

THE NUN

Story by

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Screenplay by

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A NUN.

Sits on the edge of a bed.

All alone in a small

MONASTIC CELL

This is SISTER VICTORIA, 20s. PUSH IN on her face. Wracked with emotion and fear. But a resolve hardens.

She stands up.

Decisive.

On her bed, she lays out her Bible. Her Cross. A Vial of Holy Water. Neatly. Cleanliness is next to Godliness.

She reaches over to a side table and picks up a ROSARY. Something about it seems off. Not sure what. Yet.

Clutches it in her hand.

As she turns and looks down at something by her feet.

Kneels and picks up a COIL OF ROPE.

Sister Victoria looks over at the WINDOW. Stands and walks over. The rope slinking like a serpent behind her.

Pushes open the window. It swings out into the dark of night. She feels the breeze blow. Then she steps up onto the

THE LEDGE

Sister Victoria ties one end of the rope to the OUTSIDE BUTTRESS above her as BEHIND HER --

The STURDY WOODEN DOOR of the Cell BLOWS OPENS.

Uh-oh...

Sister Victoria looks back. Not that she wants to. But is compelled to. Stares down the

LONG CORRIDOR

Right outside her room. It's lined by TORCHES along the wall. That EXTINGUISH. One. By one. Closer. And closer.

As a DARKNESS comes for her.

And that expression on Sister Victoria's face tells us it's a darkness she knows. A darkness she fears.

And as she slips the NOOSE END of the rope around her neck,
Sister Victoria prays:

SISTER VICTORIA
Forgive me Lord for this sin I am
about to commit...

Sign of the Cross.

And then she steps off the ledge.

Drops down and disappears.

But we stay here.

Wait... wait...

Snap!

Rope taut.

The Window slowly swings back.

And in the reflection of its glass, the BLACK SILHOUETTE of
THE NUN. Standing next to the Last Torch outside the door.

Doesn't move.

Just stares outside.

Or at us?

Before That Last Torch goes out too.

Plunges us into

DARKNESS.

Over which we HEAR an Old French Canadian Folk Song.

Sung pretty poorly.

VOICE (O.S.)
*À la claire fontaine m'en allant
promener...*

CUT TO:

The Terrible Troubadour.

Wheeling a cart of supplies. He'd tell you to call him
'FRENCHIE' because everyone else does. 20s. With features as
rough as his voice and the surrounding

ROMANIAN COUNTRYSIDE

VOICE/FRENCHIE

*J'ai trouvé l'eau si belle que je
m'y suis baigné...*

Stops his song when he hears --

CAW. Of a Crow.

Somewhere over by that CASTLE we only see glimpses of through the branches of the trees as Frenchie approaches.

Breaking through the trees, he sees a MURDER OF CROWS picking over something hanging close to the castle wall.

Like it's a giant bird feeder.

The hell is that?

He edges himself closer. Something *drips drip drips* from it to the ground. Collecting in puddle.

It's blood.

Drawing nearer, Frenchie looks up and sees Sister Victoria hanging above him. Crows pecking at her eyes and face.

FRENCHIE

Oh God...

He steps back as --

Snap!

Of the rope.

Sister Victoria falls to the ground.

Crows SCATTER. Fluttering, flapping wings obscuring our view until it's completely --

BLACK.

ON SCREEN:

The following occurred in 1952.

Then it slides across our screen with the black, and a dusty dimmed light filters through a LATTICED OPENING inside a

CONFESSIONAL

Revealing FATHER MICHAEL BURKE, 40something. Head bowed. As if he's deep in reflection. Doesn't look up as he hears 9 year old TIMOTHY'S thin, prepubescent voice begin:

TIMOTHY (O.S.)
 Forgive me, Father, for I have
 sinned. It's been one week since my
 last confession...

Burke grunts: *Go on...*

TIMOTHY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 I still hate my sister. She pulls
 my hair, tells me she hates me,
 breaks my toys...

FATHER BURKE
 Crow.

TIMOTHY (O.S.)
 Excuse me, Father?

ON FATHER BURKE

Jotting CROW with his pen into the nowhere-near-complete PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER CROSSWORD PUZZLE on top of his Bible.

FATHER BURKE
 I don't need to hear your sisters
 sins, I need to hear yours.

TIMOTHY (O.S.)
 But I feel like I've been pretty
 good this week, Father. My sister
 on the other hand --

FATHER BURKE
 Timothy.

Burke looks up from his crossword.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
 God already knows your sins. Part
 of confession is His desire to know
 if you do too...

TIMOTHY
 Yes, Father.

FATHER BURKE
 We'll try again next week. Go in
 peace and pray for me, a sinner.

As we hear Timothy slip out, we hold on Burke. A sinner. His eyes drop down to 'CROW'. Somewhere we hear it SQUAWK --

CUT TO:

-- in the Forever Blue Skies above

ST. DOROTHY'S CHURCH

Father Burke stands in the shadows of its steeple and surrounding trees. He lights a cigarette. I know, I know. But times were different back then.

He watches a YOUNG FAMILY exit the Church. Brother and Sister walking behind their parents. Sister pulls Brother's hair.

Brother -- must be TIMOTHY -- whips around. He spots Father Burke. Points to his sister: *Didja see that? I told you!*

Burke shrugs *Whaddayagonnado?* Watches them go. His smile fades as they do. His thoughts interrupted by FATHER RAFAEL OLVERA, 20s. Tugging at his vestments, nervous.

OLVERA

Father Burke.

Burke turns: *Yes?*

OLVERA (CONT'D)

You have a call. It's Rome.

HOLY SHIT:

A WORLD WAR II CHAPLAIN KIT.

Lined with red velvet. Containing candles. Communion trays. Bread plates. And a silver chalice. All look like they've been through, well... war. It sits on a shelf inside

FATHER BURKE'S OFFICE

It's as scattered as Father Burke seems to be as he signs last minute papers and packs away some belongings.

Olvera watches him. Even more nervous.

OLVERA

What did they say?

FATHER BURKE

They said 'Come to Rome.'

OLVERA
Do you know why?

FATHER BURKE
No.

OLVERA
How long will you be gone?

FATHER BURKE
I don't know.

OLVERA
Do you think it's because of what
happened in *Eus*?

Father Burke shoots him a look: *Enough*. That's clearly a subject Olvera should know better than to bring up.

OLVERA (CONT'D)
Just one more thing.

Jeezus, this guy.

OLVERA (CONT'D)
May I come? I've never been.

Father Burke looks at him. As if he's deciding. Then:

FATHER BURKE
No.

And somewhere we hear a PLANE TAKE OFF as we --

CUT TO:

-- VATICAN CITY.

Maybe you find some public domain footage or maybe it's just a PHOTOGRAPH of St. Peter's Square that hangs on the wall of

THIS STUDY

Buried somewhere deep inside the Vatican. People like you and me aren't supposed to be in places like this so consider yourself lucky. Serious talk goes down here. Like right now, judging by the expression on the face of --

CARDINAL CONROY. 60s. Although he doesn't smile so easily anyway. If ever. He sits across from Burke with Another Cardinal and Two Bishops.

CARDINAL CONROY

The last time you were here was --
what? Six or seven years ago?

FATHER BURKE

After my time as a Chaplain ended
in the war, yes.

Cardinal remembers. Glances over at the Others. Shifting in
their seats. Like the less said about that the better.

CARDINAL CONROY

Well, we appreciate you coming
again on such short notice.

FATHER BURKE

Cardinal, with all due respect, I
told you on the phone I wouldn't --

CARDINAL CONROY

And I told you on the phone that
this one is different. Like it or
not Father Burke you are a member
of this group --

FATHER BURKE

Member? It isn't official --

CARDINAL CONROY

-- and for good reason too. But I
must say I'm surprised at your
hesitation. I thought you'd jump at
the chance to get away from
confessionals and crosswords for a
time...

On Father Burke. *How'd you know about the crosswords?*

CARDINAL CONROY (CONT'D)

I like to think it's called the
Holy See for more reasons than just
the Bishop of Rome...

Ahem. BISHOP PASQUALE leans forward, in an effort to steer
this back to the matter at hand:

BISHOP PASQUALE

We received a report that a Nun
took her own life at a cloistered
convent near Brasov, Romania...

FATHER BURKE

Catholicism is under siege by communism in that part of the world. Towns being invaded. Priests and Nuns killed or imprisoned. A suicide is a terrible sin but it doesn't strike me as a strong enough reason for our reunion given the pressures of the political climate in the region.

CARDINAL CONROY

But the news of it would not bolster our argument to keep with faith and the Church...

Father Burke leans back. Like this is a game of cards and he's trying to get a read on their hands.

Pasquale slides a FILE across the table. Like he's throwing more money into the pot.

BISHOP PASQUALE

These are your travel documents along with contact information on the man who found the nun. You'll no doubt want to speak with him first...

CARDINAL CONROY

Also in the file is the name of a postulant who can help assist you in your inquiry since of course you actually won't be allowed to enter the convent. She is also familiar with the territory...

They sit. They wait. As Father Burke makes no moves toward the file. Because he knows:

FATHER BURKE

You're not telling me something.

CARDINAL CONROY

What makes you say that.

FATHER BURKE

Because we're in the Vatican.

That gets the Cardinal to smile.

BISHOP PASQUALE

Let's put it this way, Father. In this -- albeit rare -- instance, we don't believe we're the ones with the secret...

They stare down Father Burke. Like, call our bluff. Go ahead. But ultimately curiosity gets the better of him.

Father Burke takes the file.

And as he opens it --

FATHER BURKE

Tell me what you do know.

CUT TO:

A NUN.

Blindfolded.

She feels around the

HOSPITAL ROOM

As several YOUNG PATIENTS giggle, pressing themselves against the walls and beds. Trying not to get tagged by --

-- SISTER IRENE PALMER, early 20s. She is terrible at "Blind Man's Bluff". And judging by her White Habit, she's also a Novitiate. Which basically means a 'Nun-in-Training'.

Her fingers brush over Medical Instruments. The Crayola Masterworks of the Young Patients. The Curtains.

Searching... searching...

SISTER IRENE

I don't have to see you to know you're....

Senses movement behind her. She turns and her fingers reach out and touch --

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

There!

Wait.

Who is that?

Rips off her blindfold. Sees Father Burke. And her hand on his chest. *Oh no...*

FATHER BURKE
Does that mean I'm it?

Sister Irene snaps her hand back. Bows her head.

SISTER IRENE
Apologies, Father.

Young Patients snicker.

Sister Irene turns and gamely glares back at them. Her red face framed by her white habit: *How could you not tell me?!*

Waves of giggles crash into laughter.

EXT. ST. VINCENT'S CHILDREN HOSPITAL - DAY

Sister Irene and Father Burke walk the gardens.

FATHER BURKE
-- shouldn't be more than a few days at most. You were recommended for the journey because of your familiarity with the territory...

SISTER IRENE
The territory?

FATHER BURKE
Romania, yes.

SISTER IRENE
I've never been in that part of the world...

Burke stops: *Really?*

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)
There must have been some mistake. I apologize if coming here was a waste of your time...

FATHER BURKE
No. No apology necessary. Cardinal Conroy is a man who doesn't make mistakes. I'm sure he had his reasons for selecting you. I'll still need your help at the convent since access for anyone but nuns is extremely limited. How long will it take for you to get ready for travel?

SISTER IRENE
Not long at all, Father.

FATHER BURKE
Good. Collect your things. And
Sister -- we'll need to wear
civilian clothes while traveling.
This is one time we don't need to
broadcast our faith...

Sister Irene nods. Turns and begins to walk back to the hospital, her head bowed. Father Burke watches her go.

As from somewhere, A SCREAM --

CUT TO:

It's Frenchie.

Waking up from an awful nightmare. Soaked in sweat. Eyes red and bleary, a sign that this night terror isn't his first.

He looks around the

SMALL SPARSE ROOM

Like he's trying to remember where he is. Trying to convince himself it was just a dream. Or maybe it's because he's finally hearing that --

RapRapRap.

From somewhere below.

Head and heart pounding, he gets off of a small cot and wipes the sleep away from his face as he stumbles over to the

STAIRS

That RAPPING a little louder now. A little more urgent. He starts down the stairs.

FRENCHIE
Coming, coming...

At the bottom, he reaches a DOOR. Opens it and standing in its threshold is --

-- Father Burke and Sister Irene. Wearing plain, pedestrian clothes in an effort to blend in. His eyes drop down to Father Burke's worn LEATHER SATCHEL. Suspicious...

FRENCHIE (CONT'D)
...what is it?

He looks beyond them. Out into an EMPTY STREET of --

Brasov, Romania

Like a lot of Romania, there is a fairy-tale quality to its architecture and landscape. Except I don't think our story ends with '...and they all lived happily ever after.'

I'm not even sure it ends with '...and they all lived.'

Speaking of which --

FATHER BURKE

Mr. Thierault?

Frenchie isn't so sure he wants to confirm this. He looks over at Sister Irene. Suddenly aware of her. To Burke --

FRENCHIE

Jealous husband or an angry father?

FATHER BURKE

I'm sorry -- what?

FRENCHIE

It's usually one of the two when an older man and young, beautiful and not so innocent girl show up on my doorstep at this hour of the morning...

SISTER IRENE

It's three in the afternoon. And I beg your pardon, Mr. Thierault, but you and I have never met.

Frenchie eyes her up and down.

FRENCHIE

Then perhaps it's time we did.

