

FADE OUT

INT. ENTRY HALL

FADE IN on a now-conscious Ellington in the empty ENTRY HALL, later that night. He touches his brow and unsteadily crosses to an ornate window to look out at the still RAGING storm. No one else is present. At the sound of more HOWLING, Ellington turns and follows the noise. He staggers along, occasionally leaning against a wooden beam or doorway for support until he comes to a wooden door, held shut by a staff similar to the ones carried by Jerome, Christophorus, and the other men. He approaches it cautiously and peers through the barred window in the door.

It is a prison cell. Ellington sees a man whose back is turned towards him -- it is THE HOWLING MAN, gaunt, dirty and dressed in rags. But as the Howling Man turns, sees Ellington, and rushes to him, he reveals a gentle, bearded face and a gentle voice. The Howling Man reaches through the barred window and clutches Ellington's shoulder. Ellington tries to pull away.

THE HOWLING MAN

Help me. No, please. In the name of mercy, help me. You're not one of them.

ELLINGTON

No. My name's Ellington. I'm an American.

THE HOWLING MAN

(releases his grip)

Sssh! We have only moments. Come closer. Come.

Ellington does so.

THE HOWLING MAN

They're mad, Mister Ellington. All of them. Raving mad. Listen. I was in the village in Schwartzof. I was walking in the street with my woman. We paused to rest by a tree. And we kissed. Is it wrong to kiss? Tell me.

ELLINGTON

I-I don't think so.

THE HOWLING MAN

Of course, you don't. You don't think so, I don't think so. But Jerome -- the lecherous old fool -- We looked up and I saw him standing close by. I tried to open my mouth to speak but before I could utter a sound, he raised that heavy staff he carries -- you've seen it? -- and he hit me, again and again.

ELLINGTON

Why?

THE HOWLING MAN

For revenge. Because she refused his advances. He took his fury out on me.

ELLINGTON

I-I'm sorry. I find this difficult to believe.

THE HOWLING MAN

Of course, you do, Mister Ellington. That's the strength of the man. He makes his madness seem a harmless thing. The-the-the madness of a religious zealot. This is not a religious order, Mister Ellington. These so-called Brothers of Truth -- they're outcasts, misfits, cut off from the world because the world won't have them. Mister Ellington, please, you must believe me. I don't say they're evil. I say they're mad.

Ellington starts to walk away. The Howling Man grabs him by the shoulder.

THE HOWLING MAN

Where're you going?

ELLINGTON

I'll speak to Jerome.

THE HOWLING MAN

Noooo. He's the greatest maniac of them all.

ELLINGTON

Then, how can I help you?

A deep voice rings out.

JEROME

Mister Ellington!

Jerome, Christophorus, and a few others stand a few feet away. Ellington approaches them.

JEROME

I did not know that you were well enough to walk. Come with me, please.

ELLINGTON

I-I must talk with you.

JEROME

(pointing)

This way.

The other men watch as Jerome and Ellington silently head back to Jerome's office. The storm grows worse. Christophorus gives the Howling Man's cell a long look.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE

Jerome and Ellington enter.

JEROME

I must ask you to leave the hermitage, Mister Ellington. We have no facilities for the care of the ill. Arrangements can be made at Schwartzof --

ELLINGTON

Now, just a minute...

JEROME

No, not a minute, not another second, Mister Ellington. Now!

ELLINGTON

Why?

JEROME

I've already explained that.

ELLINGTON

No, you've explained nothing.

Jerome shuts the door.

ELLINGTON

No one asked me to come here. I realize that. But that's no excuse for your behavior.

JEROME

My son...

ELLINGTON

I'm not your son.

JEROME

You don't understand.

ELLINGTON

That's right. I-I don't. So why don't you tell me? Why are you in such a hurry to have me leave? What are you afraid I'll find out? It's the man you have locked up in the cell, isn't it, brother? Well, that isn't a secret anymore. I know about him.

JEROME

What man is this, Mister Ellington?

ELLINGTON

The one we just left. The one who's been screaming his head off.

JEROME

I'm not sure you know what you're saying.

Ellington, growing dizzy, takes a seat.

ELLINGTON

Look, brother, I -- I don't know much about this cult of yours, what's permitted, what isn't permitted. I seriously doubt if you have the authority to imprison a man against his will.

JEROME

That is quite true. We have no such authority.

ELLINGTON

Then why have you done it?

JEROME

No man has ever been imprisoned in the hermitage, Mister Ellington.

ELLINGTON

I was just talking with him.

