

UNDER THE RABBIT MOON! A tragedy realised in the style of
horror aimed at a teen audience (CW: implied violence)

WRITTEN BY

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PREMISE:

THE MISTERS DOPPE-HART are a conjoined entity whose diametric constituent parts are separated upon a full moon, by THE BOSS WITCH. With the diminutive 'conscience' twin removed, the hulking abomination named ARTHUR is free to murder in The Boss Witch's name. They must, however, fuse back together by sunrise lest both twins die.

TREATMENT:

Arthur, a burly abomination who is simple in nature, pursues his diminutive brother CEDRIC in a desperate chase, with both twins' survival at stake. Illuminated by an unsympathetic moon, Arthur's pursuit leads him into dense forest where thorny trees assail his face and upper body; these wounds heal immediately in the moonlight. Arthur calls out for his brother.

Attempting to gain an insight into his brother's position, Arthur accesses a psychic gift known as 'Remote Viewing'. This enables him to see through his brother Cedric's eyes, and vice versa. However, all Cedric allows Arthur to see is The Rabbit Moon. This is achieved by Cedric staring at this astral body, thereby preventing Arthur from deducing his brother's whereabouts.

Earlier that night, in a clearing, a rectangular altar stands with a smouldering brazier at each corner. THE COVEN chant and dance within this place of worship. Vapours rise from one brazier, and these conspire to form a semi-translucent shadow play. This provides an insight into the protagonist's origin plus development:

The twins are presented in the womb; foetal Arthur is much larger than his conjoined twin. After this, they are ready for birth. Forceps are used during their delivery, which occurs during a full moon on 20th August 1967. This inflicts a wound on Arthur's head, which duly heals. The shock of this prompts the MIDWIFE WITCH to drop this conjoined entity. Upon hitting the floor, Cedric's bones shatter. They heal immediately but remain in situ, leading to disfigurement.

As the twins develop, it is made clear that their healing ability is linked with the lunar cycle. Arthur's murderous urges begin with animals and, after several years, progress to human beings. In an effort to curtail his brother's rampages, Cedric begins using his telepathic talents to jam Arthur's cognition. This leaves both parties in a permanent vegetative state.

The Boss Witch deduces that Cedric, 'The Conscience Twin', could be safely cut away from Arthur's shoulder during a full moon. Their shared ability to heal will, on every occasion, nullify any injuries and/or complications caused by this procedure. Once separated, Cedric is imprisoned in a box adorned with occult sigils designed to prevent his escape. Arthur, on the other hand, is set free to murder in The Boss Witch's name.

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There is, however, a very clear caveat: the twins may only heal under full moon and just fuse back together before sunrise. Failure to do so will result in both twins' deaths. In despair at his brother's rampages, Cedric determines that, to prevent further loss of innocent life, he must escape his diminutive prison and remain hidden from Arthur until sunrise thereby ending both their lives. This is the only way that Cedric can end these murders.

Driven to the brink of madness by his brother, Cedric commits the previously unthinkable: in his malady, kills two ACOLYTE WITCHES who were instructed to guard him whilst the remainder are distracted by ritual. He kills both Acolyte Witches by telekinetically pinching their aortas together. He expresses sorrow towards this act committed in a moment of madness.

Three hours prior to these events, a small dog is seen chewing on a dried human ear. The Boss Witch refers to these as 'Rabbit Ears'. She asks Arthur if he is ready to capture and kill THE RABBITS. He gleefully confirms his desire to kill. There are two imprisoned Rabbits. RABBIT ONE, a young woman, and RABBIT TWO, a middle aged man.

A ritual ensues, during which both Arthur and Rabbit One are anointed with mystical symbols linked with The Coven and the gods they worship. Cedric watches this despairingly from his little box. With closed eyes and covered ears, Cedric tries to disengage from the forthcoming acts. In the background, Arthur begins counting to ten. It takes a couple of attempts. However, once his count is completed, Arthur begins pursuing Rabbit One. A little later, Cedric is forced to watch Arthur's pursuit by unwillingly entering Remote Viewing.