He grabs her hand in both of his. Doesn't let go.

FRENCHIE (CONT'D)

Call me Frenchie. Everyone does...

Smiles. Turning on the charm.

FATHER BURKE

We are here, Mr. Thierault, because of the nun you found at the Abbey.

Oh. Shit.

FRENCHIE

How'd you --
(wait...)
Are you a priest?

FATHER BURKE

And she's a nun.

A nun?!

Immediately lets go of her hand.

FRENCHIE

Forgive me for my impure thoughts,
Sister... But I had no idea. I've
never seen a nun out of her
vestments. Not that I'm opposed to
it...

Smooth.

She blushes.

FATHER BURKE

Mr. Thierault -- Frenchie -- the
Abbey -- is it far from here?

FRENCHIE

In matter of distance, no. But it
takes time to get to. Unfortunately
your timing couldn't be worse. Any
day now this village will be
overrun with the communist army...

FATHER BURKE

We'll do our best to act quickly.
Do you know someone who can take us
there?

FRENCHIE

No. I've discovered that everyone
in this town pretends like the
Abbey doesn't exist. Even talking
about it will get you in trouble.

SISTER IRENE

If I may ask, why were you there?

FRENCHIE

I was delivering their quarterly
supplies... The Abbey apparently
has had an arrangement with the
town for decades...

FATHER BURKE

So then you can take us.

Hold on Frenchie. His eyes. Dark and haunted. You just know he'd rather do anything else than go back there.

FRENCHIE

I wish I could help you but maybe there's somebody better suited.

Sister Irene looks at him.

SISTER IRENE

Please.

Fuck. Maybe he can say no to a priest but he definitely can't say no to a pretty face. Even if she is a nun.

EXT. BRASOV STREET - LATER

Frenchie leads them to a rusted bucket of a TRUCK. As he circles around, Father Burke puts their SUITCASES into its bed. And then --

The Truck drives off with them.

Revealing Frenchie standing by a HORSE-DRAWN WAGON. Both the wagon and horses have seen better days.

FRENCHIE

You took a plane from Rome. A bus from Bucharest. But now you travel by horse. It's the only way to reach the abbey. It might be 1952 where you're from but out here they're still in the Dark Ages...
(attendez...)

Where are you things?

Still confused, Father Burke looks down the street at the Truck slowly rumbling away. *G-ddamn it.* And right before Sister Irene bursts out laughing --

Frenchie WHISTLES after the Truck.

Its brakes brighten.

CUT TO:

-- THEIR SUITCASES.

Recovered, strapped tight to the Tall Board of the

HORSE-DRAWN WAGON

ClopClopClopping along a bumpy barely-a-road that cuts through spiring mountains peeking between pines.

Frenchie in the Box Seat.

Father Burke and Sister Irene sit in the back. Burke studies another Crossword Puzzle folded over on his knee.

Sister Irene studies him.

FATHER BURKE

Beginning. Eight letters. With a W.

Shows Sister Irene.

SISTER IRENE

Dawning?

FATHER BURKE

Dawning.

Writes it in.

SISTER IRENE

Does it work?

FATHER BURKE

You have a knack for this, Sister.

SISTER IRENE

Beginner's luck. I never really liked puzzles growing up...

FATHER BURKE

It's not the puzzles I like as much as I like the answers. I like the certainty of the answers. We don't get much of that luxury in the lives we've been called for...

SISTER IRENE

But isn't that where faith is supposed to step in?

FATHER BURKE

Is it?

(pause)

How long have you been a novitiate?

SISTER IRENE

...about three years.

Says that like she knows what's coming next.

FATHER BURKE

Three years. And you still haven't taken your Temporary Vows?

FRENCHIE

Temporary vows? I was under the impression there wasn't anything temporary about being a Nun...

FATHER BURKE

There is a formation process to becoming a Bride of Christ.

SISTER IRENE

Temporary Vows would help prepare me for a life of total consecration...

FRENCHIE

Would, Sister? Or will?

Busted. He looks back at her, curious. Sister Irene a little flustered. She gathers herself.

SISTER IRENE

What brings a Frenchman to the countryside of Romania?

FRENCHIE

Actually I'm French Canadian but don't tell anyone. It doesn't sound as romantic...

He winks. She rolls her eyes.

FRENCHIE (CONT'D)

And I'm here because I wanted to see the world. But when I arrived in Brasov and met the people I knew this was where I was meant to be -- I wanted to help them in any way I can...

An unexpected side of him.

SISTER IRENE

That's very noble of you.

Sister Irene and Frenchie exchange a meaningful look when --
Wagon JOLTS to a sudden stop.

Startles 'em.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)
What happened?

Surrounded by the Pines. Casting dark shadows. Frenchie hops off the Wagon. He grabs his SHOTGUN.

FATHER BURKE
Is everything okay?

FRENCHIE
We walk the rest of the way. The horses won't go any further.

As Father Burke and Sister Irene step off --

FATHER BURKE
Perhaps you should get new horses.

FRENCHIE
It's not the horses, Father. It's what lies ahead. They're scared. The Abbey -- the locals say it is a cursed place. The horses agree.

Sister Irene stares into the darkness between the pines. Everything so still. So silent. A sense someone is watching.

Burke circles around and begins to unstrap the suitcases. Frenchie grabs his arm: *Please...*

FRENCHIE (CONT'D)
Why don't you keep your things here and you two stay in town tonight? I'd feel better about it.

As Father Burke continues with the suitcases --

FATHER BURKE
"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Frenchie looks over at Sister Irene.

Back to Burke.

FRENCHIE
J'ai essaye. I tried.

They walk.

EXT. BARELY-A-ROAD - LATER

Branches block the sun. The darkness seems to dampen the sounds. Maybe that's why everything seems so... dead.

SISTER IRENE

If I may ask, Father, why is it the Church sends you on such tasks?

FATHER BURKE

The Church reaches out to me when it needs an investigation into unusual phenomenon associated with Catholicism. Unofficially they call it 'miracle hunting'...

SISTER IRENE

I thought we were here because of a suicide...

FATHER BURKE

We are. But I confess that is only part of our investigation. We also have orders from the Vatican to determine if the grounds are still... Holy.

And off her look --

Frenchie stops. Points through the trees:

FRENCHIE

I can give you my opinion on the matter now, Father.

They look and see --

A CASTLE. Or it used to be, anyway. A long time ago. But for the last several hundred years it's been home to

THE ABBEY OF ST. CARTA

Look, there are no vampires in this movie. But if there were, you'd totally understand why just by looking at this place. It's a FORTRESS. Round Towers. Walls of Stone. Built to withstand the attack of Foreign Invaders and Time Itself.

SISTER IRENE

That doesn't look like any Abbey I've seen, Father...

Father Burke throws her a look: *No, me neither.*

CUT TO:

A WOOD CROSS.

SLOWLY PULL BACK, revealing --

Whoa.

It is not alone. Just one of HUNDREDS. Big Crosses. Little Crosses. Iron Crosses. Stone Crosses. Stick. Twig. Woven. I mean, the Hill of Crosses ain't got nothing on this place. It's like a MOAT OF RELIGION that surrounds the Abbey.

Father Burke, Sister Petra and Frenchie approach. Their eyes on the Abbey that looms ahead of them. Father Burke notes a TOWER that appears to have suffered some damage.

FATHER BURKE

A result of the war?

FRENCHIE

Bombing raids, yes. I've heard stories of how the ground shook for days after them. I have tried to find more information on the castle itself but there is no record of it in the village and the locals only spit when it is mentioned...

FATHER BURKE

Spit?

SISTER IRENE

To ward off evil.

FRENCHIE

It's an old and silly superstition...

Drawing closer --

FATHER BURKE

Did you try to contact someone inside when you found the nun?

FRENCHIE

I did. But no one responded. But then again in the two years I've been delivering supplies she was the first nun I'd seen.

SISTER IRENE

It is a convent of cloistered nuns. They live with a spirit of detachment from material things and being set apart from the world in order to maintain their intimate relationship with Jesus Christ... It isn't unusual for them to not make contact with an outsider.

Good to know.

FATHER BURKE

Did you mention your discovery to anyone in town?

FRENCHIE

The delivery man I replaced. But he told me to shut up about it...

SISTER IRENE

What does he say about this place?

FRENCHIE

I've only heard him speak of it once -- when he was pissed -- er, sorry -- inebriated. But it was gibberish...

(remembering...)

Mostly.

Drawing closer to the entrance, Burke stops. Looks down. Sees BLOOD on the stone. It's like a Rorschach Test. If you ask me it kinda looks like...

...nah, nevermind.

FRENCHIE (CONT'D)

That's where I found her.

They look up. See the Frayed End of the Rope swing in the breeze. But look -- beyond it -- in the

ARCHED WINDOW

A Figure. Watches them. Before it steps away.

Father Burke makes the Sign of the Cross. Kneels down. Touches the blood. Still wet. Fresh.

SISTER IRENE

How is that possible? It's been weeks....

FRENCHIE

I told you. This place. What's the opposite of a miracle, Father?

Burke looks at him. Question cuts deep for some reason. But he doesn't answer. He moves over to the

ENTRANCE DOOR

Big. Heavy. Built to stay closed. Burke pulls on a Rusted Iron Ring anyway. Hinges *groaaaaaaan* as the Door opens.

Burke pauses. Like he's steeling himself.

Another Sign of the Cross and then he enters, disappearing into the shadows beyond. Sister Irene soon follows.

Frenchie about to enter as well but he stops. Remembers something. Might as well...

He spits.

And then steps inside a

DARK NARROW PASSAGE

Used to funnel outside invaders so they can be easily attacked. Speaking of invaders --

We catch up to Father Burke and Sister Irene. Right outside of a Small Door. Burke opens it and they all enter the

GREAT PARLOR

Probably used to be the Lord's Hall when this was a castle. Lit by CANDLES for any natural light is sparse in here.

As it is with the rest of the castle.

Fucking great.

The furnishings are few. Mainly those shelves of DUSTY BOOKS. A LARGE CONFESSIONAL BOOTH inspired by Rodin's 'Gates of Hell'. And that LONE HIGH BACK CHAIR. It's not a throne.

But close enough.

Behind it, the only PASSAGEWAY leading further into the convent is blocked off by a PORTCULLIS -- a vertical closing gate consisting of a latticed grille made of metal.

Along the Exterior Wall, SEVERAL PLASTER MALE AND FEMALE FACES hang in intervals on rectangular slabs of White Stone.

Unnerved by their blank white eyes, Frenchie approaches one. Gets close. Because he thinks he hears someone behind it faintly whisper-sing a familiar tune:

À la claire fontaine m'en allant promener, J'ai trouvé l'eau si belle que je m'y suis --

SISTER IRENE (O.S.)

They must be the Death Masks of the people inside those tombs.

Frenchie steps away. Sister Irene and Father Burke behind him. He's rattled. Did he really just hear that singing?

And wait --

FRENCHIE

-- tombs?

FATHER BURKE

Here. In the walls.

But before I get to those...

OUT OF FOCUS, IN THE BACKGROUND

...who the hell is that now seated in the High Back Chair? I mean I know it's a Nun. She's wearing a PARLOR VEIL. Long and black, it covers her face and falls onto her chest.

That must be THE ABBESS.

And she does not move as she presumably watches --

Sister Irene, Father Burke, and Frenchie look over the Tombs. ETCHINGS -- names, dates -- faded. Hard to read.

ON SISTER IRENE

Senses the Figure behind them. She turns. Suspicions confirmed. She moves toward it.

SISTER IRENE

Hello?

Father Burke and Frenchie turn. Sees the Abbess. Frenchie looks over at the others, like --

Is that normal?

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

Please excuse our unannounced arrival...

No answer. No movement.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

Hello?

Nothing. Unnerved, Sister Irene stops. Looks back at the others: *Now what?*

She turns back to the Abbess. And now sees the Abbess has cocked her head right at her. Staring at her through the veil. God help us.

ABBESS

What is it you want?

FATHER BURKE

I am Father Michael Burke. This is Sister Irene Petra. To whom do we have the pleasure of speaking to?

ABBESS

I am the Reverend Mother. You are a priest? What is a priest without his collar?

FATHER BURKE

Forgive our appearance. But as you know, Reverend Mother, clothes don't make the Catholic. We are here on behalf of Rome to inquire about the recent death in your convent...

ABBESS

What recent death?

FRENCHIE

There was a nun. I found her outside. By the entrance.

ABBESS

(in French)

Is that so?

Frenchie. Uneasy. Doesn't want to respond.

To Frenchie --

FATHER BURKE

Would you allow us a moment please?

Frenchie nods. Throws a look to Sister Irene. Back at Burke and the Abbess. And then leaves. Okay, round two:

ABBESS

You should leave with him.

Jab.

FATHER BURKE

Are you saying you weren't aware of the recent passing of the Nun?

ABBESS

What is it you want, Father?

Block.

FATHER BURKE

Rome is concerned about the safety and well-being of your cloister. I'd like to speak with the Sisters so I can offer my assurances to the Church...

ABBESS

I can offer the assurance you seek.

Jab.

FATHER BURKE

I'm afraid that won't suffice. They'll just send more and perhaps less diplomatic Church Officials.

Uppercut.

ABBESS

Yes, Father.

(pause)

However now we are about to take our Vespers followed by the Great Silence which continues until after breakfast... Come back tomorrow and you will find the answers you seek... There is lodging in the Chapel. You may stay there.

End of Round.

