

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
Cansu Yersal, BA

Fear (1917)

Robert Wiene (1873-1938)

Contents (Overview-Synopsis-Characters-Character Analysis-Themes-Scenes)

OVERVIEW

Auteur: Robert Wiene (b. 1873— d. 1938) was a writer and film director of the silent film era of German cinema. He is particularly known for *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) which is considered to be one of the finest examples of German expressionism. He is also famous for *Raskolnikow* (1923), an adaptation of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*; *The Hands of Orlac* (1924), a silent horror film; *One Night in Venice* (1934), an operetta film. He was born in Breslau as the elder son of the successful theater actor Carl Wiene. Following the rise of the Nazis to power, he fled Germany as he was of Jewish descent. Wiene died of cancer at the age of 65.

Film: *Fear* (German: *Furcht*) is a 1917 German silent horror film written and directed by Robert Wiene. The film stars Bruno Decarli, Conrad Veidt, Bernhard Goetzke, Mechthildis Thein, and Hermann Picha. The producer was Oskar Messter. The sets were designed by Ludwig Kainer. The film was released in September 1917. *Fear* is about the psychologically complex situation Count Greven finds himself in when he returns home after touring the world. His secret is that he has stolen an idol from an Indian temple which, as a consequence, causes him to lose his sanity. *Fear* was well-received by contemporary critics. In particular, Wiene's interpretation of psychology and portrayal of paranoia were praised.

Historical Background: *Fear* belongs to the 1910s era and is thus Robert Wiene's one of the earlier and lesser-known works. Wiene is mostly known for directing the landmark 1920 film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Despite not being as famous as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Fear* shows us the competency of Wiene as a director who is successful in sustaining an uncanny and bizarre atmosphere by employing a very straightforward plot. Conrad Veidt plays the Indian priest, in his first of several films with Wiene. By 1917, Veidt had already been lured away from the theatre by the film industry's financial rewards. *Fear* is his fourth film in which he played and the first film that is not lost.

SYNOPSIS

Count Greven tours the world for several years after which he returns to his castle. However, he is now changed: His disposition is withdrawn and fearful. He orders to his servants that the doors of the castle be kept locked. When he is left alone, he opens a chest inside of which is a Buddha idol. Several days later, a concerned servant informs the town's minister about his master's melancholia and fearful demeanor. When the minister comes to visit Greven, Greven tells the minister how, while he was visiting India, he had heard of a beautiful Buddha statue that made the sick well and the sad joyous. He confesses that he stole the Buddha idol from the temple and brought it home. The count explains that he now fears the temple's priests' revenge upon him. As the minister leaves shocked, he says to the servant that Greven needs a doctor. Count Greven screams that he no longer wants to live since waiting in suspense is worse than death.

One night, an Indian priest appears on Greven's grounds. The Count wishes that the Indian priest kills him to end his suffering, but the priest refuses. He prophesies that the Count will have only seven more years to live, after which he will be killed by the hand of the one who loves him most. The Count spends those years indulging in extravagant parties and gambling, but these pleasures become unsatisfying. He then wants to achieve fame by researching a solution for world hunger, only to later destroy the cure for his amusement. Still searching for meaning, he engages in a passionate love affair with a young woman

As seven years pass, he becomes paranoid once again. He plans to leave his castle. However, he cancels the trip as he cannot leave his lover. He throws the statue into a lake to break the curse. To his dismay, the statue reappears in his home. Greven can trust no one, not even his wife as he suspects that she might kill him. Finally, he shoots himself. The statue is then carried back to India by the mysterious priest.

CHARACTERS

Count Greven: A Count with a passion for collecting rare works of art who steals a Buddha statue
Indian Priest: A mysterious priest who appears on the grounds of the Count's castle
Manservant: The Count's worried servant who always tries to help his Master
The Minister: A rational and logical man who believes Count Greven needs to see a doctor
Greven's Lover Count Greven's affectionate and beautiful lover

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Count Greven

Count Greven is the main character of the film. He has a passion for collecting rare works of art which leads him to travel the world. He goes to India and becomes mesmerized with a Buddha statue which he later steals from the temple. However, his mind is always disturbed after this stealing act as he believes that Indian priests want to take revenge on him.

