

Apocrypha

Written By
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OVER BLACK:

Through a warble of static --

MAN'S VOICE

When time began, there was the
Word.

FADE IN ON:

Shadows stretch and yawn. Their dusky fathoms hold the secrets
of a dead language. Like vaporous imprints, letters and words
handwritten in Old Latin emerge on the walls of a church nave.

MAN'S VOICE

And the Word was face to face
with God.

Beneath stained glass windows, church vestiges stand silent
and silhouetted etched.

Unsettled. Stillness pervades.

MAN'S VOICE(cont'd)

And the Word was there.

A PRESENCE stirs; its tempest marked by an errant breeze and a
frost skimmed nave.

Prayer candles wicker on the verge of extinction.

On the brittle edge of consciousness --

INT. BEDROOM - PREDAWN

Eight-year-old ANNMARIE TALL ELK awakens. Face flushed and
damp with sweat, breath pluming icily in the air, she stares
into the darkness of her room. The small, button eyes of
stuffed animals stare back at her.

Curtains billow and flap over an opened window.

A dream catcher sways; its pendulum motion hypnotic.

In the dusky motes, the FM light of her radio wickers.

MAN'S VOICE

And the Word was God.

Handwritten in Crayon, the cryptic language of a dead age
covers her bedroom walls from floor to ceiling.

And suddenly --

EXT. HIGHWAY/SOUTH DAKOTA GREAT PLAINS - PREDAWN

Engine idling toward a stall, a Jeep battered almost beyond recognition sits upright in the ditch. A vast landscape of prairie surrounds it.

The crackling murmur of its radio ebbs.

MAN'S VOICE

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy.

As the wind gusts, sweeping a loose tumble of leaves and dust into the air --

MAN'S VOICE(cont'd)

Lord have mercy.

(a beat)

Christ, graciously hear us.

EXT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAWN

A startled flock of birds take flight.

In a flurry, they skirt the Victorian build and steep-sloped roof of Saint Michael's Church.

MAN'S VOICE

God, the Father in heaven, have mercy on us.

Quiet settles.

MAN'S VOICE(cont'd)

God, the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.

Stillness pervades, mitigated by the soft swell of the breeze and the distant ratchet of the sprinkler system.

Sounds of summer lay lost within silence.

MAN'S VOICE(cont'd)

God, the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.

The wind gusts and leaves sweep across the narrow walkway.

MAN'S VOICE(cont'd)
 Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy
 on us.

And for a moment --

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAWN

A quiet man by nature and age, FATHER THOMAS slips a pair of reading glasses from his breast pocket.

Brow furrowing, he examines a photograph.

FATHER THOMAS
 From what I can tell, it's the
 Litany of the Saints...

Sitting with US MARSHAL EMMA LANDRY on one of the back pews, he manages a tired smile.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
 ...written in Old Latin.

EMMA
 You're sure, Father Thomas?

FATHER THOMAS
 I've taught Latin to more high
 school students than I care to
 remember. I'm sure.

EMMA
 But you never taught Old Latin...

FATHER THOMAS
 Old Latin to New Latin is like
 British English to that spoken
 here in the States. It's the
 same... just a different flavor.

She stands.

In the quiet nave, shadowy catacombs stretch and yawn.

Holding out her hand to the priest --

EMMA
 Thank you, Father Thomas.

As they shake hands --

EMMA (cont'd)
 For your time... I know you're
 getting ready for Morning Mass.

FATHER THOMAS
 It wasn't a bother at all, Ms.
 Landry.

Glancing at the photograph in her hand --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
 I'm curious, though, as to what
 that picture has to do with the
 US Marshals Service.

EMMA
 You know Jonas Montgomery.

FATHER THOMAS
 He was a priest here at Saint
 Michael's, Ms. Landry.

Emma Landry's gaze drifts over the nave, taking in the church
 vestiges bathed within soft light.

Pallid walls, void of writing, hold their own secrets.

FLASH!

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Darkness. Shadows slip over the walls. Echoing over the
 stillness, a WOMAN'S disembodied scream fills the nave.

BACK TO:

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAWN

Emma Landry hands the photograph to the priest.

EMMA
 Three hours after Jonas
 Montgomery's execution by lethal
 injection, he woke up.
 (a beat)
 There was an inscription, similar
 to the one in that picture,
 burned into his cell wall.

FATHER THOMAS
 Have you considered that this
 might be a miracle?

EMMA
 Miracles don't happen in the 21st
 Century, Father Thomas.

Like a whisper on the wind --

EXT. PARKING LOT/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

An owl's scree laces the breeze.

Leaves ride the tidal sweep of the wind, as Emma Landry
 crosses the parking lot.

PSYCHOLOGIST (AUDIO TAPE)
 For the record state your full
 name, age and place of residence.

JONAS (AUDIO TAPE)
 ...Jonas Wade Montgomery... age
 twenty-three...

Glass and metal glinting, a handful of vehicles sit parked on
 the lot; their dust flecked windows opaque.

Reflections skitter over polished metal.

JONAS (AUDIO TAPE {cont'd})
 ...South Dakota State
 Penitentiary... Death Row.

PSYCHOLOGIST (AUDIO TAPE)
 Tell me what happened the night
 Mary Agnes died, Jonas.

Emma's pace slows.

A sense of being watched needles her consciousness.

JONAS (AUDIO TAPE)
 Darkness took her body.

She stops mid stride. Turns.

Like an Old World monolith, the Church stands silent; its
 steep-sloped roof silhouetted.

Reality teetering --

FLASH!

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Stained glass windows implode with the overwhelming force of a car accident; glass shards scissor through the shadows.

BACK TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAWN

Reality swimming into tenuous focus and feeling her world slow on its tilting axis, Emma turns back to the parking lot.

The breath lodges in her throat.

JONAS (AUDIO TAPE)

And God claimed her soul.

Like lifeless eyes, the frost sheathed windows of the vehicles parked on the lot stare back at her.

Reaching over and turning off the audio player --

EXT. FRONT PORCH/JOHN SHANGREAU'S HOUSE - DAY

With his coffee in hand, John Shangreau leans back in his chair.

The audio player, now silent, sits on a small table amidst RV sales fliers and sports magazines, all skimmed with dust.

SHANGREAU

That's as close to an admission
of guilt as we ever got.

Like the rest of the houses on this tired, residential block, John Shangreau's ranch style is aged and weather worn.

Sitting in one of the wicker chairs --

EMMA

Not much of an admission,
Lieutenant Shangreau.

SHANGREAU

I'm retired. Two years. It's just
John, now.

Like a man wishing it was something more, he sips his coffee.

SHANGREAU(cont'd)
 Between that tape and the Church
 claiming an exorcism never
 happened, you're right. There
 wasn't much of a pot to piss in.

Slipping a pack of cigarettes from his shirt pocket --

SHANGREAU(cont'd)
 Mind if I smoke, Ms. Landry?

EMMA
 It's your porch, Mr. Shangreau.

SHANGREAU
 I own the dirt clods. Bank owns
 the house.

Lighting his cigarette --

SHANGREAU(cont'd)
 Long way from Washington D.C. to
 Rapid City, South Dakota to
 revisit a closed case.

EMMA
 The US Attorney's Office has its
 reasons.

SHANGREAU
 Still a long, fuckin' trip to the
 outfield of nowhere, even for the
 US Attorney's Office.

He sips his coffee.

A fresh breeze on the cool of the day wafts through the porch,
 stirring dust into the air. Sitting on the floor, an old
 Sadelco radio, its antenna extended, murmurs the morning news
 on the AM band.

EMMA
 I haven't seen one of those in a
 long time. A Sadelco, not a
 digital one either. I didn't
 think they made these anymore.

Glancing at the radio --

SHANGREAU
 I've had it a while.

The radio's turn dial knobs and ruler style tuning band puts
 its manufacturing date in 1980's.

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

Won't play FM for shit but the AM band works like a dream.

EMMA

Got your money's worth out of it.

SHANGREAU

It works. That's all that matters.

Looking out over the front lawn --

EMMA

You moved here from Chicago. No wife, no kids.

SHANGREAU

Wanted something simpler.

EMMA

So, you what? Closed your eyes and picked Rapid City on the map?

This garners her a smile albeit a tired one.

SHANGREAU

Spent the better part of twenty years working Homicide. Seen more shit than I care to remember.

(a beat)

Wanted something different, so I moved out here to the Paha Sappa.

EMMA

The Paha Sappa...?

SHANGREAU

The Black Hills, what the Lakota call the Sacred Heart. It's their Holy Ground.

He smokes his cigarette content to watch the dust curl on the unsettled air.

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

Moved out here to get away from the city. Wanted quiet, open space, and there's always Sturgis, if I get bored.

EMMA

Do you ride?

SHANGREAU

Used to. Not so much now, though.
 (a beat)
 Once they pick something like a
 pound of road rash from your ass,
 you're not so quick to get back
 on the fucker.

EMMA

I see your point.

He drags on his cigarette; the bead a dull ember.

SHANGREAU

So, what is it you want from me,
 Ms. Landry?

EMMA

Your interpretation of the case.

SHANGREAU

It's all there in the field
 reports and case file.

EMMA

Facts, yes. Not your personal
 assessment, though. Twenty years
 working Homicide in Chicago says
 a lot about your intuition.

John Shangreau sips his coffee, lost to the quiet of the
 morning and the soft murmur of the sprinkler.

As a raft of smoke rides the breeze --

SHANGREAU

Mary Agnes, sixteen... Ligature
 marks on her wrists and legs,
 throat cut... Body tossed out a
 second floor window of Saint
 Michael's church. She'd been
 starved, dehydrated... Fingertips
 bruised and nails snapped, like
 she'd been clawing at something.

He drains the last swallow of coffee from his cup.

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

No sexual assault. And according
 to the M.E. She was still a
 virgin.

EMMA

Mary Agnes... she was Catholic.

SHANGREAU
 Grandparent raised her.
 (a beat)
 They're both dead now. Good
 people, though.

EMMA
 You knew them.

SHANGREAU
 From church.

Off Emma's inquisitive look --

SHANGREAU(cont'd)
 I grew up Catholic.

EMMA
 Your impression of the family...

SHANGREAU
 Good people. Carl worked for the
 city, farmed on his off time. His
 wife, Tessa did some clerical
 work for one of the attorneys
 here in town.

EMMA
 And Mary Agnes?

SHANGREAU
 Typical teenager, not wild but
 she wanted to live life. Worked
 part time at the mall.
 (a beat)
 You could tell she wasn't going
 to stay in small town USA very
 long. She was all about the city.

EMMA
 Any boyfriends?

SHANGREAU
 One... Sam Whitside, good kid
 with solid future. Think he's a
 journalist now for the Tribune.

EMMA
 Did you know him from church?

SHANGREAU
 No.

Tamping out his cigarette --

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

Mr. Whitside's family was
Pentecostal. Held meetings at
their house on East North Street.

(a beat)

They were different but harmless.

EMMA

So, what made you think it was an
exorcism?

SHANGREAU

Rumors, mostly. Nothing anyone
would go on record about.

EMMA

Any truth to them?

SHANGREAU

I don't know. Maybe.

On the edge of consciousness --

FLASH!

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Amidst dusky fathoms and a frost sheathed nave, words
handwritten in Old Latin emerge on the walls.

The disembodied SCREAM of a young girl echoing --

BACK TO:

EXT. FRONT PORCH/JOHN SHANGREAU'S HOUSE - DAY

Reality teeters. That scream, nothing more than the subtle
ratchet of the sprinkler jetting water over a tired lawn.

SHANGREAU

Should have followed my
instincts.

Lighting a cigarette --

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

And walked away.

EMMA

Why's that?

He stands.

Gaze finding its way to Emma's curious look --

SHANGREAU

Because some things, Ms. Landry,
are best left to God.

Walking to the door of his house --

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

Now, if you'll excuse me. I have
a bottle waiting inside and some
fishing to think about.

EMMA

One more question, Mr. Shangreau.

Hand on the door knob, he glances at Emma.

EMMA (cont'd)

There was writing on the church
walls the night Mary Agnes died.
You noted it in the field report.

SHANGREAU

And...?

EMMA

There were no evidence photos
taken. Why's that?

SHANGREAU

You'd have to ask Peter Tall Elk.
(a beat)
Back then, he worked part time
for the M.E.'s Office.

EMMA

Where can I find him.

SHANGREAU

Lives on Pine Ridge, near Wounded
Knee.

EMMA

He has a daughter.

SHANGREAU

Annmarie... Why?

EMMA

The US Attorney's office received
an email. In it was a photo of
handwriting on Annmarie's bedroom
walls... written in Old Latin.

SHANGREAU
The Litany of the Saints.

Before she can press him further, John Shangreau walks inside the house, letting the door close behind him.

EXT. JOHN SHANGREAU'S HOUSE - DAY

Quiet permeates. Silent houses with dust flecked windows overlook the tree lined street.

Wind gusts; leaves roll and tumble.

A radio's distant, muffled ebb riding the unsettled air --

MAN'S VOICE
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray
for us.

EXT. EMMA'S CAR - DAY

Hand on her car door, Emma's gaze wafts over the silent houses with their blinds drawn and the neighborhood quiet.

MAN'S VOICE
All holy saints of God, intercede
for us.

Like the tombs of the dead, silent houses stare back at her.

From behind her --

WHITSIDE (O.S.)
Special Investigator, Emma
Landry?

Startled, she turns.

The boyish good looks and warm charm of SAMUEL WHITSIDE is lost on her.

EMMA
You know me, but I'm afraid I'm
at a loss as to who you are.

WHITSIDE
Sam.

He holds out his hand and as they shake hands --

WHITSIDE (cont'd)
Samuel Whitside, actually. I'm a
journalist.

EMMA
Lieutenant Shangreau mentioned
you worked for the Chicago
Tribune.

Before he can press her further.