EXT. ABBEY - AFTERNOON - MOMENTS LATER

The Gray Stone of the Abbey Walls. The White Knuckles of Frenchie's grip on his shotgun. Suspect of everything.

Like a castle guard, he patrols the entrance. Can't shake the feeling of being watched. Looks up at the Dark Windows.

Is someone up there? Watching him?

Grooooooooooooooooooaaaaan.

He spins.

Shotgun at the ready.

Sister Irene and Father Burke exit the Abbey. Startled, Frenchie quickly lowers his aim.

FRENCHIE

Sorry -- I thought -- or rather I wasn't thinking...

SISTER IRENE

It's fine, Frenchie.

FRENCHIE

Who was that in there?

FATHER BURKE

That was the Abbess. She is the second in command of the Abbey.

FRENCHIE

Why wouldn't she let us see her?

SISTER IRENE

She was wearing a parlor veil. They are worn when meeting people outside their cloister to maintain the spirit of detachment...

FATHER BURKE

We need to wait until morning to speak with the nuns...

FRENCHIE

So it's settled then. You'll come back with me and stay in town.

Burke walks over to the blood again.

FATHER BURKE

That isn't necessary. There are accommodations for us in the chapel...

Frenchie about to protest. But bites his tongue instead.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)

When you found the body, Frenchie,
what did you do? Leave it?

FRENCHIE

No. When no one inside the Abbey
responded I moved it to protect her
body from the elements. I intended
on returning to bury her but I
couldn't bring myself to come back
here. Not... not alone.

FATHER BURKE

Where did you move it to?

EXT. THE CONVENT WALLS - MOMENTS LATER

Frenchie leads Father Burke and Sister Irene around the
perimeter. Stops outside Storm Cellar-like DOORS.

FRENCHIE

This is the ice house where I would
leave my deliveries. I never saw
anyone but they were always gone
when I returned... until now. When
I found the Sister I thought moving
her in here would help... preserve
her...

He OPENS one of the doors. Motions: *After you...*

Father Burke and Sister Irene stoop down and enter into the

ICE HOUSE

The headache gray daylight spills into it. Their breath mists
out in front of them as they eye Sister Victoria.

Seated upright in the corner.

Father Burke about to go over to her but Frenchie reaches out
and grabs his arm once again: *Not so fast.*

FRENCHIE (CONT'D)

I should tell you one more thing,
Father...

FATHER BURKE

What?

Pointing to Sister Victoria --

FRENCHIE
That isn't how I left her.

Waitwaitwait...

They both look over at Frenchie.

FATHER BURKE
What do you mean?

FRENCHIE
She was laying down when I left her here. Not like that. Sitting up.

Um...

ON FATHER BURKE

He creeps over toward the Sister Victoria's Body. Needs to get a closer look. On the shelves, food frozen with rot.

FATHER BURKE
While unusual, there have been cases of bodies twitching or sitting up not long after death.

FRENCHIE
But Father, who knows how long she was dead when I found her....

Father Burke stops. Turns to Frenchie.

FATHER BURKE
You're not helping.

FRENCHIE
Sorry...

Father Burke turns back to Sister Victoria. Kneels beside her. Winces as he sees her head wounds.

Makes the Sign of the Cross.

His eyes drop down to THAT CROSS she's clutching in her dead, frozen hands. But looking closer he sees, wait --

It isn't *just* a cross.

SISTER IRENE
What is it, Father?

It's actually --

FATHER BURKE

Looks to be a key of some kind.

He tugs at the KEY. But the Rosary it's attached to is locked in Sister Victoria's dead fingers. Pulls harder.

Rosary SNAPS. Beads scatter.

But the Key is free.

He inspects it further. Sees an ENGRAVING in its bronze:

R1:18

Don't ask me what it means. No idea. Neither does Father Burke. He pockets it as his eyes drift over to the

ACCESS DOOR

Leading into the castle. Cracked open. An inch. Maybe two. Was someone just watching him through it?

A chill.

Either from that or the cold.

Father Burke turns and faces the others.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)

We should give her a proper burial.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

Overgrown with Tombstones and Tall Grass. Next to a SMALL CHAPEL that looks as if it's still standing by faith alone.

Father Burke and Sister Irene stand at Sister Victoria's Fresh Grave. Frenchie stands nearby with a shovel. Heads bowed because --

FATHER BURKE

-- by Whose mercy the faithful
departed rest, send Your holy angel
to watch over this grave, through
Christ our Lord. Amen.

SISTER IRENE

Amen.

A BREEZE blows.

We hear --

Ting... Ting... Ting...

Of TINY BELLS staked next to several graves.

Sister Irene kneels by one of the Bells. Sees TWINE tied to it while the other end of thread disappears into the dirt.

She tugs on the twine.

Ting.

Bell rings.

Frenchie and Father Burke appear behind her.

FRENCHIE

It was common practice during the plague when people feared of being buried alive. If you were unfortunate enough for it to happen, you could ring the bell to let those above ground know they've made a mistake...

Sister Irene stands. They continue on toward a CHAPEL that looks as if it's still standing by faith alone.

INT. CHAPEL - LATE AFTERNOON - MOMENTS LATER

Aging clouds of dust swirl in the day's dying light as Father Burke, Sister Irene and Frenchie enter into the

NAVE

The Main Part of the Chapel. Sure, it's a House of God. But probably not one he comes to very often. Rows of creaky pews. Cracked Stained Glass Windows. An overturned confessional.

And a LARGE WOODEN CROSS above the Altar.

Frenchie sets down a SMALL BOX of supplies. But he's still eager to get them both to leave:

FRENCHIE

Why could you not talk to the sisters now? Why must it wait til morning?

SISTER IRENE

The sisters take a vow of silence from sunset to sunrise. That must be respected...

FATHER BURKE

You should begin heading back yourself. I imagine you don't want to be caught on those roads when night falls...

Frenchie looks up at the HEADLESS STATUE OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

FRENCHIE

Better the roads than here, Father.

FATHER BURKE

We'll be fine, Frenchie. Come back tomorrow. That should give us enough time to get what we need.

FRENCHIE

Yes, Father.

He turns and begins to exit the Church.

Throws one last look back at Father Burke and Sister Irene. His grim expression says he isn't so sure they'll be fine.

He's right.

INT. CHAPEL - GUEST HALLWAY - LATER

Sister Irene opens a CLOSET. Digs out old BLANKETS and BED SHEETS. Sniffs them. Surprised they aren't mildewed.

She begins to head down to a Guest Room when she pauses to look at SEVERAL FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS hanging on the walls.

Pictures of the Convent and the Nuns. Years gone by. In the most recent one we see a familiar face -- Sister Charlotte. Whom we met in the second Annabelle.

Sister Irene continues on to the

GUEST BEDROOM

But the light is scarce.

She sees an OIL LANTERN on a nearby shelf. A BOX of MATCHES next to it. She strikes the match and we --

CUT TO:

-- THE OIL LANTERN.

Glowing between Father Burke and Sister Irene as they sit at a small table in a

CRAMPED BACK KITCHEN

Eating BEAN PASTE with smoked meat. A staple of traditional Romanian cuisine. It looks... edible. The Table Wine helps.

Father Burke has his Crossword Puzzle open next to his plate.

FATHER BURKE
Transferals.

SISTER IRENE
Transferals?

FATHER BURKE
Transferals.

Thinks...

SISTER IRENE
...passing?

Father Burke writes it in. Stops. Erases.

FATHER BURKE
Not enough letters.

SISTER IRENE
I told you it was beginner's luck.

FATHER BURKE
Perhaps.

He continues to go over his puzzle.

Sister Irene has something to say. You can tell by the way she sneaks looks at Father Burke. Say it now? Or... now?

What about...

Now:

SISTER IRENE
Father. You mentioned miracle hunting before. Is that -- is that a role you sought out?

Father Burke doesn't look up from his food. Because he doesn't really want to have this conversation right now.

Or ever.

FATHER BURKE

I was a chaplain in the war,
stationed in near Eus in the south
of France. There was... an
incident. A child with visions. My
work with the boy drew the
attention of the Church and because
of that I was recruited to look
into the more unusual matters
involving the Church...

SISTER IRENE

So you know Bishop Form?

That gets him to look up.

FATHER BURKE

How do you --

SISTER IRENE

Because he helped me when I was
younger...

Father Burke sets his fork down: *Really...*

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

I had a series of visions when I
was a girl. My father believed one
of two things: I was mentally
unstable or worse, I was a liar.
But word of my visions reached the
church -- Cardinal Conroy
specifically -- and he sent Bishop
Form to meet with me. Days before I
was to be committed, they contacted
my Father and convinced him of a
third option...

FATHER BURKE

That they were a miracle.

SISTER IRENE

That they *could* be.

FATHER BURKE

And Bishop Form, he spoke to you
about these visions?

SISTER IRENE

He did.

FATHER BURKE

And did he consider possession?

SISTER IRENE

Yes. But after his investigation he determined I was of pure spirit and suggested I dedicate myself to the Lord...

FATHER BURKE

Have you had any visions since?

SISTER IRENE

No.

Burke nods. His thoughts distant.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

What about the boy? Did his eventually stop as well?

Father Burke flinches. A painful memory.

FATHER BURKE

Yes.

He stands. Takes his plate over to the sink. Exits out of the Kitchen. Leaving Sister Irene all alone.

With only more questions.

INT. CHAPEL - VARIOUS - NIGHT

The Nave. The Kitchen. The Altar. The Side Aisle. The Back Hallway. All are empty. And as silent as the grave.

This includes the

FIRST BEDROOM

In which Father Burke sleeps. We slowly PUSH IN on him. Like we're creeping up, ready to pounce. Somewhere behind us --

PitterPatterPitterPatterPitterPatter....

Of FOOTSTEPS.

And a playful GIGGLE.

Loud enough that Father Burke sits up. He squints into the gloom of night. Something there? Or maybe he was just drea--

PitterPatterPitter...

No.

That wasn't any dream.

He throws back the covers and gets out of his cot.

Moves into the

BACK HALLWAY

Looks in on Sister Irene in the Second Guest Bedroom. Asleep in her cot. Undisturbed by...

More FOOTSTEPS.

Father Burke spins and follows them into the

NAVE

Still empty. Still quiet. Father Burke peers into the shadows that hang like cobwebs.

Creak.

Behind him.

He turns and sees A BOY. Standing still near the Side Entrance. Silhouetted in the darkness.

Father Burke. A flicker of recognition on his face.

Is that...?

He takes a step forward for a better look but --

Boy takes off.

Outside the entrance.

Father Burke hurries after him.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A starless, moonless night. Feels like it's near lifeless too. As Father Burke pauses by a crumbling tombstone.

Where'd the boy go?

Father Burke walks deeper into the cemetery. His eyes dart from grave to grave. Searching. The Boy could be anywhere.

Or maybe he's gone entirely. Because he doesn't seem to be anywhere. *Damnit.* Father Burke begins to turn back but --

The Boy.

There he is. Standing still in the darkness. His head hung. And whoa, it looks like he's SPROUTED WINGS from his back.

Who *is* this?

Unnerved, Father Burke slowly approaches. Slow and deliberate. Doesn't want to scare the boy away.

As he draws closer, he realizes those wings. They're stone. Because the boy is standing in front of an ANGEL STATUE.

Boy keeps his head down. His eyes off Burke. Father Burke uses this as an opportunity to get even closer when --

The Boy SNAPS HIS EYES up at Burke.

Burke stops.

Can't believe it --

FATHER BURKE

Daniel?

The Boy begins to convulse, like he's choking. Something caught in his throat. Something big. He HACKS.

Opens his mouth.

And slowly VOMITS out a LARGE SNAKE.

The Snake *hisssssssssssses* as it writhes out of The Boy's stretched open mouth. Slithers into the grass.

Startled, Father Burke backs away and starts to hurry across the cemetery. Looks back over his shoulder and --

Falls into a hole in the ground. A SHALLOW GRAVE. Burke lands hard in an Open Coffin. Lid SLAMS shut and

INSIDE THE COFFIN

Burke SLAMS his fists against the lid. Struggling to get it open. But it won't budge. And what's worse is...

Thud. Thud. Thud.

Right on the other side of the lid. The sound unmistakable. It's Clumps of Dirt. He's being buried alive.

Father Burke SCREAMS and we --

CUT TO:

Sister Irene shoots straight up out of bed. Like she just had a terrible dream. Gasping for air. She looks around the

SECOND GUEST BEDROOM

All seems normal. But still. A feeling creeps over her. A sense that something ain't right. And then --

A SHADOW passes over.

Walking by.

Startles her. She gets out of bed. As behind her the moonlight casts SHADOWS on the wall. Branches. Bed posts.

Sister Irene lights the Oil Lantern. As it brightens, those shadows on the wall fade. Except for one.

A very familiar silhouette.

But Sister Irene doesn't see it as she carries the oil lantern out into

BACK HALLWAY

Sees the door to Father Burke's Room is ajar. She approaches, trying to get a glimpse inside. See if he's okay.

SISTER IRENE

Father?

No answer.

Hesitant, she *creeeaks* open the door further to find it's empty. Concerned, Sister Irene turns and is faced with --

THAT SHADOW on the wall behind her. In the Unholy Shape of The Nun. It moves. Walking along the wall and floor.

Toward the Nave. Where she hears DISTANT CHANTING. WHISPERING. And PRAYING.

Unsettled, Sister Irene follows the shadow into the

NAVE

And sees Dark Figures. Sitting in the pews. Facing the Altar like they're listening to a sermon. Their backs toward us.

