

DEVIL'S FLAME

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(OVER BLACK)

An unsettling rumbling and the clinking of glass as the following appears on screen:

*"For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness on high."*

*Ephesians 6:12*

The rumbling grows louder, the clinking glass more violent. And then SINISTER LAUGHTER -- growling, demonic.

CUT FROM BLACK TO:

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Windowless. Simple decor. A small chandelier shakes violently, dozens of dangling prisms clash. Antique furniture against velvet pattern wallpaper.

And in the middle of it all --

NATALIE (14), arms and legs strapped to a four poster bed, the unexpected source of the guttural laughter. Breath condensing in subfreezing temperature of the room. Color drained from her eyes. Waist length auburn hair matted from vomit. The flame of a bedside saint's candle illuminates the pustules that cover her once flawless complexion.

PRIEST #1 (30's) looms above her. An ornate gold CRUCIFIX outstretched in his hand. A purple stole is draped around narrow shoulders, splattered with vomit.

Another priest, PRIEST #2 (20's), kneels bedside, a rosary wrapped around his hands, head bowed in prayer.

Priest #1 speaks firmly and loudly so to be heard over the din (breath condensing throughout) --

PRIEST #1

I cast you out, unclean spirit,  
along with every Satanic power of  
the enemy --

Natalie begins to thrash violently.

PRIEST #1 (CONT'D)

-- every specter from hell, and all  
your fell companions. In the name  
of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(MORE)

PRIEST #1 (CONT'D)  
 Begone and stay far from this  
 creature of God.

Priest #1 makes the sign of the cross over Natalie's writhing body. Priest #2 follows suit. The rumbling subsides. Natalie goes still, then --

Like thousands of thread-like serpents moving in unison, her hair begins to flow into her mouth. She chokes as it slides down her throat like water down a drain. Eyes bulging, hands grasping -- fighting against the restraints.

Priest #2 leaps to his feet, tugs at the river of hair with all his might.

As Priest #1 continues to pray undeterred, Priest #2 struggles against the force that's pulling the hair down Natalie's throat --

PRIEST #1 (CONT'D)  
 I adjure you, ancient serpent, by  
 the judge of the living and the  
 dead, by your Creator, by the  
 Creator of the whole universe, by  
 Him who has the power to consign  
 you to hell --

Priest #2 begins to win the tug-of-war, pulling the hair from her throat.

PRIEST #1 (CONT'D)  
 -- depart forthwith in fear, along  
 with your savage minions, from this  
 servant of God, Natalie, who seeks  
 refuge in the fold of the Church.

Priest #2 pulls the hair out, faster and faster until --

A DEMONIC HAND is pulled out with it, clutched to the end of her hair. Priest #2 falls back. The hand lets go of its grip and disappears back down her throat.

PRIEST #1 (CONT'D)  
 And now as I adjure you in His  
 name, begone from this woman who is  
 His creature.

Natalie levitates off the bed, her body SNAPS TAUT against the restraints.

PRIEST #1 (CONT'D)  
 It is futile to resist His will.  
 Begone, then, in the name of the  
 Father, and of the Son, and of the  
 Holy Spirit!

A GUST of WIND blows past the priests extinguishing the saint's candle--an evil spirit released. Natalie falls back onto the bed. Her body goes limp. The rumbling stops. Then --

Natalie begins to weep softly -- the cry of a girl who's been through unimaginable torment.

PRIEST #2  
 Praise, God.

Priest #1 and Priest #2 flank the bed, begin unbuckling the restraints.

PRIEST #1  
 Almighty God, we beg you to keep  
 the evil spirit from further  
 molesting this servant of yours --

Natalie's cries become louder. Unseen by either priest, the saint's candle reignites.

PRIEST #1 (CONT'D)  
 -- and to keep him far away,  
 never to return.

Natalie's cries morph into a wicked cackle.

In a flash, Natalie snaps Priest #2's neck and flings him against the wall like a rag doll.

Priest #1 stumbles back, thrusting the crucifix out in front of him. The flame of the saint's candle flares up and catches his purple stole on fire. He is instantly consumed by flames as if soaked in gasoline. He drops to the floor, thrashing about.

Natalie crosses to a dresser where an antique brush and comb wait. A mirror hangs on the wall above it.

Natalie picks up the brush and begins to brush out her matted hair HUMMING a haunting, unfamiliar lullaby. Priest #1's now lifeless body smolders behind her.

She stops humming abruptly, stares at her reflection in the mirror.

NATALIE  
 I. See. You.

It's only now we realize this is a two-way mirror. Behind it, CARDINAL MATTHEWS (60's) watches.

As camera pulls back from the bedroom we reveal the fourth wall is made of glass — *an observation room*. A red emergency light STROBES above the fourth wall, illuminating the area in a devilish red glow. TWO GUARDS, dressed in the familiar blue uniform and hat of the Vatican city security force, rush in.

CUT TO:

#### MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE

Artwork portraying exorcisms throughout the ages serves as the backdrop, chilling depictions of demons in many forms being cast out from their earthly hosts.

A final image of Guidi Reni's painting of Archangel Michael's victory over Satan as the following appears onscreen:

1614 A.D. The Rites of Exorcism are published in the *Rituale Romanum* by Pope Paul V.

1835 A.D. A Vatican sanctioned school is established in Rome to formally train priests in the Rite of Exorcism.

2018 A.D. With an unprecedented rise in reported demonic possessions, the Vatican quietly establishes exorcism schools in six countries including the United States.

Camera pulls back to reveal the painting hangs in --

#### INT. EXORCISM SCHOOL (UNITED STATES) - MAIN CONCOURSE - DAY

A massive wrought iron chandelier suspended from a dome ceiling, illuminates the twelve-foot painting of St. Michael with sword drawn pointed at Satan under foot.

A LARGE PLAQUE beneath it reads, "*Carpe Daemonium: Seize the Demon*".

A GUARD keeps a watchful eye on the massive wooden door that leads into the school.

CHURCH BELLS ring out, breaking the silence. The empty lobby surges with PRIESTS and NUNS of various ages and ethnicities, books in hand, headed for their next class.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A darkened classroom. FATHER QUINN (50's), stands in front of a large screen. On it is projected--

A B&W SCHOOL PHOTO (CIRCA LATE 1960) of ANALISE MICHEL (17)-- bob haircut, angelic smile, cherubic face.

Father Quinn holds up a cassette tape recorder as he roams about the classroom--*the recording and photographs are from the actual exorcism of Analise.*

Father Quinn overlaps the voices on tape as he translates for the non-German speaking students in the class--

GERMAN PRIEST (ON TAPE)  
Warum furchtest du den  
Rosenkranz?

FATHER QUINN  
Why do you fear the rosary?

ANALISE (ON TAPE)  
Warum warum warum?!

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
Why why why?!

It's hard to reconcile the fact that demonic-gravely voice on the recording is coming from the young woman in that photograph.

FATHER RENZ (ON TAPE)  
Ja, warum?

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
Yes, why?

ANALISE (ON TAPE)  
Weil ... Weil es ...

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
Because... Because it is...

ANALISE (ON TAPE)  
NEIN, ICH WERDE ES NICHT  
SAGEN!

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
NO, I WILL NOT SAY IT!

NEXT SLIDE--Analise's mother restrains her daughter as a priest holds her by the chin. Sunken cheeks, swollen blackened eyes... a girl possessed.

FATHER RENZ (ON TAPE)  
Sag mir das von Gott!

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
Tell me this by God!

ANALISE (ON TAPE)  
Weil es eine starke Waffe ist--  
- HALT DEINEN MUND!

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
Because it is a strong weap--  
SHUT YOUR MOUTH!

FATHER RENZ (ON TAPE)  
Weil es eine starke Waffe  
ist?

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
Because it is a strong  
weapon?

ANALISE (ON TAPE)  
JA!

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
YES!

NEXT SLIDE--Analise in bed. Even thinner now, cracked and blistered lips border bloodied teeth.

FATHER RENZ (ON TAPE)  
Gegen Satan?

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
Against Satan?

ANALISE (ON TAPE)  
JA! JA!

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
YES! YES!

FATHER RENZ (ON TAPE)  
...und alle Dämonen?

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
...and all demons?

ANALISE (ON TAPE)  
JA, GEGEN UNS!

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
YES, AGAINST US!

ANOTHER SLIDE--split-screen; the school photo of Analise next to the haunting image of an emaciated, bed-ridden Analise with a crucifix held against her forehead.

Father Quinn stops the tape. He leaves this final disturbing image up on the screen as he continues--

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
Analise was showing clear signs of stage three possession. She would tear her clothes apart, lick her own urine, and eat coal.

Father Quinn makes his way back to the front of the class.

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
In stage three, death or deliverance is immanent. Sadly, for Analise it was death. Darkness won.

He turns on the lights illuminating --

A dozen or so PRIESTS (VARIED AGES), all wearing traditional black vestments and white Roman collars.

Amongst the sea of black-and-white is a pop of color --

-- this is SISTER ANN (26) seated toward the back of the class. She looks like she belongs at the U of A (the University of Anywhere-but-here) -- a nun who doesn't dress the part (as if she stepped out of a J. Crew Instagram post). The over-sized CROSS hanging from a simple rope necklace is her only religious tell.

Father Quinn takes note of Ann, doesn't look happy or surprised to see her.

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
It's said that demons are the  
devil's foot soldiers. That makes  
you the Lord's foot soldiers on the  
frontlines of a spiritual  
battlefield.

He holds up a rosary.

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
...and this here is a must-have in  
your arsenal of weapons. The  
demons' primary weapon is  
distraction. Yours is prayer.

Church bells chime signaling the end of class. Father Quinn  
pockets the rosary.

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
The holy rosary. Don't leave home  
without it.

Some titters from the class as they collect their belongings  
and head out for their next lecture.

Father Quinn shoots Ann a reproachful glare as she passes.  
Not everyone is unhappy with her attendance --

FATHER RAYMOND (mid-30's), dark complexion, smooth-shaven  
face and head to match, flashes Ann a smile that makes you  
wonder why he's devoted his life to one of celibacy.

Off Father Quinn's displeased look...

INT. INFIRMARY (LEVEL ONE) - HALLWAY - DAY

A NUN, Sister Euphemia (70's), in full habit moves purposely  
through the school's infirmary. Her features are hardened  
equally by age and by what she's witnessed in her lifetime.

SEVERAL SISTERS enter/exit patient rooms going about their  
duties; carrying bed pans, empty food trays, soiled linens,  
etc...

INT. ROOM - INFIRMARY - SAME TIME

Hospital room. Standard issue. A crucifix hangs above the  
bed. Sister Ann props a pillow behind the head of ELIZABETH  
(40's), youthful with a gentle spirit about her.

ANN  
How's that?

ELIZABETH  
Much better. Thank you, Sister.

ANN  
I have a fresh bag of fluids for  
you. Blessed by the best.

ELIZABETH  
The Cardinal?

Ann smiles, nods. Ann scans a barcode on the IV bag, then the  
barcode on Elizabeth's medical bracelet before swapping out  
the bags.

ANN  
The holy water seems to have kept  
the episodes at bay.

ELIZABETH  
It has. I pray I'll be released  
soon.

Ann places a reassuring hand on hers.

ANN  
So do I.

There's a firm knock on the door before it opens to reveal  
Sister Euphemia. Ann greets her with a smile, it isn't  
returned.

SISTER EUPHEMIA  
Cardinal Matthews would like to see  
you in his office.

INT. CARDINAL MATTHEW'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Sister Ann sits across from Cardinal Matthews, reading  
glasses perched on the tip of his nose.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS  
(reading)  
Psychology, Latin, the Science of  
Nursing, Bibliology and  
Hermeneutics.

He looks over his reading glasses at Sister Ann.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)  
Is this course load so facile that  
you must also attend classes you're  
not enrolled in?

ANN

I wasn't aware there was a limit to what one can learn, your Eminence.

Cardinal Matthews is semi-amused by her spunk, but the fact remains --

CARDINAL MATTHEWS

But you are aware that only a bishop or a priest can perform an exorcism.

ANN

Can or are allowed to?

CARDINAL MATTHEWS

For the purpose of this discussion, that distinction is irrelevant.

The outdated edict doesn't sit well with Ann, but she knows better than to challenge the Cardinal...at least for now.

Cardinal Matthews senses her frustration, he softens.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

The steady decline in enrollment of clergymen has many of my fellow Cardinals dismayed. However, it has opened a door for you. In years past exorcism school was strictly for priests. Now there you sit.

ANN

But to what end, if I can't perform an exorcism?

CARDINAL MATTHEWS

Is a nurse of no benefit to her patients because she can't perform surgery?

As Ann considers this...

CARDINAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

This school only extends invitations to clergy considered to possess a high level of spiritual attainment. You should be humbled.

ANN

I am. And grateful.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS  
Remember, child, it's dangerous  
business getting in close quarters  
with the devil no matter what your  
role.

INT. DINING HALL - AFTERNOON

A gathering of all the students -- both priests and sisters.

Father Raymond sits across from SISTER KYLIE (Asian, 20's but could easily pass for sixteen). Kylie rarely makes eye contact with anyone, which explains why she never looks up from her plate.

FATHER DANTE (Hispanic, late 20's) sits ON the table. Tattoos peek out from beneath his priestly vestments -- a permanent reminder of the life he led before he turned to God.

By the looks of their plates, they're nearly done. Ann joins the group, slams down her lunch tray.

DANTE  
Look who's back from the  
principal's office.

RAYMOND  
You okay?

ANN  
I'm fine.  
(she's not)

She stabs at her food with her fork. The three others exchange looks --

RAYMOND  
I'm guessing this means no more  
exorcism class drop-ins for you.

Ann shakes her head, "no."

KYLIE  
You really want to be an exorcist  
that bad?

ANN  
I don't want to. I was chosen to.

DANTE  
(mocking)  
It is her destiny.

Ann snatches a thick book from a stack next to Dante.

DANTE (CONT'D)

Hey!

We see the title "CHRISTIAN DEMONOLOGY" in gold lettering on brown leather as she hands the book to Kylie.

ANN

Any page. Any description.

Kylie flips opens to the center of the book--AN ILLUSTRATION of a man-goat with a jester's hat riding an alligator.