EMMA (cont'd)
I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to
comment, though.

WHITSIDE
I get that.

He smiles that All American, clean cut grin.

WHITSIDE (cont'd)
How about some useless trivia
then?

EMMA
Like how you were Mary Agnes'
boyfriend.

Off his somewhat surprised look --

EMMA (cont'd)
Lieutenant Shangreau mentioned
it.

WHITSIDE
Did he tell you that on the day
Mary Agnes died over two hundred
dead birds were cleaned up from
the church grounds?

EMMA
Interesting as that is, Mr.
Whitside...

WHITSIDE
It's Sam. Please.

EMMA
Ok. Sam... I'm not chasing ghosts
here.

As she opens her car door then slips into the driver's seat --

WHITSIDE

Mary Agnes was possessed.

Putting his hand out and blocking her from closing the door --

WHITSIDE (cont'd)

And there was an exorcism that night, but something went wrong.

EMMA

Your hand...

Leveling a cooling gaze on Samuel Whitside --

EMMA (cont'd)

You're about to lose it, if you don't move it.

WHITSIDE

Look...

After another warning glance from Emma Landry, he pulls his hand away from her door.

WHITSIDE (cont'd)

...there's more going on here than you think, Inspector. Like the fact that Father Thomas is an ordained Exorcist.

EMMA

Priests are ordained.

Closing her car door then powering down the window --

EMMA (cont'd)

Exorcists are trained.

WHITSIDE

He was there the night Mary Agnes died.

EMMA

You're not telling me anything I don't already know.

WHITSIDE

Then how about the fact that on the night Mary Agnes died, Rapid City went dark for over two hours?

EMMA

Power outages are a bitch.

WHITSIDE

I know how this sounds. Believe me, Inspector Landry, I do.

EMMA

Like I said, Mr. Whitside, I'm not chasing ghosts.

WHITSIDE

Look, I know about Jonas Montgomery's execution.

As Emma keys the ignition --

FLASH!

INT. JEEP

Sound echoing, hollow and distant, the engine diesels on the brittle fringe of a stall.

On the radio, ghostly and disembodied within static --

MAN'S VOICE

Be merciful, spare us, O Lord.

BACK TO:

EXT. EMMA'S CAR - DAY

Emma catches a glimpse of her reflection in the rear view mirror and the fleeting wicker of a shadow.

Like a whisper of memory --

MAN'S VOICE

And from all evil, deliver us, O Lord.

Reaching for the car radio, meaning to turn it off, Emma stops mid motion. She stares at her car's silent radio.

Breaking through her thoughts --

WHITSIDE

I'm staying at my folks' place on East North Street.

He pulls a small notepad from his back pocket and jots an address and cell phone number on the sheet.

Tearing the page loose and dropping it inside Emma's window --

WHITSIDE (cont'd)

That's the address and my cell
number.

(a beat)

Call me, if you want to talk.

Emma powers her window up then drops the car into gear and pulls away from the curb. With a furtive glance to the rear view mirror, she catches a fleeting glimpse of the shadow.

Stepping onto the curb, Samuel Whitside watches her leave.

EXT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

In unsettle quiet, the church stands silent. Stained glass windows overlook the grounds and a narrow walkway.

A breeze wafts.

Trees stir with the subtle, tidal gust.

Hand on the railing, Father Thomas stands near the base of the steps feeling the breeze wash over him.

With the distant rumble of dry thunder --

FLASH!

INT. SECOND FLOOR ROOM/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Handwritten text scrawled in Ancient Aramaic bleeds through frost covered walls, while shadows stir in oily streamers.

BACK TO:

EXT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

Feeling the sore nag of his left knee, Father Thomas takes his time climbing the steps. Hand on the railing, the bite of cold draws his attention.

Thin frost coats the metal railing.

Half way up the steps, Father Thomas stops. He turns, gaze drifting over the quiet grounds.

Like a whisper on the wind --

DOCTOR ROSALYN (V.O.)

And when Jesus asked him, "What
is your name?".

The soft murmuring echo of the sprinkler system ratchets.

DOCTOR ROSALYN (V.O.) (cont'd)
 He replied, "Legion, for we are
 many."

Father Thomas, hand unsteady, slips a Rosary from his pocket and after a moment's thought presses it to his lips.

On the edge of the wind, an owl's scree rides the air.

INT. LECTURE HALL/SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF MINES - DAY

On stage, DOCTOR MARGUARITE ROSALYN, Department Head of Theology Studies, speaks to a crowded auditorium.

Behind her, projected on a white screen is a passage from --

DANIEL 5:5-6

"...suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lamp stand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale..."

DOCTOR ROSALYN
 Fundamentally, we all believe in
 the existence of evil. The
 question I'm posing to you today
 is whether or not that same
 fundamental belief is evidence of
 the existence of God.

As the lights begin to come up, signally the end of class --

DOCTOR ROSALYN (cont'd)
 Term papers due next Friday. Late
 submission fail. No exceptions.

Class breaks. Students gather books and start to leave.

Threading her way through the crowd, a file folder tucked under her arm, Emma Landry approaches the stage.

ON STAGE

Doctor Rosalyn switches off the projector then sorts through her notes and gathers her materials.

EMMA (O.S.)
 Doctor Marguarite Rosalyn...?

Closing her attache case, Doctor Rosalyn looks up, eyes searching for the source of the voice.

Nameless faces of students file passed the stage.

Glance finding its way to Emma Landry --

DOCTOR ROSALYN

I'm sorry but I don't recognize you from --

EMMA

I'm Emma Landry, Special Investigator for the US Attorney's Office.

DOCTOR ROSALYN

Like I said on the phone earlier, Ms. Landry, I really don't have the time.

Checking her watch --

DOCTOR ROSALYN(cont'd)

And I'm running late as it is.

(a beat)

Call my assistant. Arrange a time for next week.

EMMA

I could call a Federal judge.

This garners Emma an agitated glance.

EMMA (cont'd)

But all I really need is less than five or ten minutes.

DOCTOR ROSALYN

Five minutes. Anything more, you might as well call your judge.

EMMA

Fair enough.

As Doctor Rosalyn descends the steps from the stage to the main floor --

EMMA (cont'd)

Ten years ago, you translated some text found on the walls in a second floor room of Saint Michael's Church.

DOCTOR ROSALYN

Mary Agnes... the girl who was
killed during an exorcism.

(a beat)

What does that have to do with
the US Attorney's Office?

EMMA

I've been tasked with reviewing
the case file.

With the last of the students leaving the auditorium --

EMMA (cont'd)

That... and Jonas Montgomery woke
up three hours after his
execution by Lethal Injection.

DOCTOR ROSALYN

Incredible as that sounds, I
don't see where you're going with
this.

EMMA

In the field report, you stated
the writing on the walls was done
in Old Latin.

DOCTOR ROSALYN

That's right. Written perfectly,
as I remember it.

(a beat)

Like I said, Ms. Landry, I'm
pressed for time.

Handing a photograph to Doctor Rosalyn from the file folder --

EMMA

This picture is of Jonas
Montgomery's cell wall. As of
yet, no one's been able to
translate its origin.

Glancing at the photo, meaning to shrug it off, something
holds Doctor Rosalyn's attention.

DOCTOR ROSALYN

It's a dialect of Ancient
Aramaic... used around the time
of Christ.

EMMA

And the inscription?

DOCTOR ROSALYN
Scripture, actually.

Handing the photograph to Emma --

DOCTOR ROSALYN(cont'd)
And depending on your stance on
the topic of faith, some would
call it a warning from God.

EMMA
Scripture...? What passage?

DOCTOR ROSALYN
Ecclesiastes Nine-Four.
(a beat)
For the living know that they
shall die. But the dead know not
anything, neither have they any
reward...

EMMA
For the memory of them is
forgotten.

DOCTOR ROSALYN
Impressive. You know your Bible.

EMMA
Even those of us who grew up East
River know our Bible.

DOCTOR ROSALYN
East River. Where about?

EMMA
A farm just outside of Huron,
South Dakota.

DOCTOR ROSALYN
I wouldn't peg you for Mennonite.
(a beat)
Which leaves either Methodist or
Catholic.

EMMA
Methodist. You?

DOCTOR ROSALYN
Lutheran.

Glancing at the photo in her hand --

EMMA

You said something about this passage being a warning from God.

DOCTOR ROSALYN

On the perils of witchcraft or rather Divination. An interesting point, when the majority consensus is that witchcraft doesn't exist.

EMMA

The passage you had on the white screen...

DOCTOR ROSALYN

King Belshazzar had brought Daniel to him to decode what was written on the palace wall.

EMMA

But that wasn't what was written on the walls in the second floor room of the church.

DOCTOR ROSALYN

I'm sure the US Attorney's Office has its own translators.

EMMA

They do but they're not available and you are.

DOCTOR ROSALYN

You're not winning points with me, Inspector Landry.

Emma smiles. Nods.

EMMA

I'll accept that.

(a beat)

Doesn't change the fact that you were there that night. Translated what was on the wall.

DOCTOR ROSALYN

It wasn't scripture. It was text from the Roman Catholic Rite of Exorcism, the Rituale Romanum.

EMMA

And? What did it say?

Preparing to leave with the last handful of students --

DOCTOR ROSALYN

Save your servant, who trusts in
you, my God.

(a beat)

Now, if you'll excuse me. I
really to have run.

With the distant, slow tumbling rumble of dry thunder --

EXT. PARKING LOT/SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF MINES - DAY

Hand on her door, Emma catches a glimpse of an envelope tucked
under a wiper blade.

Curious yet cautious, she examines the --

ENVELOPE

bulky, just her own name neatly handwritten across its face.

Unnatural quiet overlays a surreal sense of stillness.

Parked vehicles, glass and metal glinting in the bright sun,
sit deserted; shadows reflect off their windows.

Opening the envelope, Emma finds a --

ROSARY

the deep, rich color of polished beads glisten a crimson red,
inviting the hand to run along the smooth contour.

Fingers slipping over the Rosary --

FLASH!

INT. JEEP

Night. Ghostly amid dashboard lights and the Jeep's battered
interior, a Rosary hangs from the rear view mirror.

A radio transmission's static squall --

MAN'S VOICE

We sinners, we beg you to hear
us, O Lord.

BACK TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT/SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF MINES - DAY

Stillness pressing at her consciousness, the quiet an unnatural void --

MAN'S VOICE

Do not keep in mind, O Lord, our offenses or those of our parents...

Gaze drifting over the silent parking lot, the vehicles stare back at her; shadows slip over their windows in black ribbons.

Yanking her car door open --

MAN'S VOICE(cont'd)

...nor take vengeance on our sins.

Emma struggles to control her unease.

Listening to the dull wash of the wind, she slips into the driver's seat. As an afterthought, she hangs the Rosary from the rear view mirror.

Loud gospel music playing, tempo strong and intoxicating --

EXT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - DAY

White wood and steeple roof give the small church a stoic edge despite the robust gospel music filtering over the still air.

Emma takes note of the gravel lot, as she gets out of her car.

Parked near the church, Sam Whitside's Jeep sits silent; the cooling tick of its engine faintly audible. The handful of other vehicles, most of which were new around the time Clinton took Office, also sit silent and brooding.

VOICES singing loud and with purpose, hands clapping --

INT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - DAY

Like a tent revival, the congregation ROCKS out the faith, as REVEREND PETER TALL ELK moves and grooves. Seemingly oblivious to the rattlesnake in his hand and the close confines, he threads his way through the congregation.

TALL ELK

'And Jesus said to them...'

CHURCH MEMBERS feverish with faith reach out to him.

TALL ELK(cont'd)
 'I was watching Satan fall like
 lightning that flashes from
 heaven.'

CONGREGATION
 Amen!

From the back of the church, Emma watches the congregation with mild interest. Amidst the nameless faces, she catches a glimpse of Sam Whitside.

TALL ELK
 And Jesus reminded them.

As Church Members open wooden crates, letting loose a swarm of snakes onto the church floor --

TALL ELK(cont'd)
 'It is I, who have given you the
 power to tread upon serpents and
 scorpions and break the dominion
 of the enemy everywhere.'

Emma's breath catches in her throat.

Although every nerve ending in her consciousness tells her to bolt, Emma stays put.

CONGREGATION
 Amen!

TALL ELK
 If you believe... If your faith
 runs through your veins...

Church Members reach down and pick up the snakes then begin passing them around.

TALL ELK(cont'd)
 The serpent like Death holds no
 power over you.

CONGREGATION
 Praise Jesus! Praise God! Amen!

TALL ELK
 Pick up and hold the serpent,
 feel the lure of temptation but
 know its faults.

Lost within the shifting throng, Emma turns and suddenly finds herself staring into the eyes of a rattler. The snake rears back and as it is about to strike, a strong hand grabs it.

Holding the snake, Sam Whitside gives her a reassuring wink.

TALL ELK(cont'd)
 'And fear not them, which kill
 the body, but are unable to kill
 the soul. Rather, fear him, who
 is able to kill both soul and
 body in Hell.'

CONGREGATION
 Amen!

TALL ELK
 Are you ready to be saved?

CONGREGATION
 Yes!

While Reverend Tall Elk walks to the pulpit and Church Members
 gather up the snakes --

TALL ELK
 Then come with me to the water
 and bathe in the body of Christ.
 (a beat)
 Through Christ, our sins shall be
 washed away and salvation found.

Music playing loud and vivacious. Hands Clap. Voices sing.

Flowing toward the doors, the congregation shifts. Caught in
 the tidal movement, Emma loses sight of Sam Whitside.

In the cool of the day --

EXT. RAPID CREEK - DAY

Sunlight sparkles off the water, Reverend Tall Elk wades into
 Rapid Creek. Standing waist deep in the cold water, he looks
 to his congregation on the muddy embankment.

Brushing passed Emma, a YOUNG WOMAN wades into the creek.

