Condemned Sanctuary

by

Swimming Swan

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#### FADE IN:

## EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

A miserable overcast sky. A gentle gust of wind scatters October leaves across the ground. An assortment of gravestones, varying in condition, shapes and sizes are spread throughout the large lonely graveyard.

CHRISTOPHER (60's, suited) stands beside his parked car. He watches LIZ (60's, shrouded in a dark robe) mourn at the bottom of a grave.

The modest gravestone has the name "THOMAS WERNER" etched in its stone. Remnants of obscene graffiti, the word "FREAK", cover the rest of the stone.

Christopher places his hand on Liz's shoulder. His touch brings her back to reality, her distant sorrowful gaze replaced by silent anger.

> CHRISTOPHER Liz. It's time.

LIZ I'm not ready yet, Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER We don't want a repeat of last year. We've both paid our respects. Leave it here.

Liz stands. She gives Christopher a scathing look.

LIZ There are no memories to respect here. Only soil and torment.

CHRISTOPHER I know, Liz, I know. Come on, let me take you home.

Christopher helps a frail Liz to his car.

EXT. FIELD - DUSK

An empty post harvest corn field. A row of scarecrows remain on duty. A farmhouse in the distance. Dusk clouds spread across the sky.

EXT. FIELD (2) - DUSK

Bulldozers and land development machinery sit dormant in the cordoned off field. A construction banner reads: "HOMEFROMHOME CONSTRUCTION: Building new lives and new hope".

EXT. WOODLAND LANE - NIGHT

A heavy gust of wind scatters crisp October leaves across a quiet road. Moonlight beams down between gaps in over bearing trees from both sides of the road. The road leads out to -

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A quiet suburban neighborhood semi-lit by the orange glow of street lamps. Leaves continue to drift down the road towards the end of the street.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

An old Victorian house. Garden long overgrown. A rickety old wooden fence. Faint weather worn graffiti remains spray painted on the fence gate: "BEWARE OF THE FREAK!!!".

Wind strewn leaves gather and find their resting place in the garden. They rustle against the house.

A "CONDEMNED - STAY OUT" sign covers the front door.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Moonlight beams inside through a gently swinging half open door. Old wooden cupboards slant on dusty web covered walls. A boarded up window.

INT. HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

A STRIKE OF A MATCH gives light to the room. Filthy thick dark velvet curtains cover a large window. Room is empty.

LIZ (V.O.) Once a year, I'd enter this house.

INT. HOUSE - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Ancient wallpaper peels from walls. A bare wooden staircase leads upwards.

LIZ (V.O.) Once a year, I'd walk these steps.

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

A closed wooden door.

LIZ (V.O.) And once a year, I'd enter this room.

Liz holds a lit candle lamp in one hand. Her other hand reaches for the dusty door handle. She slowly twists it. Opens the door. A slight gust escapes, shimmers the candlelight. Liz enters inside the darkness beyond the door. The door SLAMS shut.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Liz shines the candlelight over the room. A dirty mattress lay on the floorboards. Curtains flail outwards wildly.

Liz places the lamp on the floor. She approaches the curtains. She spreads them aside and closes an open window. The curtains suppress back into lifeless objects.

Moonlight blares through the window into the room. It's radiance pinpoints a photo frame on the wall.

CLOSE UP ON PHOTO:

LIZ, in her 50's, smiles for a family picture with Christopher, 50's, and a facially deformed boy, TOM, 15.

Liz unhooks the photo from the wall. She wipes it clear of dust. She sits on the mattress as she strokes Tom's face. Tears drop on to the photo. Liz wipes them across the photo to clear it up even more.

Liz takes a hip flask from her pocket. She takes a sip. Her reaction indicates the contents are strong. She places the flask on the floor.

Liz sits back against the wall. She cries mournfully.

LIZ

My dear son Tom. How I miss you so.

Liz takes a pocket sized book from underneath the mattress. She opens it. Candlelight reveals it's authors handwriting to be of excellent quality.

## TOM (V.O.)

Another day at school. Another day of ridicule. Another beating on my way home. Although I'm hurt, in both senses, I don't blame them for branding me a freak. They see me as clear as I see my reflection every day. The only person who doesn't, my mother, who somehow continues to love me regardless.

Liz flicks the pages, delves further into the diary.

#### TOM (V.O.)

Voices in the night make me feel alright. I tell my mother what I hear and although she won't admit it, she must believe I'm losing my mind. Perhaps with what disease I have, it's a possibility I am. Liz turns to another section.