Passionate: Count Greven is a passionate human being. He has a particular passion for collecting rare artworks. The thing that leads him to steal the Buddha statue in the first place is his passion for the beautiful and impressive idol. Thus, we can say that he is passionate about beauty, glamour, art, religious mysteries, and so on. His passion for the Buddha statue can also be seen in the way he looks at and holds the statue proudly.

Paranoid: After Count Greven steals the Buddha idol from the temple, his entire demeanor changes. He turns into a fearful, uncomfortable, tense, and paranoid man. As he believes that Indian priests are after him to take revenge upon him, he is always on edge and looks for signs of danger in every corner. His paranoia grows day by day and transforms into a possibly psychotic experience. Here, it must be noted that even the appearance of the Indian priest on the grounds of the Count's castle might be a figment of his imagination.

Impulsive: The Count has an impulsive character. His impulsivity can be observed in his body language, gestures, and mimics. After the Indian priest tells him that he only has seven more years to live, he decides to live an utterly hedonistic lifestyle. He throws extravagant parties, gambles, drinks intoxicants, and leads a life of sensual pleasures. However, because he is innerly dissatisfied with everything; he decides to try something new and tries to find a cure for world hunger only to later capriciously and impulsively destroy his invention. Thus, his impulsivity is also connected to his selfish nature.

Selfish: The Count's selfishness can be observed in his acts and behavior. He steals the Buddha statue without thinking about the deleterious consequences of his actions. His selfishness makes him forget that the statue belongs not to him but to the entire Buddhist/Hindu community. Thus, he cannot even realize that his action is ethically unwholesome. Another selfish act of his is when he destroys the cure he found to combat world hunger. His capriciousness and selfishness make him incapable of thinking about the benefit of anyone but himself.

Indian Priest

Indian priest is the figure who is one of the priests/monks taking care of the Buddha statue. After the Count has returned home and has been getting more and more paranoid, the priest mysteriously appears

on the grounds of the Count's castle and tells him that he only has seven more years to live and will die at the hand of one who is dearest to him.

Mysterious: The Indian priest is an utterly mysterious character. We do not know how he came to Count's castle. The film gives us no clues as to how the priest might have found out about the whereabouts of the Count and came to visit him. Moreover, the prophecy that the priest makes is enigmatic and mysterious as well. He doesn't explain why the Count is allotted only seven years to live and why he has to suffer too much. At the end of the film, we see the mysterious priest once again. This time, he carries the Buddha idol out of the castle and possibly brings it back to India (even though we do not see that this happens definitively).

Manservant

The manservant of Count Greven is a loyal and helpful attendant. He plays a minor role in the film. Despite his minor role, his concern for his Master is noticeable.

Helpful: Because he is worried about the Count's psychological state and well-being, the manservant goes to visit the minister of the village. He asks for his help and says to him: 'My poor Master is suffering, and I know not the cause! I can no longer bear to see his suffering!' This considerate act of the manservant shows us that he is a reliable, helpful, and loyal servant.

The Minister

The minister of the village is a logical and rational man. Like the manservant, he also plays a minor role in the film. However, his logical and rational perspective makes us question the reliability of Count Greven and his experiences.

Rational: The minister is a sensible and reasonable man. He listens to the whole of the Count's story and finds it absurd and unrealistic. The Count tells the minister that he fears the Buddha priests' revenge: 'The terrible Buddha priests want their revenge! They seek me and they will also find me! There is no escape from their secret power!' The minister finds this story illogical and tells the manservant that the Count needs a doctor. The minister's point of view makes us the viewers question the truth or reality of anything the Count experiences.

Greven's Lover

Count Greven's lover is a young lady who appears near the end of the film. She is a joyous and affectionate character with whom the Count falls in love.

Affectionate: The Count spends his days joyously and happily with his lover. The young lady is an affectionate woman who shows fondness and tenderness towards Count Greven. However, as Count Greven's paranoia grows day by day, he even comes to be suspicious of his lover. He comes to believe that his lover might be the one to kill him as per the Indian priest's prophecy.