An hour later, Arthur returns. Dragging Rabbit One's corpse by her ankle, he awkwardly places her on the altar. The Coven begin another ritual, and evidently gain vitality from this dead body's lingering essence. Arthur and Rabbit Two are subsequently prepared for the next pursuit. Part of this involves daubing Arthur with Rabbit One's blood. This ritual is, again, partially presented by Cedric's Remote Viewing ability being passively accessed.

Cedric despairingly screams, prompting The Acolyte Witches to kick his cramped Bastille. Arthur's activities are, again, involuntarily witnessed by Cedric. It is revealed that The Boss Witch is broadcasting Arthur's vision to Cedric to compromise his ability to act. Eventually disengaging, Cedric's powers are fully awakened. Burning away all sigils on his box, this twin kills The Acolyte Witches and escapes by telekinetically picking the lock. In a fragmented presentation, Cedric witnesses the death of Rabbit Two.

A while later, Arthur drags Rabbit Two's dead body to the altar. Awkwardly lifting Rabbit Two, Arthur places this corpse upon the altar beside Rabbit One. The bodies are arranged in a way that suggests a snapshot of affection.

The Boss Witch notifies Arthur that it is time to fuse back with Cedric. However, Arthur notices Cedric's absence, prompting the desperate search and chase as shown at the beginning of this short film. Cedric hides up a tree, and is eventually located when Arthur catches him unawares with Remote Vision. Arthur dislodges Cedric from the tree by hurling a heavy log. Cedric falls, shattering his bones that duly heal in situ, further disfiguring him and mirroring the events of his birth.

Arthur drags Cedric to the altar. The Coven watch dispassionately as Arthur cuts both his and Cedric's shoulders with a surgical saw. He presses their wounds together, and they begin to heal. As the twins are slowly knitted back together, a harsh sun shines. As the sun hits the twins, their wounds stop healing. This results in The Mistresses Doppe-Hart dying, in floods of tears, within each other's arms. Upon their last shared breaths they express forgiveness.

As an epilogue, The Coven bring a PREGNANT YOUNG WITCH to the altar. The Mistresses-Doppe-Hart's corpses are awkwardly removed from the altar. The Pregnant Young Witch enters labour; forceps are picked up. The short film ends.

WRITER'S STATEMENT:

Under The Rabbit Moon is a tragedy, in the style of horror, aimed at a teenage audience (both early and late teens). This is a delicate balancing act given that certain sensitivities must be taken into account, whilst acknowledging that most members of the target audience are desensitised significantly due to the availability (rightly or wrongly) of sensitive content online. This is an unpleasant fact. These facts need to underpin my overall portrayal of menace and fear.

The central theme is a fear of death on three counts. First, and most obvious, is Arthur's overbearing will to survive at all costs fuelled by the fear of one's own demise; second is a fear of death inflicted on others; third, a more opaque aspect, is the death, or suspension, of morality on each occasion that Cedric and Arthur are separated. These are *Under The Rabbit Moon's* bedrock.

This offering also addresses, quite thoroughly, core elements of the horror genre. Take the following, for instance:

The core characters reside in an 'ordinary world' prior to the events listed. This is a vegetative prison

There is a 'supernatural force' at work here: The Witch, coupled with the twins' supernatural ability to heal

The protagonist faces death if he fails to reunite with his twin prior to sunrise

The twin, Cedric, being more psychically and mentally developed is smarter than this tale's protagonist

The fear of death is crucial to this plot - Arthur is simply doing all he needs to for his own survival

There is an 'omnipresent point of view': the audience can view from the perspective of the protagonist or antagonist

The protagonist's actions are realistic, being physical in nature. This is juxtaposed against the antagonist's psychic abilities and actions

There is an expert, namely The Witch, whose dispassionate estimation of both twins leads to exposition

This utilises the effects generated by the manipulative power of filmmaking as a route to affecting audiences

There is an element of innocence, demonstrated by the enduring love between The Misters Doppe-Hart.