They're NUNS.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

Excuse me?

Waits. But no reaction. She starts toward one of the Nuns closest to her but stops when she sees --

The Shadow of The Nun.

It has returned.

And begins to walk along the Chapel walls.

Sister Irene watches. Eyes following the shadow. It turns her around as it moves into a MIRROR.

IN THE REFLECTION

The shadow becomes a BODY. You can't see her face but you don't need to. You know. It's The Demon Nun.

Standing in front of the Altar.

Under that Huge Wooden Cross.

The Demon Nun raises her hand and points at Irene.

SCREECHES.

And now all the Other Nuns turn and look at Sister Irene as well. Their faces gruesome and pale.

Sister Irene snaps back to look at them behind her.

But no one is there.

And as she processes whether she imagines this --

BOOM!

The Huge Wooden Cross CRASHES to the ground.

Terrified, Sister Irene turns and runs out of the Nave. Returning into the

BACK HALLWAY

Calling out for --

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

Father!

Checks the Kitchen. Priest's Study. The Meeting Room. But Father Burke is nowhere to be found. Her panic increasing, Sister Irene stumbles out of the Chapel.

EXT. CHAPEL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Sister Irene stops right outside the exit. Suddenly confronted with the night. Her eyes scan the landscape.

She feels too exposed.

But then --

Tingtingting...

Sister Irene looks over in the direction of the cemetery.

TingTingTingTing...

She moves over into the

CEMETERY

Tombstones in shadow seem like abandoned ancient alien artifacts. Sister Irene walks among them. A stranger in an even stranger land as she continues to follow the --

TingTingTinTingTingTingTing...

Leads her to an OLD GRAVE. She kneels down. Sets the Lantern beside her. It illuminates the TINY BELL continuing to ring.

She stops the bell.

Pauses.

Like, now what? But then she looks down at the ground. Scared, she puts her ear close to the earth. Listens.

And through the dirt she hears --

THE MUFFLED SCREAMS OF FATHER BURKE.

Sister Irene.

Stunned. How is that possible? This grave looks like it's been filled for decades. Nevermind that for now --

SISTER IRENE
Father! FATHER!

Starts to dig her fingers into the dirt. Scraping it away, desperate. Continue to call out for --

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)
Father! I can hear you!

She looks around for something to help her. Sees the SHOVEL Frenchie used earlier leaning against the grave. Gets up.

Grabs it.

She begins to dig. And dig. And dig.

Thump!

Must be the coffin. Not six feet under. But far enough. Lets the shovel drop. Returns to using her hands.

As she sweeps away the surface dirt, she reveals HUNDREDS OF TINY CROSSES. Scratched deep into the lid of the COFFIN.

Father Burke continues to POUND against the lid.

Sister Irene pries it open.

Father Burke sits right up, gasping for life.

He grasps onto Sister Irene like she's just pulled him from the depths of death. Eventually able to muster --

FATHER BURKE

Thank you... Sister... thank...

Streaked with dirt and sweat, Sister Irene looks past Father Burke and back into the coffin. It's filled with BOOKS.

EXT. CHAPEL - EARLY MORNING

As the day's first light breaks, we hear the WHISPERING of --

INT. CHAPEL - GUEST BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- Sister Irene. Kneeling at her bedside. Reciting her Lauds. Eyes closed. Her voice trembles, fingers fidget. Still clearly rocked by the events of last night.

SISTER IRENE

-- is now, and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen. Alleluia.

Doesn't sound so joyous though.

She opens her eyes. They take in the small room, lit soft by the purple dawn. She sighs: Damn. Wasn't a dream.

CUT TO:

MEDIEVAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

Details exquisitely gruesome. Blueprints for strange torture devices. Animals staked. Men skinned. Women burned.

And WORDS. Inked in elaborate script. I guess they're in Latin? Romanian? Not sure. But they seem like --

FATHER BURKE (O.S.)
-- Witchcraft.

He looks up from writing in his JOURNAL as Sister Irene enters the

SMALL KITCHEN

Candles BURN. The morning sun still weak.

Several Ancient Texts open on the table. Other stacked on the floor. A treasure trove of medieval madness.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
Incantations, spells, curses,
unholy rituals used to conjure
demons and devils and open portals
to the underworld. Most of these
books are hundreds of years old but
look at them -- ink still fresh,
pages intact, colors bright.

SISTER IRENE
It's heresy. They should have been
destroyed...

FATHER BURKE
There is a belief in certain
circles that destroying any object
of magick could release whatever
power was believed to be stored
inside. I suspect that's why they
were buried in the grave of the
Marquis instead of being destroyed
outright...

SISTER IRENE
Marquis?

FATHER BURKE
The original owner of the castle it
seems. His seal is in each of these
books...

Shows her the SEAL painted on a page: It resembles the
ourobouros. Only more sinister.

SISTER IRENE

Why would a marquis have books on witchcraft?

FATHER BURKE

I pray our talks with the Nuns will answer that for us...

Sister Irene. Lost in bad thoughts.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)

Everything all right, Sister?

SISTER IRENE

Yes, Father. It's just the events of last night... What I saw in the Chapel... It weighs on me.

FATHER BURKE

I saw something too. It's what drew me to the cemetery... A boy. Daniel...

SISTER IRENE

The boy from France?

He nods.

FATHER BURKE

Unlike your case, after what I believed was careful evaluation, I made the judgment he was possessed and proceeded to act accordingly, within the laws of the Church. It was my first exorcism.

SISTER IRENE

Was it a success?

FATHER BURKE

The Church thought so. They believed the evil was cast out...

SISTER IRENE

But not you?

FATHER BURKE

Daniel sustained severe injuries during the exorcism. Ones from which he could not recover. He died days later. I often wonder if I was too eager with my determination.

(pause)

That is a puzzle.

SISTER IRENE
 Are you certain it was him you saw
 last night?

He looks up at her. Not sure he wants to answer that
 question. *Waitamminute...*

FATHER BURKE
 Territory.

SISTER IRENE
 Excuse me?

FATHER BURKE
 Cardinal Conroy recommended you
 because you were familiar with the
 territory. He didn't mean Romania.
 He meant your visions. You're
 familiar with strange phenomenon...

HOLD ON Sister Irene. If she wasn't so pious she'd probably
 be screaming 'oh fuck oh shit' inside her head right now.

Maybe she is anyway.

EXT. ABBEY - DAY

Everything about the Convent screams 'Don't Come Any Closer'.
 But there's Father Burke and Sister Irene anyway.

Trudging up the path.

They stop when they come to Sister Victoria's BLOOD STAIN
 because...

SISTER IRENE
 ...there's more of it.

She's right. The Blood Stains are larger. As if the earth
 itself is wounded, bubbling over with blood.

FATHER BURKE
 Another puzzle.

SISTER IRENE
 Father. Is this our answer to
 whether the grounds are still holy?

Father Burke looks at the Convent.

FATHER BURKE
 It's common for evil to surround a
 place such as this.
 (MORE)

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
 It is a fortress, after all. Built
 to keep unwanted forces out. The
 question we have to answer, Sister,
 is has it been breached?

Not to give anything away but...

Yeah. It has.

CUT TO:

AN ANGRY BEAR.

Carved on the SIGN of

THE BLACK BEAR PUB

Which is like the unofficial City Hall of Brasov.

INT. THE BLACK BEAR PUB - DAY

Littered with daydrinkers. As much a fixture as the lights,
 the taps, and the bar. At which slumps --

Frenchie. Nursing his beer.

A YOUNG WOMAN, 19 and a beauty, hangs on him. Speaking
 Romanian, she whispers into his ear.

FRENCHIE
 You know I don't speak Romanian.

She whispers some more.

FRENCHIE (CONT'D)
 I still have no idea what you're
 talking about, Mademoiselle.

More whispers. She smiles as she does. So does Frenchie. Not
 at what she's saying though. But at her hand on his thigh.

Frenchie nods: *Yes, yes, now he understands...*

FRENCHIE (CONT'D)
 I agree. Actions do speak louder
 than words...

VOICE (O.S.)
 FRENCHIE!

Oh shit. Frenchie swats her hand away. He turns. Sees it's
 GREGORO, 60s. Waving him over. *Phew...*

To the Young Woman --

FRENCHIE
Don't leave.

He walks over.

GREGORO
That couple I saw you with
yesterday. Who were they?

FRENCHIE
A Priest and a Nun. I took them up
to the Abbey...

Gregoro's expression hardens.

GREGORO
The Abbey? Why?

FRENCHIE
They were sent by the Church.

GREGORO
Are they still up there? They
stayed the night?

FRENCHIE
Yes. I pick them today.

Gregoro motions to the bartender: *One more drink...*

GREGORO
You recently discovered a body up
there, didn't you?

FRENCHIE
Yes.

GREGORO
Well, drink up to steel your
nerves, son. I believe you're about
to discover two more.

INT. PARLOUR - MOMENTS LATER

Candles lit.

Feels like it's always night time in here.

The Chair sits empty. We hear FOOTSTEPS ECHO before we see
Sister Irene and Father Burke enter the chamber.

Both quiet.

Trying to listen for signs of life.

But they hear none.

Father Burke walks over to the DOORWAY blocked by the Portcullis. Beyond it, a Passageway draped in shadow.

Through the Iron Grate --

FATHER BURKE

Hello? Abbess? As requested, we're
hear to speak with the Nuns...

Listens.

Still no answer.

He looks back at Sister Irene: *Any ideas?*

But then --

ClinkClinkClinkClinkClinkClinkClink!

Of the Portcullis.

Father Burke steps back.

In the walls, they hear the rusted links of an Ancient Chain
clinkclinkclink as it raises the Portcullis.

Sister Irene walks over and joins Father Burke at the
threshold of the

PASSAGEWAY

Sister Irene looks above them, sees the Spiked Ends of the
Portcullis jutting out from their recesses in the ceiling.

Like rotting fangs.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)

That seems like as much of an
invitation as we'll get here.

SISTER IRENE

I'll go find the Abbess.

Father Burke pulls the Rosary Key out of his pocket.

FATHER BURKE

Take this.

She does.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
See what you can find out about it.
It was obviously important to the
deceased...

Sister Irene nods. Runs her fingers along the engraving.
R1:18. Wondering what it means...

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
I realized last night what it
meant. Revelations 1:18: 'I am he
that liveth, and was dead; and,
behold, I am alive for evermore,
Amen; and have the keys of Hell and
of death.'

Frankly, I'd rather not know that.

Sister Irene I think agrees. As she gives another quick
glance to the teeth above. Before she crosses steps into the
shadows of the Passageway.

We follow.

Through Narrow Darkness and into the Bright Light of a

COURTYARD

Once the beating heart to the castle, it now seems dead and
lifeless. As if the sun hasn't shone on it for centuries.

Sister Irene stands at the center. Not sure which way to go.
That way? This way? How about back the way you came. Leave.

She peers into the shadows under the Arched Walkways. A sense
she's being watched. Just not sure from -- wait --

A BLUR OF MOVEMENT.

Out of the corner of her eye.

Over there.

Sister Irene turns. Sees just in time a Nun disappear through
a door and --

SISTER IRENE
Hello? Wait!

She follows the Nun and enters into the

DINING HALL

No sign of any Nuns.

But on the Tables, a few plates with scattered bread crumbs. Water Glasses half empty. Like they were just here.

At each setting, a HOLY CARD. Brand new. Color. Each one depicts a different SAINT with an accompanying prayer.

She hears a CLATTER coming from the

KITCHEN

Sister Irene walks in. Expecting to find someone. But she only finds instead MEAT roasting on a spit over a fire.

And the faucet *dripdripdripping*.

She shuts it off.

And then moves toward the exit and back out into the

COURTYARD

Creeeeeeeeeaaaaak. Clack.

She spots one of the Chapel Double Doors closing.

Hurries over and pushes it back open and walks into the

PRIVATE CHAPEL

Don't mistake private for small though. Vaulted Ceilings. Stained Glass. Prayer Candles. And that PIPE ORGAN.

But eyes up front. Because kneeling before a life-sized wood carved STATUE OF THE VIRGIN MARY cradling a BABY JESUS is --

A NUN.

Back to us.

Whispering Prayers.

Sister Irene approaches. Slowly cause you just know something fucked up is about to happen. Sister Irene knows it too.

Somewhere above the rafters, a bird FLUTTERS and CHIRPS. Trying to draw our attention away from the Nun. But no, can't let it happen. We're not taking our eyes off that Nun.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

Excuse me?

No answer.

Edges herself ever closer.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

Sister?

Sister Irene stands right behind her now.

Kneeling Nun still whispering prayers. Sister Irene listens longer than I would. But that's not saying much.

Sister Irene slowly begins to circle around to get a glimpse of the Kneeling Nun's Face when --

From behind her, A HAND reaches out.

Grabs Sister Irene.

Sister Irene spins and sees another Nun standing in shadow before her. This is SISTER MIRANDA, 20s. Sister Irene quickly looks back at the Kneeling Nun. Still saying her prayers.

SISTER MIRANDA

This convent has had perpetual adoration for centuries. The sisters pray in shifts to maintain the constant vigil.

SISTER IRENE

I am sorry to have disturbed her.

SISTER MIRANDA

You didn't. But almost. However Sister Ruth has withstood more than just someone sneaking up behind her...

Sister Irene. Embarrassed. Sister Miranda steps a little more into the light. Revealing a face of bruised beauty.