KYLIE

(reading)

First mentioned in the Great  
Grimoire of Pope Honorius the  
third. This demon is described as  
the "unlocker of all locks."

ANN

Surgat.

KYLIE

She's right...

RAYMOND

No way.

Kylie holds up the book for them to confirm.

KYLIE

Way.

DANTE

Come on. There are thousands of  
demons in there. And the class  
hasn't even got through the first  
chapter. Pick another one.

Kylie flips to another page--an ILLUSTRATION of a troll-like demon feeding on the corpse of a dead man.

KYLIE

(reading)

Those who were greedy, selfish, and  
ungodly people in life give rise to  
this demon form. They are cursed to  
spend eternity in self-loathing,  
feeding on the flesh of human  
corpses.

ANN  
Jikininki.

Kylie nods--*she's right again.*

ANN (CONT'D)  
Another one.

Another random flip to an ILLUSTRATION of a horned-demon mounting a naked woman.

*SLAM!*

Dante slams the book closed, puts it back in his stack.

DANTE  
Okay, okay. You win. The strangest  
obsession award goes to you.

KYLIE  
(checks her watch)  
We're gonna be late for Psych  
class.

Ann pokes at her food, before tossing her fork on the plate.

ANN  
I lost my appetite anyway.

RAYMOND  
It's frustrating, I get it. But the  
fact that you're here at all is a  
huge leap for the church.

ANN  
So I've been told.

DANTE  
At least you don't have a lot of  
competition. Do you know how many  
other sisters here want to be  
exorcists?  
(a beat)  
Nun of them.  
(get it?)  
NUN of them?

His joke lands with an almost audible thud.

ANN  
No more nun jokes.

DANTE

I'm sorry. It's a hard habit to break.

Ann breaks a smile, tosses her dinner roll at Dante who catches it and takes a bite.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Unlike any of the classrooms we've seen up until this point. Void of any religious artifacts or symbols. Not even a simple cross adorns these walls.

The room is clinical, sterile--like a doctor's office. Which makes sense, because this is the classroom of--

DR. PATEL (40's) who is currently standing beside an overhead projector--yes, old school.

He stares down the bridge of his nose through a pair of reading glasses perched on its tip.

The room is filled with both priests and sisters.

Dr. Patel adds to a growing list of mental illnesses already on the screen, continuing to write as he speaks--

DR. PATEL

Epilepsy, schizophrenia,  
Huntington's Disease, Tourette  
syndrome, I could go on but my hand  
is beginning to cramp.

Chuckles from the student body.

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)

You'll just have to take my word  
for it, there are many more mental  
illnesses and combinations thereof.

He turns off the projector. The lights in the room come on.

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)

All of which have to be eliminated  
before one can be admitted here. It  
is important to note, however, that  
admission as a patient is not a  
formal recognition of possession as  
diagnosis by the medical community.

Sister Kylie raises her hand--

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)  
Yes, Sister Kylie.

KYLIE  
You say possession isn't a diagnosis, then how do you account for what many of us have seen here-- things that can't be explained by any known mental or physical illness.

DR. PATEL  
If I can rephrase your question, just so I understand. You're asking me how can I explain the unexplainable?

KYLIE  
Yes. I guess.

DR. PATEL  
The problem with your question is you assume that because an explanation is unknown, a reasonable explanation does not exist.

As Kylie tries to process that one--

ANN  
Excuse me, Dr. Patel.

Dr. Patel turns his attention to his next intellectual victim.

ANN (CONT'D)  
By your own admission an explanation that is not provided by the medical community can be provided elsewhere, even by the religious community. Demon possession is such an explanation, no?

DR. PATEL  
If you'll recall, I said a reasonable explanation.

ANN  
Reasonable to who, the believer or the non-believer?

Dr. Patel smiles--looks like he's found himself a worthy opponent.

DR. PATEL  
Step down here, if you would,  
Sister Ann.

Ann isn't sure if he's serious.

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)  
Don't worry, I can assure you I'm  
considered a reasonable man to  
believers and non-believers alike.

Ann steps down next to Dr. Patel.

He produces a WOOD MATCH, holds it out between his fingers  
for all to see.

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)  
I hold between my fingers a single  
wood match.

He holds it in front of Ann, inches away from her face.

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)  
Don't take your eyes off of it or--

With a flick of his wrist, the match is gone.

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)  
--you might miss it.

A smattering of applause from the class.

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)  
Here, pay close attention this  
time.

Dr. Patel takes another match, holds it out. Ann squints,  
determined not to blink.

Another flick--and it's gone.

More applause.

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)  
Now let me ask you, do you believe  
the match actually disappeared?

ANN  
No. Of course not.

DR. PATEL  
But you saw it with your own eyes.

ANN

Yes, but it's only a trick.

DR. PATEL

But how do you know?

ANN

Because nobody can make matches  
magically disappear.

DR. PATEL

But a man can turn water into wine?

ANN

Not just any man.

DR. PATEL

Right. Well, perhaps I'm a wizard  
then.

(off Ann's look)

You're right, this was a simple  
parlor trick, performed by an  
amateur with little practice. Yet I  
have a room full of educated men  
and women unable to explain how I  
did it. Which brings me back to my  
original point--do I believe in  
demons? About as much as you  
believe in doctors that are  
wizards. Thank you, Sister. You may  
return to your seat.

Ann starts off.

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)

Oh, and can I have the match back?

Ann looks at him quizzically.

Dr. Patel taps his left ear.

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)

The match...?

Ann reaches behind her left ear--sure enough. She pulls out  
the match.

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)

Thank you. And...

Dr. Patel taps his right ear.

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)  
...the other one, if you don't  
mind.

This is too much, Ann reaches behind her right ear--yep  
there's a match there too.

She hands the matches to Dr. Patel. He winks. She smiles.

Doctor-1. Ann-0.

INT. INFIRMARY - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Beside the occasional MOANING, the hall is quiet. Sister Ann  
moves down the corridor carrying a dinner tray. She crosses  
into one of the rooms.

INT. ROOM - INFIRMARY - LATER

AN ELDERLY WOMAN, Claire (80's), sits on the edge of her  
hospital bed. A genial smile on her face, she oozes  
sweetness. An IV drip hangs bedside.

Claire stares at the wall as Ann feeds her another spoonful  
of apple sauce.

ANN  
You like the applesauce. Good. I'll  
have to remember that.

Ann scoops up another spoonful, feeds it to Claire.

A HAND GRABS ANN'S WRIST

Claire's spindly fingers latched on her arm, preventing Ann  
from removing the spoon from her mouth. The genial smile  
gone.

ANN (CONT'D)  
Claire, let go...

Ann struggles to pull the spoon out of Claire's mouth. Claire  
tightens her grip on Ann's wrist, eyes wild.

ANN (CONT'D)  
You're hurting me. Let. Go.

SNAP! The bowl end of the plastic spoon snaps from the  
handle. Claire goes limp, releases her grip.

Ann, left only the handle of spoon, looks at Claire's closed  
mouth -- the bowl of the spoon still inside.

ANN (CONT'D)  
Claire, open your mouth.

Claire doesn't respond -- catatonic.

Ann sticks her finger between Claire's pursed lips, trying to pry them open.

Ann manages to slide one of her fingers inside Claire's mouth where--

--she feels around inside for the spoon. After a tense beat, she fishes it out.

Ann let's out a sigh of relief (as do we). She drops the spoon on the tray.

ANN (CONT'D)  
I can see you've had enough.

Claire's mouth drops open, unnaturally wide as if her jaw was broken. A cascade of APPLESAUCE spills out, flows down her hospital gown.

INT. ROOM - INFIRMARY - MINUTES LATER

Claire sits on the bed. A fresh hospital gown pulled off frail shoulders.

Ann sits beside her, dips a bath sponge into a bucket of water. She wrings it out, swipes the sponge across Claire's collar bone.

ANN  
Maybe not so much applesauce next time, huh?

As Ann dips the sponge again, she doesn't notice the IV bag filling with blood--flushing the holy water out of Claire's veins.

Ann wrings out the sponge, swipes it across Claire's back -- this time it begins to steam the moment it touches skin.

Claire HUMS a haunting lullaby -- the same lullaby Natalie hummed in the opening.

Ann tries to mask her surprise, but the tune clearly has some meaning to her.

CLAIRE  
Such a pretty voice your mother has...

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
(demonic)  
She still sings in hell.

ANN  
Who are you? Name yourself.

Claire LAUGHS, revealing a gaping hole where teeth once occupied.

Ann crosses to the open door.

Ann's pov - of the hallway. Empty.

Ann shuts the door, returns to Claire.

ANN (CONT'D)  
I command you, unclean spirit,  
whoever you are, now attacking this  
servant of God, that you tell me by  
some sign your name.

CLAIRE  
By who's authority?

Ann grabs the crucifix hanging above the bed, holds it up.  
Her hand trembles, so does her voice--

ANN  
By the authority given to me by my  
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Claire LAUGHS -- it's more of a hissing really.

CLAIRE  
Run along, little girl.

Claire's eyes go completely white.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
(a demonic howl)  
RUN ALONG!

Claire projectile vomits the rest of her mashed dinner all over Ann. It sends Ann reeling.

POP! That was the sound of the lights blowing out, plunging the room into darkness.

The room begins to RUMBLE -- like an aftershock just struck. Ann gets to her feet. Having lost hold of the crucifix, Ann holds out the cross around her neck like a shield.

As her eyes adjust to the darkness, she feels about the room looking for the exit--

Ann stops. She squints into the shadows--

--is that Claire standing in the corner of the room by the door? Ann approaches Claire slowly --

ANN

I command you to obey me, I who am  
a minister of God despite my  
unworthiness --

More rumbling as she holds out the cross with one hand.  
Claire now hovers inches off the ground.

ANN (CONT'D)

See the cross of the Lord; begone,  
you hostile powers!

Just as Ann is about to reach the shadowy figure in the corner--

--PHHZZZT! The lights turn on, and the door flies open  
revealing Sister Euphemia.

SISTER EUPHEMIA

Sister Ann!

Ann spins around to see Claire laying in the hospital bed.  
The genial smile returned. She looks back to the door, a robe  
hangs where Claire stood just seconds ago.

Off Ann as she tries to reconcile what just happened...

CUT TO:

TELEVISION SCREEN

Old school CRT. Security camera footage of Claire's room --  
high angle of Ann grabbing the crucifix off the wall.

ANN (ON TV)

By the authority given to me by my  
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

CLAIRE (ON TV)

Run along, little girl.  
(a demonic howl)  
RUN ALONG!

Claire projectile vomits on Ann. The light goes out. The  
screen goes black.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS (O.C.)

I've seen enough.

REVEAL INT. CARDINAL MATTHEW'S OFFICE

Father Quinn and Sister Euphemia sit across from Cardinal Matthews.

SISTER EUPHEMIA  
She's dangerous.

FATHER QUINN  
Most possessed are, Sister.

SISTER EUPHEMIA  
I wasn't talking about Claire,  
Father, and you know it.

FATHER QUINN  
I hardly call Sister Ann dangerous.  
How was she to know the patient had  
progressed to stage two?

CARDINAL MATTHEWS  
Regardless, I'm afraid Sister  
Euphemia has a point. Sister Ann  
has shown blatant disregard for the  
rules. And now an attempted  
exorcism even after my warning?

FATHER QUINN  
Yes. And for that, she must be  
admonished.

SISTER EUPHEMIA  
Admonished? The child could have  
been hurt or God-forbid killed.  
There is no other choice than to  
send her back to the Maryknoll  
Sisters.

FATHER QUINN  
We summon a fraction of the clergy  
to come to this school. And only a  
fraction of those invited accept.  
Enrollment of clergy into the  
church is at a historic low and as  
a result we have nowhere near the  
numbers we need to win this holy  
battle. And you want to just "send  
her back?"

SISTER EUPHEMIA  
She is of much better service to  
the church alive than dead.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS

Alright. Sister Euphemia has provided one option. You have another?

FATHER QUINN

Let me speak with Sister Ann. I know she can be headstrong --  
(off his look)  
-- very very headstrong. But who better to be a soldier in this spiritual warfare we're fighting, if not an iron-willed person like her?

SISTER EUPHEMIA

Iron-willed or reckless?

CARDINAL MATTHEWS

Do you think she can be made to listen?

FATHER QUINN

Made to listen, no. Choose to listen, maybe. And if she can learn her place, she'll be a spiritual asset the likes of which I've rarely seen.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS

And what makes you so sure of this?

FATHER QUINN

I don't know the exact nature of it. But this relationship she has... it's personal.

SISTER EUPHEMIA

Father Quinn, every one of us has a personal relationship with God.

FATHER QUINN

Not with God. With the devil.

INT. ANN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Windowless. Candle lit. With enough space for a writing desk, desk chair, dresser and a bed frame for one single-sized mattress. Bare walls except for the crucifix above the bed.

Ann sits on the bed, back against the wooden headboard. Her face is illuminated by the glow of her smartphone.

She swipes her finger up, scrolling through the feed on her Facebook account.

-- A PHOTO of a BABY on a beach, polka-dot bikini, patting at the sand with a shovel.

Ann taps--LIKE. Scrolls.

-- Another PHOTO of a SLEEPING DOG nuzzled against a SLEEPING CHILD.

Taps--LIKE. Scrolls.

-- A banner reads, "3 Years Ago Today: See Your Memories" A PHOTO of Ann with suitcase in hand waving as she enters the Maryknoll Sisters Convent.

Off Ann's smile--brought back to that moment by the reminder...

INT. ANN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ann stands in front of her dresser mirror, pours a pitcher of water into a washbowl.

She cups some water in her hands, rinses her face clean.

Pats her face dry with a linen cloth.

She picks up a hairbrush next to the bowl, as she lifts it to her head she spots --

A SINGLE STRAND OF LONG HAIR -- AUBURN

Wrapped around the bristles. Ann eyes the hair quizzically -- where'd that come from?

She pulls the hair from the brush, examines it before tossing it in a small wastebasket.

After a few strokes through her hair, she sets the brush down.

She grabs a simple wooden JEWELRY BOX from the back ledge of the dresser. A faded painting of a HUMMINGBIRD drinks from a flower on the lid.