The title of this piece stems from my own childhood. As a kid, I could never see 'The Man in the Moon'. Rather, I always noticed an upside down rabbit. The 'Cottontail' theme is continued further, with Arthur Doppe-Hart referring to his quarry as 'Rabbits', thereby dehumanising them and justifying his actions.

I wanted the tension to derive from polarised desperations of the central characters: Arthur Doppe-Hart wishes for the survival of himself and his beloved twin. Cedric Doppe-Hart desires their deaths. The high stakes cat-and-mouse chase is effectively fuelled by these conflicting wills: survival versus oblivion.

Lastly, the inclusion of several witches is important for the narrative. I intended to provide at least one familiar element within this horror piece, since 'familiarity' links with 'expectation' which is, in turn, linked with the genre. The audience can accordingly connect with this offering.

SCRIPT:

EXT. WHITE TEXT ON AN ANIMATED BLACK AND GREY BACKGROUND - NIGHT

A black screen with gently moving trees presented as grey silhouettes. WHITE TEXT is imposed.

WHITE TEXT

Thursday, 15th January 1987. A final separation.

MONTAGE - SEPARATION

EXT. THE TWINS BEING SEPARATED - NIGHT

Varying perspectives of Cedric being cut away from and by Arthur using a surgical saw, by the bigger twin, under a full moon.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The Rabbit Moon features as the separated twins howl. Cedric, in distress, and Arthur with glee.

EXT. WHITE TEXT ON AN ANIMATED BLACK AND GREY BACKGROUND - NIGHT

Presented as before.

WHITE TEXT
A malignant pursuit.

EXT. WOODLAND - NIGHT - LATER

Through dense branches, Arthur paces with urgency. The thicket's density prevents Arthur from running, but his frantic steps suggest he wants to.

Arthur's face and upper body are scratched by thorny branches but these wounds immediately heal under the vivid, white, Rabbit Moon. He chops at the branches with his cleaver.

Arthur's twin, Cedric, telepathically communicates with him. His voice is a delicate whisper that is juxtaposed with Arthur's brutal baritone.

CEDRIC (O.S.)
Arthur, my heart beats for you.
It does. But our hearts must stop
beating. We shouldn't survive.

ARTHUR
My beating heart! My beating
heart! My beating heart!

Arthur pauses for a moment. He drops his cleaver, and closes his eyes. Arthur's right thumb is placed upon his temple with the index plus middle fingers against both eyes. Arthur's eyes are tightly shut and, through this activity, he accesses Cedric's sight using 'Remote Viewing'.

EXT. CEDRIC'S VISION, THE RABBIT MOON - MOMENTS LATER

A fuzzy representation of The Rabbit Moon, in pink. Through Cedric's eyes, the rabbit is well defined. More clearly visible than the standard representation.

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EXT. CEDRIC'S HIDING PLACE, TREE - MOMENTS LATER

Cedric is concealed in the branches of a nearby tree. His skin has changed colour, matching the surroundings, like an octopus. He looks up at The Rabbit Moon. He whispers.

CEDRIC

Brother, you'll only notice the moon. That's all I see! All I will see!

Cedric closes his eyes in a manner akin to Arthur earlier as he prompts Remote Viewing.

EXT. WOODLAND - MOMENTS LATER

A sound akin to feedback can be heard as Cedric's attempt to access Remote Viewing cancels Arthur's utilisation of this ability.

EXT. ARTHUR'S VISION, WOODLAND - MOMENTS LATER

Through Remote Viewing, Cedric determines that Arthur is looking at the tree in which he hides.

EXT. CEDRIC'S HIDING PLACE, TREE - MOMENTS LATER

Distracted by an owl flying by, Cedric involuntarily disengages from Remote Viewing. He looks at the owl.

EXT. ARTHUR'S VISION, WOODLAND - MOMENTS LATER

Cedric is able to see himself through Arthur's eyes. However, the larger twin fails to notice his diminutive brother due to his camouflage.

