

Elevator Pitch

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. AMISH FARM - DAY

1

AMOS WHEATON (29), an Amish farmer, full beard, traditional Amish clothes, angrily works an awl on a leather strap. The awl slips, tears the strap and punctures his hand.

Amos fights an obscenity, slips the awl in a pocket, sucks on his wound and crosses to a nearby shed. He grabs a three-prong pitchfork leaning against the structure. He pounds the ground with the handle of the pitchfork.

AMOS

Damn you! Damn you!

Amos pauses to remove his wide-brimmed hat and wipe his brow. Sadness and anger in his eyes. He looks up.

AMOS

Damn you! Damn you, I say. I do not know if I damn you for my shame or for my actions. Relieve me from my shame, and... I promise... I'll...

Amos bellows, throws the pitchfork.

AMOS

Damn!

A CHURCH BELL PEALS O.S.

Annoyed by the bell, chest heaving, Amos shakes his head. He blows out a breath. He's surprised to see his breath condense in the air.

He retrieves the pitchfork, and slams it against the side of the building, prongs facing upward.

He enters the shed and bangs the door.

CUT TO BLACK:

A LOUD FINGER SNAP.

2 INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

2

Amos blinks, taking in his surroundings. Confused. Mouth agape. He tugs on his beard, taking in...

A garish elevator. A polished control panel indicating ninety-nine stories, including L & B. "99" is illuminated.

Amos has no idea what this is... where he is.

Across the elevator stands ORCUS (ageless), arms at his side, gaze riveted on Amos. He wears a hip outfit, a pair of horn-rimmed glasses. A hint of a smile.

ORCUS

Good day, Amos. I hear your lament,
my good man. Perhaps we should...
(mesmerizing gesture)
...chat a spell.

Outside the elevator, pitch black.

Amos bolts for the door.

ORCUS SNAPS his fingers. The door closes. Elevator is still.

Amos backs into a corner of the elevator, stammering. Nothing comes out.

Orcus removes his glasses and slips them in a pocket with panache. He engages Amos' eyes.

Amos clasps his hands in front of his groin.

ORCUS

A life of pain... a life fraught
with grief... and shame... well,
that is nothing but intolerable.

Orcus leans back, retracts a leg beneath him. He motions for Amos to agree.

Amos dumbly nods.

Orcus looks at his hands, rubbing his thumbs on his fingers.

ORCUS

I am Orcus. My charge is to ensure
that oaths are fulfilled, promises
kept.
(off no reply)
What if I told you I could relieve
your pain?

AMOS

If it's too good to be true, it must
be a deal with the Devil.

Orcus looks up from under his eyebrows, prompts Amos with a sinister sneer.

ORCUS

Do I look like the Devil to you?

AMOS

I know not what the Devil looks like.
Why are you here?

ORCUS

I am here to aid you in fulfilling
your promise.

AMOS

What promise?

ORCUS

Ah yes, that not fully issued promise.

AMOS

What?

ORCUS

Come now. But a moment ago you were
petitioning with a promise, were you
not?. "I promise... I'll... Hmm?

Amos stammers.

ORCUS

Something... something possessed you
to seek solace from your grief in
the way you chose last night, did it
not?

Amos stammers.

Orcus SNAPS HIS FINGERS.

The face of REBECCA, an Amish woman (20s), appears. Though
innocent in appearance, she's tussled, hay in her hair.
Satisfied pleasure. A beckoning smile. Love in her eyes,
she wants more of Amos.

Amos sags, knees buckling.

Orcus waves his hand, the image fades.

Amos drapes his arms over his head.

Orcus moves a step closer, pacing back and forth, eyes locked
on Amos, who stares at his feet, shaking his head.

ORCUS

I have a question for you, Amos.

AMOS

How do you know my name?

ORCUS

I know many things. In fact, some say I know all things.

AMOS

Are you God?

ORCUS

One should not ask questions for which one does not want the answer.

Confusion for Amos. Hypnotic stare from Orcus.

AMOS

Then why are you asking me questions?

ORCUS

If one adheres to a creed and commits to it, what is it called when one violates that creed?

AMOS

What?

ORCUS

Would you, Amos, agree that living a life of pleasure is a healthy thing? Even if part of that pleasure stands outside the bounds on ones stated creed?

Amos' eyes dart about the elevator, bouncing between Orcus and the door. He looks down, folds his hands, almost prayerfully.

AMOS

I could not agree to that. It would defy the doctrines of my faith.

ORCUS

Doctrines of your faith? Why do you choose to have your life limited by rules? Rules based upon what?

(broad gesture)

What about a life of freedom? The freedom to savor a life of pleasure...

AMOS

That would be sin.