JEROME

You talked to no man. You have been very ill, Mister Ellington. You've suffered delirium.

Jerome puts a sympathetic hand on Ellington's shoulder just as a piercing HOWL causes Ellington to bolt out of his chair. He backs away from Jerome.

ELLINGTON

Oh, no. Don't tell me you didn't hear that. Honest men make unconvincing liars.

A wicked clap of THUNDER punctuates the comment.

ELLINGTON

I'll find out eventually, you know.

JEROME

What do you mean?

ELLINGTON

Just what I said. The police will be very interested to learn that you're keeping a man imprisoned here --

JEROME

I tell you, there is no man.

ELLINGTON

All right, all right. Just... forget it.

Jerome watches with concern as Ellington crosses to the door, opens it, and starts to leave.

JEROME
Mister Ellington.

Ellington stops and turns.

ELLINGTON
Yes?

JEROME
Would you really go to the police?

ELLINGTON
Would you?

Another clap of THUNDER.

JEROME
Very well. I told you the truth but only part of it. Now, I see I shall have to tell you the whole truth. Shut the door, Mister Ellington.

Ellington shuts the door just as a particularly long, sad HOWL causes Jerome to wince and put his hand to his ears. Ellington looks relieved.

ELLINGTON
Then you do hear it.

JEROME
As I have heard it every hour of every day for five long years.

Jerome crosses to the window.

ELLINGTON
Why did you lie?

JEROME
I didn't. When I told you that no man howled at the hermitage, I was being perfectly honest. What you saw is not a man. It is the Devil himself!

This rates two claps of THUNDER and a FADE OUT on Jerome's ominous, lightning-lit face.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. OFFICE

FADE IN on Jerome, still at the window, moments later.

JEROME

Yes, the Devil himself. What you saw in the cell is Satan, otherwise known as the Dark Angel, Ahriman, Asmodeus, Belial, Diabolus, the Devil. You asked for the truth. Now you have it. You do believe me, don't you?

ELLINGTON

Ah, sure. Of course.

Ellington starts backing away from a wild-eyed Jerome who rants on.

JEROME

No. Now, it is you who are lying, Mister Ellington. You don't believe me at all. Quite to the contrary. You're now quite certain of what you suspected, that I am mad. Sit down, Mister Ellington. And we'll see.

Ellington sits.

JEROME

Let me tell you a story and we'll see how certain you are that I am mad. How certain you are of anything.

Jerome walks away from Ellington and begins pacing around the room through the following:

JEROME

I suppose you fancy yourself a sophisticated man. You consider us to be primitive because we live here in solitude, away from the so-called real world. We are misfits.

ELLINGTON

Oh, no, no.

JEROME

Oh, please. I know all the theories.

ELLINGTON

I assure you, brother, that--

JEROME

No, Mister Ellington, it is I who am assuring you that I am not the ignorant fanatic I would appear. Oh, I coped with your world for forty years, and rather successfully, at that. The best schools, a degree in philosophy, a job that took me to the ends of the earth. This beard, this staff, and this faith are merely the results of a different point of view. If you can understand that, you can listen to what I have to say with an open mind.

Another wicked HOWL unnerves Ellington, but Jerome takes it in stride.

JEROME

Five years ago, there were no howls in the hermitage. It was simply the bombed-out ruin of an old castle belonging to the family Wulfran. Baron Wulfran gave it to the Brotherhood of Truth as a gesture of charity. Our job was to tend the vineyards and save what souls we could by constant prayer.

ELLINGTON

But this isn't a religious order, is it, brother?

JEROME

We feel that we are recognized by God. Truth is our dogma. We believe it to be man's greatest weapon against the Devil, who is the father of all lies.

Ellington rises.

ELLINGTON

All right, go on with your story. You were tending the vineyards.

JEROME

At that time, shortly after the Great War, the world was in chaos. Everywhere was unhappiness. Except in this little village below.

Jerome points a finger toward a rain-streaked window.

JEROME

For some reason the people of Schwartzof refused to yield to despair. They lost none of their faith. They continued as they had been for centuries. Honest, God-fearing, and happy. This village was a plum to Satan, one he could not resist. So, he came here and embarked upon a program of corruption.

ELLINGTON

But you stopped him.

JEROME

Yes! You see, Mister Ellington...

A quick clap of THUNDER for punctuation. As Jerome approaches Ellington ominously.

JEROME

... he made the same mistake that you have made. He underestimated me. He thought he would have no difficulty in tempting the old fool.

