

THE MAZE AND THE MONSTER

Written by

Kenneth Quinnell

334 19th St NE
Washington, D.C. 20002
quinnelk@gmail.com
850-339-4600

FADE IN.

EXT. A FOREST - DAY

Open on a nondescript forest somewhere in Northern Europe (probably). Winter is nigh.

An American soldier, GIBSON, runs into the shot. We are behind him. He turns and looks back towards the camera and then keeps running.

GIBSON
Shit, shit, shit.

Gibson is dressed in standard U.S. Army green camo. He carries an M-16. His helmet is unstrapped. Gibson is a white man with sandy hair in his mid-20s. He has an average build.

TARRANT (O.S.)
(in the distance)
You'd better run and hide!

He looks back, but keeps running. He's scared.

Switch to the view in front of Gibson. He emerges from the forest into a clearing and stops dead.

Before him towers a large wall, as wide as he can see in either direction.

In the center of the wall before him is an opening.

GIBSON
What the fuck?

In the distance, the sounds of several men can be heard yelling. They're getting closer.

Gibson walks forward and enters the maze.

The passage goes straight ahead. The walls are 30 feet high. Nothing grows inside the maze. The floor is dirt.

Gibson stops once he's officially inside the maze.

Nothing happens.

He shrugs. Then he runs.

He comes to a four-way intersection.

He looks down each passage, then back at the entrance.

The sounds of other soldiers getting closer.

Gibson turns towards the left and runs down that passage. He quickly takes another left turn and disappears into the maze.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Six soldiers dressed in the same uniform as Gibson walk through the forest. The formation is really loose.

At the point is PEREZ, a Hispanic-American in his early 20s. Perez says nothing as he emerges from the forest. He stares up at the maze wall.

Behind him come the Grey brothers. ERIC comes first. He's a white guy barely 21, tall, buff and big.

ERIC

What the fuck is this?

His brother, DONNIE, is a year or two younger. He is smaller, thinner and quieter.

DONNIE

Don't know.

He shrugs.

Next up is THOMAS, a black man who is nearly 30. He's stout, but certainly smaller than Eric.

THOMAS

Hold up. Let's talk this through.

After him is TARRANT. Tarrant is a massive man, easily the largest in the squad. He's mid-20s, white and bursting with energy. He can't stand still.

TARRANT

Let's go get that bastard!

THOMAS

No, let's wait a second. No need to rush into whatever this is.

Tarrant wants to go, but he takes the order.

Last is CARTER. Carter is a black man in his early 20s. He's nervous. He says nothing.

The group of men stands side-by-side and stares at the maze, Thomas standing in the middle.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
So what is this we have here?

Silence.

Thomas looks from side to side at the row of men.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Nothing? Nobody has an idea?

TARRANT
I have an idea. Let's go get that
deserting fuck.

Thomas nods.

THOMAS
I'm well aware of your enthusiasm,
Tarrant. I'm sure you and the Eager
Brothers here...

He motions to the Grey brothers. Donnie smiles. Eric
chuckles.

Perez remains stone-faced the entire time. Carter fidgets
with his M-16.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
If those... if I still had the rest
of my squad...

TARRANT
Jesus protect Tex and Martini.

DONNIE AND ERIC
(simultaneously)
Amen.

Thomas waves them off.

THOMAS
Martini would've understood
whatever this is.

TARRANT
He was the smart one.

Perez almost imperceptibly chuckles at Tarrant.

THOMAS
So, clearly, we've all never seen
anything like this. The enemy never
stops coming up with new ways to
fuck up my shit.

Tarrant nods.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
So what do we do?

He steps forward and turns to look at all of them.

The Grey brothers shrug. Carter looks away.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Anyone?

TARRANT
Let's go get that fucker.

ERIC
I hate traitors.

DONNIE
Me, too.

Thomas turns and looks back at the maze.

THOMAS
He's definitely in there. Let's go.
We'll deal with whatever whenever.

Beat.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Perez.

It's a command.

PEREZ
On it.

He tightens the grip on his M-16 and moves towards the entrance of the maze.

Thomas looks back at the squad.

THOMAS
Carter! Get in there.

Carter looks back and forth from the maze to Thomas.

CARTER
But I'm...

Thomas and Tarrant both shoot him sharp looks.

He says nothing and moves towards the maze.

