

THE CONSTRUCT

THE CONSTRUCT

Knut Svanholm

KONSENSUS.NET

The Construct

Copyright © 2024 Knut Svanholm

v1.0.0

Published by konsensus.net 

CONTENTS

About this Piece	v
1 The Construct	1
Source	7

ABOUT THIS PIECE

Knut Svanholm · Oct 10, 2024

An article published by konsensus.net.

CHAPTER 1

THE CONSTRUCT

Vincent trudged forward, burdened by his luggage as if weighed down by the desolate land's very fabric. The final leg of the road writhed like a serpent, its ashen skin devoid of the comforting touch of asphalt. The ominous gloom swallowed the remnants of daylight, leaving him to navigate through a twilight realm of unease. "Remember the twelve words, Vincent," he muttered before soldiering on. "This is the last contract. Just a few more days, then poof! No more meetings, no more deadlines, no more paperwork. After this, I'll finally be free."

He had been sent to this forgotten part of the country by his employers at The Deep Sea Construction Company to examine blueprints for a



construct that he would never fully understand. They were building something big on the seabed of the lake next to the village, but his security clearance curtailed any specific details about the project.

The village loomed ahead, its silhouette veiled in the cloak of the encroaching night. The car, a feeble companion in this dark place, found solace outside the gnarled grip of the forest as Vincent was forced to park and close the last stretch by foot. The sickly twilight glow waned, suffocated by the towering sentinels of darkness that guarded the land's secrets. Twisted branches intertwining like skeletal fingers obscured the light that had once revealed the sprawling expanse of the neighboring rye fields, a haunting barrier separating the timeworn forest from the neighboring village.

A foreboding stillness settled upon the woods, casting an unhallowed pallor over its inhabitants. The absence of wind stifled even the faintest whispers, rendering the air stagnant and oppressive. Vincent could not shake the unnerving sensation that some predator observed his every move, its sinister gaze peering through the dense shroud of foliage.

Time became a treacherous sprite, playing cruel tricks upon his senses, distorting the perception of his journey. It stretched as an elastic torment, elongating each agonizing step while his mind succumbed to the maddening dance of uncertainty. Yet, as the nocturnal odyssey unfolded, a feeble light flickered into existence, casting its meager glow upon the lonely path: a solitary street lamp, the first beacon of civilization. "If the damn hotel is not at least a Best Western instead of a Worst Eastern like the last one they put me in, I'm gonna sleep in the damn car," he thought to himself as he entered the village.

The stark boundary between the mysterious forest and human habitat materialized. Where the woodland's dominion ceased, a formidable fence rose. Like a towering monolith of isolation, its presence marked the fragile boundary between the safety of human encampment and the lurking terrors of the forest.

Vincent stood at this threshold, poised between the familiar and the abhorrent. Shadows danced around him, their macabre waltz an unsettling omen of the horrors that awaited within the village. Yet, driven by determination, Vincent summoned the courage to push on, to brave the unknown that dwelled within the unhallowed embrace of this accursed place. “Remember the words, Vincent. Just remember the damn words.”

Perched upon a modest hillock, the concrete domain of the Deep Sea Construction Company’s office revealed itself, with its austere presence looming over the quiet village. Vincent, weary from his delayed flight, had discovered that his inaugural meeting with the mid-level managers had been adjourned until Monday. This deferral left him with idle hours to fill throughout the insufferable weekend. He scrolled through his e-mails and discovered that his temporary abode was apparently a rental apartment of dubious comfort. With 9% battery remaining on his phone and resolute determination, he forged ahead, following the path that led him toward the marina and the adjacent shoreline.

The road unfurled beneath his feet, guiding him down toward his destination, where the ethereal expanse of the lake extended into the unknown. Mirroring the inky heavens above, the lake’s obsidian surface reflected a perfect blackness that concealed the secrets submerged below. Upon the distant horizon, the silhouette of a colossal drilling platform emerged, its true enormity shrouded by the deceptive distance. Though diminutive from this vantage point, Vincent possessed an intimate knowledge of its true magnitude, an understanding that made his whole body shiver. Was this where he would spend his precious days for a couple of months? “If I die here, so be it. If I don’t, salvation is just around the corner.”

A deliberate turn to the right brought him in proximity to his temporary sanctuary, a villa located upon the edge of the forlorn beach. He approached the entrance, his cold fingers shivering as his thumb touched the fingerprint reader. *BLEEP*. A red light flashed. “Oh, for Pete’s sake,” Vincent muttered under his steamy breath as he desperately used it to

warm his mitts. Finally, inside the confines of the villa, a dimly lit corridor stretched before him. The walls exuded a foreboding aura, whispering tales of long-forgotten secrets. A slight creak escaped the hinges as he swung the door open, revealing a former boy's room.

Entering the room, his gaze was drawn to the window through which the lake sprawled in enigmatic grandeur. The furnishings within the room were scarce, the bed and bedside table serving as the sole occupants of the desolate space. Pallid drapes well past their time limped from the sides of the imposing window, offering a frail barrier to the yet unknown outside. Wearing from his journey, Vincent turned his attention to personal hygiene, retreating to the moldy bathroom across the corridor.