She opens it -- CLINK -- a single note of the music box plays. Ann closes the lid, turns the jewelry box over.

She reaches for the music key to wind it--

--changes her mind, flips the jewelry box back over.

Concluding her nightly ritual, she takes off her cross necklace and places it inside. Closes the lid.

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

Sister Euphemia stands behind a lectern at the front of the class.

The seats are filled with SISTERS (VARIOUS AGES), some in habits others in modest attire.

Ann sits in the middle of the room, she takes shorthand in an open notebook as Sister Euphemia speaks --

SISTER EUPHEMIA

Jesus performed exorcisms. He cast out demons. He freed souls from demonic possession and from Him the Church has received the power of exorcism. But as members of the Catholic community of women, that is not our place--

Ann stops writing, she knows where this is going. Sister Euphemia delivers the rest of her lecture directly to Ann --

SISTER EUPHEMIA (CONT'D)

--it is not our place to free these souls from their tormentors. We are there to comfort, to pray, and show mercy.

Ann closes her notebook--a not-so-subtle act of defiance.

INT. HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Father Quinn waits outside the classroom as the sisters spill into the hall.

Ann is one of the last to emerge. She meets Father Quinn's gaze.

INT. CHAPEL - LATER

A modest-sized place of worship. Ten pews deep. The largest thing in it is the life-size crucifix hanging behind the altar.

A SISTER (30's) kneels in front of a bank of votive candles flanking the altar. She lights a candle, prays.

Their collective light illuminates--

Father Quinn and Ann who sit in the last pew.

ANN  
Send me back?

FATHER QUINN  
Don't fret, Sister. I convinced  
Cardinal Matthews otherwise.

ANN  
Thank you, Father. I only wanted --

Father Quinn raises his hand to silence her.

FATHER QUINN  
There are conditions, however. As a  
Sister you must understand your  
role --

ANN  
-- MY ROLE?!

Her raised voice earns the unwanted attention of the praying  
sister.

Ann lowers her voice, but her passion remains steady--

ANN (CONT'D)  
My role? What does that even mean?  
I serve God, not man.

FATHER QUINN  
Need I remind you of the vow of  
humility you took when you became a  
Maryknoll Sister?

ANN  
No, of course not, but I --

FATHER QUINN  
First Corinthians, chapter eleven,  
verse three, "...the head of every  
man is Christ; and the head of the  
woman is the man..."

ANN  
Ephesians chapter five, verse  
twenty-one, "Submit yourselves one  
to another in the fear of God."

Father Quinn doesn't like to be out-quoted.

FATHER QUINN

You have taken your first vows, but it's not until you take your second vows that your commitment to the church is permanent.

ANN

I understand the novitiate process, Father, but I'm not sure I understand your point.

FATHER QUINN

There are female exorcists in *other* religions.

ANN

I am a devout Catholic. I have not failed my religion. I don't expect my religion to fail me.

Ann stands to leave.

FATHER QUINN

Sister Ann, if I let you sit in on my lectures, do I have your word you'll obey the hierarchy of the church?

She sits back down, hopeful.

ANN

You do.

FATHER QUINN

But understand you'll be there only as an observer, not as a participant.

(off her displeased look)

Remember, Sister, Rome wasn't built in a day.

This elicits a smile from Ann.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

The seats are filled with PRIESTS waiting for class to begin.

Father Raymond and Father Dante are the only faces we recognize in the seats. That is until--

Ann enters.

She takes a seat front and center.

Raymond takes notice, smiles shaking his head--*that girl's got nerve.*

Father Quinn enters, stands behind the lectern.

FATHER QUINN  
Good afternoon.

ALL  
Good afternoon, Father Quinn.

FATHER QUINN  
Before we begin, I'd like to welcome a new addition to our class. Or should I say an official addition, as I know many of you have seen her in class before. Sister Ann will be observing the lessons and accompanying us during our hands-on training.

Raymond catches Ann's eye--raises his eyebrows as if to say, "Really?" Ann smiles and nods, "Really."

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
This might be a good time to review my three golden rules. Let's see how many of you were paying attention on that first day. Rule number one, anyone?

A YOUNG PRIEST (28) raises his hand--

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
Father Richard.

PRIEST #1  
Stage two possessions in observation rooms on the second level are only to be visited under the supervision of religious faculty.

FATHER QUINN  
Yes, very good. Rule number two?

AN OLDER PRIEST (40's) speaks out--

PRIEST #2  
Third level observation rooms are off limits to all students.

FATHER QUINN  
Because...

The priest's slight hesitation is the only invitation Ann needs--

ANN

Because the possessed quartered there have progressed to stage three and are deemed too dangerous for student interaction of any kind.

FATHER QUINN

Yes, in fact I don't even visit the third level. It's above my pay grade.

Laughs from the room.

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)

And rule number three?

No takers.

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)

Come on. No one?

DANTE

It was a scripture.

FATHER QUINN

It was. A very important one in your proposed line of work, Father Dante.

As Dante tries to recall the exact scripture, Ann writes something quickly in her journal.

She turns her back to Father Quinn and holds it up discreetly.

Dante's pov - written in big enough print for him to see  
"EPHESIANS 6:11"

DANTE

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."

FATHER QUINN

Very good, Father Dante. With a nice assist from Sister Ann.

(to the room)

It seems this review wasn't for her benefit, it was for all of yours.

More laughs from the class. Father Quinn gives a nod of approval to Ann--he's clearly made the right decision.

INT. STAIRWELL - MINUTES LATER

Father Quinn leads the class down a flight of stairs.

FATHER QUINN

Michael is a recent admission.  
Eight years old. Born deaf and  
mute. The parent's request for his  
exorcism was initially denied by  
the church when Dr. Patel's  
preliminary diagnosis was  
idiopathic epilepsy.

INT. POSSESSION WING (SECOND LEVEL) - MINUTES LATER

Oil-painted PORTRAITS of various religious figures adorn the dimly lit walls. The candlelight dances on the painted faces almost giving the illusion of movement.

Father Quinn continues to lead the class through the narrow catacombs.

FATHER QUINN

The request was reconsidered when  
the parents documented behavior in  
the boy that couldn't be medically  
explained.

RAYMOND

What kind of behavior?

FATHER QUINN

He began to speak.

ANN

Some would call that a miracle.

FATHER QUINN

What the boy was saying was not of  
God.

The narrow passageway opens up to --

AN OBSERVATION ROOM (BOY'S ROOM)

The class gathers along the fourth glass wall.

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
 By the time Michael was properly  
 diagnosed he was already at stage  
 two possession.

Inside we see--

Wooden train tracks and toy trains are scattered on an  
 oversized alphabet rug.

A twin bed with a train comforter and matching pillow case is  
 pushed against the back wall.

A wardrobe closet closed against an adjoining wall.

A child's easel with water colors next to a play table and  
 chairs. Currently a picture of a stick-figure boy under an  
 oversized sun is on display.

It's a typical boy's room with everything but the boy...

DANTE  
 Where is he?

Father Quinn points. The class follows the direction of his  
 pointer finger to find--

MICHAEL (8) on the ceiling. Wild eyes. A frothy-foam forms at  
 the corners of his mouth.

DANTE (CONT'D)  
 That's only stage two?

Father Quinn takes a PAIR OF SKELETON-STYLE KEYS from a hook  
 on the wall.

DANTE (CONT'D)  
 (re: the keys)  
 Might be time for an upgrade. Just  
 sayin'.

FATHER QUINN  
 Demons operate on another plane of  
 existence. Their dark energy can  
 easily manipulate our technology.  
 No electricity, codes, bluetooth,  
 or WiFi. Just good old fashioned  
 ingenuity.

He inserts each key into tandem locks and turns them. *CLICK-  
 CLICK.*

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
 Any volunteers?

Ann's hand shoots up--out of reflex more than anything.

Father Quinn shoots her a disbelieving look--*really?*

Ann casually lowers her hand.

Raymond raises his hand--

RAYMOND  
I'll go, Father.

FATHER QUINN  
Very well. You will take the lead.  
Who would like to assist Father  
Raymond?

Father Dante steps forward.

DANTE  
He can't be much worse than my  
brother's kid.

Father Quinn retrieves TWO LEATHER DOPP KITS from a concealed compartment in the wall.

FATHER QUINN  
Each of you performs a simple  
exorcism every time you baptize a  
child cleansing them of their  
original sin. That was baptism by  
water. This is baptism by fire...

He hands a kit to Raymond and the other to Dante--

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
The armor of God.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM (BOY'S ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

Raymond unzips the dopp kit. Inside we see all the tools of  
an exorcist's trade--

A pocket bible.

A rosary.

A silver-plated aspergillum for sprinkling holy water.

A purple stole.

An oil ring for administering holy oil.

And of course--

A silver Crucifix.

Raymond removes the purple stole from the kit, drapes it over his shoulders.

Raymond joins Dante who's wasted no time putting on the full armor of God--holding the aspergillum in one hand, the crucifix in the other, and wearing the holy oil ring and purple stole.

Raymond looks over to Father Quinn who stands on the other side of the glass wall.

Father Quinn nods, "*Proceed.*"

Raymond turns his attention back to the possessed boy on the ceiling, drool now dripping from his mouth to the rug below.

Raymond traces the sign of the cross over the boy, trying to steady his trembling hand--

RAYMOND  
In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et  
Spiritus Sanctum.

RAYMOND/DANTE  
Amen.

Raymond flicks the aspergillum, sending a spray of holy water in the boy's direction.

The boy HOWLS, flips onto all fours, and scurries across the ceiling like a spider fleeing a spray of Raid.

The boy crouches in a far corner of the ceiling, facing out--on guard.

Raymond moves closer. Dante doesn't budge.

RAYMOND  
I cast you out, unclean spirit,  
along with every Satanic power of  
the enemy, every spectre from hell,  
and all your fell companions; in  
the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The boy HISSES, then SPITS--it lands on its intended target. Raymond wipes his forehead clean with one end of the purple stole.

Raymond walks toward the boy, unnerved but undeterred--arm outstretched, crucifix leading the way.

The boy's eyes roll back in his head to avoid looking upon the advancing crucifix.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Begone and stay far from this  
creature of God. For it is He who  
commands you, He who flung you  
headlong from the heights of heaven  
into the depths of hell.

The boy leaps from the corner and for a split-second his demonic face is revealed.

The boy lands on Raymond, knocking him to the ground and the crucifix out of his hand.

The crucifix slides under the bed.

ON THE BED

The boy scrambles beneath the covers. He sits, motionless.

Dante helps Raymond to his feet.

Raymond searches the ground--

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

My crucifix...

Dante points under the bed.

Camera's pov - the dark abyss under the bed, seemingly endless. No sign of the crucifix. The camera pans up to the bed, where the boy sits straight up still under the covers--

--somehow he looks bigger now.

Resume

Dante offers Raymond his crucifix.

DANTE

Here. You can have mine.

Raymond takes the crucifix, holds it close to his chest as if to shield his heart or more likely his soul from harm.

His steps are short and measured as he recites--

RAYMOND

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name.

With each step closer, the figure beneath the blanket seems to grow bigger.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)  
Thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Raymond is at the foot of the bed now.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses...

Raymond reaches for the blanket with his free hand.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)  
...as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.

The tall figure beneath the blanket SNARLS like a wild beast.  
Raymond takes a step back...

FATHER QUINN  
Your weapon is prayer. Theirs is  
distraction. You musn't stop.

Raymond moves back to the bed, grips the edge of the blanket so tightly the blood drains from his knuckles.

RAYMOND  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

And with those final words, Raymond yanks the blanket off the figure to reveal--

An empty bed.

The boy has vanished.

Raymond can hardly register what happened before--

TWO DEMONIC HANDS

Jut out from under the bed, grab his ankles, and pull him under the bed with a single violent jerk.

OUTSIDE THE OBSERVATION ROOM

Ann SCREAMS.

ANN  
Raymond!

Father Quinn bolts into --

THE OBSERVATION ROOM

The bed convulses violently, as if possessed itself.

Father Quinn rushes over to the bed. He tries to lift it, but it won't budge.

FATHER QUINN

Father Dante, come!

Dante joins Father Quinn at the bed. They manage to overturn the bed revealing--

Raymond under the bed. Alone. He holds up the lost crucifix.

RAYMOND

Found it.

*BANG-BANG-BANG!*

That sound's coming from the closet wardrobe.

Then a young voice from behind the closed doors, innocent--

BOY (O.C.)

Help! Let me out!

Father Quinn rushes over to the wardrobe--the doors breathing in and out as if they were alive. Father Quinn tries to open the doors. But just as he does, the doors are yanked shut.

DEMON VOICE (O.C.)

Let me in!

Father Quinn turns to Raymond and Dante--

FATHER QUINN

One of the central rites of exorcism is to ask the demon its name. Knowing a demon's name, means having dominion and power over it. At the instant the demon reveals his name, it shows that he has been weakened; if he doesn't say it, he is still strong.

*BANG-BANG-BANG!*

More pounding on the wardrobe doors as the boy SCREAMS for mercy inside. Father Quinn turns his attention to demon inside--

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
 I command you, unclean spirit  
 attacking this servant of God, by  
 the mysteries of the incarnation,  
 passion, resurrection, and  
 ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 that you tell me by some sign your  
 name!

Then silence.

Father Quinn reaches for the wardrobe door--

*BAM!*

The door swings open with such force it sends Father Quinn flying across the room. He strikes his head against the bedpost, rendering him unconscious.

The boy FLIES (literally) out of the closet and across the room.

The GUST OF WIND left in his wake scatters the watercolor paintings about the room, leaving one behind--

--the painting of a demon; the body of an angel with the head of an owl, riding the back of a black wolf.

OUTSIDE THE ROOM

A look of recognition on Ann's face at the sight of it--

ANN  
 (a whisper)  
 Andras.  
 (louder)  
 It's Andras.

Ann beats her palms against the glass trying to get their attention --

ANN (CONT'D)  
 It's Andras!

INSIDE THE OBSERVATION ROOM

Raymond tends to Father Quinn, oblivious to Sister Ann outside.