EXT. CEDRIC'S HIDING PLACE, TREE - MOMENTS LATER

Cedric realises that Arthur is aware of his presence. Arthur can be heard loudly sniffing. He shouts in his baritone.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Oink! Oink! Brother! Oink! Oink!

EXT. WHITE TEXT ON AN ANIMATED BLACK AND GREY BACKGROUND - NIGHT

Presented as before.

WHITE TEXT

This dog eats dried rabbit ears

The White Text is then replaced with a secondary statement.

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WHITE TEXT
Three hours prior!

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

A small dog lays in the clearing, chewing on a dried human ear. Arthur is on all fours, pretending to bark like a dog. Both Arthur and the small dog look up affectionately at The Boss Witch, who is off screen.

Four ceremonial braziers are located around the altar, with one situated in each corner. The Coven surround the gently illuminated altar and are visible as silhouettes through the braziers' vapours.

Rising, semi-translucent, smoke deriving from one of these braziers accommodates a shadow play that depict the conjoined twins' shared origin and development.

INT. THE SHADOW PLAY - INSIDE THE WOMB

The first silhouetted image depicts the foetal conjoined twins. Arthur is a great deal larger than Cedric. They are joined at the shoulder. This is narrated by one of The Coven as she addresses those attending the ritual.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In 1967, a conjoined entity that would end so many lives in our name prepared to grace the earth.

After this, the clearly developed twins are grabbed by forceps and dragged from the womb.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

These twins shared a gift. An almighty gift! One that would change our lives and the manner in which us witches are sustained!

EXT. THE SHADOW PLAY - BORN UPON THE ALTAR

The next silhouettes depict The Mistresses Doppe-Hart being born under a full moon.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It was under the rabbit moon that these conjoined twins were born.

Arthur is wounded by the forceps but immediately heals. Shocked, THE MIDWIFE WITCH responsible for the twins' safe delivery drops them.

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NARRATOR (V.O.)

It was the rabbit moon that saved the twins from an otherwise fatal fall!

Cedric hits the floor first. Taking the brunt of this impact, his bones shatter. Immediately healing, but remaining in situ, these severely disfigure Cedric.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It is under the rabbit moon that they heal even the most grievous of wounds in a matter of seconds.

EXT. THE SHADOW PLAY - WOODLAND

This section of the shadow play depicts Arthur and Cedric's growth. As they develop, Cedric becomes anguished as Arthur exhibits cruelty to animals and, later, human beings.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

These twins were, are, diametrically opposed. One would feed us. The other would starve us, given the choice.

Cedric - diminutive and physically very frail - despairs as he is forced to observe Arthur's violence.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Cedric, the conscience twin, resolved to forestall Arthur's murderous rampages. He would starve us, the scum!

Arthur is aggressive to various living things. He burns plants, kills animals and attacks humans.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Arthur Doppe-Hart. The one who would feed us. The abomination. His torturous habits began with animals. But eventually he angled his ire at humans. People. You and me!

The next silhouette shows Cedric cancelling his brother's cognition using his telepathic abilities. They are, as a result, both in a vegetative state.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Cedric learnt to paralyse Arthur mentally. However, the effort involved this affected him, leaving both in a vegetative state

EXT. THE SHADOW PLAY - ALTAR

The Boss Witch separates the twins using a surgical saw.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The witch learnt to exploit the twins' ability to heal. Every full moon since 1980, the twins were separated surgically.

The twins are now separated, and their wounds heal rapidly and completely.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Freed from his conscience made flesh, Arthur was free to murder in the witches' name. But there is a caveat.

EXT. THE SHADOW PLAY - REJOINING

The twins are laid upon the altar. They are both cut deeply; their wounds are forced together and, as they heal, the twins knit together. They completely fuse together once more.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

They must rejoin before sunrise, or both will die.

EXT. WHITE TEXT ON AN ANIMATED BLACK AND GREY BACKGROUND

Presented as before.

WHITE TEXT

CATCH THE RABBITS!

There is a subsequent written statement.

WHITE TEXT

Two hours earlier ...

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

In front of the altar, Arthur and Cedric are in a vegetative state. The Coven all act together to lift Cedric's blockage of Arthur's thoughts.