# TOM (V.O.)

I refuse to leave my room. I prefer the company of the dark. Mother leaves me food and drink outside my door. I hear mocking voices outside, jeers and taunts. It's the voice inside that keeps me going.

Liz turns to the final page of the diary. It's marked October 31st. She holds it to her heart.

LIZ Five years my son. Five years to the day. I feel the pain as if it were only moments ago.

Liz reads the final entry.

# TOM (V.O.)

Tonight is the night I will take my life under the guidance and instructions of the glorious light.

Liz closes the book.

LIZ

I'm so sorry my son. If only I believed. If only I said I believed. I would do anything to have that chance again.

Curtains flap wildly. Floorboards creak. Sound of doors opening and slamming shut through out the house.

Liz, startled, gets to her feet. Clutches the diary to her chest. The room door opens - and SLAMS shut. Liz rushes to the door. Tries to open it. It won't budge.

A loud cackling of mocking laughter. The window opens and shuts by itself repeatedly as the curtains draw and close. The combination of sounds turn into a hellish crescendo.

Liz's frightened stance changes. Anger. She stands firmly.

LIZ Stop it...STOP IT!

The noises cease immediately. The window closes and shuts. The curtains stand limp.

LIZ Demon...A cursed demon that poisoned the mind of my son.

A loud wretched deep morbid MOAN emanates around the room.

Liz takes the lamp. She shines it around the room, searches for a sight of the presence.

LIZ Show yourself you coward! You killed my boy, taunted him to his death. You evil monstrous bastard!

The candle is blown out. Sound of curtains being closed.

Darkness.

The sound of Liz's fearful breathing.

Moment pass.

A soft, whisperish meek male voice.

GHOST (O.S.) I am no demon.

Liz's breaths become harsher, intensified.

GHOST (0.S.) Let yourself be calm. I mean you no harm. It is you that frightens me.

Liz tries to relight her candle with a lighter. It is repeatedly blown out.

GHOST (O.S.) If you wish the light be lit, I would prefer that you sit.

Liz warily sits on the mattress.

Light returns to the candle. Liz slowly turns her head to the side - SCREAMS.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Liz's scream is heard by a group of up-to-no-good TRICK-OR-TREATERS gathered outside. They run away screaming themselves, dropping their ammunition of eggs to the ground.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Terrified, Liz crouches by the side of the door. She looks up at a dark figure sat on the mattress.

The figure, a GHOST, is in the shape of a man but it is more of a silhouette, a shadow within the darkness. It moves whisperishly, delicately, gently.

It extends it's hand towards Liz to her horror. Realizing the impact it has on her, the fingers become outlined by an angelic glow, only to break and shatter into small particles.

LIZ What did you do...to my son?

GHOST

Tom?

LIZ WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM!?

GHOST He was my friend. As I was his. We were the only friends we both had.

Liz stands. Less afraid. More interested.

LIZ

What do you mean...friends? How could my son become friends with...

GHOST Something like me?

Liz looks lost for words.

GHOST

We shared a lot in common. Everyone seemed to be afraid of us. If they knew we were about, they wanted us gone.

Liz sits on the mattress. She's much more calm.

LIZ Then... why? Why did you let him kill himself?

Liz takes out the diary. Finds the page where Tom writes about his suicide plan. She shows the page to the Ghost, forgetting momentarily of his odd supernatural shape. She looks at him afraid. Her hands tremble.

A clear watery substance slides from the ceiling down the walls before it sinks into the floorboards.

## GHOST

I can only touch...

Ghost's hand touches Liz's arm. It disappears through it, breaks into sparkles.

GHOST What I can not touch.

LIZ The doors, the windows, the curtains. You were able to do that. GHOST

Emotional energy. My fear, your grief. Your fear, my envy.

LIZ He says right here, in his diary, that you showed him the way. He says under the guidance and instructions of the light!

#### GHOST

He would tell of darkness beyond redemption. I showed him the light beyond the dark. I would talk of desolation. He would talk of loneliness. I spoke of being at peace, he spoke it only of desire.

LIZ

So you did influence him.

#### GHOST

I was envious of him having life as much as he envied me having peace. It came to pass he wished his life to end. I spoke with persuasion but failed. It did not only condemn you to misery Miss Elizabeth Werner, but myself. I too, was left alone.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A group of teenage YOUTHS gather outside.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Liz studies the Ghost before her eyes. A rejuvenated urgency takes her over.

LIZ My son... is there a way you can you let me see my son? I need to see him, please, I beg you...