One of the paintings blows against Father Dante's leg. He pulls it off--

--it's a painting of a pregnant woman. Inside her belly is a demon baby. Scrawled along the top in watercolor letters, "Hermana"

Dante is so distracted by the image, he doesn't notice the boy on the wall behind him. Until--

BOY  
(demonic)  
Es un niño!  
(subtitle: *It's a boy!*)

The demon leaps onto Dante's back, wrestles him to the ground with superhuman strength.

OUTSIDE THE ROOM

Ann pushes past the other students to the concealed compartment in the wall. She tears into one of the leather kits and retrieves the crucifix.

Ann grapples with her fear and the promise she made to Father Quinn before running into--

THE OBSERVATION ROOM

Where Dante continues to wrestle with the demon boy.

ANN  
Andras!

The boy snaps his head in Ann's direction. Leaps to his feet.

Ann holds out the crucifix.

ANN (CONT'D)  
I command you depart, transgressor.  
Depart, seducer, full of lies and  
cunning, foe of virtue, persecutor  
of the innocent.

The boy begins to convulse where he stands.

Dante begins to recite the Lord's prayer as Ann continues the exorcism--

DANTE  
Our father who art in heaven...

ANN  
Give place, abominable creature,  
give way, you monster, give way to  
Christ, in whom you found none of  
your works.

The boy's convulsions become more savage, knocking him to the ground.

Father Quinn regains consciousness. Raymond joins Dante in prayer--

RAYMOND/DANTE  
On earth as it is in heaven...

ANN  
For He has already stripped you of  
your powers and laid waste to your  
kingdom, bound you prisoner and  
plundered your weapons.

The boy's body contorts in ways altogether inhuman.

Father Quinn gets to his feet.

RAYMOND/DANTE  
As we forgive those who trespass  
against us.

ANN  
He has cast you forth into the  
outer darkness, where everlasting  
ruin awaits you and your abettors.

The boy is suddenly lifted in the air as if pulled by the  
invisible strings of a puppeteer and begins to levitate  
toward Ann.

Father Quinn grabs the crucifix from her, stands between Ann  
and the boy.

FATHER QUINN  
Set the boy free! I command you in  
His name.

The boy begins to convulse mid-air.

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
I cast you out! I cast you out in  
the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

RAYMOND/DANTE  
But deliver us from evil.

ALL  
Amen.

The boy is suspended there frozen. All the muscles in his  
face relax--expressionless.

He sways ever so slightly as urine streams down his leg,  
soaks his pajama leg.

He collapses on the rug in a heap.

The room is overcome by an eerie stillness as they surround  
the boy.

CUT TO:

A SHAKEY HAND POORS WINE INTO--

A Dixie cup, spills some as it moves to a second cup.

REVEAL INT. SACRISTY

A small room just off the chapel altar.

Dante hands Raymond one of the paper cups. Raymond passes it  
to Ann.

DANTE  
Here's to living through our first  
exorcism.

Dante downs the cup of wine in a single gulp.

Raymond and Ann take a more conservative sip from their cups.

As Dante pours himself another cup of sacramental wine, Ann  
spots the corner of one of the watercolor paintings sticking  
out of Dante's pocket.

ANN  
I see you kept a souvenir.

Dante takes the paper out of his pocket, unfolds it--

It's the painting of the pregnant woman and demon baby.

DANTE  
I think this was meant for me.

ANN  
Meant for you--how?

DANTE  
Hermana. Sister. My sister's  
pregnant.

RAYMOND

Maybe the demon was just taunting  
the sisters here. Making a mockery  
of the Virgin Mary.

DANTE

But why in Spanish?

RAYMOND

Demons know many languages.

DANTE

My sister...she was raped.

ANN

Dante, I'm sorry.

DANTE

Five years ago I would have killed  
the man, now I pray for his soul to  
be saved. My sister believes she is  
possessed with the devil's seed.

RAYMOND

Do you?

DANTE

It's one of the reasons I accepted  
the invitation to the program. I  
believe it was a sign from God.  
I'm trying to get her admitted to  
the school. But between the  
waitlist and committee approvals--  
it can be a long process.

ANN

I will pray for her.

CLANK!

Inexplicably, the bottle of wine topples over. Spills Merlot  
on the painting.

Dante uprights the bottle before too much is wasted.

The three of them share a guilty laugh.

RAYMOND

I guess we should go to confession  
for dipping into the sacramental  
wine.

DANTE

Or we can just absolve each other  
and have another drink.

ANN

Amen to that.

They toast. As they drink, we move to--

THE PAINTING

The wine has spilled in such a way that it looks like blood flows from the pregnant woman's stomach, forming a puddle beneath her.

CUT TO:

THE HUMMINGBIRD JEWELRY BOX

Ann opens the lid, retrieves her cross necklace from inside.

REVEAL INT. ANN'S ROOM - MORNING

Ann continues her morning ritual, slips the necklace over her head and settles the cross on her chest.

FATHER QUINN (O.S.)

Going morning, Sister Ann.

Ann turns to find Father Quinn standing in the doorway.

ANN

(surprised)

Father Quinn.

FATHER QUINN

I bring you some news from Rome.

Father Quinn hands Ann a typewritten letter on official letterhead of the *International Association of Exorcists*.

ANN

I'm sorry. I don't read Italian.

FATHER QUINN

At my request a rather miraculous exception has been made by the International Association of Exorcists. The simple translation-- you've been officially accepted into the program.

ANN  
As an exorcist?

Father Quinn nods.

FATHER QUINN  
Decisions can be made quickly in  
the information age.

ANN  
So, the boy--he was cleansed.

Father Quinn shakes his head--

FATHER QUINN  
No. Sadly, the boy's still  
afflicted by the demon. It only  
took temporary refuge to avoid  
further assault.

ANN  
I see.

Ann tries to mask her disappoint--she's lousy at it.

FATHER QUINN  
Exorcism rarely works on its first  
attempt. Even for seasoned pros.  
However, you have a gift from God,  
Sister Ann. I pray we can teach you  
how to master it.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Ann moves down the hallway with the other clergy, all headed  
in a common direction.

FATHER QUINN (V.O.)  
The grace and peace of God our  
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be  
with you.

Ann wears a confident smile--the kind of smile you have after  
being the first Sister ever accepted into the exorcism  
program.

ALL (V.O.)  
And also with you.

INT. CHAPEL - MORNING

Father Quinn stands at the altar celebrating the morning mass.

The pews are filled with student clergy. Ann sits in the middle of the flock.

FATHER QUINN  
A reading from the Holy Gospel  
according to Saint Luke.

Ann makes a small cross with her thumb over her forehead, lips, and chest.

ALL  
Glory to you, oh Lord.

FATHER QUINN  
(reading)  
And the seventy-two came back  
rejoicing. "Lord," they said, "even  
the devils submit to us when we use  
your name."

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Projected on the screen--an exorcism of a SPANISH WOMAN (30's). She seizures--thrashing and kicking--as a SPANISH PRIEST (30's) places the crucifix and end of his stole on her forehead.

We continue to hear Father Quinn's (VO) as the exorcism plays out on the screen --

FATHER QUINN (V.O.)  
"Yes," He said to them, "I watched  
Satan fall like lightning from  
heaven."

Ann listens intently to a PRIEST (40's) providing instructional commentary to the class while the Spanish Priest exorcises the possessed woman on screen.

INT. POSSESSION WING (SECOND LEVEL) - DAY

Outside an observation room. Ann and the other exorcists-in-training watch through the glass wall as two of their classmates perform an exorcism inside --

AN OBSERVATION ROOM (DEN)

A possessed BLACK WOMAN (late-50s), eyes rolled back in her head, is on her knees raging against the PRIEST holding her down.

Raymond stands in front of her reciting the Lord's prayer as he lays hands on her forehead.

FATHER QUINN (V.O.)  
Look, I have given you power to  
tread down serpents and scorpions  
and the whole strength of the  
enemy.

The woman's eyes return to their normal position as she collapses in Raymond's arms, he cradles her.

FATHER QUINN (V.O.)  
Nothing shall ever hurt you.

Father Quinn nods his approval. Ann and the others break out into applause.

FATHER QUINN (V.O.)  
Yet do not rejoice that the spirits  
submit to you...

INT. CHAPEL - MORNING

Ann accepts the Eucharist from Father Quinn--he places the host on her tongue.

FATHER QUINN (V.O.)  
...rejoice instead that your names  
are written in heaven.

Ann moves to Sister Euphemia who holds the chalice of consecrated wine--Ann drinks from it as Sister Euphemia glares.

FATHER QUINN (V.O.)  
This is the gospel of the Lord.

INT. HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

Priests and Sisters come and go on their way to their next class.

As Ann navigates the narrow hallway, she glimpses--

SISTER EUPHEMIA

In a dim alcove, at the far end of the hall. If you weren't paying close attention you might think she was a statue.

The nun is staring right at her--as if there was nobody else between them. She scowls.

Ann slows, uneasy.

A COUPLE SISTERS block Ann's view--when they pass, the nun is gone.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

FATHER QUINN stands behind the lectern. A quote is written in Latin behind him on the whiteboard, "*Illi Diaboli ludicris utentes ducentur gradatim ad istius gladium gerendum.*"

FATHER QUINN

Narcism is the devil's favorite trait. With a National Selfie Day, it's no wonder there's been a five hundred-fold increase in reported possessions.

Chuckles from the class.

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)

Makes sense though, right? Social media gives demons a direct pipeline to intimate knowledge of its host - their strengths and more importantly their weaknesses.

He turns to the whiteboard.

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)

That brings me to this quote. Who can translate for me?

Ann raises her hand. Nobody else does. Father Quinn scans the room.

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)

Come on. Are the rest of you sleeping through your Latin studies? Ann.

ANN

Those who play with the devil's toys will be brought by degrees to wield his sword.

FATHER QUINN

Indeed. Pope Francis himself called  
social media "mental pollution."  
Perhaps it's spiritual pollution,  
as well.

CUT TO:

A PHOTO--ON A SMARTPHONE

A DOG wearing a party hat, sits in front of a bone-shaped  
cake a number three candle stuck in the middle.

A finger taps--LIKE. Scrolls.

REVEAL INT. ANN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ann sits on the bed, performing her mind-numbing nightly  
ritual.

-- A PHOTO of a WEDDING COUPLE at their reception, feeding  
each other cake. Happily wedded bliss.

Ann studies it--a life she'll never have. Taps--LIKE.  
Scrolls.

-- A banner reads, "6 Years Ago: See Your Memories" A PHOTO  
of TWO WOMEN (20's), cheek-to-cheek, club attire, Mai Tai's  
in hand.

Through the heavy make-up and revealing outfit, we realize  
one of those women is Ann.

Ann chuckles, shakes her head--*"what was I thinking?"*

She swipes left--another PHOTO from the past "memory" -- this  
one in the ladies room. Mirror-selfie of Ann and three other  
girlfriends--duck-lips all around.

She swipes left--a PHOTO of Ann's arms around the neck of a  
GUY (20's), shirt half-unbuttoned, bottle of Corona raised in  
celebration. Both of them with eyes at half-mast, wasted.

Ann frowns--

ANN

Those who play with the devil's  
toys...

Tap--DELETE ACCOUNT?

Ann takes a deep breath before--

Tap--CONFIRM.

INT. ANN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ann cups some water in her hands, rinses her face clean.

Pats her face dry with a linen cloth.

INT. HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

Ann walks down a dimly lit hallway, carrying the washbowl of water.

As she rounds a corner she hears a FAINT CRY -- rhythmic, with a strange sort of hiccup at the end.

As she nears the school's common bathroom the crying gets louder.

She passes a PORTRAIT of a cardinal, painted in oil. She's so distracted by the cries, she doesn't notice...

The cardinal's eyes have turned to solid black orbs.

Ann stops short of a wood door, the source of the cries hidden behind it.

As she's about to knock, the crying stops... trails with a titter. Was that laughter?

CLICK -- the sound of the lock unlatching.

Ann knocks softly on the door.

ANN  
It's Sister Ann.

No response.

ANN (CONT'D)  
I'm --

She rests her hand on the doorknob, it opens before she turns it.

ANN (CONT'D)  
-- coming in.

Ann pushes the door open--CREEEEAK.

Ann's pov - inside the bathroom. It's empty.

THWOOP-THWOOP--that's the sound of water dripping from the bathtub spigot into the tub basin filled with water.

THWOOP-THWOOP--the acoustics of the bathroom are such that it gives the drip a voice-like quality. It almost sounds like the crying she heard. Was it?

INT. BATHROOM

Ann empties the washbowl into the sink, her eyes shift to the tub.

THWHOOP-THWHOOP

Ann stands above the clawfoot tub.

Ann's pov - a layer of soap and dirt skims the surface, obfuscates what's underneath.

She kneels down beside the tub, rolls up her sleeve--

She plunges her hand into the water like someone jumping into an icy cold pool.

She feels for the drain plug--

*One... Two...*

--still searching

*Three... Four...*

--found it. She pulls the plug, the water begins to drain.

Wait...

It wasn't a plug stopping the water, it was--

A TANGLED MASS OF LONG AUBURN HAIR

Ann winces--*gross*. She tosses the clump of hair in the trash.

INT. HALLWAY

Ann makes her way back to her room, empty washbowl in hand.

The retching sound of the tub draining echoes down the hall--morphing into a demon-like scream.

Ann quickens her pace.

She passes more oil portraits--black orbs for eyes.

The sound escalates as the water cyclones down the drain--it almost sounds like a gurgled "Aaaaaannnnn!".

Ann looks back over her shoulder as she rounds a corner and slams into--

FATHER RAYMOND

The collision sends the washbowl tumbling to the adobe floor, it lands with a CRASH...

SHATTERS into pieces.

RAYMOND  
Sister Ann --

ANN  
Father, I'm sorry. I was just --

RAYMOND  
Are you hurt?

ANN  
No, I'm -- fine.

Ann kneels down to collect the pieces of shattered porcelain. Raymond kneels beside her, helps pick up the pieces.

ANN (CONT'D)  
Is this the part where I'm supposed to say, "Forgive me Father for I have sinned?"

RAYMOND  
Nah, you're covered under our Accident Forgiveness policy.

Ann smiles. Raymond smiles back. There's a fatherly quality about him that puts her at ease.