TALL ELK
 Do you take Christ into your life
 and renounce all sin?

YOUNG WOMAN
 I do. Yes.

Hand pressing against her forehead --

TALL ELK

Do you accept Jesus Christ as
Lord and Savior?

YOUNG WOMAN

I do. Yes.

TALL ELK

Through the water and by rebirth
into the purity of Christ's
body...

Reverend Tall Elk submerges the Young Woman.

TALL ELK(cont'd)

...may the Holy Spirit be with
you.

CONGREGATION

Amen.

As the Congregation moves toward the water, Emma finds herself
taken with the crowd. Amidst nameless faces, she goes deeper
into the creek, feeling the current sweep around her.

Strong and firm, a man's hand grips her shoulder.

TALL ELK (O.S.)

Through the water and by the
purity of rebirth, know the
truth.

With his hand pressing against her forehead --

TALL ELK

May the Holy Spirit be with you.

CONGREGATION

Amen.

Plunging downward, water rushing over her in a tidal surge --

FLASH!

INT. JEEP - MOVING

Surreal... Engine roaring... Glass shattering... Screaming
metal, twisting and crumpling... Fiberglass top shredding...

BACK TO:

EXT. RAPID CREEK - DAY

Breaking free of the water's surface, the sunlight bright and blinding obscuring Emma's vision --

TALL ELK (O.S.)
In Him is the light...

Reality swims back into tenuous focus.

TALL ELK
And the darkness cannot hold it.

Wiping the water from her face, blinking away the wetness, Emma catches a glimpse of Annmarie Tall Elk.

The young girl stands near the water's edge, watching the baptism with an expressionless look.

Wading back to shore, Emma threads her way through the crowd, losing sight of Annmarie.

Nameless faces flow passed her, as Emma reaches the --

SHORE

From behind her, voice barely more than a breathy whisper --

ANNMARIE (O.S.)
I know why you're here.

Emma turns.

She smiles, hoping to elicit a response from the young girl, but Annmarie simply looks at her.

EMMA
Annmarie Tall Elk...?

With the mannerisms of an Autistic --

ANNMARIE
You're here because of the writing on the walls.

EMMA
I am. Yes.

Emma kneels, wanting to be eye to eye with this strange girl.

EMMA (cont'd)
Do remember writing on your bedroom walls, Annmarie?

ANNMARIE

The words were already there.

EMMA

Yes, I know. But do you remember writing them?

ANNMARIE

I didn't write them.

Struggling to hold the young girl's gaze with her own --

EMMA

Who wrote them, if you didn't?

ANNMARIE

God did.

EMMA

Do you what the words say, Annmarie?

As if reading a passage, trying to form the words in mind --

ANNMARIE

'For the living know that they shall die...'

EMMA

Those aren't the words written on your walls, though. Those are different words.

(a beat)

Where are the different words written, Annmarie?

Silent. The girl's stare is distant, disconnected.

Standing and already half decided on the fact that the girl has shut down mentally --

ANNMARIE

In the dream.

Before Emma can press her further --

TALL ELK

I'm sorry, Ms.--

EMMA

Landry.

Reverend Peter Tall Elk dries off his face and arms with a towel then hands the towel to Annmarie.

Kneeling in front of his daughter --

TALL ELK

Take the towel to the car and
wait for me there.

He kisses his daughter's hand then gently shoos her toward the church and the parking lot.

Annmarie's response is almost autonomic.

As Congregation members walk by, he smiles and nods. Kind words are exchanged, names mentioned, hands shaken...

With the last of the Congregation out of earshot --

EMMA

I'm Emma Landry, Special
Investigator for the US
Attorney's Office.

TALL ELK

I know who you are.

(a beat)

What I don't understand is what
interest the US Attorney's Office
has with my daughter.

EMMA

Our office received an email from
you. The attachment had pictures
of your daughter's bedroom walls
and the writing on them.

TALL ELK

You're mistaken, Ms. Landry. I
never sent an email.

He glances at his daughter, watching her a second as she makes her way toward an aged Buick sitting parked on the lot.

EMMA

How long has Annmarie been
diagnosed as autistic?

TALL ELK

She hasn't.

EMMA

It's possible she could've--

TALL ELK

-- Annmarie doesn't use the
computer.

EMMA

Autistic doesn't mean she's not capable.

TALL ELK

Means it's improbable.

(a beat)

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a long drive back to the Knee.

EMMA

Why didn't you have her diagnosed, Reverend?

A moment's hesitation, as he glances toward his aged Buick, now sitting on all but deserted lot.

TALL ELK

God's will won't be changed.

(a beat)

A diagnosis has already been given. It doesn't matter what you want to call it.

EMMA

The writing on Annmarie's walls... was the Litany of the Saints.

Emma holds his gaze with her own.

EMMA (cont'd)

Was it the same as the writing on the walls of the church the night Mary Agnes died? The night you took the photos?

TALL ELK

It was different.

(a beat)

Don't ask me what it said because I don't know. There was a forensic psychologist there.

EMMA

Doctor Rosalyn.

Looking toward the water --

TALL ELK

All I did was snap some pictures.

EMMA

Did you see something in that room, Reverend? Something the camera didn't see?

Reverend Tall Elk shakes his head.

TALL ELK

There was nothing, just some scrawled writing on the walls.

EMMA

Did you know Mary Agnes?

TALL ELK

No.

Emma looks toward the church parking lot; the place where Sam Whitside's Jeep had been parked is now vacant.

EMMA

But you know Sam Whitside, Mary's boyfriend at the time.

TALL ELK

He was there... at the church the night she died, talking to a priest.

EMMA

Father Thomas...?

Smile tired and slightly papery at the edges --

TALL ELK

I think that was his name, but I can't be sure.

(a beat)

If you don't mind, I'm going to take my daughter home.

Emma watches him walk toward his Buick, dust curling on the breeze in a thin, gritty mist.

In the quiet recesses of the day --

EXT. LANTERN MOTOR LODGE - DAY

The Lantern Motor Lodge swelters in the afternoon heat. Its asphalt lot glistens with sweat, while dust flecked windows overlook the stillness of an old warehousing district.

Of the rented units, windows are open, some with box fans propped in them purring against the heat and quiet.

A radio plays.

The sound drift, ghostly on the unsettled air --

MAN'S VOICE

Our Father, who are in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.

Gaze wafting over the parking lot and the handful of vehicles parked on it, Emma fishes her room key from her pocket.

Closing her car door, the radio draws her attention.

MAN'S VOICE(cont'd)

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be
done on earth as it is in heaven.

Heat shimmers off the pavement. Glass and metal glint in the blistering sun, as Emma walks toward her unit.

MAN'S VOICE(cont'd)

Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses...

Reflections, like oily ribbons, wicker off window glass.

MAN'S VOICE(cont'd)

...as we forgive those who
trespass against us.

As she slides her key into the door's lock --

MAN'S VOICE(cont'd)

And lead us not into temptation.

Emma stares at the frost skimmed handle; tarnished brass turned frigid white.

For a moment, she hesitates.

MAN'S VOICE(cont'd)

But deliver us from evil.

Brow furrowing, Emma touches the door handle, cautiously running her fingertips over the frosted surface.

Wrapped in dusky shadows --

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

Lips moving in silent prayer, Father Thomas lights a prayer candle; the small flame bobs and jags.

ALTAR BOY (O.S.)
Father Thomas.

With his back to the Altar Boy --

FATHER THOMAS
What is it, Justin?

Silence answers.

The priest turns, gaze following the altar boy's to the --

CRUCIFIX

in the dusky half light, the wounds of Christ bleed.

Breath lodged in his throat, Father Thomas stares at the crucifix and the blood dripping onto the floor.

With each droplet, the floor quivers in a subtle tremble.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
We're done for the day, Justin.

Stepping into the boy's field of vision --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
Go home. It's all right.
(a beat)
Just a trick of the light, that's
all.

If Father Thomas had expected an argument, he gets none.

In the wake of the altar boy leaving the nave, Father Thomas walks over to the crucifix.

Rosary in hand, he reaches out and touches the blood.

On the fringe of consciousness --

FLASH!

EXT. CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION

A man's hand forced open... Nail, crudely hone but functional, positioned... Hammer slamming downward with explosive force...

BACK TO:

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

Stumbling back a step, Father Thomas gropes for something to hold on to, to steady him; his hand finds the back of pew.

Raising the Rosary to his lips, the priest recites --

FATHER THOMAS

The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not lay hold
of it.

Father Thomas stares, helplessly at the crucifix, watching each blood droplet fall amidst stretching and yawning shadows.

EXT. RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

A scattered, few vehicles, most of which are police cruisers, sit parked on the lot. Among them, Emma's rental, the rosary hanging from its rear view mirror, sits silent.

PROPERTY CLERK (V.O.)

There's a table by the far wall,
if you need it.

INT. PROPERTY ROOM/RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Matching the claim ticket to the number on the archive box, Emma nods, indicating her acceptance.

The PROPERTY CLERK regards her with a somber look.

PROPERTY CLERK

Rules for evidence review are on
the walls.

(a beat)

Inside the box, you'll find an
evidence log sheet and materials
list. Evidence bags are sealed.
If you open one, you log it on
the sheet. If you find one
already open, you log it on the
sheet then inform me. At no time
is evidence allowed to leave the
property sector.

Sliding a clipboard over the counter to Emma --

PROPERTY CLERK(cont'd)
Sign here, if you understand the
rules and regs.

EMMA
Who was the last to log it in?

The Property Clerk, more interested in the ballgame on his
radio, keys up the information on his computer.

Better things to do than this, his look whispers.

PROPERTY CLERK
Lieutenant John Shangreau. Ten
years to the day.

EMMA
Nobody's reviewed it since?

Emma fires a furtive look at the small radio, sitting on the
desktop near a deck of playing cards and an opened newspaper.

Checking his computer system --

PROPERTY CLERK
No logins or outs. Want to see
for yourself?

EMMA
No. Thank you, though.

The Property Clerk shrugs, barely giving Emma a second look,
as she lifts the box from the counter.

Carrying it to the small table, Emma watches the shadows crawl
the walls. In the background, the soft murmur of the ballgame
on the Property Clerk's radio drifts on the still air.

Emma opens the box then glances over the log sheet.

Laying personal items on the table -- a notebook crammed with
journal entries, car keys, a dream catcher and Bible.

She finds a local newspaper. Its headline reads --

DEAD BIRDS RUN A FOWL

the article itself is of little interest to Emma, although the
black and white photo holds her attention and its own secrets.

WHITSIDE (V.O.)
On the day Mary Agnes died, over
two hundred dead birds were
cleaned up from church grounds.

In the photo, Father Thomas stands foreground. Lying near his feet, a dozen or so dead sparrows clutter the grass.

WHITSIDE

...there's more going on here
than you think, Inspector. Like
the fact that Father Thomas is an
ordained Exorcist.

Emma sets the newspaper aside.

She carefully picks through the contents inside the box.

Brow furrowing, something draws her attention. It's a series of photocopies from a history book; the black and white photos show the aftermath of the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre. Corpses lay frozen; bodies in the rigor of death; the mass grave filled with corpses; soldiers standing posed.

The last photo dated 1973 and captioned as the sight of the Wounded Knee Siege almost slips from Emma's grasp. The Sacred Heart Church, a wood plank building with steeple roof, stands silent and foreboding.

SHANGREAU (V.O.)

The Black Hills, what the Lakota
call the Sacred Heart. It's their
Holy Ground.

Emma lays the photocopies on the table then works her way through the archive box. Something else draws her attention.

Curiously, Emma examines a Ouija board's pointer.

DOCTOR ROSALYN (V.O.)

...it's a warning from God...

Setting the plastic pointer aside, Emma goes back to the box.

She finds a clear plastic evidence bag with loose beads from a Rosary contained within it.

With a furtive look over her shoulder and the Property Clerk's attention on a game of Solitaire and the radio --

ANNMARIE (V.O.)

I know why you're here.

Emma opens the evidence bag and pours the Rosary beads onto the palm of her hand.

FLASH!

INT. SECOND FLOOR ROOM/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

A Rosary snapping... Colored beads falling into blackness...
Handwriting streaking the walls in oily runners...

BACK TO:

INT. PROPERTY ROOM/RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Almost impulsively, Emma relaxes her hand.

ANNMARIE (V.O.)

'For the living know that they
shall die...'

In the soft light, like a ghostly overlay, handwriting done in
Old Latin drifts across the property room's walls.

EMMA (V.O.)

Where are the different words
written, Annmarie?

On the table, the plastic pointer vibrates.

ANNMARIE (V.O.)

In the dream.

Like a rifle shot, it flies across the property room and
shatters against a far wall.

DOCTOR ROSALYN (V.O.)

...it's a warning from God...

Emma looks over her shoulder.

The Property Clerk sits engrossed in a game of Solitaire; the
ballgame on the radio plays on.

Tentatively, Emma looks to the walls. In the dusky half light,
the gray paint is untainted; the handwriting gone.

EMMA (V.O.)

Did you see something in that
room, Reverend? Something the
camera didn't see?

TALL ELK (V.O.)

There was nothing, just some
scrawled writing on the walls.

Collecting the items from the table and stowing them away in the box, Emma casually pockets the keys and Rosary beads.

After another brief glance over her shoulder, she picks up the box but leaves the notebook laying on the table.

As Emma sets the box on the counter --

PROPERTY CLERK
Everything OK?

EMMA
In order, yes.

Watching him log the box into the evidence archives --

EMMA (cont'd)
Listen, I forgot my notebook.
Mind if I go get it?

Merely glancing at her, his interest on the radio --

PROPERTY CLERK
Have it, when you came in?

EMMA
Yes.

Emma smiles. Nods. The power of suggestion.

EMMA (cont'd)
Just left it on the table, that's
all.

PROPERTY CLERK
Not a big thing.