THE BOSS WITCH (O.S.)

You are awakened! Mark the full moon, Arthur. Remove your conscience. Prepare to kill!

The Boss Witch hands Arthur a surgical saw. He removes Cedric with great pain endured by both. Cedric is placed unwillingly in a box. The wounds heal and Arthur is handed a t-shirt and trousers.

INT. CEDRIC'S DIMINUTIVE PRISON - MOMENTS LATER

Cedric, weakened by the exertion involved with blocking Arthur's cognition, slumps in the box as he slowly comes to.

EXT. CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

Rabbits One and Two are bound beside the altar. They are forced to imbibe a concoction that makes them passive as The Coven daub their bodies with sigils.

As he comes to, Arthur wears trousers and a t-shirt that says 'SNIFF-SNIFF'. He watches, rubbing his hands excitedly.

ARTHUR

The gods. They see. What do they see? I will see!

Arthur's t-shirt is removed and he imbibes a different liquid. The screen becomes fuzzy. Rabbits One and Two are now bound at their wrists and ankles while the sigils, as perceived by Arthur, begin to glow.

Arthur jumps up and down like an over-excited toddler.

THE BOSS WITCH (O.S.)

Calm down, Arthur! Patience! All you need to do is count to ten!

Cedric can be heard whimpering from inside a box, where he is imprisoned and guarded by two ACOLYTE WITCHES. One Acolyte kicks the box.

ACOLYTE WITCH ONE

Shut it, Cedric!

INT. CEDRIC'S DIMINUTIVE PRISON - MOMENTS LATER

With tightly closed eyes and covered ears, Cedric's prison shakes as The Acolyte Witches kick and shove it. Cedric then involuntarily accesses Arthur's sight through Remote Viewing.

EXT. ARTHUR'S VISION, CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

Arthur's vision indicates that Rabbit One, fully anointed and fed an antidote to the pacifying concoction, is released.

THE BOSS WITCH (O.S.)

If you escape, you win. If you win, you live. If you live, you may join us!

Rabbit One runs into the woods. Arthur jumps up and down, clapping and rubbing his hands.

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THE BOSS WITCH
 She will not win, will she
 Arthur?

Arthur simply looks at he Boss Witch, smiles and shakes his head.

ARTHUR
 One, two, three, four, five, six,
 seven, eight, nine, ten!

The Boss Witch, silhouetted by the Rabbit Moon realised in red, approaches. She rests a hand on his shoulder.

THE BOSS WITCH
 Now go, Arthur. Go!

Arthur, able to see himself through Cedric's eyes, playfully flexes his muscles. The sigils glow. The Rabbit Moon glows pink.

EXT. CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

Arthur howls with passion and glee. He runs into the dense woodland.

EXT. WHITE TEXT ON AN ANIMATED BLACK AND GREY BACKGROUND - NIGHT

Presented as before.

WHITE TEXT
 First blood!

INT. CEDRIC'S DIMINUTIVE PRISON - NIGHT

Cedric mutters incomprehensibly to himself.

EXT. CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

The sigils on Cedric's box begin to glow and burn away. The Acolyte Witches notice this and, before they can raise an alarm, both collapse in silent agony.

INT. ACOLYTE WITCH'S CHESTS

Each Acolyte Witch's aorta is telekinetically pinched by Cedric, causing their deaths in an unpleasant manner.

EXT. CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

The lock for Cedric's box is telekinetically picked.

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The box opens.

INT. CEDRIC'S DIMINUTIVE PRISON - MOMENTS LATER

Cedric opens the lid to his box. He awkwardly drags himself out.

EXT. CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

Cedric changes colour to match the surroundings. Engaged in their ritual, The Coven fail to notice Cedric escaping. He telekinetically moves and conceals The Acolyte Witches' bodies then crawls into the nearest thicket.

In the distance, The Coven can be heard commending Arthur for a job well done. They cheer and chant.

EXT. CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

A montage of various witches absorbing life essences from the recently deceased Rabbit One. They grow less pallid and more youthful.