Tarrant waves the Grey brothers forward and they bound towards the maze with enthusiasm.

TARRANT

What is this, sir? Is it a trap?

Thomas looks at him for a second.

THOMAS

Who cares? Let's go.

He walks towards the maze. Tarrant follows.

INT. THE MAZE - MOMENTS LATER

The soldiers stand at the intersection, looking down the various passages.

THOMAS

Perez. You hear anything?

Perez shakes his head.

TARRANT

What do we do, sir?

THOMAS

Well, shit. Looks like we're gonna have to split up.

He looks around.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Anybody have a problem with that?

If anyone does, they keep it to themselves.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Alright, let's see how well you bastards did at Highlights magazine. Let's go!

CARTER

What's Highlights...

Tarrant glares at him. Carter shuts up.

Thomas gestures towards the right passage.

THOMAS

Perez. Go that way. Tarrant, go with him.

Perez and Thomas lock eyes.

Beat.

Another beat.

Perez turns and walks towards the right passage.

Tarrant turns to follow. Thomas grabs him by the shoulder and leans in and whispers into Tarrant's ear.

Tarrant nods grimly and follows Perez.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Let's have all the fucking Grey
brothers keep going straight.

Eric eagerly starts down the passage. He looks back at Donnie.

ERIC
You sure you can handle a straight
line, Donnie?

DONNIE
Fuck you!

He points his M-16 at his brother.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
I can handle a straight line for
your ass.

He laughs and follows.

THOMAS
Carter. You're with me.

He nods towards the left passage.

Carter doesn't move at first, but then trudges towards the left.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Dipshit.

He follows.

The sun drops below the top of the maze wall and shadows start to fill the passages.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. RAMSHACKLE SHED - DAY

The scene shifts to black and white.

Deep in the woods, the soldiers stand outside the closed door of a ramshackle 10' by 10' wooden shed. It has no windows.

Thomas stands just outside the door. He looks satisfied.

THOMAS
Perez, you're up.

Perez stares at him.

PEREZ
No.

Tarrant is shocked.

TARRANT
What?

Tarrant is angry. Thomas is stone-faced.

PEREZ
You heard me.

TARRANT
Are you disobeying a direct order?

Donnie and Eric move closer towards Perez, flanking him.

Carter stands apart from the others.

Gibson stands even further away.

THOMAS
That is a direct order, Perez.

Beat.

PEREZ
No.

Tarrant, Eric and Donnie crowd Perez towards the shed.

Gibson takes a step further away from the shed.

Carter notices, but no one else does.

Carter and Gibson lock eyes.

Gibson nods towards the forest.

It takes Carter a second to understand.

Gibson nods again. He takes a step.

Carter mouths the word "no" at him.

Gibson takes off running. Carter watches him go.

Donnie looks up and sees Gibson. He points.

DONNIE

Hey! Where's Gibby going?

They all turn to see Gibson disappear into the woods.

Perez backs away from the other soldiers, he pays no attention to Gibson.

THOMAS

Son of a bitch! Fellas...

He turns to rest of the soldiers.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Looks like we have a deserter.

He starts walking after Gibson.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

And you know what we do with deserters?

He starts to run. Eric and Donnie follow.

TARRANT

We kill them.

He says it directly to Perez.

Beat.

Perez jogs after Thomas.

Carter follows as well.

Tarrant runs after them. His grin is devilish.

INT. THE MAZE - PRESENT

The sun is low enough that the passage is largely shadows now.

Gibson turns a corner to the right and sees a long straight passage.

He walks a short ways down the passage before he stops and looks around.

Nothing.

He listens.

Nothing.

He sits down, leaning against the wall.

He pulls a photo out of his breast pocket. He stares at the photo, which is of him, along with a woman and a young girl. A family.

His eyes tear up.

He puts the picture away and wipes his eyes.

He pulls a grenade from one of his pockets.

He starts to fiddle with the pin.

He takes a deep breath. He puts the grenade away.

He hears a sound.

He looks up and sees a figure standing at the corner.

The figure is large. About as large as a human being could be. He wears green military fatigues and boots. The clothes are torn, the boots cracked.

Long, bristly black hair emerges from every tear and crack. His hands are covered with it. His head is also covered with it. He has two large horns growing from his head.

This is THE MONSTER.

The Monster stares at him for a second.

Gibson looks down as he gets up.