Stowing the archive box on a wheeled cart --

PROPERTY CLERK(cont'd)
Make it quick, otherwise I gotta
log it.

EMMA
No problem. Thanks.

He shrugs her off. Solitaire and his ballgame await.

Emma walks to the table; stillness pressing around her like the exposed nerve of a tooth; shadows stretch and yawn.

As she reaches for the notebook, the breath suddenly lodges in her throat. Sitting on the table in pristine condition, the plastic pointer glistens in the soft light.

With time slipping by and feeling every second, Emma pockets the pointer then retrieves the notebook.

Wrapped in the quiet stillness of the day --

EXT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

Stoic and Old World, the church stands silent and imposing amidst an unnatural stillness.

ARCHBISHOP (V.O.)
From my conversation with the US
Attorney, you're reviewing Jonas
Montgomery's case.

Quiet pervades, mitigated by the distant ratchet of the sprinklers and the soft current of wind through the trees.

INT. ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

Sitting behind his desk, the office plush and comfortable, ARCHBISHOP SHORE regards Emma with a warm smile. Like Father Thomas, he's a quiet man by nature and age.

ARCHBISHOP
I also understand that Jonas
Montgomery woke up three hours
after his execution.

Emma sits near the desk.

EMMA
That's right. He did.
(a beat)
But I'm not here to talk about
Jonas Montgomery.

ARCHBISHOP
You want to know why I didn't
approve Mary Agnes' exorcism.

EMMA
One of the questions, yes.

Leaning back in his chair, smile never faltering --

ARCHBISHOP
Exorcism, although very real, is
something from the Dark Ages. In
the 21st Century, psychology has
offered new light on mental
stability or in some cases
(MORE)

ARCHBISHOP(cont'd)
instability. What was once
considered a criteria for
exorcism is more often than not a
result of mental defect.

EMMA
Psychosis.

ARCHBISHOP
Whenever there is a case brought
to the church requesting
exorcism, it is reviewed. In Mary
Agnes' case, there was reason to
believe there were other factors.

EMMA
Just so I understand, Archbishop
Shore, what is the criteria? How
do you determine if an exorcism
is warranted?

Pouring himself a cup of coffee --

ARCHBISHOP
An interview is conducted and an
assessment done. We ask for a
thorough physical and psychiatric
evaluation. Like I said before,
what was once considered demonic
possession can now be attributed
to anything from Schizophrenia to
even Turrets.

He raises the carafe.

ARCHBISHOP(cont'd)
Would you like some coffee, Ms.
Landry?

EMMA
I'm fine. Thanks.

ARCHBISHOP
Imported from Rome. It's quite
good. Very smooth, not as acidic
as the coffee here.

As he sets the carafe down on his desktop --

EMMA
Who performed Mary Agnes'
psychiatric evaluation?

ARCHBISHOP

Doctor Rosalyn.

(a beat)

From my understanding, it was determined that Mary Agnes suffered from a Dissociative Disorder.

EMMA

And this was determined from only one evaluation?

ARCHBISHOP

Doctor Rosalyn is the best in the field. I saw no reason to doubt the assessment.

EMMA

Out of curiosity, what are the other factors for demonic possession?

ARCHBISHOP

Unexplained physical phenomenon, such as moving objects and levitation. Other signs would include usage of archaic language, something they would have no way of knowing or even comprehending.

On the fringe of consciousness --

FLASH!

INT. SECOND FLOOR ROOM/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Handwriting done in Old Latin emerge, ghostly and unbidden on the walls... The room's door slamming open and closed...

BACK TO:

INT. ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

The Archbishop sips his coffee, while his gaze finds its way to the window and the stillness beyond the polarized glass.

ARCHBISHOP

At times, the possessed can reveal things about the exorcist that they could not possibly know. There are acts of anger and

(MORE)

ARCHBISHOP(cont'd)
 rage, usually cursing and profane
 enactments to sacrilegious
 behavior.

(a beat)
 None of which, Mary Agnes showed.

EMMA
 Except for the writing done in
 Old Latin on the walls of the
 church... a second floor room
 that you had sealed up.

ARCHBISHOP
 Sealed because Catechism students
 found it enticing to wander
 through the upstairs rooms.

(a beat)
 Saint Michael's used to be house
 its priests on the second floor.
 Now, that we've grown, that is no
 longer feasible.

EMMA
 Did you ever talk to her parents?

ARCHBISHOP
 Mary Agnes was raised by her
 grandparents. And yes, I spoke
 with them at great length.

EMMA
 And what did they say, when you
 told them she wasn't possessed?

ARCHBISHOP
 People want to believe in
 possession more than they want to
 think their loved one has a
 mental disorder.

EMMA
 They appealed your decision.

He shrugs. Unconcerned.

ARCHBISHOP
 The Church found as I did. There
 was nothing to merit an exorcism.

EMMA
 So, what happened? How did she
 end up here at the church?

ARCHBISHOP

I don't know. I was in Rome at the time.

(a beat)

First and foremost, Ms. Landry, for an exorcism to be performed it must be approved by a Bishop. And I never approved one.

EMMA

Seems one happened, though.

ARCHBISHOP

It did not.

Standing, as he opens his desk drawer and removes a day planner --

ARCHBISHOP(cont'd)

I'm afraid I have an appointment. Is there anything else I can help you with?

EMMA

No, Archbishop Shore.

(a beat)

Thank you for your time.

As he escorts Emma to the office door --

EMMA (cont'd)

I do have one more question. Have you ever seen exorcism?

ARCHBISHOP

Once. In Haiti, but that was a long time ago.

EMMA

Have there been any on the Reservation?

ARCHBISHOP

Not as far as I know.

(a beat)

At least none on Pine Ridge, the whole area is considered holy ground, sacred land by Lakota.

EMMA

But demonic possession is real.

ARCHBISHOP

It is, yes.

Opening the door for Emma --

ARCHBISHOP(cont'd)
 Diabolical possession isn't
 institutionalized, Ms. Landry. It
 can happen anywhere and to anyone
 at anytime.

EMMA
 Just not to Mary Agnes...

The Archbishop smiles, although it's papery and thin.

ARCHBISHOP
 She was a disturbed young woman,
 but not possessed.
 (a beat)
 I'll let the US Attorney know you
 were most gracious.

Emma smiles and nods, the gesture more automatic than
 anything, as she leaves the Archbishop's office.

EXT. RAPID CREEK - DAY

Waist deep in the water, the current tugging at him, Samuel
 Whitside prays silently.

Eyes closed, he falls back into the silken flow of the water.

Quiet drifts; his body unseen in the water's cold depths.

Stillness mitigated by the water lapping the shore stretches.

He breaks free of the surface; water cascading off of him

He breathes in deeply then exhales with slow, calculated
 release before wading back to the muddy shore line.

Reaching for his towel --

EMMA (O.S.)
 Baptism isn't something I thought
 you could do alone.

He glances at Emma, who stands on the shore.

WHITSIDE
 Driving by, huh.

EMMA

Something like that.

(a beat)

You could've been baptized with
the congregation earlier.

WHITSIDE

Had things to do.

EMMA

So, you decided on a solo
baptism. Not exactly something
you do alone. At least, that I've
seen.

WHITSIDE

I don't know.

Towelng off his head and torso --

WHITSIDE (cont'd)

Faith doesn't depend on whether
or not you go to church. It's
something between you and God.

(a beat)

Baptism's no different.

EMMA

Reverend Tall Elk would
disagree... among others.

WHITSIDE

Maybe.

He drapes the towel over his shoulder.

WHITSIDE (cont'd)

I guess I've always looked at a
little different.

EMMA

How's that?

WHITSIDE

Faith doesn't start or end at the
church doors. It's either there
or it's not.

EMMA

You're the first I've ever heard
of doing a solo baptism.

WHITSIDE

All of us have a tendency to over
complicate things.

They walk toward the parking lot.

WHITSIDE (cont'd)

Take the Greek word for baptism
for instance... baptizein. Means
to immerse.

EMMA

What about exorcism? Is that over
complicated too?

As they near the --

PARKING LOT

Swallowed whole by the shimmering heat, Emma's sedan and
Samuel Whitside's Jeep sit parked and silent.

The small, country church swelters, as quiet as a tomb.

WHITSIDE

There's different types of
exorcisms, Major and Minor.

Popping the back hatch of his Jeep's topper --

WHITSIDE (cont'd)

Prayers of deliverance can said
by anyone, while Major Exorcisms
follow the Rituale Romanum.

EMMA

The Roman Catholic Rite of
Exorcism.

He liberates a duffel bag from the back hold.

WHITSIDE

All organized religions have
rites of exorcism or varying
degrees of it. They're not as
regimented as the Rituale
Romanum.

EMMA

Which is what you wanted Mary
Agnes to have.

WHITSIDE

Only because she was Catholic.

Slipping on a t-shirt on then tossing the towel into the Jeep's rear hold --

WHITSIDE (cont'd)

Reverend Tall Elk offered to do a rite of exorcism for her, but Mary wouldn't go for it.

EMMA

Might have been because the Catholic Rite stems from the Sixteenth Century.

(a beat)

It's been around the longest.

WHITSIDE

Because something's been around the longest, doesn't make it work any better.

EMMA

Is that what you told Mary Agnes?

WHITSIDE

Not in so many words.

As he fishes his keys from his pocket --

EMMA

What made you think she was possessed and that it wasn't something psychiatric?

WHITSIDE

I was there, Emma. I saw it first hand.

EMMA

You saw what... exactly?

WHITSIDE

Crazy doesn't move a Ouija board's pointer across the room, just by thinking about it. And it doesn't write things on the walls in Old Latin or shatter mirrors by screaming at them.

EMMA

You saw all that? Personally?

WHITSIDE

Mary Agnes wasn't crazy, Emma.
(a beat)
It's just that nobody would
believe her... or me.

EMMA

Except for Jonas Montgomery.

WHITSIDE

He wanted her to stay at the
church... asked if I would be
staying too.

EMMA

That was the night she died?

Opening the Jeep's driver's side door --

WHITSIDE

No. She died the third night.

EMMA

She was gone for three days and
no one reported her missing.
(a beat)
Or you, for that matter.

Climbing into the driver's seat --

WHITSIDE

It was all arranged with the
Church.

EMMA

Who arranged it? Archbishop
Shore?

WHITSIDE

No. It was Father Thomas.

EMMA

But the Archbishop was the only
one, who could approve the
exorcism.

Keying the ignition, the Jeep's engine roaring to life --

WHITSIDE

It was all set up, that's all I
know.

EMMA

Was there anything in writing,
anything at all?

WHITSIDE

Just Mary's journal, she wrote
everything down in a notebook.

As he backs up, slowly --

WHITSIDE (cont'd)

Maybe, if you find her journal,
you'll find something written
about it.

EMMA

If I need to get a hold of you
later, will you still be at your
parents' house?

WHITSIDE

Yeah, should be.

EMMA

Is there any reason you can think
of as to why Mary would keep
photos of the 1890 Wounded Knee
Massacre?

He leans out the window.

WHITSIDE

Reverend Tall Elk said it's a
sacred burial ground.

EMMA

Did you ever mention it to Jonas
Montgomery or Father Thomas?

WHITSIDE

No. Why?

EMMA

Just curious.

Emma steps away, as he backs the rest of the way; she watches
him drive off, dust curling on the air in his wake.

EXT. EMMA'S CAR - DAY

With the driver's side door open, Emma sits behind the
steering wheel, leafing through Mary Agnes' notebook.

Reading aloud --

EMMA

Went to talk to Reverend Tall Elk today. He listened to what I had to say...

Like a whisper, Mary Agnes' voice rides the unsettled air.

MARY AGNES (V.O.)

...but I knew he didn't believe me anymore than Archbishop Shore or even Father Thomas. They keep asking me what I feel. And the only thing I can say is that it's like I'm living two lives at the same time.

Emma glances at the Rosary hanging from the rear view mirror.

FLASH!

INT. JEEP

Engine dieseling... Plastic face plate of the dashboard a webbing of cracks... Sound of radiator fluid hissing...

BACK TO:

EXT. EMMA'S CAR - DAY

Quiet presses in on her, close and stagnant, as Emma turns the page to an earlier journal entry.

MARY AGNES (V.O.)

Had my appointment with Doctor Nelson Miles today. They did all these tests. I could have told them I didn't have epilepsy or a tumor or anything physical that shows me the things I see. It's like a dream, really. A dream no one understands but me.

Emma leans back in her seat.

MARY AGNES (V.O.) (cont'd)

It was a few days after that, when Grandma took me to see Doctor Rosalyn. I don't know if you can call a psychologist a doctor or not, but I guess it

(MORE)

MARY AGNES (V.O.) (cont'd)
 doesn't matter. No one can help
 me, not really.

For a moment, she stares through the car's windshield,
 watching the dust curl on the breeze.

EMMA
 All alone. No one to believe you.

Emma turns the page.

MARY AGNES (V.O.)
 There was writing on my bedroom
 walls, covering them from floor
 to ceiling. It wasn't my writing,
 though. And the language, I
 didn't even know what it was
 until Sam told me. He said it was
 Old Latin, a dead language.

Looking up at the rear mirror --

FLASH!

INT. SECOND FLOOR ROOM/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Shadows receding... Handwriting emerging on the walls, taking
 oily form in Old Latin... Curtains billow and flap...

BACK TO:

EXT. EMMA'S CAR - DAY

The wind stirs, whispering over the browning landscape.

MARY AGNES (V.O.)
 Grandma says all prayers are
 answered. I guess, if God's
 silent, that's an answer.

Movement draws Emma's gaze to her side mirror.

She watches a pair of young teenagers, ball mitts tucked under
 their arms and caps pulled low over their eyes. They banter
 back and forth, hand gestures and laughter.

MARY AGNES (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Sometimes, when I dream, I'm
 falling into darkness. All I hear
 is the whisper of the dead.