ORCUS

You know, Amos, sin simply means to miss the mark.

(MORE)

ORCUS (CONT'D)

So you wander from the path... off
the straight and narrow, how big a
deal is that in the...

(broad gesture)

...entire scheme of things?

AMOS

No. Sin means to oppose the will of
God.

Amos' eyes widen. He stammers.

ORCUS

I know what you did.

Amos gulps.

ORCUS

I mean... a man... known to be capable
and chaste... if he were to lust in
his heart... or worse, perform
unhallowed carnal acts... well...

Amos replies with a guilty look. He wipes at a tear.

ORCUS

Behavior that contradicts beliefs,
conflicts the soul.

(off Amos' head shake)

...perhaps conflicted souls, such as
yours, will be banished to the
invisible ethers of the Unknown.

Amos rushes the elevator door. He claws at it. Doesn't
budge.

Orcus laughs, SNAPS his fingers. "B" illuminates.

The elevator jolts into motion. Amos braces.

Floors count down.

ORCUS

All you need to do, Amos... is press
one of these buttons. We move to
that place... and you disembark.

(wa-la gesture)

Simple.

Orcus, with a sweeping motion, invites Amos to do just that.

Amos rushes the control panel.

Orcus waves his hand at the control.

Frantically Amos presses every button. The elevator keeps on, bypassing all floors. "92."

ORCUS

(chuckles)

You know, good man, if you were to disembark on any of these floors... perhaps you would seize control of your destiny. Then again, perhaps you would tinker with your fate.

Amos shakes his head: "That is not possible!"

ORCUS

Perhaps the outcome would be a life of pleasure and good. Perhaps it would exceed the horrors of... you know. Once you choose, there is no going back...

Amos backs into the far corner, trembling. Terrified of Orcus, unable to look way.

ORCUS

Indecision is purgatory.

Orcus waves his hand at the elevator panel again. He pulls a pair of scissors out of what appears to be thin air. He snips under his chin, hands the scissors to Amos and motions for him to cut his beard. "86."

Amos reluctantly takes the scissors. He examines them, a speculative glance at Orcus. Could he rush him and drive the scissors into his heart? Amos positions the scissors as if a weapon. He raises his arm.

Orcus performs a rolling hand gesture.

Amos appears frozen, arm quivering. Unable to move, breathing is nearly impossible.

Eye contact. Orcus looks him down.

Amos licks his lips; even that's a struggle.

Orcus reverses the hand gesture, prompts with a nod: "Cut the beard."

Amos closes his eyes, shakes his head.

AMOS

I cannot. It is a reminder of my adulthood... of my...

ORCUS
 Adulthood? Your adulthood? Look at
 me.

Amos does.

Orcus makes a snip gesture.

Reluctantly, Amos snips the slightest bit of beard. Watching
 it fall to the floor, he gasps. Angrily, Amos hurls the
 scissors against the wall. They break.

Another FINGER SNAP.

Rebecca appears in the flesh, standing directly before Amos.
 She smiles demurely... so inviting.

Amos shields his eyes with a hand. A glance at the panel.
 "77."

REBECCA
 Amos, Amos. How long have we been
 plotting our togetherness? Yes, we
 took innocence from one another. It
 was my will... and yours too as I
 surmised. Amos, do you not feel the
 pure bliss? In the eyes of the
 Divine... could this be anything
 other than...?

Amos shakes his head.

She steps closer.

REBECCA
 Amos, my dear Amos... promise me.
 Promise me your heart... your soul.

She reaches to...

Amos, who tentatively reaches to her. Abruptly, he retracts
 his hand.

AMOS
 Send her away! Leave me be!

ORCUS
 Come now. Did you not feel better...
 because of what you shared together?
 (wiggles eyebrows)
 Ah, lust and pleasure. Dare I say
 love? Or are you not man enough to
 know?

Amos recoils, every muscle tightens.

AMOS

Send her away.

Orcus SNAPS HIS FINGERS. "68."

Rebecca morphs into a made-up harlot. She lustfully rushes Amos.

REBECCA

Amos, my Amos. Since our innocence
is gone, Amos, shattered by our
encounter. You might as well...

(seductive)

...make something of your sins.

She grabs his shirt and pulls him near, her mouth opening...

He kicks at her.

Poof! Smoke. She is gone.

Amos falls backward into the elevator's walls. Stunned.

ORCUS

Poor form, Amos. You rejected yet
another fruit of my offering. You
are not endearing yourself to me.

AMOS

Leave me be. Let me go.

ORCUS

Why should I?

Orcus points to the panel. "59."

AMOS

(a gasp, then...)

Where are we going?

ORCUS

Where do you think?

