

THE SHINE

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

A dark narrow passage. A place where shadows thrive. Gloom enough to send any 'normal' folk in the other direction.

BLACK STILETTOS strike the pavement. Echo. The CLICK CLACKS scream power and confidence, but in a place like this?

We follow the five inchers up to -- fishnets, a short leather skirt. Dolled up, over-accessorized, meet MONICA, twenty-ish, concealed by pancaked make-up.

Near the end of the alley, stands a dark silhouette of a man, long trench coat, fedora hat. He almost looks like a shadow himself until she stops in front of him.

The moon bounces off his angular jawline. His eyes cold and grey. This is CAIN "THE CRUTCH".

Monica hands Cain a wad of rolled bills, turns to leave.

CAIN

Going somewhere?

She turns back to Cain who's spot counted the night's run.

CAIN (CONT'D)

You're short.

He looks down, pockets the dough. She attempts explanation.

MONICA

I swear I'll make up for it
tomorrow just...

Cain grabs her by the arm. His other fist nails her jaw.

CAIN

You sorry ass slut!

He pushes her backwards. Her ass hits the pavement. Rips her fishnets. Cain straddles her.

A grapple. She struggles to get away as he beats her. She claws at his face. Knocks his fedora off.

As he bends over to retrieve the hat, it's enough for her to scramble away. She runs down the alley. He wipes his face -- blood.

He scowls as she escapes.

EXT. MACGARVEYS IRISH PUB - NIGHT

A neon that's seen better days sizzles over a black door.

Beside the entrance, sits a BUM, that look of dirt and despair about him.

He looks to find Monica, scraped, reddened. She sifts through her handbag, pulls out what change she has left, deposits it into Bum's forever stained palm. He nods 'thank you'.

She looks back over her shoulder then hurries inside --

INT. MACGARVEYS IRISH PUB - CONTINUOUS

A dark paneled swill slinging hole-in-the-wall.

Celtic music accentuates the ale drinking atmosphere. Patrons decorate the bar.

Monica finds the least occupied section, takes a seat away from the action as the BARKEEP serves shots at the other end.

She buries her face in her hands which tremble.

BARNABAS (O.S.)
Something troubling you ma'am?

The soft male voice is almost comforting to her ears. She looks up to see BARNABAS, 30ish, dark eyes and hair, a peace about his emotionless face.

BARNABAS (CONT'D)
I can see the pain in your eyes.

MONICA
In my jaw more like it. I think it's broken. I need a new profession.

He reaches over, lightly rubs a forming bruise on her cheek.

BARNABAS
Who did this to you?

MONICA
You read the Bible?

BARNABAS
Once or twice.

MONICA

The one who killed Abel. That's who did it. You're talking to a ghost ya know, cuz he's going to kill me.

Barnabas pulls out a clear bottle, no label. Pours the antidote into a rocks glass. Slides it in front of Monica.

MONICA (CONT'D)

I don't drink. What is that, anyway?

BARNABAS

I call it 'The Shine'.

MONICA

Moonshine? As in prohibition?

Finally, an emotion as he flashes a trusting smile then tucks the bottle in his jacket pocket.

BARNABAS

Just my special brew. It'll make you forget your troubles.

She shrugs 'what has she got to lose' picks up the glass, swirls the liquid fire, then downs a swallow.

BARNABAS (CONT'D)

Anything else I can do for you?

MONICA

Not unless you can make someone disappear.

BARNABAS

What if I told you I could do just that? Would you take me up on the offer?

She takes another sip. He has her attention.

BARNABAS (CONT'D)

I mean, an eye for an eye, right?

She puts the glass down. Shakes her head.

MONICA

It would be the answer to my prayers but I can't wish death on anyone. Who am I to judge? I mean I'm just a working girl trying to make a living.

From her point of view, Barnabas looks blurry. In and out of focus. She leans on the bar.

MONICA (CONT'D)

What was in that glass? I'm feeling whoozy.

BARNABAS

Shine...With which I have something in common.

He goes out of focus again.

BARNABAS (CONT'D)

Ya see shine is an illicitly distilled or smuggled liquor. Or it can mean to distinguish oneself in an activity or excel, which is what I 'do'.

MONICA

What is it you excel at? Making moonshine?

Inebriated, she laughs 'he's pulling her leg'. He doesn't laugh, stares through her, a dead serious look about him.

BARNABAS

My destiny is to serve others. Fulfill prophecies so-to-speak. You could say I'm skilled at, well, many things, some better left unsaid.

MONICA

How about serving me a ride home, Mr. Destiny?

From her POV he becomes distorted. We see him through her double vision, he scans the area, steps from behind the bar.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

A dark road scantily lit with what street lights are working.

Barnabas walks next to Monica who stumbles, mumbles, and clings to him to keep from falling down.

A dark FIGURE follows them.

Barnabas stops. Listens but doesn't look back. That sixth sense tells him someone's trailing.