On his way back, his towering stature almost collided with the low archway, a testament to the ancient proportions of the dwelling. "What is this place? A home for ants?" he thought to himself as he entered his dour chamber. He ensured the door was securely locked and drew the blinds shut, which shrouded the room in velvety darkness, promising respite from the overwhelming surroundings.

With weariness weighing heavily upon his mind and body, Vincent surrendered to the beckoning abyss of sleep. Troubled dreams populated the murky recesses of his subconscious, interlaced by brief flashes of the new life that awaited him after this last horrid job was finally over.

"What was that?!?"

Vincent woke up swiftly, shaken and groggy from an uneasy slumber. Shrouded in darkness, his room seemed impervious to the passage of time. The silence was deafening. His mobile, neglected and uncharged, offered no support in its silent oblivion.

With a swift motion, Vincent yanked the blind open. Moonlight cascaded into the room, unveiling the eerie tableau that lay beyond the glass pane. His eyes fixated on the moonlit beach that morphed the landscape into an otherworldly realm. Then suddenly, amidst the tranquil scene, his gaze alighted upon a lone figure standing steadfast, facing the impenetrable depths of the lake.

The distance between them obscured the finer details, yet Vincent discerned the silhouette of a man adorned in a tailored suit, clutching a mouse-eared leather portfolio in his right hand. Uncertainty gnawed at Vincent's psyche, compelling him to rub his eyes in disbelief, hoping to dispel the surreal apparition before him. But when his vision cleared, the man remained a bewildering sentinel amidst the moon-kissed night.

Before Vincent could muster his faltering thoughts, the man embarked upon an incomprehensible course. He strode purposefully into the watery expanse with measured strides, never wavering from his determined path. Vincent's eyes widened with morbid fascination as the suited figure pressed onward, each step plunging him deeper into the enshrouded depths. And then, with an unsettling finality, the man vanished beneath the lake's surface, swallowed by its inky embrace. Only the faint ripples and concentric circles of disturbed water bore witness to his fleeting existence. "Jeepers, tittie-fornicating Lord, what in the heck was that?"

Minutes stretched agonizingly as the vanished man refused to resurface. Like a malevolent serpent, panic constricted Vincent's trembling heart. What unspeakable rite had he just witnessed? His frantic mind raced, grappling with the unfathomable. He rummaged through his luggage hastily, clad himself in haphazardly donned attire, and hastened toward the room's exit. But in his state of frenzied urgency, fate conspired against him. The archway loomed low, and in the darting of his somewhat silly walk, Vincent's head collided with an unyielding force that rendered him unconscious. Vincent's tumultuous thoughts were instantly consumed by the quandary that awaited him beyond the threshold of consciousness.

"...member ...the ...words, Vin ...cent."

A disquieting sense of familiarity accompanied Vincent's second awakening. Once more, he found himself in his bed, the window concealed behind the same impervious blind. A disturbing continuity prevailed as he surveyed his untouched luggage as if the turbulent events of the previous night had been naught but figments of a fevered imagination. A perplexing question seized his thoughts — had it all been a mere phantasmal

reverie, a nocturnal concoction of his slumbering mind? Had a man really walked out into the lake? How could such vividness be contained within the ephemeral realm of the subconscious?

Insatiable curiosity made Vincent's grand mission take the back seat as a desperate need for closure gripped him. He approached the window again, reaching for the old piece of string that entwined the dusty blinds. With a decisive pull, the world beyond was laid bare, revealing the dawn of a new day. Morning's golden light cascaded upon the landscape, coaxing a flock of doves into flight, their wings fluttering, startled at the disturbance. The air was devoid of any breath of wind as the tranquil lake mirrored the heavens above, a perfect reflection that seemed to conceal more than it revealed.

A gentle touch traced a protrusion on his forehead. Pain radiated through his senses, scattering tangible reminders of the ordeal he had endured, even if its reality remained inscrutable. Having taken inventory, Vincent sighed as a muted acceptance washed over him, for he knew that dwelling upon this riddle would lead him down a labyrinthine path of endless speculation. It was time to abandon the depths of introspection and embrace the banality of daylight.

Determined to dispel the lingering specter of the uncanny, Vincent resolved to venture into the town to immerse himself in the mundane affairs of daytime existence. It seemed a prudent course of action, a welcome intermission following the dark corridors of his troubled thoughts. With a subtle nod to himself, he cast aside the lingering shadows of uncertainty, resolute in his decision to face the rest of the weekend beyond the confines of his room.

For now, at least, the pursuit of distractions offered a semblance of solace, a temporary refuge from the tendrils of the inexplicable that coiled menacingly within the sinuous depths of his mind — a mind utterly unaware of the twelve words that had been so precious a mere night hours ago... "Right. Another week of work to look forward to. Only twenty-one more years until retirement."

Is there a greater horror in this world than forgetting what you forgot?

SOURCE

Originally published at konsensus.net/article/the-construct