THEMES

SOCIETY

Religion Religion is one of the major topics of *Fear*. Count Greven travels to India and encounters a Buddha idol in a Hindu/Buddhist temple. Being enchanted and mesmerized by the artwork, he decides to steal it. However, after having stolen the idol, he is plagued by doubts about the priests who might wish to take revenge upon him for the unacceptable deed he committed. As the Count tells the minister: 'Since that day, I have had no peace. The terrible Buddha priests want their revenge! They seek me and they will also find me! There is no escape from their secret power!' Here, we can examine the plot of the story in the context of the Buddhist religion. Buddhism is a religion founded by Siddhartha Gautama, a wandering ascetic and teacher who lived in South Asia during the 6th or 5th century BCE. One of the

ethical precepts of Buddhism is abstaining from taking what is not given. According to this perspective, what Count Greven does is a violation of this ethical precept. Therefore, as per the principle of karma/kamma, he has to bear the consequences or effects of his unwholesome action. However, the utterance of Count Greven: 'The terrible Buddha priests want their revenge!' shows us that the Count has no real acquaintance with the Buddhist religion as one of the tenets of Buddhism is to have compassion and loving-kindness for every sentient being and wish them to be free from harm. Therefore, we can confidently assert that Count Greven's paranoia and doubts that he will be haunted by the priests are not based on the reality of Buddhism and seem to be pure figments of his imagination.

CRIME

Injustice Injustice refers to a lack of fairness or an unjust act or occurrence. The unjust act that happens in *Fear* is Count Greven's stealing the Buddha statue. First of all, the Buddha statue is the property of the temple. Therefore, he has no right to own the statue. By stealing the statue, Count Greven not only acts selfishly but also shows that he has no respect for the temple or the priests taking care of the temple. This unjust act leads to various karmic consequences that Count Greven has to deal with. Because of the unwholesome action he undertook, he is always plagued by paranoia that the priests will want to take revenge on him. Later on in the film, when the Indian priest appears on the grounds of the Count's castle, he tells the Count that he will only have seven more years to live. The Count decides to spend those years pursuing a hedonistic (pleasure-oriented) lifestyle. Being dissatisfied with his hedonistic life later on, he tries to find a solution to world hunger. However, he destroys his cure before it is presented to the public. His act of capriciously destroying his very cure for world hunger is another unjust act that he commits. Looking at the patterns of actions that Count Greven engages in, we can conclude that he commits unjust actions because he does not care for the rights and interests of anyone but himself and is a selfish human being.

Punishment There is no legal punishment that Count Greven has to face. He does not have to face any legal consequences as a result of his stealing act. Nevertheless, he faces the karmic consequences of his actions. Here, karma means that the intent and actions of an individual influence the future of that individual. We can say that he is psychologically tortured throughout the film as a result of taking the Buddha statue out of the temple. He is always paranoid, doubtful, and fearful that something bad is about to happen to him as a result of his stealing. After the Indian priest appears on the grounds of his castle and tells him that he only has seven years to live, he lives a hedonistic life for those seven years. However, as those seven years come to an end, we see how he once again becomes plagued with paranoia and doubts about what his fate will be. At the end of the film, he cannot bear the suspicion anymore and finally shoots himself. Thus, we can say that he gives his own punishment to himself. Some may argue that Count Greven did not deserve what happened to him as he was simply in a state of psychosis which made him unable to tell reality from imagination. But the important point is that he *willingly* and *intentionally* stole the Buddha statue and knew very well at the time of his stealing that he was acting selfishly. Therefore, he is responsible for his behavior and has to face the consequences thereof.

Revenge Count Greven is afraid of the possibility that the Indian priests might take revenge on him because of his stealing act. For this reason, he is fearful and paranoid throughout the film. He does not seem to realize that he is psychologically torturing himself with his very thoughts, beliefs, and behavior. Even though there is no certain evidence that the Indian priests are after him, he believes this to be the case. Therefore, he is always on edge and on the lookout for any signs of danger. Even the appearance of the Indian priest may be taken to be a sign of his mental disturbance. As the Minister comes to conclude, Count Greven needs a doctor before anything else. He is not mentally stable and may even be suffering from psychosis which is a psychological state where patients lose their contact with reality and start to live in an imaginary world that is a product of their disturbed minds. Therefore, it might be argued that even the appearance of the Indian priest may be a figment of Count Greven's imagination. Perhaps he hallucinated the Indian priest and all the things he told him. Whether the Indian priest wanted to take revenge on Count Greven for his unacceptable stealing act is a question that can only be answered if we know whether Count Greven hallucinated the priest or not. We can say that we do not have sufficient evidence to conclude either way.