Once he's on his feet and looks up again, the Monster is gone.

Gibson picks up his M-16 and quickly moves away from the Monster.

INT. THE MAZE - PRESENT

Thomas kneels in the intersection, looking at boot prints on the ground. There are many and they go in all directions.

Carter stands about as far away as he can while still being in the intersection.

THOMAS

I'm not a damned tracker. There's too many boots on the ground.

He stands up.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

But my best guess is that the freshest boots go...

He looks down at the ground again and then points in the direction Gibson went.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

...that way.

He gestures for Carter to move down the passage. Carter goes. Thomas follows.

INT. THE MAZE - MOMENTS LATER

Carter arrives at a split in the passageway. He stops and turns to look back at Thomas.

CARTER

Which way now?

Thomas walks forward and pushes Carter aside.

Carter moves towards the passage that turns towards the center of the maze.

Thomas kneels down again to look at the boot prints.

THOMAS

If I'm reading things correctly...

The Monster emerges from the other passageway and brings a clawed hand down on Thomas. The claw marks on Thomas' face begin to bleed profusely.

Thomas struggles to pull out his sidearm.

Carter takes off running down the passageway. His helmet falls off as he runs.

Another claw comes down on Thomas and he falls to the ground, dead.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. RAMSHACKLE SHED - DAY

The scene shifts to black and white.

Carter stands before the closed door of the shed.

CARTER
D-do I have to?

TARRANT
Hell yeah you do! It's squad
bonding time!

Carter looks at the door. Then Tarrant. Then Thomas.

Thomas nods.

Carter shuffles his way towards the door.

He opens it up and goes in, although we never see what's inside.

Tarrant smiles. Thomas turns and looks towards the woods.

INT. THE MAZE - MOMENTS LATER

It's nearly night now, but the moon provides light in the center of the maze's passages.

Carter has been running for quite a while. He's breathing heavily. He's sweating profusely.

He comes to another intersection.

CARTER
Fuck, fuck, fuck!

GIBSON (O.S.)
Stop right there.

Carter turns towards the leftward passage. Gibson points his M-16 at Carter.

GIBSON (CONT'D)
Drop the weapon.

Carter looks back at the passage he came from.

CARTER
Fuck that, man!

Carter holds his weapon tighter as he looks back at Gibson.
Gibson takes aim.

GIBSON
I'm not going to say it again.

Carter looks down the passage again.

CARTER
C'mon man, there's something back
there. It got...

Gibson steps forward, keeping the M-16 pointed at him.

GIBSON
You saw it, too?

CARTER
Saw it? It fucking ki...

The Monster emerges from the shadows, smashing its horned head into Carter. As he flies off of his feet, Carter squeezes off several rounds from his M-16. He hits the ground with a thud.

Gibson slips back into the shadows.

Carter sits up and points the rifle at the Monster. He fires.

The bullets do nothing.

Gibson trips over his feet and falls on his ass.

The Monster kicks the gun out of Carter's hands.

Then it kicks him in the face, knocking Carter onto his back.

As Gibson stares on with fear, the Monster brings its boot crashing down onto Carter's head, which crunches flat into the ground.

Gibson gasps.

The Monster looks directly at Gibson.

Gibson grips his rifle tighter.

The Monster looks away and shambles down the opposite tunnel.

Gibson exhales a deep breath.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. RAMSHACKLE SHED - DAY

The scene shifts to black and white.

TARRANT
Eric! You are up.

ERIC
Fuck yeah!

He goes into the shed eagerly.

INT. THE MAZE - PRESENT

Eric and Donnie casually walk down the dark passage.

ERIC
Let's hurry up and find this fuck.

DONNIE
Yeah. I don't like this place.

Eric laughs.

ERIC
Haha, fucking loser. Leave it to
you to get scared...

The Monster leaps out of the shadows with an open mouth filled with razor-sharp teeth.

It closes its mouth down on Eric's neck. Blood spurts as Eric screams.

Donnie pulls his trigger, but more of his bullets hit Eric than the Monster.

The Monster looks up at him and roars.

His head leaning back, Eric makes eye contact with Donnie. He mouths the words "help me," but no sound comes out.

The Monster takes another bite of Eric. Eric screams some more.

Donnie runs off.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. RAMSHACKLE SHED - DAY

The scene shifts to black and white.