Makes you wince. Sister Irene too.

SISTER MIRANDA (CONT'D)

I'm Sister Miranda. We were told you were coming...

SISTER IRENE

Y-yes. I'm here with Father Burke. There is an official inquiry into the circumstances that led to the recent and unfortunate death in your cloister...

Sister Miranda considers this. Then:

SISTER MIRANDA
Please. Follow me.

INT. GREAT PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

Father Burke flips through one of the Dusty Books. On every page, the same passage. Over and over again.

He reads --

FATHER BURKE
'...And out of the ground the Lord
God formed every beast of the field
and every bird of the sky, and
brought them to the man to see what
he would call them; and whatever
the man called a living creature,
that was its name.'

Thump.

Father Burke turns.

ThumpThump.

Coming from the direction of those TOMBS.

He closes his journal and puts it back into his Satchel as he walks over toward them. Death Masks stares back at him.

Which one was it?

Thump.

That one.

Father Burke walks over to the Tomb. He puts his ear up against its slab. Hears *something* moving inside.

Father Burke looks around the Parlour. He sees an old FIRE POKER leaning up against the Book Shelf.

Grabs it and returns to the Tomb. Uses the Poke to pry open the Tomb, revealing --

A SHRIVELED, OLD CORPSE. Surrounded by coils and coils of WRITHING SNAKES. Holy shit...

Horrified, Burke reels back. It's as if the very walls of this castle are infested with these serpents.

He watches a snake slither across the length of the parlor and disappear into a crack in the stone.

Father Burke quickly shuts the Tomb. Turns and looks back at the Parlor: *What is this place?* And then, a flash of memory. Prompts him into action.

From his satchel, Father Burke pulls out one of the Ancient Texts found last night. Flips the pages and sees --

AN ILLUSTRATION.

Of this Parlor. But with a symbol on the floor.

Father Burke walks to the center of the room. Gets on his knees and inspects the floor. Smells it. Huh. Something there for sure. Dips his finger in it. Tastes that and yeah it's --

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)

Sulphur.

Reaches back into his bag. Pulls out a VIAL filled with POWDER. Pours a little of it onto the floor.

Strikes a MATCH.

Lights the powder with it and --

FWOOOOSH!

It catches fire and burns in the outline and shape of a
GIANT PENTAGRAM

Across the entire floor of the parlor. The fire flares brightly before it flames out. Leaving a BURNT MARK behind.

Holy shit.

INT. SITTING ROOM - LATER

A Fire CRACKS and POPS in the hearth. Sister Miranda and Sister Irene sit in nearby chairs. Feeling its warmth.

It'd be cozy. If it wasn't creepy.

Sister Miranda finishes stirring a CUP OF TEA and offers it to Sister Irene. She takes it. Sips it. Bitter. Gross.

But she manages a polite and grateful smile anyway.

SISTER MIRANDA

Sister Victoria's death was a
terrible tragedy for the convent
but we still feel her presence.

(MORE)

SISTER MIRANDA (CONT'D)
 She was the most devoted out of any
 of us...

A heavy pause. And a darkness in the doorway behind Sister Irene catches Sister Miranda's eye. She stares as --

Sister Irene turns and looks.

No one there.

SISTER MIRANDA (CONT'D)
 Excuse me, Sister...

Up from her chair. Over to the door. She quickly closes it. The *creeeeking* hinges rival the crackling fire.

She returns to her seat by the fire.

SISTER MIRANDA (CONT'D)
 Sister Vict--

Creeeeeaaaaaak.

Shit.

Door OPEN.

Both Sister Irene and Sister Miranda look. Standing in the shadows -- who is that? -- *The Nun?* -- Or just a Nun?

Well, whoever it is turns and walks out of view.

Sister Miranda. Slight tremble. Slight break in her voice as she turns back to Sister Irene and explains:

SISTER MIRANDA (CONT'D)
 Forgive us. We're highly protective
 of our privacy. Some of the sisters
 would prefer I not speak to you at
 all...

SISTER IRENE
 We appreciate your willingness to
 do so...

Sister Miranda forces a smile. Looks back over her shoulder. Distracted. Sister Irene tries to pull her attention back --

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)
 Sister Miranda -- last night -- in
 the Chapel -- I saw a Nun...

It worked. That gets Sister Miranda's attention. Her face pale. Her eyes wide. Brimming with fear.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

She was... She *felt*... anything but Holy...

Once more Sister Miranda looks to make sure they're alone. And then she leans in and whispers to Sister Irene --

SISTER MIRANDA

Do you see her too? I've seen her stalking the hallways at night. We all have... She looks like us. But she's not one of us. It's something unholy. It takes on the blasphemous form to corrupt us... It made Sister Victoria commit the ultimate sin and --

VOICE (O.S.)

Sister Miranda --

SISTER ABIGAIL, 30s, appears next to them.

VOICE/SISTER ABIGAIL

It's time to attend to your prayers...

Sister Miranda and Sister Irene quickly stand. Both startled by the sudden presence of Sister Abigail.

And from their conversation.

SISTER MIRANDA

Yes, Sister.

Sister Abigail looks at Sister Irene. Passing judgment.

SISTER ABIGAIL

You haven't taken your vows yet?

SISTER IRENE

No.

SISTER ABIGAIL

You shouldn't be here. This is not a place for you...

Sister Irene. Taken aback. Tries to stammer out an excuse but Sister Abigail doesn't allow for one.

SISTER ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Sister Victoria was a troubled young woman. Her family had a history of mental illness.

(MORE)

SISTER ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
 A suicide is a tragedy but that is
 all it was -- a woman who had lost
 her grip on reality.

Sister Abigail leaves.

SISTER MIRANDA
 Come, Sister. I will show you out.

INT. CONVENT - WALKWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sister Irene follows Sister Miranda to the Passageway. Before she leaves, Sister Irene remembers the Rosary Key in her pocket. Pulls it out and shows it to Sister Miranda.

SISTER IRENE
 Sister Victoria had this in her
 possession when she died. Do you
 happen to know what it's for?

A flash of recognition across Sister Miranda's face tells us that yeah, she definitely does. But again she says --

SISTER MIRANDA
 No.

Spots something out of the corner of her eye. Not sure what. But whatever it was it causes her to --

SISTER MIRANDA (CONT'D)
 Now. Please. Go.

SISTER IRENE
 Father Burke will want to hear this
 directly from the Abbess.

SISTER MIRANDA
 I'll see what can be done.

She looks back over her shoulder.

A NUN standing on a balcony. That same one from earlier. Looking down on them with a face shrouded in shadow.

SISTER IRENE
 Who is that?

Eyes up to the balcony --

SISTER MIRANDA

Tell Father to remember Matthew
6:13: "Trust in the Lord with all
your heart, and do not lean on your
own understanding..."

INT. PARLOUR - MOMENTS LATER

Sister Irene steps out of the Passageway. Sees the burnt
outline of the Pentagram. Makes the sign of the Cross.

Looks around the Parlour. It's empty. No sign of Father
Burke. She hurries for the exit.

EXT. CONVENT - MOMENTS LATER

Father Burke looks over at Sister Irene as she exits the
Convent. Frenchie runs over to her.

FRENCHIE

Dieu Merci. Are you okay?

SISTER IRENE

Yes. Fine. Thank you. Father, what
is that in the parlour?

FRENCHIE

What is what?

FATHER BURKE

Nothing. Just more remnants of the
past...

(to Sister Irene)

What did you find?

SISTER IRENE

Something is off. They're being
tormented by something. The nun I
spoke with -- Sister Miranda --
she says she's seen things too.
Things that I've seen. They all
have. But she told me this in
confidence -- like she was scared
to speak of it. It is my belief
that this is why they keep
perpetual adoration as well,
Father. For centuries, I was told.

FATHER BURKE

Really?

FRENCHIE

Adoration? *Qu'est-ce que c'est?*

SISTER IRENE

It's constant prayer. Every hour of every day.

FRENCHIE

How is that possible? They need to sleep, don't they?

FATHER BURKE

The Sisters don't pray all at the same time. It's done in shifts.

SISTER IRENE

When I was leaving, Father, Sister Miranda wanted me to remind you of Matthew 3:13: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding..."

FATHER BURKE

That isn't Matthew. That's Proverbs.

SISTER IRENE

I know. I think she quoted the wrong verse because she feared someone was listening to us. Someone who wouldn't know Matthew 3:13...

FRENCHIE

What's Matthew 3:13?

SISTER IRENE

It's a part of the Lord's Prayer. "Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil. "

Oh. Shit.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

It's a cry for help.

Father Burke looks up at the Convent. Thinking.

FRENCHIE

Please. Let us go back into town. If I can't bring you to your senses I know a man there who will.

FATHER BURKE

Who?

EXT. THE BLACK BEAR PUB - NIGHT

Frenchie leads Sister Irene and Father Burke to the entrance. He hesitates. Sheepishly looks over to Sister Irene.

SISTER IRENE

What is it?

FRENCHIE

It isn't the classiest of establishments, Sister.

Like maybe you should stay outside but --

SISTER IRENE

Neither was the stable in Bethlehem but that served its purpose.

She enters. After a look, Frenchie and Father Burke follow.

INT. THE BLACK BEAR PUB - SECONDS LATER

Filled with life and song. A stark contrast to to the Abbey.

Frenchie pushes through the crowd. Sister Irene and Father Burke follow. SEVERAL WOMEN -- some younger, some older, but all beautiful -- pull at Frenchie: *Sit with me, Frenchie. Over here, Frenchie. Go fuck yourself, Frenchie...*

Frenchie looks back at Sister Irene. Sees her eyeing them suspiciously...

SISTER IRENE

So this is what you meant by helping the people of this town?

FRENCHIE

What can I say, Sister -- I have charitable nature...

Once again she rolls her eyes.

They continue on.

MOMENTS LATER

At a table tucked away in the back of the bar. Gregoro pours TWO SHOTS. Pushes one toward Father Burke.

Father Burke waves it off: *I'm good.*

GREGORO

Priest or no priest, I don't trust
any man who won't drink with me.

Father Burke looks at the others. Like, when in Rome... ania.
He drinks. Gregoro immediately pours another.

Looks at him. Go on...

Father Burke picks it up. Shoots. Scores.

Gregoro nods in satisfaction.

GREGORO (CONT'D)

I want to make something clear at
the start, Father. No matter what I
say -- these are not rumors. These
are not exaggerations. These
stories are true. Passed down
through my family for generations.
It has been our burden to live with
this truth. But we carry it
proudly, like soldiers -- so we may
protect those around us from doing
any harm...

FATHER BURKE

Then in that way you are not unlike
a Priest. We also have our stories
that some would call rumors or
exaggerations. But we know the
truth and we protect it, so we can
help others... So I assure you,
Gregoro, we listen with open minds.

Gregoro nods. Well said.

GREGORO

Mount Sinai. The Garden Tomb. The
Chapel of Ascension... These are
holy places, yes?

Yes.

GREGORO (CONT'D)

There are unholy places as well,
Father. As with holy grounds, I do
not know the number, but if there
are five -- if there are twenty --
if there a hundred -- it makes no
matter -- that Abbey is the most
Godless of them all...

Pour. Drink. And then --

GREGORO (CONT'D)

It was built by the Marquis of Snakes in the Dark Ages. You heard of Vlad the Impaler, yes? A man consumed with stretching out the last painful moments of life. But when death comes, his interest was no more. This was not so for the Marquis. In fact that is when his interest began....

FLASHBACK:

THE MARQUIS, 50s. If a serpent ever took the form of Man, it'd look a lot like the Marquis. Tall. Thin. Venomous.

He leans over a VILLAGER, 20s. Arms, legs and neck strapped down tight to a wooden table with leather bindings.

We're somewhere

UNDERNEATH THE CASTLE

The Marquis holds a CEREMONIAL DAGGER against the belly of the Villager. Villager squirms. As much as he's able.

GREGORO (V.O.)

He would kill -- *murder* -- husbands and wives -- fathers and mothers -- sons and daughters -- brothers and sisters -- young -- old -- it did not matter. He did it to study death...

Marquis PLUNGES the Dagger into the Belly of the Villager. We PAN UP the Villager as the Marquis continues to SLICE.

Until we reach the Marquis. Staring into the eyes of the Villager. Listening to his screams.

Soaking 'em in.

Off screen, we sense he's stopped slicing. He's taken this person to the brink of death. Just a second or two away.

The Villager has stopped screaming. His eyes stare past the Marquis. Like it's seeing something from beyond.

MARQUIS

Tell me what you see.

GREGORO (O.S.)
Convinced he could not just conquer
it -- but control it. He was a
student but soon became a teacher
of the occult....

INT. CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

The Marquis dips his pen in a Bottle of BLOOD. He begins to write in exquisite script across a long parchment.

Behind him, MORE VILLAGERS. In various states of decomposition. Some long dead. Others close to it.

GREGORO (V.O.)
He wrote countless texts, filled
with spells for conjuring demons
and rituals in which to call upon
the forces of Hell. Think of our
prayers -- our selfish prayers --
heal me, save me, do me this one
favor, God. Such little requests in
the grand scheme of things, no?

INT. CASTLE COURTYARD - LATER

A FIRE BURNS. In front of it, the Marquis in ceremonial robe holds up SERPENTS. They twist and slither onto him.

His OCCULT FOLLOWERS begin to CHANT.