Ellington backs away and sits again.

JEROME

But I had him in a cell before he knew what happened.

ELLINGTON

But, if he's the Devil, how do you keep him locked up?

JEROME

With the Staff of Truth!

A wild-eyed Jerome flourishes his staff above his head dramatically and then lowers it.

JEROME

The one barrier he cannot pass.

ELLINGTON

Tell me, how did you recognize him? He doesn't look evil.

JEROME

The Devil hath power to assume a pleasing shape. I had seen him before, in all parts of the world. In all forms and guises. Wherever there was sin. Wherever there was strife. Wherever there was corruption. And persecution. There he was also. Sometimes he was only a spectator, a face in the crowd. But, always, he was there.

Jerome pounds his staff on the floor insistently. All this is too much for Ellington who again grows dizzy, swaying in his chair.

JEROME

Now... you see, I hope, why you must say nothing of what you've seen and heard here.

Ellington rises again.

ELLINGTON

Brother... Not that I doubt you, you understand, only... Well, isn't it possible you might have made a mistake?

JEROME

No! Think, Mister Ellington. Think of the peace of the world these last five years. Think of this country now.

(MORE)

JEROME (CONT'D)

Is there another like it?

ELLINGTON

You haven't put an end to-to suffering. There's still murders, robberies. Even now while we're talking, people are starving.

JEROME

The suffering man was meant to endure. We cause most of our own grief. We need no help from him. It is the unnatural catastrophe, the great wars, the overwhelming pestilences, the wholesale sinning that we have stopped.

ELLINGTON

I believe you, brother.

JEROME

Do you truly?

ELLINGTON

Yes. I-I admit I was doubtful at first but you've convinced me. Absolutely. I-I promise to keep your secret.

JEROME

Good, my son. Tomorrow, if you feel well enough, you may leave.

Jerome crosses to the door and opens it for Ellington.

JEROME

In the meantime, Brother Christophorus will look after you.

Ellington starts out the door.

JEROME

Please. Go directly to his room.

ELLINGTON

Good night, brother.

INT. OUTSIDE THE HOWLING MAN'S CELL

Ellington, sick and dizzy, rubs his stiff neck as he makes

his way to the Howling Man's cell. Ellington grins when he sees the Man's scared, hopeful face in the barred window.

THE HOWLING MAN

He lied to you, didn't he? I can see that.
What'd he say?

ELLINGTON

He said that you were the Devil.

THE HOWLING MAN

(nearly laughs)

The Devil! That's good. That's wonderful.
What a dream for an old devil, to catch the
Devil and lock him up.

(suddenly concerned)

You don't believe him, do you?

ELLINGTON

No, of course not.

THE HOWLING MAN

Then help me.

ELLINGTON

Look, why don't I just go get the
authorities?

THE HOWLING MAN

It would be my death warrant. The
authorities would return and find nothing.
Jerome is mad, but he's shrewd, too.

A hand appears on Ellington's shoulder. He turns to see it belongs to Brother Christophorus.

CHRISTOPHORUS

(politely)

Brother Jerome was fearful you might lose
your way. Come.

Christophorus leads Ellington away. The Howling Man watches them go, a mixture of hope and fear in his face.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRISTOPHORUS' ROOM

Moments later, Christophorus enters with Ellington and shuts the door behind them. Christophorus starts to put a key in the lock but Ellington grabs his arm.

ELLINGTON

Why are you locking the door?

CHRISTOPHORUS

(as if it were obvious)

To protect you. Rest now, Mister Ellington.

(locks the door)

Remember, you're still a very sick man.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHRISTOPHORUS' ROOM

Later that night. As Christophorus sleeps, Ellington carefully steals the key chain from around his neck. Collecting his coat, Ellington stealthily unlocks the door, opens it, exits, closes it, and then takes one last look at the sleeping Christophorus through the door's window before hurrying away.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE THE HOWLING MAN'S CELL

A weakened, dizzy Ellington approaches.

THE HOWLING MAN

You've come. Good.

ELLINGTON

What do you want me to do?

THE HOWLING MAN

Lift off the wooden bolt.

Ellington looks at the wooden staff that bolts the door shut. It appears easily removable and well within the Howling Man's reach.

ELLINGTON
(astonished)
Is this all that holds you in?

THE HOWLING MAN
Yes. Lift it off.

ELLINGTON
(confused)
Why haven't you done it yourself?

THE HOWLING MAN
Please. There's no time for talk. Mister
Ellington, in the name of mercy -- If you
fail now, they'll kill both of us. Don't
you understand that?