Ann picks up a jagged piece of porcelain, accidentally SLICES OPEN her finger--draws blood.

ANN  
Shit!

RAYMOND  
Ok, now that might not be covered.

CUT TO:

A MIXTURE OF BLOOD AND WATER swirl down a sink drain.

ANN (O.S.)  
A real doctor?

REVEAL INT. BATHROOM

Ann rinses her finger under the faucet. Raymond fishes through a first aid kit.

RAYMOND  
As opposed to--?

ANN  
People get their doctorates in all sorts of things. Growing up there was this neighbor who had his PhD in Recreation and Leisure Studies.

Raymond laughs.

ANN (CONT'D)  
I'm serious. My dad called him Doctor B.S. Only he didn't abbreviate it.

RAYMOND  
Medical doctor, general practice.

She's impressed.

ANN  
Guess they're serious when they say the church is on life support.

RAYMOND  
Here -- give me your hand.

Ann offers her hand.

Raymond takes it.

He studies the gash.

It's been a couple years since Ann's felt a man's touch. She feels flushed--grateful Raymond is too busy looking at her finger to notice. Hoping to slow her racing heart --

ANN  
So, why the career change?

During the following Raymond tends to Ann's wound--

RAYMOND  
It's a long story.

ANN

Seems you've got a captive audience.

RAYMOND

At the hospital I saw a lot of people die. Not because they were untreatable, but because there wasn't enough of us to treat them. Night after night I'd spend my time in the E.R. picking which patients to admit and which to turn away. Some of those people died because of lack of care.

ANN

But how many more did you save?

RAYMOND

A lot. And I knew that intellectually. But spiritually... I was broken. I turned to alcohol to mask my guilt. At first it was a crutch, then it became my life. That's when a priest who came to give last rites to one of my patients stepped in.

ANN

He knew you had a problem?

RAYMOND

He smelled the alcohol on my breath. At that point my sweat was probably ninety proof. Because of him, I decided the priesthood was my calling. I joined the clergy and went back to the hospital administering last rites to the patients there. I haven't turned a patient away since.

Raymond finishes wrapping her finger.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

So, what about you?

ANN

It's late. I've kept you up long enough.

RAYMOND

That's what we call in the medical field "dodging the question."

She smiles.

ANN  
Goodnight, doc.

Ann waves goodnight with her bandaged finger. Off Raymond who is more intrigued by Ann than ever...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Ann moves with the flock between classes. She spots Kylie, waves--

Kylie keeps walking. Assuming she didn't see her, Ann hurries over and takes her arm --

ANN  
Sister Kylie.

Kylie stops, avoids eye contact.

ANN (CONT'D)  
Hey... after the night I had, I  
need some caffeine desperately.  
Want to grab some of that sludge  
from the --

KYLIE  
Not everyone agrees with the  
church's decision.

ANN  
I'm sorry... what?

KYLIE  
Letting you into the exorcism  
program.

ANN  
Oh. Well... do you?

KYLIE  
Father Timothy once said the devil  
doesn't come dressed in a red cape  
and pointy horns. He comes as  
everything you've ever wished for.

Kylie breaks free from Ann's grip. She continues down the hall, leaving a dejected Ann in her wake.

INT. LIBRARY/STUDY HALL - AFTERNOON

Rows of shelves filled with religious texts surround a bank of study tables.

Ann sits--that cup of sludge she was craving next to an open book. She writes in her notebook.

INT. LIBRARY/STUDY HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Ann moves down a row of books carrying a small stack on her arm. She browses the titles on a shelf, eye-level.

Distant voices whisper. Then--

DEMONIC VOICE  
(a raspy whisper)  
ANN!

Ann spins--there's nobody there.

She shakes it off, turns her attention back to the books. Finds the title she's looking for...

Ann's pov - as she pulls the book off the shelf--A DEMONIC FACE stares at her from the other side of the aisle. BLOODSHOT EYES surrounded by long auburn hair--it's Natalie--the same girl from the opening scene. Pustules cover her face, stained yellow and green teeth exposed in a demonic grimace.

A HAND GRABS ANN'S SHOULDER

Ann jumps, drops the stack of books.

DANTE (O.C.)  
I'm sorry...

Ann turns to find Father Dante.

DANTE (CONT'D)  
...I didn't mean to sneak up on you. But it's a library, so...

Ann looks back at the empty spot on the bookshelf. The demonic girl is gone.

ANN  
I'm fine. Really.

Ann and Dante kneel down, gather the scattered books.

DANTE  
Sister Ann, I need your help.

INT. LIBRARY/STUDY HALL - MINUTES LATER

Ann and Dante sit at a study table speaking in hushed tones --

ANN  
Have you considered maybe the  
committee was right to deny your  
sister an exorcism?

DANTE  
I know my sister... I know her  
better than any committee ever  
will. She is under the devil's  
spell. This I am certain.

ANN  
Have you spoken to Dr. Patel?

DANTE  
He'd only say the decision of the  
committee is binding. He wouldn't  
give me any other details.

ANN  
But there is an appeals process.

DANTE  
There is no time for that. She  
isn't eating or drinking. I fear  
for her life and the life of her  
baby. Please.

ANN  
Father Dante, I'm no more qualified  
than you.

DANTE  
I saw you with that possessed boy.  
You were fearless. I can't say the  
same for myself.

ANN  
Yet that boy is still possessed.

DANTE  
And still alive.

ANN  
Have you asked any of the others...  
Father Raymond?

DANTE  
 Father Raymond said he would go...  
 but only if you agreed.

As Ann weighs her decision --

PRELAP SFX of the SCREECHING of a subway car brakes --

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND CENTRAL TRANSIT - NIGHT

Ann, Raymond, and Dante wait on the platform as the subway car comes to a stop.

RAYMOND (V.O.)  
 You never told me how you were  
 called to service.

ANN (V.O.)  
 It's a long story...

INT. SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT

Raymond and Ann sit next to each other. Dante sits a few seats over reading the bible.

RAYMOND  
 Looks like you've got a captive  
 audience.

Ann smiles, looks out the window.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)  
 You're really not going to tell me?  
 After I shared the whole doc  
 alcoholic story?

ANN  
 My mother...she was possessed.

Raymond leans back in his seat. He wasn't expecting to hear that.

ANN (CONT'D)  
 It was never officially  
 acknowledged by the church or  
 anything. She had struggled with  
 depression and was diagnosed as bi-  
 polar. But this was... more.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. ANN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - PORCH (15 YEARS AGO) - DAY

Camera's pov - over her mother's shoulder as she rocks slowly in a wooden rocking chair, watching Young Ann play in the backyard.

Young Ann swings on a swing, her long hair flows in the wind.

ANN (CONT'D)

She never cut my hair. She'd always tell me it was my best feature. I think she meant it as a compliment.

RESUME

INT. SUBWAY CAR

ANN (CONT'D)

But I always thought, really? My hair is my best feature? Isn't everybody's hair basically the same? I mean it's hair.

Raymond runs his hand across his bald head.

RAYMOND

I don't know--you're asking the wrong guy.

ANN

My hair was so long then. Past my waist. It would get these horrible tangles...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ANN'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM (15 YEARS AGO) - NIGHT

Ann's mother sits on the edge of her bed, brushing out Young Ann's hair.

ANN (V.O.)

My mother could spend what seemed like hours brushing it out. And she'd hum... a lullaby.

RAYMOND (V.O.)

What, like Rock-a-Bye Baby?

ANN (V.O.)

No... It was this tune from an antique music box she found at one of her church rummage sales.

We stay close on her mother's lips humming as we hear Ann HUM the melody (V.O.) --

ANN (V.O.)  
She would sometimes brush my hair  
so hard clumps of it would come  
out.

Hair pulled taught.

A child's scream.

A tangled mass in the brush.

ANN (V.O.)  
Afterward she'd hold me and she'd  
cry--

Ann's mother cradles her in her lap, tears streak down both their faces.

ANN (V.O.)  
She'd say the voice in her head  
made her do it... she said it was  
the voice of the devil.

INT. ANN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - HALLWAY (15 YEARS AGO) - NIGHT

Young Ann peeks out from her bedroom door.

Young Ann's pov - down the hall. Her mother's bedroom door cracked open just enough for her to see her mother laying on the bed. We hear indiscernible WHISPERS coming from the room.

ANN (V.O.)  
At night I would hear it too--  
voices. It scared me. She scared  
me.

Her mother is now standing at the door--glaring at her.

RESUME

INT. SUBWAY CAR

ANN  
My father eventually had her  
committed. The first night she was  
gone I cut off all my hair. And  
cried...

RAYMOND  
And your mother?

ANN  
She was at the asylum for a year.

RAYMOND  
They released her?

ANN  
She released herself.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ASYLUM ROOM (15 YEARS AGO) - NIGHT

Ann's mother hangs from an overhead pipe by a bed sheet.

ANN (V.O.)  
She hung herself.

Camera's pov - a suicide note on the floor beneath her feet,  
pushes in close enough to the note so we can read the scrawl,  
"SUPERO"

RESUME

INT. SUBWAY CAR

RAYMOND  
Supero. That's Latin right?

Ann nods.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)  
What does it mean?

ANN  
"I win."

PRELAP SFX thunder clap --

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Heavy rain pelts the asphalt. A dog barks a warning in the distance.

ANN (V.O.)  
I studied everything I could about  
demonology... every demon from  
every religion preparing for the  
day I'd find the one responsible  
for taking her from me.

Ann and Raymond trail Dante across the parking lot of a multi-story apartment complex in the heart of the city.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - SIXTH FLOOR - MINUTES LATER

Peeling paint on paper thin walls. Carpet stained with whoknowswhat. Half the lightbulbs burned out, the other half flicker--destined for lightbulb heaven.

Dante knocks on an apartment door. A tarnished "6C" nailed above the peephole.

Ann and Raymond wait behind him.

The door opens to reveal MRS. JIMENEZ (50's), aged more by worry than years. Eyes red from crying and lack of sleep.

DANTE  
Mamá, I've brought help.

The tears flow--

MRS. JIMENEZ  
Alabado sea el Señor!

She wraps herself around her son, collapses in his arms.

INT. JIMENEZ APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Dante's father sits in a rocking chair in a corner of the cramped living space, staring at a TV blaring Univision.

DANTE  
Hola, papa.

He doesn't respond, continues to glare at the TV.

DANTE (CONT'D)  
You have to forgive him. My father believes what I am doing is an act of defiance against the church.

Dante leads Ann and Raymond into the hallway.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

A jungle animal mobile hangs above a crib, bare mattress beneath it.

Dozens of Saints' candles adorn the room.

Their collective light casts a warm glow on--

EMILIA (18) currently asleep and very pregnant. Her swollen belly visible beneath the fabric of her button-down nightgown.

DANTE

My mother says she's been asleep  
for three days.

Ann, Raymond, and Dante stand at the foot of the bed.

Ann now wears the purple stole over her shoulders.

She gently unbuttons a few of Emilia's buttons to reveal her bare stomach.

She flicks open the ring of holy oil on her finger, dips her thumb in it, then rubs the oil on Emilia's bare stomach.

Ann makes the sign of the cross on her skin as she professes--

ANN

Lord, have mercy.

DANTE/RAYMOND

Lord, have mercy.

Emilia stirs, something awakened in her. She begins to whisper--indiscernible--demonic.

Thumb in oil--another cross across Emilia's belly.

ANN

Christ, have mercy.

DANTE/RAYMOND

Christ, have mercy.

The whispers grow louder--overlap. A gurgle in Emilia's throat, foam begins to erupt from her mouth.

Thumb in oil--another cross on her stomach.

ANN

See the cross of the Lord and  
begone, you hostile powers!

A CHILD'S FACE SUDDENLY APPEARS

Pressed against the inside of Emilia's stomach, skin vacuum sealed around its features contorted in a mortal scream.

Ann recoils. The face disappears back into the womb.

Ann holds up the crucifix.

ANN (CONT'D)  
In the name of Jesus Christ, name  
yourself.

A demonic laugh.

EMILIA  
Your mama. Mama. MAAAA-MAAAA!

ANN  
By the authority given to me by the  
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I  
command you to tell me your name!

Emilia bolts up on her knees, rips open the top of her gown  
revealing swollen breasts--

EMILIA  
Suck my titties, bitch!

Her breasts begin to leak milk--then blood.

DANTE  
Lord, have mercy...

The bedroom doors opens, it's Mrs. Jimenez. She's crying now,  
hysterically--

MRS. JIMENEZ  
Salva a mi hijo! Dios, salva su  
alma!

SLAM! The door slams shut. The knob rattles as she tries to  
open it again, but it won't budge.

Ann catches sight of a pewter pendant hanging from Emilia's  
neck--

--the body of a man, the head of a lion, talons of an eagle,  
two pairs of wings, and a scorpion's tail.

ANN  
Pazuzu!

Emilia flips on her back, begins to convulse--her whole body  
shaking violently.

ANN (CONT'D)  
Hold her!

Dante and Raymond get on either side of Emilia, hold her down  
by her arms.

EMILIA  
(natural voice)  
Save him. Save my baby.  
(demonic voice)  
I'm going to eat him up...

Emilia SLURPS as if sucking up a strand of spaghetti.

Ann leans over her, grabs the pendant--rips it from her neck.

Emilia HOWLS. Ann holds out the pendant--

ANN  
Where did you get this?

EMILIA  
I pulled it from your mother's  
pussy.

DANTE  
What is it?

ANN  
Pazuzu. Demon goddess known to  
protect pregnant women from other  
demons.

Ann wraps her rosary around her hand, crucifix dangling in  
front of her.

ANN (CONT'D)  
Hail Mary, full of grace...

EMILIA  
Full of disgrace.

ANN  
The Lord is with thee.

Emilia spreads her legs--

EMILIA  
Do you want to know what it feels  
like to have something grow inside  
you?

ANN  
Blessed art thou amongst women...

Emilia turns to Father Raymond--

EMILIA  
Father here wants to grow inside  
you! Don't you father?

ANN

And blessed is the fruit of thy  
womb, Jesus.

EMILIA

Molester. MOLEST. HER.

ANN

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for  
us sinners. Now and at the hour of  
our death.

ALL

Amen.

EMILIA

(demonic)

Amen.

