

Canto 1: The Dark Wood; Or, You Used to Call (to) Me on My Cell Phone.

*(Ambience of the forest for a few seconds. Then, the sound of footsteps, as Jeremiah walks through the forest. Jeremiah is cold and lost, and can be heard shivering. After some time, Jeremiah's cell phone rings. It plays the classic Nokia ringtone. After 2-4 rings, Jeremiah picks up the phone, indicated by an audible beep.)*

JEREMIAH

Um...Hell-o?

GOD

Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee. Obey my voice, and I will be your God. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. Jeremiah Bale, call to me and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you do not know.

*(An awkward pause.)*

JEREMIAH

I'm sorry but...who is this?

GOD

Oh, for the love of Me...I was trying to sound all cool, and there you have to go and ruin it. Great. Perfect. You had one job, Jeremiah. *One job*. And that was to make me sound cool at this exact moment in time.

JEREMIAH

I'm...sorry?

GOD

That's okay. I wrote this bestseller novel way back in the day – it's fairly autobiographical. Anyway, if you read it, you'll know that I'm a pretty forgiving guy. (*A beat*.) Oh, come now, Jeremiah. Morgan Freeman can't hold a candle on the real deal.

JEREMIAH

Hang on...Are you...are you God?

GOD

You betcha.

JEREMIAH

No way...

GOD

Yahweh.

JEREMIAH

This can't be real. I've got to be dreaming. Let's see... (*Slowly*) My name is...Jeremiah Bale. I live in Hell, Michigan. I'm a...senior at the University of Michigan.

GOD

What are you doing?

JEREMIAH

I'm listing facts. That's what you do when you're dreaming. You start listing facts, and suddenly, you wake up.

GOD

I'm not sure that's how it works. I'm pretty sure that's just called "Exposition." But, you know. Whatever helps you sleep at night.

*(A very quick rimshot.)*

JEREMIAH (*slowly*)

I went into the forest looking for Beatrice and...I was...bitten – no, stung – by a viper. Or at least, something that was like a viper...And now I'm just sort of lost.

GOD

Beatrice, you say? Well, as luck would have it, I happen to have in my possession a message that she recorded for you.