Guilt Guilt refers to the fact of having committed a specified or implied offense or crime. Count Greven feels guilty for having stolen the Buddha statue. He knows that what he did was a violation of the rules of the temple and that he took something that was not his right to take. Therefore, he is plagued with fears, suspicion, and paranoia that something very bad will happen to him as a result of his unwholesome act. He is plagued with fears to such an extent that certain parts of the film that are about his interaction with the Indian priest may simply be a hallucination produced by his unhealthy and perturbed mind. Count Greven finds some relief from his fears during the seven-year period that is given to him by the Indian priest. However, his guilt once again comes to the surface when the seven-year period ends. At the end of the film, it is because of his inner guilt and fluctuations of his mind that he cannot see a way out of his situation and decides to bring an end to his problems by shooting himself.

PSYCHOLOGY

Regret Regret refers to feeling sad, repentant, or disappointed over something that one has done or failed to do. We know that Count Greven feels guilty for having stolen the Buddha statue as he is always on the lookout for any signs of danger that might befall him as a consequence of his unacceptable deed of stealing. However, it is not clear whether Count Greven feels remorseful for his ethically unacceptable deed. The reason for this is that whenever he takes the Buddha statue out of the chest, he looks at it with mesmerized eyes and pride. He feels proud that he owns the statue. Were it not for his paranoia, he would not have felt any ethical responsibility for his unwholesome act. The only act that might be a sign of his regret is when the seven-year period that is allotted to him by the Indian priest ends and he doesn't know what to do to get rid of the *curse* of the statue and decides to throw it into a lake. Even when he throws the statue into the lake, it is not because he feels he has done the ethically wrong thing but because he cannot bear anymore the paranoia that his mind produces. Therefore, we can say that even though Count Greven *knows* that he did something wrong, he does not *feel* any moral responsibility or regret because of his selfish disposition.

Fear As we can see from the psychological portrayal of the Count, he is plagued by the emotion of fear, that is, an unpleasant feeling caused by the threat of danger, pain, or harm. He is certain that something very bad is going to happen to him because he stole the Buddha statue. Throughout the film, we witness the Count's fears, paranoia, and disturbed psychic state. The only period where he seems to be free of his fears surrounding the statue is the seven-year period in which the Indian priest allows him to live freely. As the seven-year period comes to an end, his fears resurface and he is once again plagued by extreme emotions and paranoia. One important point to note here is that because the mind of the Count is plagued by extreme emotions and fluctuations, we the viewers do not feel that we can completely trust the sequence and content of events as perceived from the perspective of the Count. One likely possibility is that the appearance of the Indian priest on the grounds of the Count's castle may simply be a reflection of the ill mind of the Count. It is thus up to the viewers to decide whether the Count's story is to be trusted or not.

Paranoia 'Paranoia is thinking and feeling like you are being threatened in some way, even if there is no evidence, or very little evidence, that you are. Paranoid thoughts can also be described as delusions. A delusion is a false fixed belief that is not amenable to change in light of conflicting evidence. Paranoia is a central symptom of psychosis.' Throughout the film, we witness Count Greven's paranoia. He is certain that the Indian priests are out to get him and harm him even though there does not seem to be any concrete evidence supporting his beliefs. It does not seem possible, or at least rational, that the Indian priests would follow him back to Europe and try to harm him in any way. After all, Buddhism is a religion that is based on compassion for all sentient beings. Therefore, it would be absurd for the Indian priests to look for revenge. All these points seem to indicate that Count Greven's fears and paranoia are ungrounded and are a product of his deluded and psychotic mind.