The mobile begins to play--it's the lullaby we've heard  
before.

Ann turns, watches the stuffed-animals spin to the haunting  
melody.

Emilia begins to cackle demonically--delighting in the  
mischievous.

EMILIA (CONT'D)

The hour of her death. *La-la-la-la-*  
*la-la-la-la!*

*WHOOSH!*

The bedroom window flies open, raining sideways into the  
room.

A GUST OF WIND extinguishes all the candles. The room now  
illuminated only by moonlight.

ANN

I know who you are! In the name of  
Jesus Christ, I command you speak  
your name!

Emilia SNARLS, GNASHES TEETH, WRITHES, as --

ANN (CONT'D)

In the name of the Holy Spirit, I  
command you speak your name! It is  
God who commands you! Your name!  
Give me your name!

EMILIA  
Pazuzu! Pa-Zu-Zu!

ANN  
Begone, Pazuzu! Tremble and flee,  
as we call on the name of the Lord,  
before whom the denizens of hell  
cower. The Word made flesh commands  
you...

Ann traces the sign of the cross in the air with the  
crucifix.

Emilia begins to thrash, rising off the bed.

ANN (CONT'D)  
The Virgin's Son commands you...

Emilia now hovers high above the bed.

ANN (CONT'D)  
Jesus of Nazareth commands you...

Emilia spins in the air, stops with her belly to the bed.

ANN (CONT'D)  
I adjure you in His name, begone  
from this woman who is His  
creature.

*BZZZZZZ-BZZZZZ!*

Raymond and Dante look around the room--*Where is that buzzing  
coming from?*

ANN (CONT'D)  
It is futile to resist His will!

Raymond is the first to spot--

--A HORNET crawling out from underneath Emilia's nightgown,  
drops to the bed below. Then another... and another...

Until there are dozens of them on the bed, they clamber in  
formation--form black numbers against white sheets--666

ANN (CONT'D)  
For it is not men you are  
condemning, but rather Him who  
rules the living and the dead!

*BZZZZZZZZZZZZZ!* The buzzing grows louder and louder until--

A SWARM OF HORNETS spray from between Emilia's legs, emerge out the open end of her nightgown.

ANN (CONT'D)  
Lord, let your mighty hand cast  
Pazuzu out of your servant,  
Emilia...

A HAND--pressed against the inside of Emilia's stomach--this is no baby hand...

A DEMONIC FACE--appears beneath the surface, the face of Pazuzu rages against taugth skin.

Emilia screams in agony.

ANN (CONT'D)  
...He commands you, depart from  
this place. Begone! Surrender to  
Him in the name of the Father, and  
of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,  
forever and ever!

ALL  
AMEN!

And within an instant--

The hornets fly out the window. *BAM!* The window slams shut behind them.

One-by-one the flames of the Saints' candles reignite, basking the room in a holy glow.

Emilia drops to the bed, freed of the demon. She weeps.

Dante sits on the bed, cradles his sister in his arms.

Ann, Raymond, and Dante exchange looks--*Holy. Shit.*

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT

An empty car. Ann rests the back of her head against the window. Raymond is asleep on her left shoulder, Dante on her right. It's been quite a night...

Ann's pov - through the train window as light markers pass in a dark tunnel.

The subway car lights FLICKER. And for a split second--

Natalie, the demonic girl from the library, appears in the back of the subway car awkwardly hunched over. She's wearing the same nightgown we saw her in before, stained with vomit.

FLICKER

She's gone.

FLICKER-FLICKER

She's back--closer now.

FLICKER

Even closer.

Ann tenses as the tunnel opens up to a station platform, flooding the train car with light.

The girl is gone.

The doors open to a GROUP of COLLEGE STUDENTS who board the car, giggling at the sight of the two priests asleep on Ann's shoulders.

INT. ANN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ann kneels bedside, rosary in hand--praying.

ALL (V.O.)  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Ann crosses herself, kisses the crucifix at the end of the rosary.

She climbs under the covers, blows out the Saint's candle on her side table. Before the room is plunged into darkness we catch a glimpse of something under her bed--

--TWO EYES glow in the shadows.

Ann closes her eyes.

We hold on her face for a long beat before we hear--

--CALINK-LINK-CLINK. A few notes from the music box play...

Ann's eyes dart open. Her eyes shift to the dresser where the music box sits, lid closed.

She steps out of bed--sets one foot on the floor, then the other. There doesn't appear to be anything under her bed now, but it's awfully dark under there...

Ann moves to the dresser, sets her hand on the music box.

She slowly lifts the lid--

--nothing but silence and the cross necklace.

Ann retrieves the cross, puts it on--she'll be sleeping with this tonight.

She starts back toward the bed--*OUCH!*

She stops--now what? She has something in her eye. She blinks, tries rubbing it out. Only makes it worse.

She moves back to the dresser, leans in to the mirror.

Ann's pov - in the mirror. She pulls down her lower eyelid--

--examines it. There in the corner...

Is that an eyelash?

Ann picks at it with her fingernail, manages to grab it between her nails.

She pulls at it.

It's not an eyelash.

It's a... hair.

Ann tugs at the end of it, slowly pulling the hair from the corner of her eye.

Shit--*that hurts.*

Ann keeps pulling--looking for the end.

It doesn't come.

Just keeps unspooling like thread on a bobbin.

She's so busy extracting the hair from her eye, she doesn't notice--

--the **FIGURE** in the shadows behind her.

It's getting closer.

Ann squirms--has to get it out.

Closer.

She yanks the hair from her eye, backs away from the mirror.  
Only then does she see it in the reflection--

--THE DEMON GIRL, Natalie, right behind her.

Ann spins.

An empty room.

FATHER QUINN (V.O.)  
What kind of visions?

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Ann keeps pace with Father Quinn who moves swiftly down the corridor.

ANN  
A girl...a teenager maybe.  
Possessed.

FATHER QUINN  
And how do you know this?

ANN  
She looks like the devil himself.

Father Quinn stops at the top of a flight of stairs.

FATHER QUINN  
You've seen the devil, have you?

He smiles. She doesn't.

He heads down the stairs, Ann follows.

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)  
Have you asked any of the others  
about this girl?

ANN  
Yes.

FATHER QUINN  
And? Have they seen her?

Ann shakes her head, "no."

ANN  
But there's more than just the  
visions. I've been finding... hair.

FATHER QUINN

Hair?

ANN

Yes, long strands of dark red hair.

FATHER QUINN

Have you looked under every habit at the school? I'm certain there are a few sisters who might match that description.

ANN

I found it in *my* hairbrush. And -- this will sound crazy -- but I pulled...

Father Quinn stops at the bottom landing, turns to her --

FATHER QUINN

Sister Ann, you are not the first nor will you be the last to grapple with the curriculum here. This is not material you'll find in the common core. What we're dealing with speaks to the very essence of good and evil itself. Evil that has even found its way into our own ranks. May I make a suggestion?

ANN

Of course, Father.

FATHER QUINN

It wouldn't hurt for you to speak to Dr. Patel.

Ann can't hide her shock at the suggestion.

FATHER QUINN (CONT'D)

Don't look so surprised. Dr. Patel is a trusted colleague and a good man. Spiritually misguided, yes. I pray for his soul daily. But he's a brilliant psychiatrist. I should know. I've been to him a few times myself. Now if you'll excuse me, I have some demons of my own to tend to.

Father Quinn winks at her then disappears down another corridor.

INT. DR. PATEL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Various degrees, honors, and distinctions hang on the wall behind the desk.

Dr. Patel sits on the edge of his desk facing Ann who sits in a leather chair.

DR. PATEL  
How old is this girl in your  
visions?

ANN  
I don't know...thirteen? Fourteen?

DR. PATEL  
And how old were you when your  
mother took her life?

ANN  
I was...  
(it hits her)  
...fourteen.

DR. PATEL  
The lullaby, the girl with long  
hair, the hairbrush--all traumatic  
memories from your childhood.  
Coincidence?

ANN  
You're telling me it's all in my  
mind.

DR. PATEL  
Nightmares, recurrent distressing  
memories, being easily startled or  
frightened--all these are symptoms  
of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

ANN  
(skeptical)  
PTSD?

DR. PATEL  
I'm not asking you to abandon your  
entire belief system, Sister Ann.  
I'm only asking that in this case,  
you consider an alternate  
explanation.

Ann entertains the possibility.

DR. PATEL (CONT'D)  
At some point you'll have to  
confront your past, not run away  
from it. And, while I understand  
its sentimental value, the jewelry  
box you mentioned could be a  
trigger.

CUT TO:

INT. ANN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ann wraps the jewelry box in a sweater, puts it in the bottom  
dresser drawer.

INT. ANN'S ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Ann kneels bedside, crosses herself. She starts to get to her  
feet when something catches her eye--

--A HORNET crawls across her pillowcase.

Ann freezes--*how did that get in here?*

*Bzzzzzzzzz*

The hornet takes flight, circles her before landing in her  
hair--it burrows.

*Bzzzzzzzzz-bzzzzzzz*

Ann flicks her head sending the hornet flying.

It comes at her again, more aggressively now.

*BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ*

Ann swats at it as she opens her bedroom door. The hornet  
flies out, down the hall where Ann catches sight of--

--Natalie, the demonic girl, before she darts around a  
corner. The pitter-patter of bare feet echo down the hall.

Ann takes pursuit--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ann catches a fleeting glimpse of Natalie's nightgown before  
she disappears down a staircase.

A trail of demonic laughter hangs in the air.

Ann follows it--

INT. STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ann picks up her pace, descending the staircase past the second level. She follows the pitter-patter down another flight.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ann passes more oil-painted portraits of prominent clergy--solemn expressions replaced with demonic grins. As if they know where she's being led.

Ann rounds a corner, slows...

Ann's pov - down a dark passageway. Natalie floats away into the shadows, her laughter trailing. Above an archway, painted letters read, "LEVEL 3".

INT. POSSESSION WING (LEVEL 3) - CONTINUOUS

Ann comes to a massive wooden door, metal bands riveted across its width for reinforcement. A small window at eye-level affords a look beyond. A crucifix overhead.

To the left of the door is a stoup (small basin) filled with holy water. Above it a plaque warns, "LEVEL 3 RESTRICTED AREA".

Ann tries the door--locked.

She looks through the small window--so dark. Hard to see. She cups her hands around her face.

Ann's pov - through the small window. An empty corridor stretches into the blackness.

Resume

Ann turns to head back the way she came when--

CLICK! *Creeeeeeeeeaaaaaaak.*

The door slowly swings open.

Ann looks beyond the open door into the blackness.

She crosses the threshold, rethinks it. She doubles-back--dips her finger in the holy water, blesses herself with the sign of the cross, then continues inside--

INT. POSSESSION WING (LEVEL THREE) - CONTINUOUS

Ann moves down the darkened corridor. Musical notes play faintly in the distance. The music gets louder as the corridor opens up to --

AN OBSERVATION ROOM

The red emergency light strobing above the open door. Inside, a baby mobile spins above a bassinet, the source of the music--it's playing Ann's lullaby. Next to it--

A WOMAN

With her back to us, hums along with the melody. She rocks gently in a wooden rocking chair--identical to the one from Ann's childhood memory.

Ann moves inside the room, approaches the woman in the rocking chair.

From this angle the woman looks like she could be Ann's mother--*is it?*

ANN

Mother?

The woman stops rocking. Stops humming. Sits deadly still.

Ann moves closer.

Reaches out to touch her shoulder.

THE CHAIR SPINS AROUND

Reveals Emilia--dead. Eyes fixed in a look of terror. Hornets crawl out of her mouth, clamber across her face.

A BABY sucks forcefully on her breast, trying to extract milk from the corpse.

NATALIE

Now behind Ann, whispers in her ear --

NATALIE

SUPERO!

(subtitle; I WIN!)

INT. ANN'S ROOM - MORNING

Ann's eyes JOLT open, awakened from her nightmare by--

--SISTER EUPHEMIA standing above her bed. A nightmare of a different kind.

SISTER EUPHEMIA  
Sister Ann...

Ann sits up with a start.

SISTER EUPHEMIA (CONT'D)  
...get dressed. Cardinal Matthews  
is calling for you. We'll be  
waiting.

CUT TO:

INT. CARDINAL MATTHEW'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Ann enters, finds the Cardinal behind his desk.

ANN  
Your Eminence. Sister Euphemia said  
you called for --

She's stopped by the sight of Dante hunched in a chair, tear stained cheeks.

He's flanked by Father Quinn and Sister Euphemia.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS  
I'm afraid I have some tragic  
news... Father Dante's sister,  
Emilia, took her own life last  
night.

Ann's knees go weak, luckily there's a chair for her to fall into.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)  
She threw herself off the roof of  
the apartment building.

Ann closes her eyes hoping this is just another nightmare.

SISTER EUPHEMIA  
By God's grace the baby is expected  
to survive.

FATHER QUINN  
Emilia's father reported to his  
parish that you attempted an  
exorcism on Emilia. Is this true?

ANN

Yes, but Emilia's request was  
denied by the church, I was only --

The Cardinal shows sign of a temper for the first time--

CARDINAL MATTHEWS

Are you saying you know more in  
your brief existence than a church  
that has stood for thousands of  
years?

ANN

No, of course not, but she was  
possessed. She was.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS

And who in the church said  
otherwise? Emilia was only denied  
care here at the school. The  
committee believed her case was too  
involved for this setting. She was  
being considered by the Archbishop  
for transfer to Rome.

Ann turns to Dante--

ANN

Did you know this?

He looks away--clearly he did.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS

They believed hers was a case of  
multiple possessions. Not one demon  
commanding a legion of others, but  
two demons fighting for one soul.  
You freed her of Pazuuzu, who  
Emilia had summoned to protect her  
from --

ANN

(realizing)  
--Lamashtu.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS

Yes, a demon known to torment  
pregnant women so it can steal  
their babies souls.

Ann sits in silence--running through that night in her head--  
how could she not have known...

CARDINAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)  
You overestimated your own  
competence, blinded by your pride.

SISTER EUPHEMIA  
We've decided it's best you return  
to your place with the Maryknoll  
Sisters.

She turns to Father Quinn, hoping to find an ally.

FATHER QUINN  
It's an unanimous decision.