He scoops a drunken Monica up into his arms, carries her up the walk, disappears into an apartment building.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A modest dwelling. Just enough to serve as a crash pad.

Barnabas carefully lies Monica onto the bed.

He stares at her. His face emotionless. Calm.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Out of the shadows, the dark figure that was following emerges into the lighted entrance.

It's Cain and he doesn't look happy.

He looks over his shoulder. Scans the surroundings, enters.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door creaks as it slowly opens.

Monica lies sound asleep.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The light over the entrance goes dark. The door opens. Someone walks out of the door and into the night. It's too dark to make them out.

INT. MACGARVEYS IRISH PUB - NIGHT

An almost empty gin mill. Only late night bar flies left.

Barnabas sits at the bar -- as a patron. The barkeep wipes the counter.

BARKEEP

Another round?

Barnabas just puts his hand over the glass 'no'.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Sun beams through tattered mini blinds.

The light lands on Monica, who lies asleep on the verge of waking, she tussles.

Her eyes open slowly. She reaches out of the cover, grabs her head 'pain'. Mumbles to herself.

MONICA

Ugh. Exactly why I don't drink.

She closes her eyes rolls over on her back, pulls the covers up, then her eyes open to see --

-- hanging from the fan blade, a dark grey fedora hat.

She stares confused. 'She never turns tricks at her place.'

Then the familiarity of the hat sinks in. Her eyes widen.

She rolls over in bed.

SCREAMS.

Neck slashed wide open, Cain lies dead right beside her in blood soaked sheets.

Monica scrambles out of the bed. Falls on her ass. Looks up in horror.

The headboard and wall over the bed, covered in blood spatter. She crawls backwards, hyperventilates, scuttles to the phone on the bedside table, hits 9-1-1.

911 OPERATOR

Nine one one, state your emergency.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

Blue strobes flash against the multi-housing unit.

A squad car pulls away.

Monica looks back at the apartment building through the back window of the police car.

INT. MACGARVEYS IRISH PUB - DAY

The place is extinct, except for the BARKEEP and DETECTIVE CARTER who stand at the end of the bar.

BARKEEP

I'm telling you, there was no one here named Barnabas. Ever.

DETECTIVE CARTER

She said he served something called shine.

BARKEEP

I think the hooker hit the crack pipe too many times that night. And you never know, someone could have slipped her a roofy. Not saying it's ever happened in here but...

DETECTIVE CARTER

Her blood work showed no signs of recreation drugs. Something about her story. I honestly believed it. Hitting a bunch of dead ends though. Anyway, thanks for you help. If you think of anything else, here's my card.

Detective Carter hands a business card over to the Barkeep.

Five Years Later

INT. CELL - DAY

Metal bars. A holding room for what is about to come.

Monica sits on a cot.

An ORDERLY stands over her with a pair of clippers that come to life. Buzz a section of hair off the top of Monica's head then buzz a spot on her calf.

MONICA

(whispers)

I didn't do it. It was him. The shine. I can't remember. You believe me, right?

She looks up at the Orderly who doesn't even acknowledge her, keeps preparing the prisoner.

INT. DEATH CHAMBER - DAY

A room awaits. Execution chair sits in the center under a well lighted stage.

Witnesses like an audience wait with anticipation.

Monica is led in. Placed in the chair.

There is a calm across her face while they secure her. She is strapped at the waste, wrists, and ankles.

Electrodes are carefully placed on the hairless spots on her head and leg.

A PASTOR comes in the room. In his clutch the Holy Bible.

PASTOR

Have you any last words child? I'm here if you'd like to pray.

She sits comatose. Blank.

He turns to walk away. She whispers.

MONICA

I didn't do it. It was the man with the shine. The shine.

She is in the room alone.

The second hand on the clock TICKS. Her whispers get louder. Turn into chants.

MONICA (CONT'D)

The shine. The shine.

The second hand echoes. CLICK. CLICK. Like a heart beat.

Her voice gets louder.

MONICA (CONT'D)

The shine! The shine!

Witnesses look at each other. Hear the strange words coming from the death chamber.

MONICA (CONT'D)

The shine! The shine! The shine!

Lights flicker. The sizzling BUZZ of electricity then --

-- PITCH BLACK.

INT. TAMMY'S TAVERN - NIGHT

A small dive bar. Most of the patrons look on the Karaoke taking place in the back.

The barkeep paces around the room collecting spent bottles.

A TALL MAN in a business suit sits at the bar, drowns himself with the last bit of scotch. Worried face, shaky hands.

BARNABAS (O.S.)
You look like you could use a
stronger glass of contentment.

Tall Man looks up to Barnabas, like deja vu, who stands behind the bar, bottle of 'shine' in hand.

BARNABAS (CONT'D)
What brings you in tonight?

The clear poison splashes against the bottom of the glass.
Fills it half full.

TALL MAN
Spending my last penny after
divorce court today. Cheating
bitch, got everything.

FADE TO BLACK.