Psychosis 'Psychosis is a condition of the mind that results in difficulties determining what is real and what is not real. Symptoms may include delusions and hallucinations, among other features. Psychosis can have serious adverse outcomes.' We can infer that Count Greven is psychotic from what we witness throughout the film. He is deeply paranoid. He has fixed beliefs that do not have any grounding in reality.

He believes that the Indian priests can follow him from India to Europe just to get their revenge. However, no one sees the Indian priest but Count Greven himself. Therefore, the appearance of the Indian priest on the grounds of the Count's castle is most likely a hallucination that his mind produces. Likewise, what the priest tells the Count, that is that he only has seven years to live, also seems to be a mere figment of the Count's very imagination. As the Minister who represents rationality observes, what the Count needs is a doctor. However, the Count never consults a doctor which is symptomatic of those who are psychotic as psychotic people are very certain that what they believe is the absolute truth. Therefore, they do not see any point in consulting a healthcare professional.

FLAW

Greed Greed refers to an intense and selfish desire for something. Count Greven's fatal flaw is his greed for material objects. From the moment he sees the Buddha statue, he is mesmerized by it and wishes to own the statue at all costs. Therefore, he steals the statue even though he rationally knows that what he does is not an ethical act. As can be seen in the scene when he takes out the Buddha statue from his chest, he is filled with pride and joy when he looks at it. However, he also becomes paranoid as a consequence of his act of stealing. Count Greven's greed is also visible in the way he spends his allotted seven-year-long period. Like a dissatisfied monkey jumping from branch to branch, Count Greven jumps from one pursuit to another in search of fulfillment and meaning. He first tries the hedonistic life: he throws parties, gambles, drinks alcohol, and leads a life of sensual indulgences. However, he is innerly dissatisfied. Thus, he decides to try something new and attempts to gain fame by finding a solution to world hunger. Because of his selfishness, he destroys his very work which could, in theory, help millions of people. In all these cases, it is his greed for more pleasure that drives him. At the end of the film, he can no longer fight with the demons in his mind and shoots himself. It is particularly interesting to note how Count Greven suffers from dissatisfaction, greed, and craving. Because Buddhism acknowledges that life is filled with suffering and dissatisfaction precisely because of our cravings and greed.

QUEST

Explore The film presents us with the life of Count Greven, a man driven by his fears, suspicion, and paranoia. He explores the world and his environment throughout the film. He travels to India and encounters a different way of life and culture. Later, he returns to Europe with the Buddha statue he stole. When the Indian priest tells him that he only has seven more years to live, he spends those years jumping from one pursuit to another with the aim of experiencing life to the fullest. He explores the life of hedonism. Later, he explores a life of learning as he tries to find a cure for world hunger. Finally, he explores love and finds some peace of mind. However, his seven-year-long period comes to an end and he has to face the consequences of his actions. Thus, we can conclude that throughout the film, we see Count Greven's exploration of his environment and his interactions with it.

RELATIONSHIP

Love Love is not a major topic of the film. Nevertheless, we witness the love affair between Count Greven and a young lady. After leading a hedonistic lifestyle and attempting to be famous for finding a cure for world hunger; Count Greven is still innerly dissatisfied. However, things change when he finds the love of his life. The period which he spends with his beloved might be the most peaceful time of his life. The Count spends his days joyously and happily with his lover. Nevertheless, the seven-year period that was allotted to him comes to an end and the Count is once again filled with paranoia. He even suspects that his beloved might be the one to kill him. Thus, even love is not enough to save the Count from his disturbed and ill mind and paranoia.

APPEARANCE

Secrets Count Greven holds a secret, namely that he has stolen a Buddha statue. He cannot tell anyone what he did. However, his manservant notices his suffering and informs the minister about it. Count Greven eventually tells his secret to the minister who is shocked upon hearing it. We do not get to know whether his manservant also comes to find out about his secret. The minister might be the only

person who knows about the Count's entire story. The Count's fears and paranoia cause him to be more secretive than he should be. He never consults a doctor about his condition as he believes himself to be perfectly sane. However, as we see in the film, keeping secrets from others is not always healthy and may have deleterious consequences such as those that Count Greven eventually faces.