ANN  
And Father Dante and Father  
Raymond?

CARDINAL MATTHEWS  
They were witnesses but not  
participants. They will remain in  
the program.

Ann meets Dante's gaze--sorrow in his eyes. Her anger at the  
injustice subsides.

ANN  
I understand.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS  
I hope you'll use your time at the  
convent for reflection. Be mindful,  
Lucifer was once the most beautiful  
and powerful angel in Heaven, but  
he became prideful, and God cast  
him out.

Off Ann's dispirited look...

INT. SCHOOL - MAIN CONCOURSE - AFTERNOON

Suitcase in hand, Ann crosses in front of the twelve-foot  
painting of Archangel Michael.

The Guard watches stoically as she opens the oversized wooden  
door revealing a stairwell--spiral stairs ascend out of view  
inside.

She begins her ascent as the door shuts behind her.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARYKNOLL SISTERS CENTER - DAY

A simple sign hangs from a wooden post, "Maryknoll Sisters".

An Uber (most likely a Prius) stops in front of the brick and mortar convent.

Ann emerges from the backseat suitcase in hand, stands in the long driveway--a near duplicate of the Facebook photo taken years ago--sans the smile.

INT. ANN'S ROOM - LATER

Roughly the same size as her room at the school. Although the natural light from the window makes it seem larger.

Simple decor for simple living. The requisite crucifix above the door.

The suitcase is open on the bed. Ann transfers its contents to the dresser.

She unfolds a sweater revealing the jewelry box. She contemplates whether to put it out for a beat before setting it on top of the dresser next to her hairbrush.

She opens the music box--the melodic notes of the haunting lullaby play. The music begins to slow as the key unwinds...

Lost in her thoughts, Ann doesn't see the OMINOUS FIGURE looms in the doorway behind her.

The figure stands there a beat before --

OMINOUS FIGURE  
You don't belong here!

Ann spins, to find --

MOTHER SUPERIOR FRANCIS (70's), a petite woman, the quintessential grandma.

ANN  
Mother Superior. What did you say?

MOTHER SUPERIOR  
(sweet as pie)  
I said, welcome home, Sister.

Mother Superior pulls Ann into a warm embrace.

EXT. PRAYER GARDEN - AFTERNOON

Ann sits on the prayer bench in the front of a birdbath, surrounded by roses.

A PAIR OF BIRDS take flight from the bath. Ann follows them skyward, her eyes drawn toward the brick dormitory.

Up to her open window. Curtains blow and WE SEE--

A FIGURE standing in her room.

Long auburn hair.

But what is it doing?

Curtains blow.

It's brushing its hair--long, violent strokes.

A HAND GRABS ANN'S SHOULDER

She jumps--

It's only Sister Marie.

SISTER MARIE

I didn't mean to startle you. The others are in the dining hall.

ANN

Thank you. I'll be right there.

Sister Marie ambles off. Ann looks back up at her room.

The curtains blow--

An empty room.

INT. DINING HALL - EVENING

The Maryknoll Sisters sit at a long banquet table, eating their soup in virtual silence.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

The sisters go about their usual after dinner duties.

Ann washes and dries the dishes.

INT. ANN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ann inspects her hairbrush for strands of auburn hair--  
thankfully there are none.

She removes her cross, places it in the jewelry box.

She kneels beside her bed, crosses herself before folding her  
hands in prayer.

*BZZZZZZT.*

Ann's phone lights up on the nightstand.

*BZZZZZZT.*

Ann crosses herself, gets to her feet. Retrieves her phone.

Ann's pov - of a Facebook notification; "You have a new  
memory".

Ann frowns--didn't she delete her account?

She swipes on the notification opening her feed--

The banner reads, "6 Years Ago: See Your Memories" The same  
PHOTO we saw earlier of a younger Ann and friend, cheek-to-  
cheek, club attire, Mai Tai's in hand.

She swipes left--the PHOTO in the ladies room. Mirror-selfie  
of Ann and three other girlfriends--duck-lips all around.

Swipes again--a PHOTO of Ann in a bathroom stall. Head in the  
toilet. Vomiting.

Wait... WHAT?

SWIPES--matted hair now stuck to her face with sweat.

Shit.

SWIPES--the PHOTO of Ann hanging on the neck of the twenty-  
something douche. Wasted.

SWIPES--now they're in the backseat of his car.

Oh God.

SWIPES--guy's hand under her blouse.

SWIPE-SWIPE-SWIPE-SWIPE-SWIPE--so fast now that it creates  
the illusion of a moving image--

Ann's top comes off.

Guy hikes up her skirt, moves between her legs.

They sprawl across the backseat.

Hand against steamed glass.

Faces in climax--unnaturally stretched into demonic howls.

*BANG-BANG-BANG!*

Something POUNDS on Ann's bedroom door.

A shadow beneath the threshold spills across her floor.

The doorknob turns. The door opens revealing--

Mother Superior Francis.

Ann quickly flips her phone under her pillow.

MOTHER SUPERIOR  
Goodnight, Sister Ann. Heavenly  
dreams.

Ann forces a smile.

ANN  
Goodnight, Mother Superior.

Mother Superior closes the door. Ann retrieves her phone,  
looks at the screen--

Just a harmless lazy cat photo.

Off Ann's troubled gaze...

EXT. PRAYER GARDENS - MORNING

Every day here seems like the one before, which is why you  
wouldn't know if not for the CHYRON telling us its--

3 WEEKS LATER

SNIP! A garden pruner cuts through the stem of a blooming  
rose.

Ann brings the flower to her nose, closes her eyes as she  
inhales the aroma.

SISTER MARIE (O.C.)  
Sister, you have a visitor.

Ann turns to find--

Father Raymond standing beside Sister Marie. He's the last person Ann expected to see here--

ANN  
Father Raymond...

By his solemn expression, this isn't a casual visit.

EXT. PRAYER GARDEN - MINUTES LATER

Ann and Father Raymond walk through the prayer garden, passing various saintly statues.

ANN  
And the others, how is Father Dante?

RAYMOND  
He left the school just days after you.

ANN  
Of his own choice?

Raymond nods--yes.

RAYMOND  
He never returned to his congregation. I'm afraid he's having a crisis of faith.

ANN  
I will pray for him.

RAYMOND  
And you? Are you still having those visions?

She looks down at the trail, ashamed to admit --

ANN  
Yes.

RAYMOND  
I think I've seen her, too.

This news stops Ann in her tracks.

ANN  
When?!

RAYMOND  
I've been down to level three.

ANN

What? How did you --

RAYMOND

Bishop O'Connell had a heart attack during an exorcism. They brought me in to try and save him.

ANN

And...

Raymond shakes his head--*he didn't make it.*

RAYMOND

There was a girl there. Natalie. I think she's the one you've been seeing.

Raymond pulls his smartphone from his pocket, hands it to Ann.

ON THE PHONE--a hastily snapped PHOTO of Natalie, standing in front of the glass wall of her observation room. Staring right into the camera. It's the same girl from the opening EXCEPT her distinctively long hair has been chopped off at her shoulders.

ANN

That looks like her--but her hair. The girl I'm seeing has much longer hair.

RAYMOND

Apparently, so did she. They cut it.

ANN

Why?

Raymond shrugs--*I don't know.*

RAYMOND

The whole time I was trying to revive Father O'Connell, she stood there pressed against the glass, humming--it was that lullaby you sang on the train.

Raymond HUMS a few bars of the lullaby--same one. It creeps him out just as much as it does us.

Ann sits up, maybe she's not going crazy.

ANN  
But I don't understand, why come  
here to tell me this?

RAYMOND  
Natalie told me to.

Off Ann's look...

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL - MAIN CONCOURSE - NIGHT

Camera's pov - from behind a NUN IN FULL HABIT walks past the school Guard standing beside oversized painting of St. Michael the Archangel.

ANN (V.O.)  
This demon, it won't stop haunting  
me until I confront it. I have to  
go see the girl.

RAYMOND (V.O.)  
But how? They'll never let you back  
in to the school.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Camera's pov - from behind the same nun. Students nod to her out of reverence as she passes.

ANN (V.O.)  
Not me. Mother Superior.

Camera pan's down to her hands--the sleeves end a few inches short of her wrist.

Reverse to reveal--

ANN

Wearing one of Mother Superior's habits.

CUT TO:

A PURPLE STOLE--as it's draped over Ann's shoulders.

AN ASPERGILLUM--being filled with holy water.

A CRUCIFIX--womanly lips gently kiss the crown.

AN ANTIQUE ROSARY--dangles in front of us.

RAYMOND (V.O.)  
This rosary was given to me by the  
priest who saved me...

REVEAL INT. FATHER RAYMOND'S ROOM - LATER

Door closed to limit their exposure, illuminated by candle  
light. Raymond holds the antique rosary in front of Ann who  
is outfitted for the spiritual battle that awaits her...

RAYMOND  
It was his mother's, blessed by  
Pope Paul the Sixth. Take it.

ANN  
Father, I can't keep this.

RAYMOND  
Who said anything about keeping it?  
It's on loan. Just for tonight's  
festivities. I fully expect to get  
it back.

Ann smiles, reaches to take it from him. He doesn't let go.

They stare into each others eyes for a beat, hearts racing--  
under very different circumstances this moment would lead to  
a kiss.

Raymond releases the rosary.

ANN  
Thank you, Father.

Ann recovers, turns for the door...

RAYMOND  
Sister Ann...

Ann turns back to him.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)  
Let me come with you.

ANN  
No. I'm the one it's after. I can't  
put anyone else in harm's way.

RAYMOND  
But it's dangerous to face it  
alone.

She holds up the crucifix--

ANN  
I won't be alone.

Off her look of fierce determination...

INT. SCHOOL - VARIOUS - MIDNIGHT

All are settled in their rooms for the night.

Empty hallways. Dark corridors. Votives flutter in an empty chapel.

An eerie silence comes over the school, punctuated by a distant rumbling--*a storm is coming...*

INT. POSSESSION WING (LEVEL 3) - NIGHT

Ann moves down a flight of stairs, passes under the "Level 3" archway.

As she moves closer, demonic WHISPERS echo down the corridor--a warning that she's approaching.

Ann stops at the reinforced wood door. As she reaches for the handle--*CLICK-CLICK-CLICK!* Tumblers inside the lock fall into place. The door slowly opens on its own--as if pulled by an invisible hand.

*Creeeeeeeeeaaaaaak.*

Ann takes a step back, peers into the darkness--

--nothing's there.

Then, the sound of water bubbling...

Ann shifts her attention to the basin of holy water on the wall--it's boiling.

Ann crosses through the threshold into the restricted area.

INT. CHAPEL - SAME TIME

Altar candles are lit shining on Raymond who kneels at the altar, praying the rosary in sight of the life-size crucifix.

INT. POSSESSION WING (LEVEL 3)

We track with Ann as she moves down a dark corridor, WHISPERS CLAMORING. The corridor opens up to--

## AN OBSERVATION ROOM (LIVING ROOM)

A NAKED WOMAN, mid-30s, nothing sexual about it--rail thin, body ravaged by the possession. Her gown in a crumpled heap next to her feet.

The woman lifts her arm--it's amazing she has the strength--points in the direction of another corridor.

Ann keeps moving, down the corridor to--

## ANOTHER OBSERVATION ROOM (HOSPITAL ROOM)

An OLD MAN, late 70s, in a hospital gown stands at the glass wall. I.V., oxygen tubing, blood pressure cuff stretched to their limit. Eyes rolled back in his head, gnarled finger pointing.

There's that RUMBLING again--it amplifies as Ann moves down a corridor that opens up to--

## NATALIE'S OBSERVATION ROOM (BEDROOM)

Just as we saw it in the opening. Bed. Dresser.

Except now hundreds of upside down crosses of various sizes have been scratched into the wallpaper--by the looks of it the wallpaper's been scraped with Natalie's fingernails.

And there, crouched in a corner of the room with her back to us, is Natalie. Hair chopped off at her shoulders.

The rumbling subsides, gives way to the sound of--

Natalie WEEPING softly.

Ann retrieves a trio of keys from a designated spot on the wall, unlocks the triple locks.

She tightens her grip around the crucifix--digs up the courage to enter.

## INSIDE THE OBSERVATION ROOM

Ann stops just inside the door--she shudders at the extreme cold. The condensation of her breath visible in the chilly air of the room. She locks the triple locks--pockets the keys.

Natalie stops crying, stands with her back still to Ann.

NATALIE  
(frightened)  
Are you good... or are you bad?

ANN

I'm good. I come as an ambassador  
of Jesus Christ, our Lord and  
Savior.

Natalie turns to Ann, tears spill down her cheeks. She walks  
toward Ann. Her hands are held together, fingers folded under  
them.

NATALIE

Here is the church.

She raises her two pointer fingers together.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Here is the steeple.

She parts her two thumbs.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Open the doors.

(demonic)

AND THERE ARE THE SHEEPLE!

Natalie opens her hands to reveal--

A HANDFUL OF MAGGOTS

She wiggles her fingers causing the maggots to cascade  
through her fingers and onto the floor.

She LAUGHS as more MAGGOTS SPILL from her mouth.

When the demonic Natalie speaks it sounds almost like  
multiple voices speaking at once--some only a whisper  
repeating certain words and phrases others a roar--all saying  
the same thing.

Ann makes the sign of the cross over Natalie.

ANN

Lord, have mercy.

NATALIE

Does this look like the work of a  
merciful God?

ANN

Christ, have mercy.

NATALIE

Oh mercy me! Are you sure you've  
confessed all your sins, whore?! I  
know all your secrets.

(MORE)

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
 You dream of Father Raymond doing  
 what that boy did to you in the  
 back seat of his car. And what  
 about what you did to him?

Natalie blows air in-and-out of her mouth.

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
 Annie get your cum.

Ann is derailed by the demon's knowledge of her past--*how could he possibly know?!*

She recollects herself...

ANN  
 Do not ignore my command because  
 you know me to be a sinner. It is  
 God Himself who commands you.

Natalie begins to LAUGH--a creepy blend of a child's giggle  
 and a demonic chuckle.

ANN (CONT'D)  
 Lord, Almighty God, let the enemy  
 have no power over this child. May  
 the son of perdition be powerless  
 to harm her.