EXT. WOODLAND - MOMENTS LATER

Arthur listens to the distant cheers and chants as he drags Rabbit Two's corpse through the dense woodland. He excitedly claps, dropping the corpse. He then looks concerned.

EXT. CEDRIC'S VISION, THICKET - MOMENTS LATER

Cedric looks over his shoulder at The Acolyte Witches' corpses.

EXT. WOODLAND - MOMENTS LATER

With head in hands, Arthur doubles over with anguish.

EXT. CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

The Coven can hear Arthur's distant, anguished, cries. Their ritual is stopped immediately.

ARTHUR
Cedric! Gone! Gone!

WITCH ONE runs over to Cedric's box. The lid is closed, and locked. She unlocks it, and realises it is empty. She alerts The Boss Witch.

WITCH ONE

It's Cedric. He's not there. He's gone!

THE BOSS WITCH

Honestly?

The Boss Witch cradles her head for a moment.

THE BOSS WITCH

Find that imbecile, Arthur! FIND HIM! Forget the rabbits! FORGET THEM!

EXT. WHITE TEXT ON AN ANIMATED BLACK AND GREY BACKGROUND - NIGHT

Presented as before.

WHITE TEXT

A malignant pursuit.

EXT. WOODLAND - MOMENTS LATER

As Arthur seeks his brother, Cedric telekinetically raises himself up the tree. Arthur calls out as Cedric begins to weep.

CEDRIC

Arthur, my heart beats for you. It does. But our hearts must stop beating. We shouldn't survive.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

My beating heart! My beating heart! My beating heart!

Cedric clings tightly as he can, to a precarious branch as he notices the sun crowning over the eastern horizon.

EXT. CEDRIC'S HIDING PLACE, TREE - MOMENTS LATER

Cedric watches Arthur from up high. The latter is suddenly aware of Cedric's presence.

EXT. CEDRIC'S VISION, WOODLAND - MOMENTS LATER

Arthur sees himself through Cedric's vision. He is able to deduce his brother's location. He picks up a heavily log and, screaming, throws it.

EXT. CEDRIC'S HIDING PLACE, TREE - MOMENTS LATER

Cedric is struck by the heavy log.

EXT. WOODLAND - DAWN

Cedric falls to the floor, his bones shattering in a similar manner to the earlier description. He is even more disfigured as the bones heal, more slowly, in situ once more. Arthur approaches with haste.

Arthur grabs Cedric by the ankle and drags him to a large fallen tree. The sun casts shadows. Using the cleaver, Arthur cuts his and Cedric's shoulders. He presses the wounds together. They begin to knit together as Arthur prepares to fuse back with his brother. However, hit by the sun, the injuries stop healing.

The Coven walk into this scene, watching dispassionately as The Misters Doppe-Hart slowly bleed to death under the unforgiving sun. Both are in floods of tears.

CEDRIC

I man sorry, my brother. My
beating heart! You have to die.
And I have to die.

The twins gradually progress towards unconsciousness. Cedric feebly continues talking to Arthur as he fades. They hold one another in their arms.

CEDRIC

I love you, brother! My beating
heart!

ARTHUR

One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven, eight, nine, ten.

CEDRIC

My ...

One by one, The Coven turn away and walk out of this scene.

CEDRIC

... Beating ...

The Boss Witch stays nearby, however. She offers a reassuring hand to Arthur, stroking his brow.

CEDRIC

... Heart!

Like The Coven, The Boss Witch exits. The Misters Doppe-Hart, life ebbing, are left behind on the fallen tree under a strong morning sun.

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**EXT. BLACK TEXT ON AN ANIMATED WHITE AND RED
BACKGROUND - MORNING**

In a reversal of the earlier text, this represents daytime.
The trees, in red, sway with the slight breeze.

BLACK TEXT
An epilogue!

EXT. WOODLAND CLEARING - MORNING

A heavily pregnant YOUNG WITCH is guided to the altar. The
Boss Witch adorns her belly with sigils. The Young Witch
enters labour atop the altar.