Self-delusion Self-delusion refers to the action of deluding oneself or the failure to recognize reality. The Count loses his contact with reality after he steals the Buddha statue. He firmly believes that the Indian priests are after him and are going to harm him in some way even though there is not enough evidence to support his beliefs. His paranoia is to such a degree that he cannot sleep during the night and always fears the worst possible case. His paranoia later transforms into a psychosis where he hallucinates an Indian priest telling him that he only has seven years to live. Throughout these experiences, he does not seem to be aware of the fact that he is deluding himself. On the contrary, Count Greven is very certain that his beliefs represent reality accurately. At the end of the film, he commits suicide as he cannot see a way out of his situation. Thus, self-delusion results in self-destruction.

SCENES

After returning from his world tour, Count Greven is changed

'After a foreign journey of several years, the Count is expected back at his castle. Two years ago, a happy and cheerful man went abroad—and what sort of man came home?' We see a carriage coming to the castle. Out of the carriage steps Count Greven. He has an uncomfortable and fearful demeanor. He immediately orders that all the doors be locked and all the gates be bolted: 'No man may come in and no man may go out! I never want to see a strange face again!'



Count Greven has brought a Buddha idol with him which he is particularly fond of

The Count proceeds to his room. He looks around suspiciously. His worried servant comes in. The Count asks him to close the windows and the curtains. Only after all the curtains are closed does he find some comfort. He asks his servant to bring him the chest that he brought from his travels. He opens the chest out of which he picks a beautiful Buddha idol. He looks at it with loving eyes and hugs the idol. However, soon, he becomes uncomfortable again and puts the idol back into the chest.



Count Greven wants to hide his Buddha idol from other people

At night, the Count is uncomfortable again and looks around with suspicion. He breathes heavily and looks like he cannot breathe. He has a paranoid look on his face. He goes to his study room and opens the chest to take out the Buddha idol. He looks at it with pride and joy. However, very soon, his joy transforms into suspicion again. As if he wants to protect the statue from outside forces, he takes it to another room. He puts the statue into a cupboard which is hidden behind a curtain. He has a great sense of relief when he makes sure that the statue is safe.



Count Greven always feels suspicious

The day passes quickly. Count Greven feels disturbed once again. He looks around with suspicious eyes. His worried servant comes in. Looking stressed and paranoid, Count Greven asks his servant whether he has seen anyone steal through the passageway. The servant shakes his head to say: 'No' but the Count still seems to be deeply disturbed.



The nights are without rest

Count Greven's nights are also without rest. He cannot fall asleep and spends his nights walking through the rooms of the castle. He is always on edge as if he is about to face a great danger very soon.



The servant asks the minister of the village for help

Count Greven's servant comes to visit the minister of the village. He says to him: 'Help me! My poor Master is suffering, and I know not the cause! I can no longer bear to see his suffering!' The minister decides to pay a visit to the Count.



Count Greven confides in the minister

When the minister comes, the minister asks him to confide in him as he is the Count's old teacher and the Count can trust him. The Count seems to be severely suffering. Finally, he holds the minister's hand tightly and confides in him: 'Listen! You know that I am driven by an unhappy passion for collecting rare works of art. This passion drove me into the world to seek the most beautiful art objects. Nowhere in the world did I find what I was looking for, until one day, in the heart of India, I heard...about the holy Buddha image in the temple at Djaba, whose beauty made the sick well and the sad happy...I had to see it!'



The Count tells the story of how he stole the Buddha idol

We see a flashback to the temple in India where the priests attend to the Buddha idol. Count Greven secretly hides in a place where they cannot see him. After the priests leave the statue, the Count comes out of his hiding place and looks at the. Afterward, he steals the statue. When the priests come to see that the idol is absent, they run to search for the one who stole the idol. But they cannot find anyone.



The Count believes that the priests want their revenge

The flashback ends. Count Greven tells the minister that: 'Since that day, I have had no peace. The terrible Buddha priests want their revenge! They seek me and they will also find me! There is no escape from their secret power!' Count Greven can hardly breathe as he is utterly scared of the priests' power. He collapses finally while the minister leaves the room.



The Minister believes the Count is mentally sick and needs a doctor

The minister says to the servant: 'We don't need a minister here—we need a doctor!' Then he leaves. Meanwhile, the Count is severely suffering. Finally, he shouts: 'I want to die, for life no longer has any attraction for me. This agony of suspense is worse than death.'