Not in any hurry, the young teens cross the grounds, headed to some Little League game or practice.

Brow furrowing, Emma reads aloud --

EMMA

Father Montgomery gave me a
Rosary today. He said God heard
my prayers.

Emma pulls the plastic bag with the Rosary beads contained within it from her pocket. Feeling their smoothness through the thin plastic, she studies the polished beads.

EMMA (cont'd)

Someone heard your prayers, Mary
Agnes, but I don't know if it was
God or not.

Leafing through the pages, something catches Emma's attention then like a whisper on the edge of quiet --

MARY AGNES (V.O.)

I dreamed about this place on the
Reservation. Sacred ground,
forgotten like the dead buried
there. It's called Wounded Knee.

Emma looks over at Reverend Tall Elk's small, country church with its steeple roof and wood plank construction. There's something oddly familiar about it.

For a dizzying moment --

FLASH!

INT. PROPERTY ROOM/RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

The black and white photo of the Sacred Heart Church and its barren grounds in Wounded Knee, South Dakota...

BACK TO:

EXT. EMMA'S CAR - DAY

Like a transparent overlay, Emma visualizes the Church of the Redeemer and the Sacred Heart Church in Wounded Knee. In her mind's eye, their wood plank and steeple roof construction match; their dimensions a perfect duplication.

With a tired sigh, Emma tosses the notebook onto the passenger's seat then keys the engine.

As she pulls the door closed --

MARY AGNES (V.O.)
 Sometimes, when it's quiet, you
 can hear the dead call your name.

The Rosary sways from the rear view mirror; its slow, pendulum
 motion hypnotic in the afternoon sun.

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

With the nave as quiet as the dusty recesses of an ancient
 tomb, Father Thomas sits on a pew near the altar.

His back to Emma Landry --

FATHER THOMAS
 Archbishop Shore had made it
 clear that he would not approve
 an exorcism for Mary Agnes.
 (a beat)
 And given her family history,
 there wasn't much I could do to
 argue the case.

EMMA
 What family history?

FATHER THOMAS
 Mary's mother, Eileen, suffered
 from Schizophrenia.

Emma's gaze finds its way to the Crucifix.

EMMA
 You didn't tell Archbishop Shore
 about Mary Agnes coming to see
 you.

FATHER THOMAS
 Even if I had, Ms. Landry, it
 wouldn't have changed things.

In the quiet solace, the priest looks aged and worn.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
 This is the 21st Century, the age
 of reason and rationalization. In
 this day and age, what we don't
 understand we label as a
 Dissociative Disorder.

EMMA

Did you think Mary Agnes was possessed, Father Thomas?

FATHER THOMAS

Doctor Rosalyn recommended Mary be institutionalized. That her condition was at best Dissociative Personality Disorder.

Rosary in hand, he runs his fingers over the polished beads.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

At worst, Schizophrenia.

EMMA

And the Agneses never asked for a second opinion.

FATHER THOMAS

Carl and Ethel didn't have the money. The church paid for Mary's psychological assessment.

EMMA

And of course the Church never asked for a second opinion either.

FATHER THOMAS

Doctor Rosalyn came highly recommended.

EMMA

By who?

FATHER THOMAS

Archbishop Shore.

EMMA

So, despite Archbishop Shore's decision on the exorcism, you wanted to help Mary Agnes.

(a beat)

Is that why you asked Jonas Montgomery to offer her a prayer of deliverance?

FATHER THOMAS

I thought if Mary believed she'd had an exorcism...

His gaze distant, reflective.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
 ...she would stop seeing and
 hearing ghosts, where there
 weren't any.

EMMA
 But she didn't know about prayers
 of deliverance.

FATHER THOMAS
 In themselves, they're a minor
 exorcism, a call to God for
 intercession.

EMMA
 And the Church didn't send anyone
 to Mary's house. No one saw the
 writing on her bedroom walls.
 Handwriting that was done in Old
 Latin, a language she knew
 nothing about.

FATHER THOMAS
 She was a disturbed girl.

EMMA
 What she was, Father Thomas, was
 haunted and the one place she was
 taught to go to for help turned
 her away.

(a beat)

Mary kept a journal. She wrote in
 it that God answers all prayers.

FATHER THOMAS
 He does.

EMMA
 Did she ask you what God's
 silence meant?

FATHER THOMAS
 Faith is the light of truth. When
 we stop listening with our soul,
 the voice of God is a whisper.

EMMA
 And whose voice do you hear,
 Father Thomas?

Hand unsteady, Father Thomas raises the Rosary to his lips.

FATHER THOMAS

The same as you, Ms. Landry, the
voice of doubt.

EMMA

Why didn't you go to her house,
Father Thomas? What were you
afraid of finding?

He stands then with a furtive glance in Emma's direction --

FATHER THOMAS

I have an evening prayer service
to prepare for.

EMMA

Answer my question, Father
Thomas. What were you afraid of
finding?

Groping for the back of a pew to steady himself --

FLASH!

INT. SECOND FLOOR ROOM/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Curtains billow and flap, chasing shadows in oily ribbons over
the walls and scrawled handwriting.

The room's door BANGS closed on its own.

Shadows take the form of spreading angel's wings.

BACK TO:

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

Gaining his composure, Father Thomas looks to the Crucifix.

FATHER THOMAS

Exorcism isn't always about
driving away demons.

Before she can press him further, the priest walks away.

EXT. JOHN SHANGREAU'S HOUSE - DAY

Bathed in sweltering heat, the sprinkler lays silent. Its
connected hose snakes over dried, browning grass to a rusted
spigot at the side of the house. Amidst stillness and pressing
quiet, the house's dust flecked windows greet Emma's gaze.

Nothing more than a trick of the light yet for a moment the --
HOSE

stirs in a subtle, quivering movement.

Unnerved, Emma walks passed the sprinkler and hose, giving both a wide berth, pace quickening.

In the shade of the --

EXT. FRONT PORCH/JOHN SHANGREAU'S HOUSE - DAY

Sitting in a wicker chair, his legs stretched out and a beer on the table next to a radio, John Shangreau lights a cigarette.

On the radio, the murmur of a ballgame drifts over the quiet.

SHANGREAU
Give her a tug. She'll open.

Emma pulls on the screen door. With a modicum of resistance, the door opens.

SHANGREAU(cont'd)
There's beer in the cooler here.

On the floor next to his chair sits an aged cooler.

EMMA
I'll pass on the beer.

SHANGREAU
Well... I think I got some sun tea inside.

EMMA
I'm good. Thanks.

Emma glances over her shoulder. In the hot sun, the hose lays silent and still; its sun faded hide like the skin of a snake.

SHANGREAU
You know what I hate most about retirement?

EMMA
No. What's that?

SHANGREAU
Time. Got way too fuckin' much of it and nothing to kill it.

Settling back in his chair, beer in hand --

SHANGREAU(cont'd)
What's on your mind, Ms. Landry?

EMMA
I read through some of Mary Agnes' journal. She mentioned finding writing on her walls.

SHANGREAU
And you want to know if I went to her house to have a look.

Popping the top on beer --

SHANGREAU(cont'd)
Peter Tall Elk went with me. He took some shots of her bedroom walls.

EMMA
The handwriting...

SHANGREAU
...matched what we found in the second floor room of Saint Michael's.

EMMA
But did it match Mary Agnes' handwriting?

SHANGREAU
It was her writing in that second floor room, Ms Landry.

Emma sits down on the porch swing.

EMMA
You assumed it was.
(a beat)
She was the only one there at the church other than Jonas Montgomery and Sam Whitside.
(a beat)
The only one in her bedroom the night the handwriting was found on the walls.

SHANGREAU
I know where you're headed with this. Had the same thought.

He levels a tired gaze on Emma, as he sets his beer down on the table then turns the volume down on the radio.

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

Rapid City doesn't exactly have a handwriting analysis expert. So, I sent a sample of Mary's handwriting along with a picture Tall Elk took of her bedroom walls and a picture of the walls in that second floor room at the church to an independent lab.

EMMA

What lab?

SHANGREAU

Quantico, Virginia. FBI is very good at handwriting analysis.

(a beat)

They matched all three to Mary Agnes.

John Shangreau looks passed Emma to the silent street; his gaze distant, reflective.

Mostly to himself --

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

And right now, you're wondering if the handwriting found on those walls matches what was seen in Jonas Montgomery's cell.

EMMA

We're a lot alike, Lieutenant Shangreau.

Watching him, as he lights a cigarette --

EMMA (cont'd)

Because you're asking yourself, if the handwriting matched Mary Agnes' to the writing in Jonas' cell... does it match the handwriting on eight-year-old Annmarie Tall Elk's walls?

SHANGREAU

What's the answer, if the handwriting did match?

The lines of his features deepen in the lengthening shadows.

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

Maybe the road leads to a darker truth you're not ready to face.

EMMA

What would that be, Lieutenant?

SHANGREAU

A girl is thrown out a second floor window like a rag doll, throat coat, blood everywhere...

Hand unsteady, he drinks his beer, swallowing hard.

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

Makes you wonder if something got into the exorcist.

EMMA

Is that what you believe, Lieutenant?

SHANGREAU

What I think doesn't matter, Ms. Landry.

EMMA

Why's that?

SHANGREAU

Because reality is perception, it's like looking at a glass of water. I might say it's half full and you say it's half empty.

EMMA

That's opinion.

SHANGREAU

Goes deeper than that.

With the radio's soft murmur filtering over the quiet --

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

My grandmother had Alzheimer's, eighty-five years old with arthritis so bad you couldn't put your hand on her knee. It would make her leg jump and cramp, and I knew it hurt like hell. Anyway, she's moving around her room like she's seventeen again, not a pain to be had.

He drags on his cigarette; a smile playing over his lips.

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

In her mind, she was seventeen
and a young woman just about to
start her first teaching job.

(a beat)

Like I said, it's all perception.

EMMA

Pretty good for police
Lieutenant.

SHANGREAU

You forgot the retired part.

Leaning back in his chair --

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

I've been around the block a few
times. Seen my share of shit.

EMMA

Anything like what happened to
Mary Agnes?

SHANGREAU

That was a first and the last.

EMMA

Earlier, you said it makes you
think something got into the
exorcist.

SHANGREAU

When the whole mess started with
the Mary Agnes case, I asked a
friend of mine, a priest, what it
takes to be an exorcist.

He stubs out his cigarette.

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

He told me that to do an exorcism
you have to have unwavering
faith. You can't doubt. You have
to believe that God is there with
you and that He hears you. If you
doubt, what you're exorcizing can
get into you.

EMMA

Who was your friend, the priest?

SHANGREAU
Archbishop Shore.

EMMA
He's hardly a simple priest.

SHANGREAU
They're a priest, just higher up
on the rung. That's all.

Emma glances at the silent hose and dormant sprinkler laying
on the browning grass.

EMMA
In your field report, you
mentioned there was Jonas
Montgomery, Sam Whitside and Mary
Agnes on scene.

SHANGREAU
Sounds about right.

EMMA
You said Doctor Rosalyn
translated the writing on the
walls of the church.

SHANGREAU
And?

EMMA
Someone called the Doctor.
(a beat)
Was it you, Lieutenant?

SHANGREAU
I'm guessing it was Archbishop
Shore.

EMMA
Why would he call?

SHANGREAU
His church. His responsibility.

EMMA
And you didn't question Doctor
Rosalyn's analysis or translation
of the handwriting...?

SHANGREAU
You're seeing ghosts, where there
aren't any, Ms. Landry.

EMMA

Interesting you say that.

(a beat)

Because Father Thomas said the same thing about Mary Agnes.

As John Shangreau lights a cigarette, Emma's gaze finds its way to the garden hose and sprinkler. For a fracturing second within the mind's eye, the sprinkler head moves; Its lithe ease that of a snake making its way through the grass.

Unnerved, Emma closes her eyes and suddenly --

FLASH!

INT. JEEP

Stillness amidst night's blackness... Rosary swaying from the rear view mirror... Radio murmuring, softly... A ball game...

BACK TO:

EXT. FRONT PORCH/JOHN SHANGREAU'S HOUSE - DAY

Attention diverting to John Shangreau --

EMMA

Father Thomas could have translated the writing as easily as Doctor Rosalyn.

(a beat)

I'm curious why you didn't go with his translation.

SHANGREAU

I don't know. Gut feeling, I guess.

EMMA

What was your gut telling you?

SHANGREAU

Same thing it is now.

Liberating another beer from the cooler --

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

I'm overdue for my appointment with the couch.

He stands. Stretches. Tired muscles nagging at him, as he walks over the door.

EMMA

You never said why you didn't go with Father Thomas' translation.

SHANGREAU

Wanted an impartial assessment, and I felt, at least, at the time that I'd get that with Doctor Rosalyn.

EMMA

You could have corroborated his translation.

SHANGREAU

If anything, it would have given me insight into his thought processes. Is that it?

EMMA

Something like that.

SHANGREAU

Maybe some things are best left to God to sort out.

Opening the door to the house --

SHANGREAU(cont'd)

Besides, it wouldn't have changed things, Ms. Landry. Not in the slightest.

Before Emma can counter, he walks into the house, letting the door swing closed behind him.

EXT. JOHN SHANGREAU'S HOUSE - DAY

Standing in the cooling shade, the radio's murmur ebbing in the background, Emma studies the garden hose. With barely more than a subtle stirring, the sprinkler head shifts in Emma's direction, as she descends the steps.

The gate swings open on its own.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee.

EXT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

In the shadow of the church, Father Thomas sits on a park bench; Rosary in hand, he looks to the church.

Quiet tempered by gusting wind stretches and yawns.

FATHER THOMAS

Blessed art though amongst women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy
womb, Jesus.

Breath pluming in the unsettled air, Father Thomas looks skyward, watching the clouds drift like thin gauze.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

Holy Mary, mother of God, pray
for us sinners...