(off a long look)

You leave me with no choice. I cannot
allow you to exist as you were.
Miserable. Cowering. Afraid of
your shadow.

AMOS

I was following the Will of...

ORCUS

Please. Spare me the litany.

(MORE)

ORCUS (CONT'D)

You went against your scripture as
you tussled with that woman... what
was her name?

Amos glances at the floor, then the control panel... "51."

AMOS

(barely audible)
Rebecca.

ORCUS

Presently, I see no choice but for
you to suffer in the hell of
hypocrisy. Unless...

"49." Orcus steps closer, holds up a finger.

ORCUS

I wish to extend an alternative. An
opportunity if you will. An
opportunity you would do well to
relish.

Amos glances at the control panel. "47."

AMOS

I cannot live in defiance of His
Rules!

ORCUS

His Rules are my rules.

Orcus prances about the elevator, eyes riveted on Amos. A
sly chuckle.

ORCUS

Simply, when people live caught
between choices... perplexed by the
paradox of their options, that is
Hell... in its purest form.

Amos defiantly shakes his head. "42."

ORCUS

Tell me, Amos, have you not spent
your days depriving yourself of
contentment on Earth because you
intend to please...?
(gestures upward)
...tell me this woman is the only
source of joy you've ever rejected.

Amos licks his lips. She is not.

ORCUS

So, would you not conclude by any logic that the Omnipotent One is oblivious to your lot in life? Indifferent to your joy?

AMOS

What you're suggesting...

ORCUS

...you think this is heresy?

AMOS

It is blasphemy.

"37."

ORCUS

Is it blasphemy to assume the Divine wishes you to suffer in life? Or that the Divine wishes you contentment, peace in your choices, love?

Amos nods.

ORCUS

What sort of God would disapprove of you giving yourself to her and she to you?

Amos ponders the question. The elevator jolts, accelerates.

Orcus checks the decreasing numbers. Amos' eyes do the same.

ORCUS

Do you honestly believe you should be denied pleasure?

"31." Amos snorts.

Orcus ceases his pacing, crosses his arms, and leans closer to Amos.

ORCUS

The choice is yours, Amos. You cannot live in both worlds.

Amos defiantly leans toward Orcus. "27."

Faces inches apart, they can taste each others breath.

AMOS

And if I don't choose?

Orcus angles his head: "Do you want that question answered?"

ORCUS
Do you want her?

Amos nods. "21."

ORCUS
Say it, Amos. Words matter.
(off no reply)
You cannot do it. I own you.

Amos ponders the implication. He nods slowly, then feverishly. He takes a step toward Orcus.

Orcus cocks his head, giving a look of admonition.

Amos steps back.

AMOS
Yes. Yes. I choose... I want... I
want to be with her.

ORCUS
Then fight for her.

The elevator shudders violently. Lights flicker. It accelerates. "17," "16."

Amos glances at the control panel. No clue. Exasperated, he flaps his arms at his side. "14," "13."

He feels something. "10," "9."

He removes the awl from his pocket. He studies it, glances at the elevator panel. "7," "6," "5."

Sweat drips from Amos' brow. His breath is visible in the air. He rushes the panel. Stares at it. Confusion.

"3."

AMOS
I want...

ORCUS
Declare it, man. State your will!

"2." Amos raises the awl. He stabs the panel, nails "L."

AMOS
Her! I want her! Rebecca!

ORCUS
Damn you.

The button glows red.

A puff of smoke. Orcus is gone.

The elevator jolts to a violent halt. Smoke. Lights flicker.

Amos pulls the awl from the button. Rushes the door. Pries at the door with the awl. It opens with remarkable ease. Amos stares into...

BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT. In the light, Rebecca moves forward. In one hand she holds the pitchfork. She reaches out with a hand, devilishly delectable smile. A "come hither" look for the ages.

Amos stands. Wobbles. He hesitates.

REBECCA
Now, Amos. Make haste. Before it
is too late.

Amos deliberates.

Ominous, awful GRINDING noises. FRYING SERVOS. SLIPPAGE. METALLIC CLANGS.

Rebecca nods, finger wave: "come hither."

Amos steps out...

3 EXT. ELEVATOR - DAY

3

Amos reaches to Rebecca. He hesitates, looks back in the elevator.

More ELEVATOR NOISES.

He looks back to Rebecca. Her free hand urgently urges him closer.

Amos turns away, nearly falling back into the elevator. He steadies himself, debates. Suddenly, he throws the awl into the elevator.

The doors slam shut. The elevator speeds away. Smoke and light seep from the seal of the door.

Amos turns to Rebecca. He licks his lips.

She beckons.

He reaches to her hand and just before they touch, we freeze frame and...

FADE OUT.