Indian priest appears and prophesies that the Count will have only seven more years to live

One night, an Indian priest appears in front of the castle. Soon after, Count Greven wakes up. He looks distressed and paranoid as usual. He takes his gun from behind his pillow and sees that an Indian priest is waiting for him in front of the castle. He goes to where the priest is and tries to shoot him. But then he lets go of his gun. He falls to his knees and says to the priest: 'Take my life! Death will be a release for me!' Indian priest responds: 'Then I would take something of no value to you! Instead, you must live and learn to love life. Then today, seven years hence, you will die at the hand of one who is dearest to you!'



The Count decides to spend his remaining years indulging in pleasures

Count Greven wakes up in his bed. He goes near his Buddha idol and finds a note at the bottom of the statue. In the note, it is written: 'Do not forget...today, seven years hence!' At this moment, he realizes that the Indian priest was not merely a dream: 'Seven years...seven years of living in peace! I will use those seven years to drain the cup of happiness to the last dregs!' He feels that he has won a victory, albeit a temporary one.



The Count spends his years indulging in extravagant parties and gambling

The Count spends his seven years by throwing parties and indulging in sensual pleasures. He dances, plays card games, gambles, and drinks alcohol. His indulgences and way of life arouse the anger of the people. One day, the minister comes to complain about his behavior. The Count says: 'I must live life differently to others. I must very quickly empty the cup of life to its last drop as though it were a cup of wine to be emptied to the bottom!'



Later, the Count works to find a cure for world hunger

However, soon, he gets bored of his sensually indulgent lifestyle. After throwing a final feast, he tells everyone to go home. He decides to try something 'new'. He spends all his days and nights in his laboratory, occupied with his work. One of those days, his worried servant comes into the laboratory and asks his Master when he will rest as it is already early morning. The Count goes to his study room, takes out one of the books from his library, and starts studying.



The Count capriciously destroys his very work

'The great work! The transformation of nitrogen to protein, which could do away with hunger in the world forever...comes ever closer to success.' The Count's great discovery is published and the crowds lay siege to the castle. They can no longer be held back. People come into the laboratory and celebrate the Count's discovery. However, the Count capriciously destroys his invention in front of the public. People are unsettled and leave the laboratory. The Count says to himself victoriously: 'To something new! The world is wide! Life is rich!'



The Count finds the love of his life

Once more the gates of the castle are bolted, but this time it is not out of fear, but for the sake of love. The Count spends his days joyously and happily with his lover. However, time runs on...and life runs out.



The Count wishes to go on a trip but cannot leave his lover

The Count realizes that seven years have passed and his time has come. He is filled once again with distress, suspicion, and paranoia. He wants to go on a trip to travel the world. But parting from his beloved is not easy. Finally, he realizes that he cannot leave her.



The Count tries to get rid of the Buddha statue

One day, he looks at the Buddha statue and realizes that he doesn't have much time to live. In order to get rid of the statue, he throws it into a lake. However, when he comes back to the castle, he sees that the statue is still in the same spot.



The Count grows more and more paranoid

The Count spends the rest of his days in a state of despair and agony. On the last day before his seven years come to an end, he walks around in paranoia with a gun in his hand. He believes that his servant might try to poison his drink. Later, he asks his servant to let the carriage be brought as he wants to leave. However, he cannot enter the carriage because he thinks the driver is the Indian priest. He goes back to his study room and sees his beloved looking at a dagger. He believes that his beloved might be the one to kill him. He shoots his gun in the air. Then he runs to another room and shouts: 'I hate the world! I hate life; there is no hand that is dearest to me!'



Indian priest reappears and Count Greven finally shoots himself

We see the Indian priest praying in front of the castle. Count Greven cannot live with this suffering and agony anymore. He sees visions of the Indian priest watching his every move. Then he looks at the gun he is holding and shoots himself.



Indian priest takes the Buddha idol out of the castle

After the Count has shot himself, the priest enters the castle. He goes to the room where the Buddha idol is, takes the idol, and carries it out of the castle.