GHOST I cannot as I exist in between realms. You greatly overstate my capabilities.

Liz is frustrated at the opportunity being rejected.

LIZ Then what good are you damnit!

The Ghost's form slinkily slides away from Liz. Floorboards CREAK. Liz calms herself.

LIZ What are you? What were you?

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Christopher's car pulls up out front.

Christopher gets out. He looks up at the house with a sigh. His attention is taken by the group of troublesome youths standing nearby. Flickers of flames turn into a rolled up newspaper being lit on fire and held like a torch.

> CHRISTOPHER Hey! What the hell are you lot doing over there?

The gang look at Christopher. A YOUTH, 14, holds the torch aloft without a care in the world.

YOUTH What's it look like? We heard screams in the freak house. We're gonna burn it down.

CHRISTOPHER You're gonna burn it...What is it with you and your generation?

Christopher storms over to the youths. He grabs the torch, throws it to the ground and stamps it out.

## CHRISTOPHER

Apart from the ridiculous ghost stories you keep telling each other, did you ever contemplate there might be someone REAL inside?

YOUTH

Chill, gramps. It's only a house. Was gonna get knocked down soon anyway. Not as if it's alive or anything.

Christopher clips the Youth round his ear.

CHRISTOPHER Get outta here you morons!

The youths scatter.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The ghost "sits" next to Liz.

LIZ You are what I have been seeking all these years. The proof of an afterlife. I have made up my mind.

GHOST

You must let me persuade you to think otherwise.

LIZ

Talk won't stop me. If you allow me to be blunt, you should know that.

GHOST If you will allow me to be just as blunt, you will be where you wish to be soon enough. Those that choose their own or anybody else's fate, may not get to. If you endure, you reap.

LIZ Tom...? What about Tom!?

Silent moments pass.

Liz turns angrily to the Ghost.

LIZ

You're lonely. You only want me to stay alive so I keep coming back. You're a liar. A manipulative liar!

Cackling laughter echoes through the room. Liz is far from afraid. She keeps angry eyes on the ghost.

GHOST Like the free spirits that roam woods and fields, once the foundations are gone, so shall I. (beat) Elizabeth Werner, reconsider. I admit to my need of a friend. You have been of great service for me tonight. You may think of me otherwise, but as my friend I advise you to await your fate and not determine it.

LIZ It is too late.

Liz looks to the flask on the floor.

LIZ I have a spell of my own. And it will be taking effect any moment. EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Christopher opens the fence gate. His attention is taken by the returning group of youths - they run past him, deliberately knocking into him.

Christopher grimaces in pain. He slants, releases a whimper as the group run into the distance. His hand clutches his side - blood.

He looks up at the group. The Youth gives him the finger with one hand and shows off his flick-knife with the other.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Ghost's sparkly figurine begins to diminish. It looks towards Liz.

GHOST I'm truly sorry for you choice. But I understand.

LIZ Will you stay with me...until the end?

GHOST As I did with Tom?

LIZ

Yes.

GHOST I feel compelled to do so. I feel it is something I owe to you.

Liz lays - her body passes through Ghost's transparent figure - on the mattress. She closes her eyes. She holds out her hand. The Ghost's arm extends and forms the silhouette of a human hand. The Ghost hand holds Liz's hand.

> GHOST Sleep well my friend.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Christopher stumbles inside through the door. He falls to his knees clutching his side.

CHRISTOPHER Liz...ELIZABETH!

INT. HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Christopher makes his way through the room.

Christopher trudges up the stairs, holding his side in pain.

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

Christopher leans against the door. He takes a breather. He knocks on it gently.

CHRISTOPHER Liz...I've got to take you back. I've got to take you home.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Christopher opens the door, storms inside.

CHRISTOPHER

No...

The bright candle lamp sits in the middle of the floor. Liz lay icily still on the mattress.

Christopher kneels down beside her. He timidly turns her head. Her skin is light blue. Her eyes closed, blood leaks from her mouth.

# CHRISTOPHER No, no, Liz, what have you done!?

He checks her neck for a pulse. He clasps his hands to his mouth, shocked and teary-eyed. Christopher tries a heart massage to resuscitate her.

CHRISTOPHER You can't leave me Liz. You can't leave me on my own!

Christopher's vigorous attempts fail. He slumps to his knees beside Liz in heartbroken tears. Pain etches over his face.

Christopher holds Liz's hand. He kisses her forehead.

CHRISTOPHER Sleep well my love.

Christopher slumps to the floor.

FADE TO BLACK.