Voice barely more than a breathy whisper --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

...now and in the hour of our
death. Amen.

Signing the Cross, Father Thomas looks to the church; the windows stare back at him, lifeless and still.

Reflecting over the glass, shadows wicker.

FLASH!

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Reality teeters... Prayer candles wicker on the verge of extinction... frost crawls the walls... The Crucifix bleeds...

BACK TO:

EXT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

The whisper of the wind a subtle harmonic; the distant ratchet of the sprinkler system echoing.

Father Thomas' grip on the Rosary tightens.

FLASH!

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Sound echoing, reverberating... Whip cracking... Slash marks emerge on the walls, slicing through thin frost...

BACK TO:

EXT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Hand trembling, Father Thomas massages the Rosary's beads.

FATHER THOMAS

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins.
Save us from the fire of hell.

The priest looks to the church.

Gaze tracing the building's stoic contours --

FLASH!

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Shadows deepening into ink wells... Like thunder tearing the sky apart, metal striking metal echoing a scream...

BACK TO:

EXT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

Father Thomas struggles for the words.

FATHER THOMAS

Lead all souls into heaven,
especially those in most need of
thy mercy.

On the edge of consciousness, grating and etched, sound barely more than a whispering impression, shade overlays the grass.

Raising the Rosary to his lips --

FLASH!

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Dizzying reality... Shadowy ink wells... Frost blanketing the nave... Blood dripping from the Crucifix... Each droplet striking the floor with hollow reverberation...

BACK TO:

EXT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

Echoing and distant, the sprinkler system ratchets.

The wind gusts, firm and hard.

FATHER THOMAS

God, by your name save me, and by
your might defend my cause.

Leaves stir into the unsettled air. They tumble and roll,
twisting one way then another, curling on the eddying breeze.

Shade creeps across the lawn.

In the quiet recesses of the moment, Father Thomas hears the
jet of water from the sprinkler fall. The sound is like that
of small bombs deployed; the displacement of air whistling
passed each droplet.

As the water strikes the grass, he hears each droplet land and
burst; he hears miniature tidal waves crash against the grass.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

Glory be to the Father, and to
the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Father Thomas looks to the second floor windows of the church.

With the lifeless eyes of the dead, frost smothered windows
stare back at him.

Like the flutter of wings, shadows reflect off the glass.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

As it was in the beginning, is
now, and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen

Hand trembling, Father Thomas signs the cross.

INT. LECTURE HALL/SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF MINES - DAY

Suffuse light adding depth to the shadows, Emma stands in the auditorium's doorway; the notebook under her arm.

Emma walks into the auditorium.

Quiet permeates, broken by the soft click of the auditorium door, as it latches closed behind her.

EMMA

Hello. Doctor Rosalyn...?

No answer.

Stillness greets her; the auditorium lights a soft glow amidst stretching and yawning shadows.

Pale walls and empty rows of seats stand silent; the room strangely haunted by the absence of students.

Overhead, the surround sound system clicks on.

Dead air. Silence then --

JONAS (AUDIO TAPE)

Save your servant, who trusts in
you, my God.

With an iron grip of claustrophobia clutching her consciousness, Emma makes her way down the center aisle.

She looks to the lectern and --

ON STAGE

a projector casts an overlay of scrawled handwriting onto the projector's white screen. Written in Old Latin, the letters and words seem to float effortlessly in mid air.

Emma's pace toward the stage slows.

JONAS (AUDIO TAPE){cont'd}

Let her find in you, Lord, a
fortified tower in the face of
the enemy.

She takes in the deserted lectern: the table cluttered with lecture notes and term papers, Doctor Rosalyn's attache case sitting open on the floor.

On the white screen, the handwriting shimmers.

Tracing each letter and word with her gaze --

JONAS (AUDIO TAPE{cont'd})
 Let the enemy have no power over
 her. And the son of iniquity be
 powerless to harm her.

Nearing the stage, eyes searching dusky motes of pooling
 shadow, Emma looks for Marguarite Rosalyn.

No movement, only the soft purr of the projector's motor.

JONAS (AUDIO TAPE{cont'd})
 Lord, send her aid from your holy
 place. And watch over her from
 Sion.

Stillness pervades.

Laying her hand on the railing, Emma prepares to climb the
 steps, which lead to the stage.

The auditorium lights wicker.

JONAS (AUDIO TAPE{cont'd})
 Lord, heed my prayer.

On the stage, movement stirs within shadowy catacombs.

JONAS (AUDIO TAPE{cont'd})
 And let my cry be heard by you,
 my God.

As she climbs the steps, taking each riser with cautiousness,
 Emma lays her hand on her holstered service pistol.

The surround sound system clicks off.

silence descends.

From shadowy depths near the back of the stage, a YOUNG MAN in
 his early twenties emerges.

Startled by Emma's presence, his footfalls stagger.

YOUNG MAN
 No one's supposed to be in here.

Emma relaxes; her hand slipping away from her service weapon.

EMMA
 And you are...?

YOUNG MAN
 Doctor Rosalyn's teaching
 assistant.

Regarding her with a curious look --

YOUNG MAN(cont'd)
Is there a problem?

EMMA
No. I was just looking for Doctor
Rosalyn.

YOUNG MAN
Late lunch...

He switches off the projector.

YOUNG MAN(cont'd)
He should be back in an hour or
so.

(a beat)
What did you say your name was?

EMMA
I didn't.
(a beat)
I'm with the US Attorney's
Office, though...

Shaking his tentative hand --

EMMA (cont'd)
Emma Landry. And you are...

YOUNG MAN
Robert Black Elk.

EMMA
Isn't this Doctor Marguarite
Rosalyn's --

YOUNG MAN
Sydnie Rosalyn... he's giving a
dissertation this evening on the
theory of exorcism.

Off her look and with a confused one of his own --

YOUNG MAN(cont'd)
There's no Marguarite Rosalyn.

EMMA
How long have you been his
assistant?

YOUNG MAN
A couple years.

Emma glances at the projector then at the white screen and after a moment's debate to the speakers of audio system.

EMMA

What was that on the audio system?

YOUNG MAN

An exert from an exorcism tape. Doctor Rosalyn wants to use it for his lecture.

EMMA

He didn't give a lecture earlier today. Did he?

The Assistant shakes his head.

YOUNG MAN

No. Why?

EMMA

I just thought maybe he offered two lectures.

Feeling off balance yet holding her composure, Emma glances at the darkened white screen.

EMMA (cont'd)

The writing on the screen... what was it?

YOUNG MAN

Apostle's Creed. It's said as part of the Rosary.

EMMA

And the recital from the audio system?

YOUNG MAN

Part of the Rituale Romanum...

(a beat)

I'm sorry. You said you were with the US Attorney's Office.

Feeling her reality tilt, Emma manages a tired smile.

EMMA

That's right.

YOUNG MAN

I don't know what the US
Attorney's Office would want with
Doctor Rosalyn.

EMMA

Nothing, actually.

As she descends the steps --

EMMA (cont'd)

I obviously have the wrong room.

Stillness presses in on her with a steal grip.

In the wake of the moment --

EXT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

Lips moving soundlessly, Father Thomas prays.

An overwhelming sound, like the scraping of a razor's blade
over glass, draws the priest from prayer. Hand faltering in
mid motion of Signing the Cross, Father Thomas stares at the
church windows.

Thick frost sheaths the stained glass.

Steaming through the fog of frost, taking form on its own,
handwriting in Old Latin emerges.

Signing the Cross, the words a breathy whisper on his lips --

FATHER THOMAS

I believe in God, the Father,
Almighty, Master of heaven and
earth.

Fear threatens to take hold.

His gaze drifts upward, toward a second floor window --

FLASH!

INT. SECOND FLOOR ROOM/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Wind rages to screaming howl... Splintering the frame, the
door bangs open and closed... The window explodes...

BACK TO:

EXT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

Hand trembling, Father Thomas presses the Rosary to his lips.

FATHER THOMAS
And in Jesus Christ, his only
begotten Son, our Lord...

Staring at the writing burned into the frosted windows --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
...who was conceived by the Holy
Spirit, born of the Virgin
Mary...

Father Thomas grapples with his fear.

With a slow, tumbling rumble of distant thunder --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
...suffered under Pontius Pilate;
was crucified, dead and buried.
He descended into Hell.

EXT. PARKING LOT/SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF MINES - DAY

Stopping mid stride, breath lodged in her throat and eyes widening, Emma stares at the parked vehicles. With the exception of her rental, every window is shattered; glass lays strewn on the pavement.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)
The third day he rose from the
dead.

Shadows reflect in oily streamers off the broken glass.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.(cont'd))
He ascended into heaven, and sits
at the right hand of God, the
Father Almighty. He will come
again to judge the living and the
dead.

In the quiet of her car --

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.(cont'd))
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the
Holy Catholic Church, the
communion of saints, the
forgiveness of sins, the
resurrection of the body and life
everlasting. Amen.

INT. EMMA'S CAR - DAY

Emma lays her hands on the steering wheel then settles back in her seat; her grip on the wheel tightens.

Hanging from the rear view mirror, the Rosary sways.

FLASH!

INT. JEEP

Amidst carnage of broken glass and twisted metal, shadows swell in deepening ink wells... Dashboard lights wicker...

Radio murmuring, softly... a ballgame, double header...

BACK TO:

INT. EMMA'S CAR - DAY

Keying the ignition, Emma glances at the rear view mirror; a shadow, fleeting and indiscernible, whispers over the glass.

She hesitates a moment.

The note paper with Sam Whitside's cell number and address lays on the console between the driver and passenger seat.

Emma picks it up, glances at the address.

Wrapped in the quiet of the day --

EXT. SAMUEL WHITSIDE'S HOUSE - DAY

An old mutt lays on the stoop of an age neglected house. At best, the property is a half step from derelict; its dust covered windows, some broken, overlook a weed clotted yard.

The dog barely glances in Emma's direction.

Looking for a doorbell and finding none, Emma knocks on the door. The wood groans, hinting that with a little more force it would give on its own.

Silence greets her.

Stepping off the stoop, Emma walks to the side of the house, taking care of where she steps.

Coiled on a rusted hanger, a garden hose lays forgotten.

As she walks along the side of the house, following a narrow albeit crumbling walkway amidst tall weeds and grass --

HUGH (O.S.)
Nobody lives there, ma'am.

Emma searches for the source of the voice.

Standing on the other side of a rusted and sagging chain link fence in HUGH MCGINNIS. Face flushed and damp with sweat, he runs a handkerchief over his nose, sniffing.

HUGH
Goddamn hay fever.

He sneezes. Blows his nose then pockets the handkerchief.

HUGH (cont'd)
Gets worse every fucking year,
almost like clockwork.
(a beat)
Name's Hugh McGinnis.

EMMA
Emma Landry.

Looking from the house to the backyard, barely visible in the overgrown grass and weeds, Emma manages a tired smile.

EMMA (cont'd)
This is the Whitside house. Isn't
it?

HUGH
Whitside...?

EMMA
Sam Whitside.

No recognition in the man's eyes.

EMMA (cont'd)
His parents lived here.

HUGH
Last ones to live in that house
were Carl and Ethel Agnes.

Pulling his ragged handkerchief from his pocket --

HUGH (cont'd)
Afraid I don't know anyone by the
name of Whitside, though.

Another wheeze and honk into the handkerchief; Hugh McGinnis regards Emma with a sobering look.

EMMA

Carl and Ethel Agnes... they had a granddaughter.

HUGH

Mary... think that was her name.

EMMA

Did you know them? Carl and Ethel?

HUGH

Just from church.

Tucking the handkerchief into the back pocket of his jeans --

HUGH (cont'd)

They didn't talk much outside the main doors. Kept to themselves, mostly... Ethel used to have a pretty nice garden, though, out back there.

EMMA

What about Carl or Mary?

HUGH

He worked a lot. Wasn't 'round much... and the girl, she was a teenager.

Emma surveys the shambles of the backyard to the aged battered remains of the house.

EMMA

How long has this house been empty?

HUGH

Seven... eight years... that was the time Ethel passed. Carl he died a couple years before her.

Gesturing at the house --

HUGH (cont'd)

Church bought the house and the lot shortly after Ethel died.

EMMA

The church?

HUGH
 Saint Micheal's.
 (a beat)
 Had a priest come out and take a
 look at the place.

EMMA
 A priest... Father Thomas?

HUGH
 Sounds about right.

He gives her an apologetic look.

HUGH (cont'd)
 I haven't been so good the last
 few years about going to church.

EMMA
 Hard to believe the church would
 let the place get to run down.

HUGH
 Damn shame, really.
 (a beat)
 They could've sold it a year
 after they bought it for a song
 and a dance. Why they kept it,
 I'll never know.

Something stirs alongside the house, drawing Emma's glance.

EMMA
 You wouldn't happen to know a
 Reverend Peter Tall Elk. Would
 you, Mr.--

HUGH
 --McGinnis.
 (a beat)
 And no, I can't say I know him
 either.

Alongside the house, the scrape and pull of something on the
 crumbling walkway drifts over the quiet.

HUGH (cont'd)
 Want to mind where you step,
 ma'am. Mostly garden snakes but
 sometimes we find some that are a
 little less friendly.

EMMA
 Great.

Glancing toward the side of the house --

EMMA (cont'd)
I'll keep that in mind.

With another honk on his handkerchief and a furtive look over his shoulder to his own house --

HUGH
Got a casserole in the oven. And
my wife will have my head and my
ass, if I let it burn her pan.

Trudging toward his house, he gives Emma a brief wave.

HUGH (cont'd)
If that old mutt gives you any
trouble, just tell Big Foot to
get his ass home.

Emma barely notices Hugh McGinnis' departure or hears his passing comment, as he trudges toward his house.

Quiet settles.