GREGORO (V.O.)
The Marquis had grander ambitions
and became a devout follower of
Hell and all its demons dwelling
within... And unlike some of our
prayers, Father, his were answered.
Hell used him as a tool to open a
portal so that its evil would walk
among us...

The FIRE brightens and --

INT. UNDERCROFT - CONTINUOUS

-- A CLOSED DOOR EXPLODES OPEN with the RED LIGHT OF HELL.

INT. THE BLACK BEAR PUB - CONTINUOUS

Back on Gregoro and the Others.

SISTER IRENE

Did no one try and stop him?

GREGORO

Many did. Many failed. It was not easy when you go into battle against Hell itself. But the Church ultimately found success -- though it was costly. Known as the secret crusade or the serpent crusade...

FLASHBACK:

INT. CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Knights and Holy Men STORM the Castle. Occult Followers scramble. But all meet their ends in bloody fashion.

GREGORO (O.S.)

...the Church stormed the castle and killed the Marquis and his followers...

In the

GRAND PARLOR

The Marquis. Cornered by Two Priests. The Marquis smiles. Grabs a TORCH. Swings it the Two Priests. They step back.

And then --

The Marquis brings the Torch to his sleeve. Sets himself on fire. The flames consume him.

He runs toward the Priests.

Toward us.

Taking us back into Bright White Light of --

CUT TO:

DAYLIGHT.

Shines down over the Castle.

Priests walk the grounds. Sprinkling Holy Water. Swinging Thuribles burning with incense. Lips move in Prayer.

GREGORO (V.O.)

As a defensive measure, the Church claimed the castle as their own, creating the Abbey to forever bless the grounds as Holy to protect us against any potential fall out. And it did. For many generations. But after the war, something changed there...

FLASHBACK:

One Bomb. Two Bombs. Three... An AIR RAID. We follow 'em down as they land and EXPLODE the Romanian Countryside.

The Castle SHAKES. Damage is done.

CUT TO:

Somewhere dark, a DOOR FRAME buckles slightly. And the DOOR cracks open. An unholy red light begins to bleed through...

END FLASHBACK:

INT. THE BLACK BEAR PUB - CONTINUOUS

Gregoro stares at the Others.

GREGORO

The ground became fallow, the livestock fell sick and died, and this once peaceful and pious village has become this...

He gestures around the bar. At all the revelry, the drunkenness, the devil-may-care attitudes...

GREGORO (CONT'D)

But it doesn't stop here in this village. Look at what is happening to the rest of this country. Like a disease it has spread... Religion being driven out. Evil is winning this war...

Burke flinches.

GREGORO (CONT'D)

You feel it too, don't you? I fear the Nuns in that convent have failed us. The door has been opened.

(MORE)

GREGORO (CONT'D)

And if it is, how much time do we
have left before the world goes to
Hell?

Drink.

And as Gregoro SLAMS the shot glass down again we --

CUT TO:

EXT. BRASOV STREET - LATER

Father Burke, Sister Irene, and Frenchie exit The Black Bear
Pub and walk off down the empty street. Determined --

FATHER BURKE

We'll need the use of your wagon
and horses again, Frenchie.

FRENCHIE

My wagon? For what -- returning to
the Abbey? You can't be serious.

FATHER BURKE

What else would you have us do?

FRENCHIE

Return to our lives?

FATHER BURKE

That Abbey existed for hundreds of
years without incident. Until very
recently. You heard Gregoro --
something changed. If there is a
portal and it's been opened we need
to close it...

(pause)

We only need your wagon, Frenchie.
We don't need you.

Frenchie looks over at Sister Irene. He can sense her unease,
her hesitation, her fear.

FRENCHIE

You don't have to go. You can stay
here. With me. Let him save the
world on his own...

Sister Irene stands between them. Debating. She makes a
choice. Moves toward Father Burke.

FRENCHIE (CONT'D)

Sister. Are you certain? You really are going to go with him up there?

SISTER IRENE

Not just with him. We go with God.

EXT. ROMANIAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAWN

Father Burke and Sister Irene sit in the Box Seat. Burke holds the reins as the Horses *clopclopclop* along.

Like it's a funeral procession.

SISTER IRENE

On our first night here you asked if the visions were what led me to this life... They didn't.

Father Burke looks at her: Tell me more.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

My visions weren't like Our Lady of Fatima or Our Lady of Lourdes. I didn't see an apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary, hear the voices of the angels, or receive words of prophecy. The things I saw, Father... When I saw them -- it didn't feel as if the Lord was calling for me. It felt as if I was being called by something... else. So they didn't lead me into this life. They pushed me. They forced me into it -- hoping my devotion to the Lord would protect me from the Unholy Evil I knew...

FATHER BURKE

And it has so far, hasn't it?

SISTER IRENE

Until we came to this place. The evil I sensed as a child. The visions I saw -- they never had a face. But last night... last night I looked directly into its eyes. I was terrified. But it was then I also truly knew for the first time that I was right and my father was wrong -- I wasn't crazy.

FATHER BURKE

Faith protects. And the truth --
John 8:32 -- the truth will you set
you free...

ClopClopClop...

CUT TO:

CRACKED STONE.

And then BLOOD laps over it. Like the tide coming in.

The Blood of Sister Victoria has grown even worse. That wound
in the earth no doubt a fatal one. It stops right at the feet
of Father Burke and Sister Irene.

Both look up at

THE ABBEY OF ST. CARTA

And then at each other. Like this is going to be some kind of
showdown. They continue their approach.

Splish. Splish. Splish.

We PULL BACK and reveal the

CEMETERY

And Sister Victoria's Grave.

Dug up.

Like something crawled out of it.

INT. PARLOUR - MOMENTS LATER

Father Burke and Sister Irene enter. Father Burke walks over
to the Passageway. He is about to enter but -- *wait* --

SISTER IRENE

Father Burke. Please. We know this
place was not originally built as a
convent. But the Church deemed it
Holy ground. We must respect that
or our sacrilege may empower
whatever evil may reside within.

Can't believe she's saying this but --

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)
Let me go in and find the sisters.

FATHER BURKE
But Sister Irene --

SISTER IRENE
I am afraid of this place, Father.
But I fear it more if we begin
treating it with irreverence.

FATHER BURKE
You make a good point. But I'm
still going in.

Yeah he is. Except for what happens next. Which happens in
seconds, okay? Father Burke --

-- starts to move toward the door. But they both hear a
slight *click!* above them. They look up right as --

The Portcullis drops.

Sister Irene pushes Father Burke out of the way.

He falls back as --

CLANK!

The Portcullis drops.

Inches away from the tips of his shoes.

Holy shit.

He looks up at Sister Irene.

In disbelief.

Through the portcullis --

SISTER IRENE
I'll go find Sister Miranda.

FATHER BURKE
I'll look for another way in.

Sister Irene turns to go but not before --

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
Sister. Thank you.

She nods.

And steps into darkness.

INT./EXT. CONVENT - COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Sister Irene enters. Struck by a sense of foreboding. Maybe because the Convent seems even more lifeless than before. Ground looks cracked and churned over. Like a scabbed wound.

The occasional whistle of wind -- and Sister Irene's breathing -- the only sound.

SISTER IRENE

Hello?

Her voice so small. Her sense of dread so big. Feeling exposed, Sister Irene looks for cover under one of the

ARCHED WALKWAYS

That runs along the perimeter of the Abbey. She pushes open a nearby door and pokes her head into the

PRIVATE CHAPEL

Rafters rotting. Prayer candles nearly burned out. And that once-beautiful Pipe Organ. Covered under a thick layer of dust. Evidence it hasn't been used for ages.

What has happened here?

Sister Irene approaches the

ALTAR

Sees that WOOD CARVED STATUE OF MARY cradling the Baby Jesus. Or -- as Sister Irene draws nearer -- um --

That's what it used to be.

Because it's since been defaced. And now the Virgin Mary looks just like The Nun. Or wait, is it actually The Nun?

And look at the Baby Jesus she cradles.

He has WINGS.

Of a fucking pigeon.

Ripped off one of those DOZENS OF DEAD PIGEONS that lay in puddles of their own blood near the Altar.

Sister Irene quickly crosses herself and shuts her eyes tight. Like she knows this is an image that will haunt her for the rest of her days. However many left there may --

ORGAN BLASTS.

Behind her.

One deep, loud flat chord. Like the augmented 4th. Otherwise known as the 'Devil's Interval'. Startled, she turns.

Sees no one.

But the chord literally wakes the dead. And all of the birds behind her FLUTTER up into darkness above the rafters.

Sister Irene SCREAMS.

Runs to the side of the Chapel.

Looks above her into the darkness hanging overhead. Birds somewhere up there. She can hear their wings flapping.

How is that possible?

Her eyes once again are drawn to the altar. Over to the Statue of the Not-Virgin Nun and her Winged Baby.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)
Sister Miranda? Anyone?

Creeeeaaaaaak.

She turns.

Private Chapel Door begins to close.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)
No! Wait!

She hurries.

And right as the door is about to *clack* shut --

She pushes it back open wide.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)
Please --

Steps back out into the

COURTYARD CORRIDOR

Not a soul.

At first, anyway.

Because then she sees the EDGE OF A NUN'S HABIT flap at the Far End of the Corridor. As if a NUN is standing just around the corner. Spying on her.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)
Hello? Sister Miranda?

The Sister slips behind the corner.

Disappearing.

Uh...

Sister Irene follows. Not sure she should -- or wants -- to be doing this. Turns the same corner and sees --

THAT NUN hurrying toward the the far end when Sister Irene blurts out again --

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)
Please! Wait!

But the Nun doesn't. Ducks into another Door. Sister Irene chases her down and into the

DINING HALL

Not at all like we last saw it.

Sister Irene recoils at the stench of the ROTTED MEAT splattered on the tables. Stacked dirty plates. Chairs overturned. And scattered on the floor, she sees those

HOLY CARDS

Colors faded. Even the Saints themselves seem like they've aged. And who's that there? Sister Irene picks it up.

Sees it's the Virgin Mary. Or used to be before it was defaced with BLACK INK. Black circles around the eyes. Black lines across the lips. They all resemble The Demon Nun.

Sister Irene picks up a few other Holy Cards scattered about. Not every one -- but enough -- are defaced the same way.

Sister Irene lowers the last defaced card to reveal --

THE SHADOW OF THE DEMON NUN.

On the back wall.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

No...

It begins to move. As it does, it rattles the POTS. Clangs the PANS. Knocks over SHELVES. Plates CRASH to the floor.

The Shadow stops behind a DINING TABLE. Moves its arms out like it's grabbing the edge of the table and then --

FLINGS THE TABLE AT SISTER IRENE.

It flies across the Dining Hall right toward her. It just misses her as Sister Irene turns and races out of the Hall.

Back into the

COURTYARD CORRIDOR

Where she seeks refuge. To gather herself.

Which is when she sees the EDGE OF A NUN'S HABIT flap at the Far End of the Corridor. As if a NUN is standing just around the corner. Spying on her.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

Hello? Sister Miranda?

The Sister slips behind the corner.

Disappearing.

Uh...

Sister Irene slowly walks the length of the Corridor. Not sure she should -- or wants -- to be doing this.

She turns the corner into

ANOTHER CORRIDOR

Leading deeper into the Convent.

And at the far end, we just see THAT NUN hurrying toward the the far end when Sister Irene blurts out again --

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

Please! Wait!

That Nun stops.

But doesn't turn around.

Sister Irene stops too. Not sure what to do. Stay here? Approach? No. Don't approach. Please.

Sister Irene risks getting closer.

Somewhere, the wind continues to whistle.

So close she could reach out and touch the Nun. She doesn't though. Only begins to inch herself ever closer when --

That Nun darts forward again.

Right through an

ARCHED OPENING

Where Another Corridor begins. This one even darker. She picks up a nearby CANDLE. Burning its wick.

Begins to walk down, revealing --

CRUCIFIXES and CROSSES. They're everywhere. As if we're about to enter a cave and they're the stalactites and stalagmites.

Sister Victoria stares into the blackness of the CORRIDOR OF CRUCIFIXES. Wondering the same thing we are:

What in the hell must be down there?

Probably nothing good.

CUT TO:

-- A MAP of the CASTLE.

And we get a better sense of its massive labyrinthine layout. Designed for defense in mind, as were most medieval castles.

THAT CORRIDOR THERE is probably where we just left Sister Irene. And what's ahead of her is hard to tell. That area of the map is covered in ONE BIG BLOTCH of Red Ink. Or wait...

Is that blood?

By the way, we're back in the

PARLOUR

With Father Burke, as he turns the page of a MASSIVE BOOK revealing ANOTHER IMAGE of the Castle Interior.

It's the UNDERCROFT. The basement below. It's populated with drawings depicting terrifying Demonic Creatures of Hell.

Strange...

Concerned for Sister Irene, Father Burke looks back at the Passageway: *Where is she?*

He turns back to the

MAP

Finds the Parlour. Sees the Passageway. And what's this? A SECRET PASSAGE? Looks like it's hidden by the --

CONFESSIONAL BOOTH.

Burke about to investigate further when --

A REFLECTION catches his eye in a nearby Mirrored Vase. It's the Abbess. Standing right behind him.

Father Burke turns and sees --

The Abbess seated in her chair. As if she was always there. Watching. And waiting. How'd she -- ? Nevermind.

FATHER BURKE

Abbess.

He glances back over at the Passageway.

THE ABBESS

She's fine, Father.

No. She's not.

Father Burke looks back at The Abbess. Something is off. But he can't quite place it. Her voice, maybe.