THOMAS

Tarrant. Take a break. It's your turn.

TARRANT

Thank you, sir.

He sets his M-16 on the ground and walks toward the shed.

TARRANT (CONT'D)

Gonna show you pukes how it's done.

He goes into the shed.

INT. THE MAZE - PRESENT

Perez is on point. Tarrant follows, not too far behind.

They come to a split in the passage.

Perez turns back toward Tarrant.

PEREZ

Which way, boss?

Tarrant smirks.

TARRANT

Why the fuck do we let you run point?

He pushes past Perez and takes a look down each passage.

TARRANT (CONT'D)

How can you run point if you can't even make a fucking decision.

Tarrant licks his finger and holds it up to the wind.

TARRANT (CONT'D)

(under his breath)

Indecisive piece of shit.

Tarrant doesn't notice anything.

He does the same for the other passage.

Perez chuckles.

TARRANT (CONT'D)
Fuck you. We're going this way.

Tarrant takes the passage towards the center of the maze.

TARRANT (CONT'D)
It's ridiculous who they let into
the Army these days. I can't
believe you even made it in. Who
did you fuck to get recruited
anyway, Perez?

He continues walking for a bit.

TARRANT (CONT'D)
I asked you a question...

He turns around. Perez is not there.

TARRANT (CONT'D)
Mother fu...

He pauses. Then he smiles.

TARRANT (CONT'D)
Looks like we have ourselves
another deserter.

He goes back towards the split in the passage. He stops.

TARRANT (CONT'D)
Now, if I were a fuckwad, which
passage would I take.

He looks towards the direction they came in and then the new
passage. He points towards the new way.

TARRANT (CONT'D)
Eney, meanie...

He points towards the old way.

TARRANT (CONT'D)
Miney...

The Monster bites part of his hand off. Tarrant screams in
agony as he staggers back from the Monster.

He lifts the M-16 to shoot, but winces and drops it when his
wounded hand touches it.

The Monster advances.

Tarrant retreats.

He reaches down and pulls a knife from a sheath.

The Monster roars.

Tarrant rushes at it, screaming, and brings the dagger down at the Monster's heart.

The knife breaks when it hits the Monster's body.

TARRANT (CONT'D)

Fuck.

The Monster punches Tarrant in the chest with his full might. Tarrant's bones crunch as he is thrown backwards.

Tarrant struggles to pull his sidearm free with his working hand.

We switch to Tarrant's POV as the Monster comes directly at him.

The Monster opens his mouth and everything goes black for Tarrant.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. RAMSHACKLE SHED - DAY

The scene shifts to black and white.

Donnie squats, smoking a cigarette.

Tarrant walks out of the shed. He's a bit sweaty.

TARRANT

Donnie! You are up!

Donnie leaps up and flicks the cigarette away.

DONNIE

Bout time.

He goes into the shed.

INT. THE MAZE - PRESENT

Gibson walks along a passage and it opens up into a large open area. Passages leave the open area in the center of each of the other walls as well.

From the passage to Gibson's right, Donnie comes running.

Gibson raises his rifle and points it at Donnie.

GIBSON

Freeze.

Donnie does. He doesn't know where Gibson is, though, so he has to look around before he spots him.

DONNIE

It's not me, man. Someone...
someTHING killed Eric!

GIBSON

Drop your weapon.

He looks towards the passage he came out of.

DONNIE

But...

Gibson takes a step closer, his rifle aimed at Donnie's head.

GIBSON

Now.

Beat.

Donnie carefully puts the weapon down.

DONNIE

C'mon, man!

Perez emerges from the third passage, his rifle held up, but not directed at anyone.

PEREZ

What's this?

Gibson turns his rifle on Perez.

Perez doesn't flinch. He doesn't lower his weapon.

GIBSON

I am not dying today.

DONNIE

What the fuck?

PEREZ

I've got no problem with you,
Gibson.

Beat.

Gibson relaxes.

DONNIE
Can I have my gun back?

GIBSON
You going to behave?

He looks back towards the passage.

DONNIE
C'mon, man. If you saw what I
saw...

GIBSON
I did.

Perez relaxes.

PEREZ
Me, too.

GIBSON
What was it?

PEREZ
No idea.

The Monster emerges from the fourth passage.

DONNIE
Fuck!

It roars.

Donnie scrambles to pick up his gun.