CUT TO:

INT. CHRISTOPHORUS' ROOM

Christophorus awakes with a start, sees that the keys and
Ellington have vanished, rises and crosses to the door.
It's locked.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE THE HOWLING MAN'S CELL

Ellington starts to remove the staff. He is suddenly having
serious doubts. He lets go of the staff.

THE HOWLING MAN
Hurry. Hurry.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRISTOPHORUS' ROOM

Christophorus pounds on the door and yells.

CHRISTOPHORUS
Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop!

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE THE HOWLING MAN'S CELL

Ellington, hearing the yells, panics and quickly removes the staff. The cell door slowly swings open and there is a horrific moment of uncertainty as the Howling Man steps out, a wide grin on his face. Ellington hands him his coat.

ELLINGTON

Put this on, the storm.

The Howling Man drapes the coat over his shoulders as Ellington looks around nervously. Ellington is about to lead him to safety when, to the accompaniment of a long roll of THUNDER, the Howling Man points a bony finger at Ellington's back, whereupon Ellington instantly loses control of his body and collapses to the floor. After a sidelong glance to assure himself that his captors are too late, the Howling Man allows a dark look to cross his face. His features begin to subtly change. He smiles, strokes his beard, and strides off. A prostrate Ellington watches in horror as, with every step, the Howling Man slowly transforms himself into a hideous horned demon.

The coat draped over his shoulders transforms into a cloak. When at last the Devil reaches the wall opposite his cell, he turns back to Ellington, wraps the cloak about himself, smiles grimly, and disappears in a puff of smoke. A stunned Ellington passes out. Jerome and Christophorus arrive. Jerome peers into the empty cell while Christophorus glances sympathetically at Ellington. Jerome and Christophorus exchange looks. Christophorus walks off while Jerome crosses to Ellington, now regaining consciousness. Jerome puts an arm around him.

JEROME

I'm sorry for you, my son. All your life, you will remember this night. And you'll know, Mister Ellington, whom you have turned loose upon the world.

ELLINGTON

I-I didn't believe you. I saw him and didn't recognize him.

JEROME

That is man's weakness... and Satan's strength.

Ellington stares hard in the direction of the Devil's escape.

ELLINGTON

(voice over)

In that moment, I decided to spend the rest of my life tracking him down. To recapture the evil I'd released.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CASTLE

A view of the CASTLE in the storm that night.

ELLINGTON

(voice over)

The evil that soon took the shape of the Second World War, the Korean War, the hideous new weapons of war. I swore I'd find him again, as Brother Jerome had done.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ELLINGTON'S ROOM

A very small version of the wooden Staff of Truth as it keeps a 1960s-style door shut.

ELLINGTON

(voice over)

It took many years but I did it. See? I have him in there now.

A hand gestures toward the door. The hand belongs to Ellington -- he appears now as he did in the first scene: older and grayer and as wild-eyed as Brother Jerome. He turns and crosses to his HOUSEKEEPER. Ellington has been telling his story to her, apparently in a ROOM of Ellington's house.

ELLINGTON

You understand now. You understand why you must not under any circumstances go near that door. You see how important it is that he stay locked up?

The housekeeper looks at him as if he's crazy but nods her assent.

ELLINGTON

Good. I'm sending him back to Brother Jerome. He'll do a bit of howling but, heh, pay no attention to that. It's a trick. I know. Yes, I must go now.

Ellington crosses to his raincoat and puts it on.

ELLINGTON

Must go. I-I have preparations to make. I-I'll be back in just a few minutes.

Ellington grabs his hat and heads for the door. The storm continues. He pauses and turns back to the housekeeper.

ELLINGTON

(gravely)

Remember. Remember. Keep that door locked.

Ellington leaves, shutting the door behind him. The housekeeper turns and stares for a long moment at the bolted door in disbelief -- until a wicked, piercing HOWL emerges from the other side. Startled, she crosses to the door and hesitantly removes the wooden staff.

NARRATOR

(voice over)

Ancient folk saying: "You can catch the Devil, but you can't hold him long." ...

The housekeeper turns the knob and opens the door.

NARRATOR

(voice over)

... Ask Brother Jerome. Ask David Ellington. ...

The door swings open to reveal part of the darkened,

shadowy ROOM on the other side.

NARRATOR

(voice over)

... They know, and they'll go on knowing to
the end of their days... and beyond... in
the Twilight Zone.

PAN UP, DISSOLVE TO and FADE OUT on a starry night SKY.

THE END