THE ABBESS (CONT'D)

What is the answer you seek?

FATHER BURKE

I fear something is very wrong here, Abbess... I don't believe it began with the deceased Nun.

THE ABBESS

Like many places in this world, the Abbey has a long history. Not all good. But we repent.

FATHER BURKE

That Nun -- I found her clutching something in her hands. A key.

Pulls the Rosary Key out from his side pocket. Dangles it in front of him. Like bait.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)

Would you happen to know what it opens? I suspect it was important to her...

THE ABBESS

No.

Father Burke considers her answer. Not sure whether he believes her as a sudden, unnatural draft...

...blows out the candles.

Darkness falls.

Father Burke squints, adjusts his eyesight. Is the Abbess still there? Can't see. Nervous, he quickly pockets the Key.

Pulls out MATCHES.

FATHER BURKE

Abbess?

He strikes one.

Lights a candle. The glow brightens revealing -- oh --

She's still seated there. But her head is slumped forward. Like she fell asleep. Or, y'know, died.

Father Burke scans the room.

As if there's been a change -- no, a *charge* -- in the air. A vague familiar feeling to him. Eyes fall back on the Abbess.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)

Abbess...

No answer.

Shit.

Father Burke lifts the candle. Holds it high, expanding its glow as much as the small flame can muster.

He begins to slowly approach The Abbess.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)

Abbess?

No answer.

And now he stands before her.

He reaches out and touches her shoulder. She does not stir. And is cold to the touch. Huh.

His hand drops to the edge of the Parlor Veil. Is he going to... Oh, he is. He gathers the edge of it in his hand.

Deep breath.

And he begins to raise the veil.

So slow.

Painfully so.

Here it comes, her face about to be revealed but --

The Abbess' Hand SNATCHES his arm.

Don't go any further.

Startled, Father Burke steps back. Her fingers still clutch his arm as he does and -- *holy shit* --

Her arm breaks off and comes with him.

Father Burke drops the candle.

It still glows.

A miracle.

He grabs her arm with his other hand. Her grip strong, he struggles to pry off her fingers. They look like the ends of a dead tree branch. Gnarled, withered, spindly.

Still stepping back, he frees himself and the arm drops.

Shocked, he looks back up at the Abbess. Still seated in the chair. One arm gone. Not that you can tell, really.

And then --

The Abbess leaps out of her chair.

Lunges at Father Burke.

He falls back and The Abbess leaps on top of him. He struggles to fight her off as he hears her SHRIEK --

THE ABBESS

Valak will have your soul!

Gathering every ounce of his strength, Father Burke flings her aside. Into darkness.

Fuck.

Where'd she go?

Father Burke looks over at the Confessional.

INT. THE CORRIDOR OF CRUCIFIXES - CONTINUOUS

Sister Irene has not come far since we last left her. But you can't blame her for taking her time. For being cautious.

Keeps her eyes ahead of her as she inches forward.

Ever so slo--

A CROSS.

Clatters to the floor.

Right in front of her feet.

She kneels. Picks it up. Grips it like a sword. Stands and continues on. Rounding a corner, revealing --

That Nun.

Kneeling before a CLOSED DOOR. And the door looks rather ordinary. But given the context, I imagine it's anything but.

We hear That Nun WHISPERING prayers.

SISTER IRENE
What is this place?

Creaaaaaaaak...

Closed Door begins to slowly open.

From which --

A GUST OF WIND.

Catches That Nun's Habit and whips it up and away, as if whoever was wearing it is invisible. Or a ghost.

Habit falls.

And then is sucked into the STORM OF BLACKNESS beyond That Open Door. Oh God. What's in there?

Terrified, Sister Irene stumbles back. Looks away from the That Door. Her expression pained. She drops the cross.

And then --

EVERY CRUCIFIX AND CROSS IN THE CORRIDOR FALLS.

And one by one they begin to slide into the doorway.

Sister Irene looks up.

Emerging out of the blackness beyond she sees --

The Nun.

Sister continues racing through

VARIOUS ROOMS

And when she feels as if she's gained some distance between she and The Nun she risks a look

BEHIND HER

And The Nun is standing right fucking there.

Sister Irene SCREAMS.

Lost, she twists this way and that way hoping to find herself back to the Passageway but instead we see she's in another

LONG CORRIDOR

Somewhere deep inside the convent. She looks behind her. All alone. Slows down to recover some energy.

CreakCREAKCreakCREAK...

Faint.

What is that?

Sister Irene moves to investigate as the *creakCREAKcreaking* continues. Down the length of the corridor.

As she walks, she looks down and can see DROPS of BLOOD. Like morbid bread crumbs. Dotting the way toward that

CreakCREAKCreakCREAK...

She stops outside a Monastic Cell. The creaks coming from something on the other side of the door.

Sister Irene pushes it open.

Revealing --

A NUN.

Sitting in a Rocking Chair in the far corner of the Monastic Cell. Her back to us. Rocking away. *CreakCREAKCreakCREAK...*

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

Hello?

CreakCREAKCreakCREAK...

Frightened, Sister Irene slowly approaches the Rocking Chair. And as she comes around she sees who sits in it --

Sister Miranda.

Staring blankly into space. With eyes that bleed. On her lap a CRUCIFIX. And her palms open. Also red with blood.

Stigmata.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)

Oh dear God! Sister Miranda!

Sister Irene tries to shake Sister Miranda out her catatonic state. But to no avail. She remains unresponsive.

VOICE (O.S.)

Sister Irene --

Scared, Sister Irene spins. Sees Sister Ruth and Several Other Nuns huddled together. How long have they been there?

Sister Ruth goes over and shuts the door. Locks them inside. Turns to Sister Irene and asks --

SISTER RUTH

What did Sister Miranda tell you?

INT. PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

Father Burke approaches the Confessional. Its carvings of damned souls seem to stretch out and reach for him.

One of us... One of us... One of us...

His eyes dart to the shadows that surround him. The Abbess could be cloaked in any one of those. Or maybe she's --

Behind the Confessional Curtain. Because it flutters. Enough to raise your hair and get your palms sweating.

Father Burke reaches out for the curtain. Grabs the edge and pulls it back, revealing --

Nothing.

He steps

INSIDE THE CONFESSIONAL BOOTH

Searching for that Secret Passage into the Convent. Slides his hands over a Back Panel. Nothing. But then --

He hears A THIN, PREPUBESCENT VOICE from behind the Lattice.

VOICE (O.S.)
 Forgive you, Father, for you have
 sinned...

Father Burke freezes.

No. No no no...

FATHER BURKE
 Daniel?

VOICE/DANIEL (O.S.)
 How long have I been dead, Father?

Chills him to the bone.

FATHER BURKE
 Six... seven years.

DANIEL (O.S.)
 Did you cast out the evil, Father?

FATHER BURKE
 I-I don't know...

Father Burke leans forward. Peers through the Lattice. Is he really in there? Can't see. He quickly exits back into the

PARLOUR

Hurries to check the Other Side of the Confessional. No sign of Daniel. But he sees a crack of an opening.

The Secret Passage.

Father Burke about to enter but --

SOMETHING FLOPS DOWN ONTO HIM. He looks onto his shoulder -- not sure what it is yet -- and sees --

A SNAKE.

Hissing at him.

Father Burke yanks it off of him.

MORE SNAKES RAIN DOWN FROM THE RAFTERS ABOVE.

Father Burke reels back. Stumbling onto the floor. He looks up and sees --

THE BOY.

With WINGS SPROUTED FROM HIS BACK.

Perched on the rafters like a gargoye. He snarls with demonic eyes. Forked tongue lashing out of his mouth.

It is VALAK, as described in the Book of Solomon. When he takes on the frightening form of a winged child.

Burke's blood freezes at the sight.

The Boy VOMITS OUT snake after snake. Continuing to drop down onto the Burke. Burke scrambles to his feet as --

The Boy jumps down.

But he never hits the floor. Its wings flutter like a hummingbird, keeping it hovering inches off the ground.

Father Burke races toward the exit.

The Boy in pursuit.

And just as the Boy is about to grab him, Father Burke reaches the Entrance and SLAMS THE DOOR behind him.

BANG!

On the other side of door.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

And then --

Silence.

Father Burke on his knees recovering just beyond the ENTRANCE THRESHOLD to the Parlour. It's sealed off by the door.

The one way back in now closed off.

He calls out --

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
Sister Irene!

Damnit.

He's stuck out here.

And then --

On the ground in front of him in a lone shaft of sunlight,
his CROSSWORD PUZZLE. He looks down. 14 Across. *Transference*.
Over to the grid --

D - L - V - - I - -

Got it.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
Deliveries.

He immediately gets up. Runs.

CUT TO:

BLACK.

Until the Storm-Like CELLAR DOORS open -- letting in the
daylight -- and Father Burke descends into the

ICE HOUSE

Stops when he reaches the bottom.

His eyes go over to the Access Door. And those few open
inches. There it is. The way in.

As he moves toward it --

A NOISE.

Behind him.

He turns and sees DIRT-STAINED FINGERS grip the edge of the
door. Father Burke steps back as he sees --

Sister Victoria begin to descend the stairs after him. Her
bones cracking, her brains bleeding.

Father Burke runs over to the

ACCESS DOOR

Tries to slide it open.

Can't.

It's stuck.

He looks back at Sister Victoria.

Getting closer.

He pulls on the door harder. *C'mon, goddamnit, move...*

But no.

Too stubborn.

Once more he looks back at Sister Victoria and --

SHE'S RIGHT THERE. Right on him. Raises her hands to scratch his fucking eyes out when --

SMACK!

She's hit with a SHOVEL. Sister Victoria falls away, revealing behind her holding the shovel is --

Frenchie.

FRENCHIE

I thought you could use some help.

INT. MONASTIC CELL - CONTINUOUS

As Sister Irene listens to Sister Ruth, occasionally her eyes drift over to the back of poor Sister Miranda.

SISTER RUTH

Sister Miranda broke a code by speaking to you. Whether it was lies or not...

SISTER IRENE

She wanted help. I know she did.

SISTER RUTH

As did Sister Victoria.

SISTER IRENE

But she killed herself.

SISTER RUTH

In the interest of preservation.

SISTER IRENE

Of what?

SISTER RUTH

Hope. Our hope. Sister Victoria was trying to save us but failed. Sister Miranda was trying to do the same thing in her own way but she should not have depended on outsiders...

SISTER IRENE

Why? What's happening? Is what they say true? Is there really a -- a portal -- a doorway to Hell here?

SISTER RUTH

Yes. And for centuries it was closed and this convent thrived in its purpose as gatekeepers, protecting Man from the demonic forces of Hell. But we could not protect Man from himself -- and the last War dropped the bombs which rattled this Abbey and cracked open the door, letting loose the demon that had been beating against it for centuries.

Sister Ruth looks over at an Older Nun.

SISTER RUTH (CONT'D)

Sister Christian? The time has come...

SISTER CHRISTIAN, 50s, speaks up. As she talks, it's hard not to notice the scars on her neck. Like she survived a hanging.

SISTER CHRISTIAN

I came here thirty years ago. Many of us weren't even aware of what was present under the Abbey until after the second war. That's when the strange things began to happen... Some called them sightings, others called them hauntings. But many in the cloister began to flee as the encounters got worse... The Abbess stopped recruiting and those of us that remained made a pact to stay because we discovered that as our numbers dwindled, the power of the demonic forces got stronger... It takes many forms -- a serpent, a small winged child -- but the form the evil takes the most is --

SISTER IRENE

A nun.

SISTER CATHERINE

Yes.

SISTER RUTH

It was the Abbess who discovered the portal had been opened. She went down to lock it but without the proper protection and she came back under the influence of the demonic... She was killed but her tormented soul remains.

SISTER IRENE

Protection?

SISTER RUTH

The closer to the portal, the stronger the influence. There is a relic needed to guard one's soul against the underworld. Without it the door cannot be approached nor can it be closed...

SISTER IRENE

The key. Sister Victoria was holding it...

KNOCKKNOCKKNOCK!

On the door.

Oh God.

They look over at Sister Irene.

SISTER RUTH

See who it is...

Her? Okay...

She hurries over to the Judas Window.

Opens it up.

But no one is there.

And then --

Father Burke appears in the window.

Jeezus...

SISTER IRENE
Father Burke.

She lets him in.

He enters. Followed by Frenchie.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)
Frenchie?

FRENCHIE
Seemed like the noble thing to do.

SISTER IRENE
How did you find me?

FATHER BURKE
The trail of blood.

SISTER IRENE
The key. Do you have the key?

FATHER BURKE
Yes.

He pulls out the Rosary Key. Hands it to her. She turns to Sister Ruth and --

SISTER IRENE
Sister Ruth. Tell him about the key...

But Sister Ruth just stares at her.

SISTER IRENE (CONT'D)
Sister Ruth -- please --

FATHER BURKE
Sister Irene...

Sister Irene looks over at Father Burke. Both he and Frenchie are looking at her, like --

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
Who are you talking to?

Sister Irene looks back at Sister Ruth and the Other Nuns. But they're gone. Desperate, she looks around the room.

Nowhere they could have gone.

Only Sister Miranda in the Rocking Chair remains. The rocking diminished. Now she just sits.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)

Visions.

Sister Irene. A dawn of realization appears on her face. Once again she approaches Sister Miranda. And this time she sees --

The Corpse of Sister Miranda. Clearly she's been dead for months. If not longer. Sister Irene GASPS.