NATALIE  
 But this little one is so much fun  
 to torment.

Natalie begins to retch, drops to her knees...

ANN  
 Strike terror, Lord, into the beast  
 now laying waste to your vineyard.

Natalie looks up, for a moment the demon returns--

NATALIE  
 (demonic)  
 I am terror.

Natalie continues to gag. One last dry heave before she spews  
 a SWARM OF FLIES.

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
 (herself)  
 Why is this happening to--help--me!

ANN

Lord, let your mighty hand cast  
this demon out of your servant,  
Natalie Rose.

NATALIE

She is my servant now.

Ann holds up the crucifix at arms length.

Veins begin to surface on Natalie's face, throbbing. Pustules  
oozing. She makes Linda Blair's Exorcist look like a glamor  
shot.

ANN

The power of Christ compels you to  
release her!

NATALIE

Come and get her, YOU BITCH!

*POP-POP-POP-POP!*

The LIGHTS GO OUT.

Plunging the observation room into

DARKNESS.

Somewhere in the room, a DEMONIC GROWL.

ANN

God, by your name save me, and by  
your might defend my cause.

The LIGHTS FLICKER, briefly illuminating

NATALIE

climbing the wall above the bed, on all fours--headed for the  
ceiling.

DARKNESS.

Shit.

Ann fumbles in the dark for the aspergillum, readies it for  
when--

The LIGHTS FLICKER again.

Natalie is now on the ceiling scrambling toward her with  
SUDDEN, UNFEASIBLE speed.

Ann flicks the aspergillum, sending a spray of holy water in her direction.

Natalie HISSES, retreats.

DARKNESS.

Ann holds her breath, trying to hear Natalie over her racing heart.

The LIGHTS FLICKER again.

Ann scans the room, doesn't see her. That's because--

SHE'S RIGHT BEHIND HER.

Ann feels Natalie's icy breath on the back of her neck.

She spins around, comes face-to-face with her.

NATALIE

Run along, little girl! RUN ALONG!

Natalie shoves Ann with such unearthly force it sends her flying backwards across the room into the dresser.

Ann pulls herself up off the floor, sweeps the room looking for Natalie. The RED EMERGENCY LIGHT now strobing above the room. Ann's heart stops when she sees--

--the door to the observation room open.

Natalie's gone.

Ann feels her pocket for the keys--they're gone. Ann hurries out of the observation room.

We stay with her, tracking with her back through the corridors, past the other observation rooms--

--the OLD MAN is now GROWLING and THRASHING, banging his head against the glass wall. Blood cascades down the glass.

--the NAKED WOMAN excitedly runs back and forth along the glass wall like a caged animal, celebrating Natalie's escape.

A FLASH OF WHITE passes at the end of a darkened hall--trailed by demonic laughter.

INT. CHAPEL - SAME TIME

Raymond kneels praying at the altar.

*BANG-BANG!*

The chapel doors slam shut. The altar candles flare.

One by one the bank of votive candles flanking the altar ignite.

Raymond rushes to the doors, pulls on them--they might as well be nailed shut. He pounds on them with closed fists.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOORS

Camera's pov - as it pulls away from the chapel and down the hallway, clergy rooms to the left and the right.

*SLAM-SLAM-SLAM-SLAM-SLAM-SLAM!*

The doors slam shut in quick succession down the entire stretch.

MUFFLED VOICES of bewildered clergy carry as they try and escape their rooms. Unsuccessful--one and all.

INT. STAIRS

We continue to move with Ann as she ascends a flight of stairs, heads down a long hallway.

WHISPERS carry down darkened corridors.

The pitter-patter of FOOTSTEPS echo--making it difficult to pinpoint their origin.

We continue to track with Ann--a chill comes over her.

She stops, notices as her breath begins to condense in the air.

She keeps moving, the crucifix held out in front of her as a shield.

ANN

Reveal yourself! The power of  
Christ compels you! I command you,  
reveal yourself!

Her breath continues to condense, more visible now as the temperature continues to drop--

NATALIE (O.S.)

(demonic, mocking)  
You're getting colder...

Ann moves toward the sound of the voice...

NATALIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Colder...

Ann crosses into the--

INT. SCHOOL CONCOURSE

The school Guard lies dead in the corner--eyes fixed in terror, head twisted around one-eighty. And there in the center of the grand entrance is--

NATALIE

eyes rolled back into her head, whites exposed. She's levitating ten feet off the ground, arms outstretched like a cross.

Ann raises the crucifix up to Natalie, makes the sign of the cross with it...

ANN  
I command you, unclean spirit,  
whoever you are, now attacking this  
servant of God --

Natalie looks down at her with burning eyes--

NATALIE  
(demonic)  
Oh, you know who I am. I know who  
you are, little orphaned Annie...  
You remember. Think, Annie. Think.  
I remember you. Do you remember me?

Ann is crippled in the moment--a memory unlocked--*she does know that voice...*

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
Yes. You remember...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ANN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - HALLWAY (15 YEARS AGO)

Young Ann looking down the hall from her bedroom into her mother's room (as we saw earlier).

Her mother stands at the door--glaring at her. For the first time we hear the demonic voice that young Ann heard--

MOTHER  
 (demonic)  
 GO TO BED!

Ann's mother's voice--*it's the same demonic voice coming from Natalie.*

The bedroom door slams shut.

EXT. ANN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - PORCH (15 YEARS AGO)

Camera's pov - over Young Ann's shoulder of her mother as she rocks slowly in a wooden rocking chair. Her mother's crying--

MOTHER  
 No...no...I can't. Stop saying  
 those things!

Young Ann moves closer.

YOUNG ANN  
 Mommy, are you okay?

In a flash, Ann's mother spins her head--face distorted in anger...

MOTHER  
 (demonic)  
 Run along, little girl! RUN ALONG!

RESUME

INT. SCHOOL CONCOURSE

Natalie floats toward her, Ann's eyes filled with tears...

NATALIE  
 We'd sing to you. You remember,  
 Annie.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ANN'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM (15 YEARS AGO) - NIGHT

Ann's mother brushes the tangles out her hair, HUMMING the lullaby into her ear. Only now we hear BOTH the mother AND the demon singing...

NATALIE (V.O.)  
 Such a lovely lullaby, isn't it? It  
 was sung to children on their death  
 beds during the Black Plague.

Ann's mother continues to brush her hair, the strokes becoming more forceful with every pass...

NATALIE (V.O.)

A man who lost his daughter to the plague made a box to hold a lock of her hair...

Camera's pov - pushes in on THE HUMMINGBIRD JEWELRY BOX sitting on her dresser.

NATALIE (V.O.)

...a music box. The little girl was fond of hummingbirds. So was your mother it seems.

RESUME

INT. SCHOOL CONCOURSE

Natalie now hovers above Ann, her feet dangling inches away...

NATALIE

It took mommy longer than she thought to die. I quite enjoyed watching her thrash about.

Natalie begins to flail about, mocking Ann's mother's death.

Ann reaches out, grabs Natalie by the ankle...

ANN

In the name of Jesus Christ, King of kings, I command you, speak your name. In the name of the Holy Spirit, I command you. Give me your name!

Ann tries to pull Natalie to the ground--a spiritual and physical tug o' war. Natalie GROWLS and THRASHES like a captive animal.

ANN (CONT'D)

It is God, creator of the heavens and earth, who commands you! The power of Christ compels you! Your name, demon! GIVE ME YOUR NAME!

With a Lion-like roar BOOMING, AMPLIFYING that makes the whole concourse shake, Natalie answers the command --

NATALIE

I am Legion!

DEMONIC VOICES

We are Legion!

A thunderous earthquake knocks Ann to the ground. The giant iron chandelier sways forcefully.

NATALIE  
E pluribus unum!

A SOURCELESS WIND whirls about the concourse, howling as it whips around the levitating girl.

ANN  
Legion, I know your name! Two  
thousand unclean spirits expelled  
by Jesus into a herd of pigs. And  
by His command I will cast you out  
again!

|                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| NATALIE                       | DEMON VOICES                  |
| If you banish me, I'll just   | If you banish us, we'll just  |
| find another soul to torment. | find another soul to torment. |

ANN  
Not if I banish you all to hell!  
I cast you out, every unclean  
spirit, every satanic power, every  
legion, in the name and by the  
power of our Lord Jesus Christ!

NATALIE  
Stop it! NO! NO!

A GROWLING SCREAM escapes Natalie's mouth as she grabs her head in her hands. Then--

--her hair begins to grow.

--from the roots.

--pulled up from beneath her scalp.

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
(herself)  
Oh God, it hurts-make it stop-  
please-make-it-stop!

Ann traces the sign of the cross at Natalie who throws her head back and cries out in agony.

ANN  
Lord repel the devil's powers!

Natalie's hair continues to grow longer--longer--past her waist.

ANN (CONT'D)

We command you, begone and fly far  
from the Church of God, from the  
souls made by God in His Image and  
redeemed by the Precious Blood of  
the Divine Lamb.

The hair wraps around Natalie's ankles, begins pulling her  
backward.

ANN (CONT'D)

God the Father commands you. The  
Son of God commands you.

Natalie writhes as her back arches further and further.

CRACKCRACKCRACK

The girl is nearly bent in half now.

ANN (CONT'D)

God the Holy Ghost commands you!  
The exalted Virgin Mary, Mother of  
Jesus, commands you.

Ann wraps the rosary around her hand, presses the cross  
against Natalie's forehead. It smokes as it touches flesh.

The wind and rumbling reaches a fervor--*a storm at its  
height.*

ANN (CONT'D)

Exorcizamus te, omnis immundus  
spiritus omnis satanica potestas,  
omnis incursio infernalis  
adversarii, omnis legio, omnis  
congregatio et secta diabolica, in  
nomine et virtute Domini nostri  
Jesu Christi!

And with those final words Natalie goes completely limp,  
collapses to the floor in a lifeless heap--her features  
returned to that of an ordinary fourteen year old child that  
has been to hell and back.

All is still.

Until...

THE MASSIVE IRON CHANDELIER right above her rips from the  
ceiling--a final act of demonic defiance.

The chandelier PLUMMETS--headed straight for Natalie.

Ann moves with angelic speed, pulls her to safety just as the chandelier crashes to floor.

Ann pulls Natalie in tight, holds her close--both of them freed from the snares of this demon.

ANN (CONT'D)  
 Amittere non vincere.  
 (subtitled; "I win. You  
 lose.")

INT. HALLWAY - SAME TIME

As if simultaneously released from an invisible captor, all the doors open.

Students and faculty spill into the hallway, baffled by what just happened.

INT. CHAPEL - SAME TIME

The church doors open with a wheeze and, like the last demonic breath of the devil, sends an unnatural GUST OF WIND through the church--

--WHOOSH. The altar candles and votives are extinguished.

Raymond runs out, headed for--

INT. SCHOOL CONCOURSE

The student clergy and faculty gather.

Raymond pushes to the front, relieved to find--

Ann standing, carrying Natalie in her arms, the painted backdrop of St. Michael the Archangel behind her.

A foot soldier is born.

INT. CARDINAL MATTHEW'S OFFICE - MORNING

Ann sits in front of Cardinal Matthews who is behind his desk. Father Quinn sits beside her.

FATHER QUINN  
 Natalie is reunited with her  
 parents and doing well under the  
 circumstances. They say she  
 remembers very little of the whole  
 ordeal.

Ann smiles--it might be the first genuine one we've seen from her.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS

Yes. Now, onto other matters...

The Cardinal's demeanor changes to a more solemn tone. He shifts nervously in his chair.

CARDINAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

Upon reconsideration after conferring with the Council of Cardinals, it's been decided the church cannot officially recognize your completion of the program as an exorcist.

ANN

What?!

CARDINAL MATTHEWS

It would raise too many other questions regarding church doctrine. Should nuns now be able to consecrate the Eucharist? Should clergy be allowed to marry?

FATHER QUINN

But we'd like to offer you a research fellowship here at the school...

(emphasizing for affect)

...in exorcism.

Off Ann's steely look of determination...

CUT TO:

INT. FATHER RAYMOND'S ROOM - DAY

Father Raymond enters his room to find waiting for him on his writing desk--

HIS ROSARY

Along with a note. It reads simply, "*Thanks for the loan. It came in handy.*" And is signed with a smiley face in a nun's habit.

Raymond smiles--under very different circumstances right now they'd be riding off into the sunset together. But, alas, that's not their fate...at least not for now.

INT. SCHOOL CONCOURSE - DAY

Ann stands at the wooden door, admiring the painting of St. Michael the Archangel one last time--she's part of his army now whether the church recognizes it or not.

FATHER QUINN (V.O.)  
Are you sure you won't reconsider?

ANN (V.O.)  
Thank you, Father, but I've made my decision.

She exits to the stairwell. It's only now that we notice Sister Euphemia is watching from the shadows--eyes filled with sorrow.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Ann ascends the spiral stairs, adobe walls give way to bedrock.

ANN (V.O.)  
I think it's best for me and for the church.

INT. UNDERGROUND STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ann climbs another flight of concrete stairs, pipe railing--industrial. Bedrock walls exposed.

FATHER QUINN (V.O.)  
I'm not certain either of those statements is true.

A seismic rumbling--pipes rattle. Ann doesn't seem concerned, keeps climbing.

Ann walks down a narrow corridor, comes to a weathered door. She walks through it and emerges in --

INT. GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL - MORNING

The morning light streams through the massive arched windows, casting long shadows on the floor of passengers as they hustle to-and-fro. Ann blends into the throng.

FATHER QUINN (V.O.)  
If I may just give you one last word of advice...

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - MINUTES LATER

Ann waits on the platform to catch the train.

FATHER QUINN (V.O.)  
Be careful. Now that you know the  
devil, the devil knows you.

A voice calls out from the other side of the platform.

MALE VOICE  
Sister Ann!

Ann knows that voice, she turns to see--

FATHER DANTE

Standing at the edge of the platform. He glares at her for a  
beat before one word escapes his lips --

DANTE  
*Supero.*  
(subtitle; "I win")

And with that declaration he steps backward off the platform  
into the path of the oncoming train.

As the train slams into him, we --

CUT TO BLACK.

*FINIS*  
(THE END)