

INNER DEMONS
by
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EXT. OLD GRIMWOOD HOUSE - NIGHT

The abandoned house sits in an old, neglected neighborhood. Corroded by years of bad weather. Second storey window boarded up by a piece of wood. Glass shattered.

The front door is separated from the street by a wrought iron gate and a long gravel walkway, lined by withered trees on each side, dead autumn leaves drifting to the ground.

Behind the house, nothing but a lake. Eerily calm. A foggy mist hovering low above the surface.

The night is dark. Rain pours down from black skies above.

A small black car pulls up to the house.

A man (50's) steps out of the car. Wearing a long black coat. Matching black fedora hat. Eyes solemn. He pulls his collar up from the biting chill of the rain. This is FATHER FRANCIS LONDON.

He stands there a moment. Staring up at the decayed house. At the weeds and branches winding around it in some macabre embrace.

He catches a glimpse of movement from the second storey window. In the darkness he can see the outline of someone watching him. A woman.

He hunches his shoulders and starts up the walkway toward the front door.

INT. FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A hand enters frame, turning the doorknob and opening the door for Father London, who stands at the entrance, the rain dripping from his hat and shoulders.

EMILY BRITE (26), the woman from the second floor window, appears relieved when she sees the priest.

EMILY
Hello, Father.
(steps aside)
Please, come in.

The priest does, removing his soggy hat, revealing a full head of silver-grey hair.

Emily shuts the door behind him. She has long, dirty blond hair, unkempt and clinging to her in clumps of sweat. She looks like she hasn't slept in a day or two.

She extends her hand.

EMILY
I'm Emily.

FATHER LONDON
 (shakes her hand)
 Father London.

EMILY
 Please, let me take your coat.

FATHER LONDON
 No, thank you. I'm fine.

EMILY
 I'm so glad they agreed to send
 someone over when I called.

FATHER LONDON
 Well, rest assured, this is not
 standard protocol for the
 Church. A case like this would
 ordinarily undergo weeks of
 investigation before a member of
 the clergy is assigned to it.
 But, seeing as how this is the
 location, along with its well
 documented history... I suppose
 the cardinal made an exception.
 Just this once.

EMILY
 Believe me, Father, this is an
 unusual step for us as well. We
 usually don't involve the Church
 in our work.

FATHER LONDON
 We?

EMILY
 Me. And my husband. Matthew.

FATHER LONDON
 Is he here? Your husband?

Emily's face turns solemn.

EMILY
 I think... I should show you
 something. Before we go
 upstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Father London is sitting at the kitchen table, watching Emily
 remove a video camera from its tripod and bring it over to
 the table.

EMILY
 My husband and I are ghost
 hunters.

FATHER LONDON
"Ghost hunters"?

EMILY
We travel to places - homes,
schools, cemeteries, churches,
hospitals - that are long
rumored or suspected of being
haunted, and then we set up
surveillance equipment and
attempt to capture any evidence
of hauntings and signs of
paranormal disturbance on film.

FATHER LONDON
Quite an unusual choice of
occupation.

EMILY
It's a fascination, Father. A
hunger for the unknown. In
fact, my husband and I met on a
ghost hunting expedition a few
years back in Romania organized
by several groups.

(remembering)
He had - has - quite an affinity
for this line of work. He
seemed to always have this...
strange connection to the
unknown.

FATHER LONDON
What happened to him?

Emily's face goes solemn again. She sits down next to the
priest. Sets up the camera for him.

EMILY
As you're aware, Father, this
house was the old site of the
Grimwood slayings. Serial
murderer Paul Grimwood, a
wheelchair-bound man who grew up
here in a violent and abusive
environment. This eventually
led to his killing spree, after
his parents died. His victims
were all children he led to this
house, where he performed his
sadistic rituals.

FATHER LONDON

I've heard the stories. Some say he was possessed by demons, in a futile attempt to explain how he did the things he did while confined to a wheelchair. A very weak theory, even by Church standards.

EMILY

The slayings finally ended, on this day one hundred years ago.

FATHER LONDON

And so I assume you've heard stories of hauntings in this house and came here to investigate. But what does this have to do with me?

She sets the camera down on the table.

EMILY

We shot this last night. Here, in this house.

She presses play.

ON VIDEO:

The camera is slowly panning over the empty living room.

The date at the bottom of the video reads "10/30/2010, 11:21 PM".

MATTHEW'S VOICE (ON VIDEO)

The old Grimwood house. Site of the Grimwood slayings of 1910. The living room, they say, is where he kept the kids before bringing them upstairs for his rituals. And remember this guy was in a wheelchair--

The camera suddenly spins to face MATTHEW HAYWARD (27). Green eyes. Good looking.