The tall grass and weeds shiver, as if something moves through the tangled mass, threading its way through the foliage.

In a gentle breath, the wind gusts.

Emma stands a moment longer, listening to the whisper of the breeze through the tall grass and weeds.

Making her way back the way she had come, Emma suddenly stops.

Lying on the walkway, sun rotted and unfurled --

THE GARDEN HOSE

stretches over the blistering pavement to the tall weeds on the other side of the walkway.

Emma breathes in deep and slow.

The hose lays silent and still.

Quelling the urge to run passed it, Emma steps over the garden hose with a tentative, cautious step.

Pace even and casual, Emma walks toward the front gate.

Behind her, the soft scraping sound of the hose pulling itself over the pavement drifts.

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

Quiet isolation; nave deathly silent.

Prayer candles wicker; shadows slip over the walls, bathing empty pews and church vestiges in dusky catacombs.

Father Thomas walks down the center aisle.

FATHER THOMAS

All things came into being
through Him. And without Him,
there came not one thing that has
come to be.

As if giving him passage, shadows recede; the subtle rush of an errant breeze whispers through the nave.

Slipping the Rosary around his neck --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

In Him was life, and the life was
the light of mankind.

Father Thomas raises the beads to his lips.

Nearing the crucifix, his gaze fixed on the figure of Christ on the Cross --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not lay hold
of it.

Father Thomas Signs the Cross.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

Help me, Lord, do now what I
could not then.

Like a whisper on the edge of consciousness --

EXT. PENNINGTON COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Leaves whisper in a tumbling roll, as Emma Landry approaches the bland government building.

In the smoked glass, Emma's reflection shimmers.

JONAS (AUDIO TAPE)

Darkness took her body and God
claimed her soul.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM/PENNINGTON COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Small and windowless, walls pale and bare, the room is silent and sterile. Sitting near a small table, his wrists shackled, JONAS MONTGOMERY regards Emma with a warm smile.

Reaching over and turning off the audio player --

EMMA

What did you mean by darkness
took her body?

Despite the cramped confines of the room, Jonas Montgomery seems at ease, as he settles back in his chair.

JONAS

Death... is its own demon.

EMMA

And God claimed her soul.

JONAS

God claims all of that, which is
His.

Jonas Montgomery's soft tone carries well.

JONAS (cont'd)

And he breathes life into that,
which is not yet to come.

Unlike so many others, who have sat in rooms such as this, he shows little interest in the room itself.

His gaze holds Emma's rapture.

EMMA

Like your execution, Mr.
Montgomery?

JONAS

Death is a perception of reality,
a passage of the soul from the
vessel of the body to the body of
the Father.

EMMA

And Mary Agnes...

JONAS

What is meant to happen will. But
that's not your question, Emma
Landry.

EMMA

What's my question then?

JONAS

You want to know the concept of death. Why it is something God allows, when it isn't something of free will.

EMMA

Like you said, death's a perception of reality.

JONAS

Our body is a vessel. From dust it was made and to dust it shall return. The soul, however, is immortal.

EMMA

Matthew 10:28... 'And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him, who destroy both body and soul in hell.'

JONAS

For some, death is a passage. For others, it binds them to a place they do not belong in.

Pouring herself a glass of water --

EMMA

Would you like some water, Mr. Montgomery?

JONAS

No. Thank you, though, Emma Landry.

He leans forward in his chair.

JONAS (cont'd)

Do you mind? I would like to show you something.

Gesturing at her bottled water --

JONAS (cont'd)

Your water. Please.

For a moment, Emma regards him with a tinge of distrust then hands him the bottled water.

JONAS (cont'd)
 Everything we see and hear, touch
 and feel is a perception of
 reality.

Wrapping his hands around the plastic bottle, obscuring it
 from view --

JONAS (cont'd)
 Sometimes, though, our perception
 can be skewed.

EMMA
 What are you --

Jonas Montgomery pulls his hands away from the bottled water,
 only the water is --

JONAS
 Wine... In the same way that our
 body is made from dust...

As Emma examines the bottled water, giving it a tentative
 taste test, her expression confirming the wine --

JONAS (cont'd)
 Wine is made from water and to
 water...

He wraps his hands around the bottle then seconds later
 releases it.

JONAS (cont'd)
 ...it shall return.

EMMA
 I don't believe in miracles, Mr.
 Montgomery.

JONAS
 Miracles are like everything in
 this life... a perception of our
 reality.

EMMA
 And Mary Agnes?
 (a beat)
 What perception of reality did
 she find?

JONAS
 Salvation is something earned not
 given, not a privilege. It comes
 with faith.

EMMA

Mary Agnes had faith.

JONAS

And she found salvation.

As the door opens and the ON DUTY OFFICER enters the room --

EMMA

Do you know Peter Tall Elk and his daughter, Annmarie?

JONAS

I know them. Yes.

EMMA

That isn't possible.

JONAS

All things, Emma Landry, are possible. You have to have faith.

EMMA

Because faith is truth...?

She gives the On Duty Officer the nod to prep Jonas Montgomery for escort from the interview room.

JONAS

Faith is the light, which guides us out of the darkness. Faith is never lost, merely overshadowed.

EMMA

What does that mean?

JONAS

Change your perception and the truth shall be known.

EMMA

And the truth, Father Montgomery, what is it?

JONAS

Faith frees the soul, Emma Landry, where perception obscures it. Truth is all around you. All you have to do is open your mind to hear its whisper.

On the fringe of quiet stillness --

EXT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

Silent and monolithic, the church with its windows frost covered overlooks an inviting landscape.

The wind gusts.

Leaves stir into the unsettled air then sweep across the walkway and the front steps.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)
 God and Father of our Lord Jesus
 Christ, I appeal to your holy
 name and beg for your help.

Wrapped within shadowy catacombs --

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

The nave lays quiet and still; empty pews reside amidst dusky half light and pallid walls.

Prayer candles wicker.

FATHER THOMAS
 By the sign of your name...

Hand trembling, Father Thomas signs the cross.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
 ...let your servant be protected
 in mind and body.

Stained glass windows sweat with melting frost; the water runs in rivulets, dripping pregnant droplets onto the floor.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
 Almighty Lord, Word of God the
 Father, Jesus Christ, God and
 Lord of all creation... by whose
 might Satan was made to fall from
 heaven like lightning.

Frost seeps over the walls.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
 I humbly call on your holy name,
 asking that you pardon me for all
 my sins. Lord, I ask that you
 strengthen my faith.

As he lights a prayer candle, Father Thomas' gaze sweeps the nave's shadowy depths and finds its way to the crucifix.

EXT. PENNINGTON COUNTY JAIL - DUSK

Clouds drift across a plate, blue sky.

Quiet pervades; the silence almost deafening.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)

Lord, grant me the power to
confront with confidence and
resolution the awaiting darkness.

Emma stares at the skin of the pavement.

Wrapped within shimmering heat --

FATHER THOMAS (V.O. (cont'd))

I ask this through you, Jesus
Christ, our Lord and God, who are
coming to judge both the living
and the dead and the world by
fire.

Sparrows, hundreds of them, lay dead on the parking lot.

Walking towards her car, footing numb and unsure --

FLASH!

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Vesting himself in purple surplice and stole, Father Thomas
signs the cross... Shadows steal across the walls, taking oily
form... Silhouette etched birds, wings flapping, wicker in odd
reflections pale walls...

BACK TO:

EXT. PENNINGTON COUNTY JAIL - DUSK

Loose feathers ride the eddying air, tracing the currents in
downy lithe, tumbling and curling.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)

God and Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, I appeal to your holy
name, humbly begging your
kindness. Graciously grant me
help against this unclean spirit
now tormenting this creature of
yours. Through Christ our Lord.

Emma reaches her car and opens the door.

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DUSK

Amidst frost forming on the empty pews and pallid walls,
Father Thomas kneels in front of the crucifix.

Breath pluming, icily, in the still air --

FATHER THOMAS

God, whose nature is ever
merciful and forgiving, accept my
prayer that your servant bound by
the fetters of sin...

The wounds of Christ bleed; shadows darken into ink wells.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

...be pardoned by your loving
kindness.

EXT. JOHN SHANGREAU'S HOUSE - DUSK

Stopping short of the front gate, startled and trying to
comprehend, Emma stares at the sign on the front lawn.

Sun faded and worn, the sign reads: FOR SALE.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)

I command you, unclean spirit, by
the mysteries of the incarnation,
passion, resurrection and
ascension of our Lord Jesus
Christ...

Beyond the sign, the house stands as silent as a tomb.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.(cont'd)

...by the decent of the Holy
Spirit, by the coming of our Lord
for judgment...

Like the eyes of the dead, the windows stare back at her.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.(cont'd)

...tell me your name and the day
and hour of your departure.

Emma opens the front gate; it whines on its rusted hinges.

Walking toward the house, Emma steals a furtive glance at the
garden hose. Silent and unmoving, it lays on the grass.

Nearing the front porch, the house looming over her --

FLASH!

INT. SECOND FLOOR CORRIDOR/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Walls pressing in on him, Father Thomas walks down a narrow corridor. He slips the Rosary around his neck.

BACK TO:

EXT. JOHN SHANGREAU'S HOUSE - DUSK

Pace slowing, Emma sees the flicker of shadows, ghostly reflections whisper over the second floor windows.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)
 I cast you out, unclean spirit,
 along with every Satanic power of
 the enemy, every specter from
 hell, and all your fell
 companions...

Emma stops mid stride.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O. (cont'd))
 ...in the name of our Lord Jesus
 Christ.

The reflections in the windows take on the oily shape and form of silhouette, etched birds.

Movement stirring behind her, snake like slithering --

FATHER THOMAS (V.O. (cont'd))
 Be gone. For it is He who
 commands you. He who flung you
 from the heights of heaven into
 the depths of hell.

Emma turns. Stares, helplessly, at the place where the garden hose had laid; the grass indentation is its only hint of having been there at all.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O. (cont'd))
 Fear Him, who in Isaac was
 offered in sacrifice, in Joseph
 sold into bondage, slain as the
 paschal lamb, crucified as man
 yet triumphed over the powers of
 hell.

Looking for the garden hose, knowing it's here and waiting to strike, Emma searches for movement.

Stillness reigns.

Senses heightening, she looks to the front porch. Except for the swing, the porch is empty; dust undisturbed; cob webs litter the darkened corners; a realtor's key box hangs from the door knob.

Emma turns and starts to walk toward the front gate.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.(cont'd))
Be gone in the name of the
Father...

Quiet ebbs, as the wind gusts and the gate swings open.

Walking fast, keeping her eye on the gate and willing herself not to run blindly, Emma hears something snake behind her.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.(cont'd))
...and the Son...

Something... the garden hose... sliding through the grass, its rough hide scraping the ground.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.(cont'd))
And the Holy Spirit.

At the last second, Emma bolts through the gate.

Silence drifts, as she turns and stares at the garden hose laying motionless on the grass.

And for a dizzying moment --

INT. SECOND FLOOR CORRIDOR/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DUSK

Stowed furniture, some covered in sheets and drop cloths and other simply stacked, line the walls.

Doors swing closed on their own, as Father Thomas approaches.

FATHER THOMAS
Give place to the Holy Spirit by
this sign of the holy cross...

Signing the cross --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
...of our Lord Jesus Christ, who
lives and reigns with the Father
and the Holy Spirit, forever and
ever.

Mice scurry along the baseboards, moving in out of sight as they skitter within inches of Father Thomas' footsteps.

As he approaches the door of Mary Agnes' room --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
Repel, O Lord, the devil's power,
break asunder his snares and
traps, put the unholy temper to
flight.

The door unlatches on its own and swings open.

Stopping short of crossing the room's threshold, Father Thomas wraps his hand around the cross of the Rosary.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
By the sign of your name...

Signing the cross with slow, deliberateness --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
...let your servant be protected
in mind and body.

He steps into the --

INT. SECOND FLOOR ROOM/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DUSK

Handwriting emerges; the text written in Old Latin covers the walls from floor to ceiling.

Father Thomas looks at the walls.

FATHER THOMAS
Keep watch, Lord, over the inmost
recesses of the heart. Rule the
emotions, Lord, and strengthen
the will.

An errant breeze whispers through the room; curtains billow and flap in a dusty echo.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
Let vanish from the soul the
temptings of the mighty
adversary.

Shadows deepen, as they stretch and yawn over the floor.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
Save your servant, who trusts in
you, my God.

EXT. RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT - DUSK

Shadows whisper off the windows of parked vehicles in fleeting reflections, as Emma walks toward the building.

Quiet pervading --

FLASH!

INT. JEEP

Amidst carnage of broken glass and twisted metal, dashboard lights wicker... Rosary swaying from the rear view mirror...

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)

I adjure you, ancient serpent, by
the judge of the living and the
dead, by your creator, by the
creator of the whole universe, by
Him who has the power to consign
you to hell...

BACK TO:

EXT. RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT - DUSK

Pace slowing, Emma senses a presence.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)

...depart forthwith in fear along
with your savage minions.

She turns, eyes searching for movement.

Glass and metal glinting in the sun, vehicles sit parked.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O. (cont'd))

Yield, not to my own person but
to the minister of Christ. For it
is the power of Christ that
compels you, who brought you low
by His cross.

Beyond the lot, the sidewalk and street lay silent.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O. (cont'd))

Tremble before that mighty arm
that broke asunder the dark
prison walls and led souls forth
to light.

Aware of the pressing quiet, Emma jogs to the main doors.

INT. PROPERTY ROOM/RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT - DUSK

Shadows fill the room in deepening swaths, darkening the walls, as Emma approaches the main desk.

Walking over to the counter, badge and I.D. in hand --

EMMA

I wanted to review the evidence
for the Mary Agnes case.

PROPERTY CLERK

Have the box number?

From her pocket, Emma pulls the slip of paper with the archive box number written on it.