Gibson and Perez turn their guns towards the Monster and they start firing.

Donnie joins them and all three men unload their clips.

The smoke clears.

The Monster, unharmed, roars again.

Perez pulls out his knife and rushes at the creature.

Once he gets close enough, the Monster backhands him, knocking him to the ground. The knife flies from his hand.

Donnie pulls out his sidearm and levels it at the Monster. He starts walking closer and closer. He starts to shoot at it, stepping forward as he shoots.

He pushes the attack, but nothing hurts the Monster. Once he's close enough, the Monster disembowels him with a claw swipe.

Donnie falls to the ground, lifeless.

Perez grabs his knife and gets to his feet.

GIBSON
What do we do?

The Monster roars.

Perez looks at Gibson.

PEREZ
That a grenade?

Gibson stares at him.

GIBSON
It won't work.

The monster steps forward.

PEREZ
It's our last chance.

GIBSON
We have no chance.

Gibson tosses his useless M-16 to the ground.

The Monster raises its arms and levels one at each of them. Then it brings them together in a clapping motion.

The two men exchange looks.

GIBSON (CONT'D)
What does it want?

PEREZ
I think it wants us to fight each other.

GIBSON
What?

The Monster repeats the motion. Then it roars.

They turn to face each other.

The Monster snorts approval.

GIBSON (CONT'D)
What choice do we have?

PEREZ
None.

Gibson pulls out his knife.

GIBSON
I guess we're doing this.

It's not a question.

He rushes at Perez and tries to stab him.

Perez easily sidesteps the attack and tries to slice at Gibson as he goes by. He misses.

The Monster roars with approval.

Perez flinches at the roar. Gibson lunges again.

Perez dodges again and manages to slice Gibson on the forearm. The cut goes through the uniform, but doesn't get too deep into the flesh.

The Monster sniffs blood in the air. It roars in approval.

GIBSON (CONT'D)
This is fucking crazy.

Perez just watches him.

GIBSON (CONT'D)
Gonna make me do all the work?

Perez doesn't take the taunt.

Gibson frowns.

He rushes at Perez.

Perez drops low, going under Gibson's attack. He slices Gibson on the leg.

Gibson howls in pain and falls toward the ground. As he falls, though, he sweeps his leg, taking Perez off his feet.

The two men fall to the ground in a tangle. They start to roll around.

Gibson raises his knife to stab Perez, but Perez grabs the knife hand while using his other hand to smash Gibson in the face with the butt of his knife.

Gibson's nose gushes blood.

The Monster sniffs the scent of blood again. It grunts approvingly.

Perez squeezes Gibson's wrist and Gibson drops the knife.

Perez lets go of Gibson's wrist and stands up. He kicks Gibson's knife away.

He takes a few steps closer to the Monster, keeping his knife pointed at Gibson.

PEREZ

That enough? Or you need more?

The Monster grunts.

Unseen by Perez, Gibson pulls out the grenade.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. RAMSHACKLE SHED - DAY

The scene shifts to black and white.

Thomas walks several feet towards Gibson, who stares at the shed.

THOMAS

You ready for this?

Beat.

GIBSON

I am.

Thomas claps him on the shoulder.

THOMAS

(laughing)

I knew you would be.

Gibson goes through the door.

INT. THE MAZE - PRESENT

Perez takes another step closer to the Monster.

Gibson sits up and steadies himself.

PEREZ
(yelling)
What do you want?

Gibson pulls the pin from the grenade.

The Monster rushes at Perez.

Perez drops low. Instead of attacking him, the Monster leaps over him.

Gibson throws the grenade.

The grenade ricochets off the Monster's chest and falls back into Gibson's lap.

GIBSON
Oh fuck!

The Monster crashes down on top of Gibson, knocking him prone.

The grenade goes off between the Monster and Gibson. The Monster's body fully contains the explosion.

Perez stands and looks towards them.

The Monster gets up. The front of its clothes are fully shredded, black fur fully on display. The Monster is covered with blood and guts and Gibson, but it is unharmed.

The Monster roars at Perez.

Then it walks back into the maze.

EXT. THE MAZE - MORNING

Perez walks out of the maze. In the distance is a mountain range. Before him is a trail leading down into another forest. In the valley below the forest is a village. Lights dot the village.

Perez takes his first step down the path.

He doesn't look back at the maze.

FADE OUT.