Father Burke grabs a BEDSHEET.

Throws it over Sister Miranda in the chair.

He pulls Sister Irene away. As they step back, Sister Irene gathers herself. Sign of the Cross. Begins a prayer but --

Cloaked Sister Miranda springs to life.

Lunges at Father Burke. STABS the Crucifix into his side, tries to dig her nails into his face.

Father Burke HOWLS.

As he SLAMS Sister Miranda back down onto the cot as she twists and contorts under the sheet. Pins her down.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)

Help me hold her down!

Frenchie helps.

Demonic WAILS and MOANS through the sheet.

Not giving up.

Father Burke looks around for anything that may help. Sees a CUP of WATER near the bedside. *Light bulb.* Prays over it:

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)

God's creature, water, I cast out the demon from you in the name of God the Father almighty, in the name of Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. May you be a purified water, empowered to drive afar all power of the enemy, in fact, to root out and banish the enemy himself, along with his fallen angels. We ask this through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is coming to judge both the living and the dead and the world by fire.

He looks to Sister Irene.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
Hand me the holy water.

Sister Miranda moves for it. Sister Miranda flails. Knocking Frenchie into Sister Irene who spills the Holy Water.

Oh no...

Holy Water mixes with the blood of --

Father Burke. He and Frenchie wrestle Sister Miranda back down. Father Burke looks over at the Door.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
Go out to the hallway and get ready
to shut the door.

They can barely hold Sister Miranda down any longer. Her screams like a rake scraped against her throat.

Sister Irene goes over to the Door.

Grabs the handle.

Father Burke looks over at Frenchie.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
One... two...

They release Sister Miranda. They race toward the Door. Sister Miranda close behind.

They makes it out just as --

SLAM!

Door closes right on her arm. Her cloaked face still screeches through the Judas Window.

Father Burke forces her arm back behind the door and then Sister Irene gives it another --

SLAM!

Closed.

Sister Miranda falls away from the Judas Window.

Silence.

Is she finished?

Sister Irene steps up to peek through the Judas Window to make sure but --

A BLOODY HAND GRABS HER.

Again.

It's Father Burke.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
No good will come of that.

He slides down onto the floor. Hand covering his wound.

Sounding defeated...

SISTER IRENE
They're all dead. It is lost.

FATHER BURKE
No. Not yet. The demon still needs a conduit -- a human host to escape these grounds. Sister Victoria must have been the last nun. I suspect that's why she jumped from a window. It wasn't suicide. It was a sacrifice so the demon couldn't have her soul. We need to seal the portal and contain the evil.

CUT TO:

FRESH STITCHES.

As Frenchie sews him up, through the pain --

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
I believe I know where the portal is...

They're in the

KITCHEN

Trying not to watch too closely --

SISTER IRENE
Yes. I do too. But we can't go down there unless we're guarded against the evil...

FATHER BURKE
By what?

SISTER IRENE

The key.

Father Burke pulls out the Key.

FATHER BURKE

'...the keys of Hell and of death.'

SISTER IRENE

But Father, before we begin, I'd like to take my vows...

Frenchie stops the stitches. Looks at her. As if he might say something. Something clever, something witty...

FATHER BURKE

Are you certain of this?

SISTER IRENE

My visions. I now know they are a miracle of God and I am ready to commit my life to Him...

FRENCHIE

Now *that*, Sister, is a noble act.

INT. PRIVATE CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

In a corner somewhat untarnished by evil, Sister Irene lays face down on the floor. The act of prostration. And by the way, there is so much more to this ceremony to explore but for now let's just cut to the chase:

FATHER BURKE

--May the love of God unite you and make you a true family that united in the name of the Lord, it may be an image of Christ's. Amen.

Sister Irene rises. And now we realize she's wearing the BLACK HABIT. The symbol of complete devotion to God.

INT. CONVENT - VARIOUS CORRIDORS - MOMENTS LATER

Sister Irene, Father Burke and Frenchie hurry with the key. The Nun stares up at her from the courtyard.

Oh no...

FATHER BURKE

Keep in the shadows.

The only thing they can do is maneuver as best they can in the opposite direction from which the Nun approaches.

Until they reach the

CORRIDOR OF CROSSES

Father Burke grabs a candle. It battles back the blackness but it's not a war this light is going to win.

As they draw closer to the end of corridor, the candle flame grows smaller and smaller and smaller and...

Pffft.

Dies.

For a moment, they are stuck in an awful darkness that seems to suffocate them all. Until we see --

AN ORANGE GLOW.

Begin to brighten.

Sister Irene holds up the Rosary Key. It burns with flame but the fire does not scorch her as she grips it.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
God's light. Stay within it. It
will protect us...

Huddling close together, they move toward the end. But The Nun appears behind them. Casting a long shadow.

They turn.

And tremble.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
DEMON!

Nun looks over at Burke. Begins to walk toward him.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
We cast you out, every unclean
spirit, every satanic power, every
onslaught of the infernal
adversary, every legion, every
diabolical group and sect, in the
name and by the power of our Lord
Jesus Christ.

(MORE)

FATHER BURKE (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. No longer dare,
cunning serpent, to deceive the
human race, to persecute God's
Church, to strike God's elect and
to sift them as wheat. For the Most
High God commands you, He to Whom
you once proudly presumed yourself
equal; He Who wills all men to --

Nun CHARGES at Father Burke.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)

GO! STAY IN THE LIGHT! CLOSE THE
PORTAL!

They do.

Descending a spiraling set of STAIRS. The deeper Sister Irene
and Frenchie go, the more she hears the distant sounds of
Whispering Voices: Are they calling out to them?

They continue down the stairs, as if they're descending into
Hell itself. Which isn't so far off from the truth.

As we saw on the map earlier, it used to be the

UNDERCROFT OF THE CASTLE

Technical term for what you call the cellar. But it is lined
with brick and has vaulted ceilings and is seemingly endless.

The GLOW does little to penetrate the darkness. So they can
only see the following in horrifying glimpses --

Discarded bones. Strange runes mapped on the floor. Illegible
words scrawled in blood on the walls.

And the TORTURE DEVICES. Each one worse than the last. The
Brazen Bull. The Judas Seat. The Iron Maiden.

A Nun long ago dead on each. We recognize their faces. Sister
Ruth. Sister Christian. Sister Catherine. The Others.

Frenchie looks at a Nun crucified on an upside down cross.
Like Peter the Apostle.

The Dead Nun smiles at him.

Eeeeesh.

He reels back. And for the slightest instant, we see him step out of the protective light. He recoils back for Sister Irene but sense she isn't there. He turns and --

FRENCHIE

Sister...

Merde.

He's come face to face with the Winged Boy. It grabs Frenchie by the neck and slams him down onto the ground.

The Winged Boy clammers on top of him. And as Frenchie opens his mouth to scream the Boy opens his mouth and --

-- VOMITS A SERPENT into his mouth. The snake writhes and slithers down Frenchie's throat.

The Boy stands up. And for a second we lose him in the darkness. But a small shaft of light find him again, revealing he's no longer The Boy but...

...The Demon Nun.

She steps further into the shadows.

Sister Irene spins.

SISTER IRENE

Frenchie? Frenchie?!

From the shadows -- he groans --

FRENCHIE (O.S.)

Sister...

Over there.

SISTER IRENE

You need to stay in the light!

She runs in the direction of his suffering. The light reveals him huddled on the ground. What's he whispering?

Oh God... Is he... Is he singing?

FRENCHIE

*J'ai trouvé l'eau si belle que je
m'y suis baigné...*

Sister Irene holds the light over him, he continues to sing as he starts to look back. Twisting his head on his neck.

Bones SNAP.

Until he's staring up at her. With EYES OF THE DEMONIC. And UPSIDE DOWN CROSSES pushing through his skin.

He lunges at her.

Sister Irene stumbles back.

Frenchie POUNCES on top of her. Fights for the Keylight. Holding his hand over the flame, the GLOW --

Dims... and dims...

And the evil in the darkness encroaches. Getting closer to her. Revealing themselves to be a cloister of --

DEMONIC NUNS.

Whispering Satanic prayers.

The Keylight -- that Holy Light -- almost gone as Frenchie continues to pin Sister Irene to the ground.

Gripping it tight.

But then --

Father Burke SLAMS into Frenchie. Frenchie falls to the side in a crumpled heap.

FATHER BURKE
CLOSE THE DOOR!

Thwooom!

Sister Irene is yanked out of frame.

She slides across the floor of the undercroft. Still holding onto the keylight as she SCREAMS.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
Sister!

She's gone.

But we go with her.

Staying in the light to protect us until we find --

Sister Irene clutching to the sides of a DOOR in the wall. Barely hanging on. About to get sucked into the

PORTAL

Beyond it glows a RED, HELLISH FIERY LIGHT. Shafting through putrid smoke. Sister Irene struggles as her Habit twists and tangles, flying off into the darkness behind her.

She continues to fight. And right as it looks like she's about to win -- oh no --

The Demon Nun appears out of the Portal.

Grabs her.

SISTER IRENE

NO!

Sister Irene looks back at the Nun. She sees its skin peel away, revealing a snarling BLACK, DEMON-SNAKE FACE. With a mouth filled with fangs. Head with horns.

Sister Irene SCREAMS.

Father Burke sees Irene through the other Demonic Nuns. Determined, he fights his way forward.

FATHER BURKE

Sister Irene!

The Demon Nun looks beyond Sister Irene. Locks eyes with Father Burke. A showdown of epic proportions.

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)

VALAK! I cast you out! I banish from this place all curses, hexes, spells, witchcraft, black magic, demonic assignments, diabolic infestations, oppressions, possessions; all that is evil and sinful! In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you!

Valak SCREECHES.

His grip loosens on Sister Irene.

She pulls herself out and over to the side. Scrambling she reaches back for the Door. SLAMS it shut.

JAMS the Rosary Key into the lock.

Turns it and --

Holy Light floods the room.

Vanquishes the evil.

Debris settles.

And from out of a settling cloud of dust, Father Burke emerges. Bruised and beaten. But alive.

SISTER IRENE
Thank God.

FATHER BURKE
Are you hurt, Sister?

Shakes her head.

She looks over at where Frenchie lay.

SISTER IRENE
Frenchie...

But he's gone.

INT. PARLOUR - LATER

Father Burke and Sister Irene walk toward the exit. Light streams in through the cracks. The darkness lifted at last.

INT. PRIVATE CHAPEL - LATER

Father Burke and Sister Irene sit in a pew.

FATHER BURKE
Are you sure you won't come?

SISTER IRENE
No. My path has led me here. This is where I will remain to help rebuild the Abbey...

FATHER BURKE
I will tell Cardinal Conroy to send the help you need.

SISTER IRENE
What about Frenchie? We never found his body. He must be somewhere. Did the evil escape with him?

FATHER BURKE
Perhaps. But the greater evil was contained. If there was a demonic force attached to Frenchie it will reveal itself.

(MORE)

FATHER BURKE (CONT'D)
I am certain someone good will be
there to send it back..

SISTER IRENE
How can you say that with such
certainty?

FATHER BURKE
Faith. Because I have faith,
Sister...

Sister Irene smiles.

EXT. ABBEY OF ST. CARTA - LATER

Sister Irene stands in the Doorway as she watches Father
Burke disappear beyond the crosses. Looks down to her hands.

Holding a BLACK HABIT. Miranda's, maybe. Or Sister
Victoria's. But now? It's hers.

She puts on the Habit.

Wears it well.

Gives one last look to the outside world before --

SLAM!

She SHUTS the door on it.

BLACK.

Over which,

A WOMAN SCREAMS.

Years Later

Warren, Massachusetts

CUT TO:

The SCREAMING WOMAN.

Terrified, she kneels by her bed inside her

MASTER BEDROOM

Face red. Eyes desperate.

WOMAN
Please, please don't --

BLAM!

A SHOTGUN BLASTS off her arm.

She HOWLS.

BLAM!

Another shot. Blasts into her skull. Splattering her brains on the bedside wall. She falls. As her dead eye stare up at --

It's Frenchie.

The years have not been kind to him. A hulking, sweating mess of a man. Dare I say he looks...

Possessed.

In case you missed it in our beginning, his real name is Maurice Thierault. And now we recognize him from The Conjuring. As the Man in the Exorcism Footage.

Oh.

Shit.

He STOMPS out of the Master Bedroom.

Down the stairs and into the

FAMILY ROOM

There's a POUNDING on the Front Door.

But he ignores it.

As he plops down on his favorite recliner.

Behind the Front Door, we hear a MUFFLED VOICE. Calling out. Urgent. But Frenchie ignore that too.

He lifts up his sweat-soaked WHITE T-SHIRT. We see UPSIDE DOWN CROSSES push out of his body. His eyes begin to BLEED.

As Frenchie positions the shotgun under his neck.

And without hesitation --

He pulls the trigger.

Click.

But it doesn't work.

BOOM!

Front Door KICKS open.

Revealing --

ED AND LORRAINE WARREN. With a Priest behind them. Good has finally come to send the evil back.

They stare in horror at Frenchie sitting in the Recliner. Speckled in his wife's blood.

ED

My God, Maurice. What have you done?

Lorraine looks over to the MIRROR across the room. And instead of Frenchie's reflection staring back at her...

...it's Valak.

Lorraine's eyes go WIDE.

Oh no...

Valak looks at Lorraine.

He SNARLS.

AND THE MIRROR SHATTERS TO --

BLACK!

The End