Handing it to the clerk then watching him key it in --

PROPERTY CLERK(cont'd)

Sorry, ma'am. That archive number
didn't bring anything up.

EMMA

Search by the name... Agnes.

He types in the name then shakes his head.

PROPERTY CLERK

Nothing listed for Agnes.

EMMA

Lieutenant John Shangreau logged
it in. Can you check by his name?

PROPERTY CLERK

Shangreau...?

Keying in the name then leveling a somber look on Emma --

PROPERTY CLERK(cont'd)

No Shangreau. Sorry.

EMMA

Do know if there was a Lieutenant
John Shangreau assigned to the
Rapid City PD?

PROPERTY CLERK

Been here twelve years. Haven't
heard the name. Could be that
he's with the Sheriff's
Department.

EMMA
Anything's possible.

The radio on the desk broadcasts of a ballgame; the monotone voice of the announcer warbles within a squall of static.

Glancing at the radio --

FLASH!

INT. JEEP

Ink wells of shadow spread... Dashboard lights flicker... The soft, murmur of the radio... A ballgame's broadcast plays...

BACK TO:

INT. PROPERTY ROOM/RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT - DUSK

Emma nods at the radio on the desk.

EMMA
How long's that game been playing?

PROPERTY CLERK
Double header.

EMMA
Seems like it's been on for a while.

PROPERTY CLERK
Ballgames always do on the radio.

Walking over to the radio, he jockeys the antenna.

PROPERTY CLERK(cont'd)
Interference of some kind. Got some religious program earlier, though. Came in clear as a bell.
(a beat)
Anything else I can get you?

EMMA
No. Thank you.

Emma looks to where the cart had been parked earlier; the one the Property Clerk had set the archive box on. In its place sits a pair of filing cabinets.

On the edge of consciousness, reality teetering --

INT. SECOND FLOOR ROOM/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DUSK

Like a rifle shot, the room's door slams shut on its own.

Father Thomas stands in pooling shadow.

FATHER THOMAS

May the trembling that afflicts
the human mind...

Signing the cross --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

...the fear that afflicts the
faith of God's servant, descend
on you. Make no resistance nor
delay in departing.

In snake like tendrils, shadows curl around his ankles.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

It is God Himself...

Signing the cross --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

...who commands you; the majestic
Christ...

Signing the cross, feeling the floor vibrate beneath him --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

...who commands you; God the
Father...

Signing the cross --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

...commands you; God the Son...

Signing the cross, as shadows slither around him --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

...commands you; God the Holy
Spirit...

Signing the cross --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

...commands you.

The handwritten text burns into the walls.

And for a moment --

EXT. RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT - DUSK

Emma glances skyward; the distant rumble of dry thunder, echoing over the stillness, abates the quiet.

An unsettled sense of being watched nags at her consciousness.

Heat rising off the pavement in a shimmering tide --

MARY AGNES (V.O.)

...They keep asking me what I feel. And the only thing I can say is that it's like I'm living two lives at the same time...

Glass and metal glinting in ghostly distortion--

MARY AGNES (V.O.) (cont'd)

...It's like a dream, really. A dream no one understands but me.

Another reality, one of sound and movement, stirs like a transparent overlay beyond this one.

Emma stands motionless.

Peripheral's edge shivers -- traffic echoes, pedestrians walk by on the sidewalk, ghostly illusions of movement, all the sounds and movement of early evening stir.

Reality teetering --

INT. SECOND FLOOR ROOM/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Cracks tear through the walls, ripping through the foundation in jagged lines, spreading in spidery rifts.

Father Thomas' breath plumes.

FATHER THOMAS

The mystery of the Cross commands you.

Signing the cross, while shadows snake around him --

FATHER THOMAS (cont'd)

The faith of the holy apostles Peter, Paul and all the saints commands you.

Signing the cross --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
The blood of the martyrs commands
you.

Signing the cross and having to raise his voice above the gale
force wind raging within the room --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
The continence of confessors
commands you.

Signing the cross, the walls pressing in on him --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
The devout prayers of all holy
men and women commands you.

Signing the cross, shadows covering the floor making it
impossible to see below his knees --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
The saving mysteries of our
Christian faith commands you.

A wind rages, peeling the paint in dusty flecks from the
walls, as shadows swell in blackening depths.

On the brittle fringe of permeating quiet --

EXT. EMMA'S CAR - DUSK

The wind gusts, washing over Emma in a tidal breath.

SHANGREAU (V.O.)
Maybe the road leads to a darker
truth you're not ready to face.

Opening the driver's side door --

JONAS (V.O.)
Death is a perception of reality.

Emma sees the black and white photos from the archive box
laying on the passenger seat.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)
Exorcism isn't always about
driving away demons.

Those images of the aftermath -- the 1890 Wounded Knee
Massacre -- stare up at her; the faces of the dead forever
laden in the throes of rigor.

MARY AGNES (V.O.)
 I dreamed about this place on the
 Reservation. Sacred ground,
 forgotten like the dead buried
 there.

Gaze drifting over the parking lot --

MARY AGNES (V.O.)(cont'd)
 It's called Wounded Knee.

Looking for anyone who might have left the photos and seeing
 no one, Emma gets into her car.

Glancing at the Rosary hanging from the rear view mirror --

FLASH!

INT. PROPERTY ROOM/RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

The black and white photo of the Sacred Heart Church and its
 barren grounds in Wounded Knee, South Dakota...

BACK TO:

EXT. EMMA'S CAR - DUSK

Hands tightening on the steering wheel, Emma pulls her gaze
 from the Rosary then glances at the photos. Lying on top of
 the scattered sheets, the lone picture of the 1972 Wounded
 Knee Siege holds Emma's gaze. She sees passed the images of
 siege to the church in the background.

JONAS (V.O.)
 Everything we see and hear, touch
 and feel is a perception of
 reality.

In her mind's eye --

JONAS (V.O.)(cont'd)
 Change your perception and the
 truth shall be known.

Emma visualizes the Sacred Heart Church in ghostly overlay of
 Peter Tall Elk's Church of the Redeemer.

MARY AGNES (V.O.)
 Sometimes, when it's quiet, you
 can hear the dead call your name.

As she keys the ignition and the car roars to life --

INT. SECOND FLOOR ROOM/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DUSK

Breath pluming icily in the unsettled air and his hand unsteady, Father Thomas uncaps a small bottle of holy water.

The room trembles; hair line cracks permeate the walls.

FATHER THOMAS

Depart, transgressor. Depart
seducer, full of lies and
cunning, foe of virtue,
prosecutor of the innocent.

Sprinkling holy water on one wall --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

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

The room shrieks; the scream rips through the air, as the floor rumbles beneath the priest's feet.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

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

Shadows coil and move, slithering snake like and formidable within the room's close confines.

The air grows colder; ice begins to form on the window.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

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

Subtle echoing of rattlesnakes, hundreds of them, drifts over the air, as Father Thomas walks over to a second wall.

Sprinkling the wall with holy water --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

For you are guilty before
almighty God, whose laws you have
transgressed.

The water strikes the wall, sizzling and steaming on impact, while shadows strike with the ferocity of nesting snakes.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
 You are guilty before His Son,
 our Lord Jesus Christ, whom you
 presumed to tempt, whom you dared
 to nail to the cross.

Walking through the shadows, dissipating them as he sprinklers
 a third wall with holy water --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
 You are guilty before the whole
 human race, to whom you proffered
 by your enticements the poisoned
 cup of death.

Father Thomas turns then struggles to walk against the raging
 wind, while he raises his voice to be heard over the gale.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
 I adjure you, profligate dragon,
 in the name of the spotless
 Lamb...

Signing the cross --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
 ...who has trodden down the asp
 and the basilisk, and overcome
 the lion and the dragon to depart
 from this Church of God.

Curtains billowing and flapping, the sound echoes with the
 sharp ebb of a whip crack.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
 Tremble and flee, as I call upon
 the name of the Lord, before whom
 the denizens of hell cower, to
 whom the heavenly Virtues and
 Powers and Dominations are
 subject...

Sprinkling holy water on the fourth wall --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)
 ...whom the Cherubim and Seraphim
 praise with unending cries.

Father Thomas struggles to stay standing; the force of the
 wind threatens to overwhelm him.

Behind him, the room's door bangs open with explosive force.

EXT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - NIGHT

Silence greets Emma, as she lays her hand on the door's handle and turns it. Half expecting it to be locked, she's surprised, when the latch clicks and the door simply opens.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)
The Word made flesh commands you;
the Virgin's Son commands you.

Walking into the --

INT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - NIGHT

Shadows and low lighting make it difficult to see, but Emma walks on despite this.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)
Jesus of Nazareth commands you,
who once, when you despised His
disciples, forced you to flee in
shameful defeat from a man.

Ink wells deepening into murky catacombs --

FATHER THOMAS (V.O. (cont'd))
And when He had cast you out, you
did not even dare, except by his
leave, to enter into a herd of
swine.

Emma hears the soft, murmuring hiss of snakes

As shadows coil around her legs and torso --

FLASH!

INT. SECOND FLOOR ROOM/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Wind raging... Window cracking then exploding... Father Thomas groping his left arm, struggling for the words...

FATHER THOMAS
And now as I adjure you in His
name...

Hand trembling, consciousness waning, signing the cross --

FATHER THOMAS (cont'd)
Begone!

BACK TO:

INT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - NIGHT

The windows of the church explode with a thunderous roar, knocking Emma to the floor, as the church trembles.

Hitting hard, she rolls onto her side.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)
 God of heaven and earth, God of
 the angels and archangels, God of
 the prophets and apostles, God of
 the martyrs and virgins...

The air bitter cold; frost begins to form on the pews and seep across the walls; an errant wind whispers through the church.

Shivering and struggling to get to her feet --

FATHER THOMAS (V.O. (cont'd))
 God, who has the power to bestow
 life after death and rest after
 toil.

Emma feels her reality tilt.

FLASH!

INT. SECOND FLOOR ROOM/SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Frost covers the walls, the handwriting barely visible within a sheath of whiteness... Father Thomas slumping to the floor, hand to his chest... His heart beginning to give way...

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)
 For there is no other God than
 you, nor can there be another
 true God beside you...

BACK TO:

INT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - NIGHT

Through the floor, Emma feels the church tremble, as if the structure is on the verge of separating from its foundation.

Scrambling, crawling her way to her hands and knees --

FATHER THOMAS (V.O.)
 ...the Creator of heaven and
 earth, who is truly a King, whose
 kingdom is without end.

Emma finds herself staring into shadow nest of roiling snakes.

FATHER THOMAS (V.O. (cont'd))
 I ask you, my God, to deliver
 this servant of yours from the
 unclean spirits.

Like mist, the shadow snakes dissolve, dissipating in
 fracturing seconds before they reach Emma.

Someone steps into the doorway, a priest -- Father Thomas.

FATHER THOMAS
 Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Pulling Emma to her feet with gentle ease then wrapping his
 arm around her shoulders, he smiles; they walk toward the
 doorway, pace slow yet assured.

EXT. SACRED HEART CHURCH/WOUNDED KNEE, SD - NIGHT

Sound drifts over the rich, night air with the distant spark
 lights of a farm house visible.

With last of Emma's reality flecking like dust on the wind --

FATHER THOMAS
 It's all right. Death has no
 power over you here. Not any
 longer, Ms. Landry.

Emma glances at the Sacred Heart Church. It seems to stare
 back at her, silent and still.

The priest's arm tightens, reassuringly, around her shoulders.

EMMA
 I'm at Wounded Knee. But how --

FATHER THOMAS
 You've always been here.

Like a mirage on a whisper's edge of dissolving --

FLASH!

INT. JEEP

Amidst carnage of broken glass and twisted metal, dashboard
 lights wicker... Rosary swaying from the rear view mirror...

BACK TO:

EXT. SACRED HEART CHURCH/WOUNDED KNEE, SD - NIGHT

Reality swimming out of focus then congealing, Emma stares at the Jeep -- her Jeep -- parked on the gravel lot; the cemetery's age worn archway stands between her and the Jeep.

Gaze drifting over the Wounded Knee Memorial --

EMMA

Peter and Annmarie Tall Elk...

FATHER THOMAS

...died during the 1890 Wounded Knee massacre, Annmarie's body was found near the creek next her father's.

EMMA

Major Samuel Whitside of the Seventh Calvary, he was here too. Along with Hugh McGinnis...

FATHER THOMAS

...and John Shangreau, a scout and interpreter who advised not to disarm the Lakota because it would lead to violence. General Nelson A. Miles visited the carnage after a three day blizzard had frozen most of the dead to the ground.

(a beat)

They were buried in a mass grave, some still alive. Their names like the massacre forgotten.

EMMA

Why this place?

FATHER THOMAS

God answered your prayer.

He hands her his Rosary.

EMMA

Mary Agnes... Marguarite Rosalyn...?

FATHER THOMAS

There are times, when angels speak to us and we don't know they're angels.

EMMA

And Jonas Montgomery...

FATHER THOMAS

Sometimes the Lord answers our prayers and He's in the same room with us.

Stopping short of the cemetery's age worn archway --

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

God's given you another chance to live. Choose life, Ms. Landry.

EMMA

And you, Father Thomas?

FATHER THOMAS

I belong here.

Hand slightly trembling, Emma pulls the key she found in the archive box from her pocket.

EMMA

Was any of it real?

FATHER THOMAS

The only thing that changed was your perception of reality.

Father Thomas smiles, giving her hand a warm, brief squeeze.

FATHER THOMAS(cont'd)

Now, live and remember.

As Emma climbs into the Jeep and keys the ignition, the soft whispering murmur of its radio ebbs --

MAN'S VOICE

For the living know that they shall die. But the dead know not anything. Neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.

Emma drops the Jeep into gear.

Dissipating within the distant rumble of dry thunder, the sound of a car accident echoes like the cry of an owl's scree.

THE END