MATTHEW (ON VIDEO)

--in a house with only one staircase that leads upstairs.
(mock fright)
Wooooo.

EMILY'S VOICE (ON VIDEO)

Knock it off, Matt.

The camera spins around now to show Emily, looking a lot more vibrant and clean.

EMILY (ON VIDEO)

Most of the reported hauntings happened upstairs, mostly from neighborhood kids hanging out here looking for a good scare. There was also one report of a real estate developer scouting this location for new condos, who said he witnessed something up there which can only be described as paranormal.

Camera spins back around to face Matthew, who looks excited.

MATTHEW (ON VIDEO)

Let's go take a look, shall we?

The film suddenly cuts to EMILY'S POV, climbing the staircase to the second floor.

EMILY'S VOICE (ON VIDEO)

They say Grimwood was missing an eye, left eye I believe, with nothing to cover it up. Nothing but an empty socket. Part of the accident that took the use of his legs.

The film cuts again, to Grimwood's old room upstairs. Camera slowly pans around, showing a mostly empty room except for a cabinet drawer and dresser mirror, and some metal pipes and pieces of wood leaning up against the wall.

EMILY'S VOICE (ON VIDEO)

Grimwood's old room. Where most of the killings took place.

The camera passes over the rusted and chipped floorboards.

EMILY'S VOICE (ON VIDEO)

If you look closely, you can still see some chalk outlines here, or some sort of charcoal designs, probably where he drew symbols to mark his rituals.

Suddenly there's a SHARP NOISE off camera. The camera whirls around to find one of the metal pipes now lying on the floor.

EMILY'S VOICE (ON VIDEO)

Jesus...

MATTHEW'S VOICE (ON VIDEO)

(calling from
downstairs)

Emily!!

EMILY'S VOICE (ON VIDEO)

Matt?

MATTHEW'S VOICE (ON VIDEO)

Emily, quick, get over here!
Something weird is happening.

EMILY'S VOICE (ON VIDEO)

Hold on!

The camera suddenly races out of the room, starts running down the stairs.

EMILY'S VOICE (ON VIDEO)

(frantic;
panting)

Oh god oh god oh god--

The image suddenly cuts to black.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Click- Emily hits the stop button on the camera.

FATHER LONDON

I'm afraid I don't understand.
What exactly did you want me to
see here?

EMILY

I think it's time to go
upstairs.

INT. GRIMWOOD'S ROOM - NIGHT

The door creaks open slowly. Emily enters, followed by
Father London.

Father London reacts to something off screen.

FATHER LONDON

My God...

At the other end of the room sits MATTHEW - IN HIS
WHEELCHAIR.

A clap of thunder BOOMS outside.

Matthew's body is curled up in the chair, his head tilted
upward, lifeless eyes almost pulled back behind the eyelids,
mouth open, frozen as if in a vegetative state.

They approach slowly.

FATHER LONDON

I... I don't understand. Your
husband is--

EMILY

A paraplegic. Car accident when he was fifteen left him confined to a wheelchair for life.

FATHER LONDON

But how did he end up in this... condition? He appeared fine in the video from last night.

EMILY

I don't know, Father. When he called me downstairs, he thought he saw movement coming from the basement. He wanted me to go down there to film it. When I came back upstairs, he was gone. I climbed the stairs again up to this room and somehow found him here... in this catatonic state.

FATHER LONDON

How did he get up here in his wheelchair? There's no possible way.

EMILY

This is why I called you, Father.

The priest looks at her. Starting to understand.

EMILY

Paul Grimwood was a paraplegic, just like Matt. Yet somehow he made it up and down this room in his wheelchair. And considering the stories we've heard about Grimwood's... condition...

FATHER LONDON

(incredulous)

You believe your husband is possessed?

EMILY

I know how crazy it sounds.

FATHER LONDON

Grimwood's mental condition was all speculation. They're not even sure if he was really confined to a wheelchair or simply crippled.

EMILY
(desperate)

There must be something you can do.

FATHER LONDON

I can't do anything unless I can confirm his condition is not medical in nature. Miss Brite, you really should have notified the paramedics before calling us--

A SUDDEN BANG off screen startles them.

One of the dresser drawers has flung open.

EMILY
(panicked)

It's happening again.

FATHER LONDON

Again?

EMILY

Like last night. Strange things started happening just before I discovered Matt like this.

The priest looks at the open drawer. Then back at Matt. His mind racing.

The rain outside is falling harder. Beating against the windows.

One of the floorboards suddenly collapses. Emily screams.

FATHER LONDON

All right, come on. Let's get Matthew out of here.

EMILY

But--

FATHER LONDON

Leave the wheelchair. Maybe his condition will improve if we get him away from this place. Come on, can you grab his legs?

EMILY

I think so.

FATHER LONDON

I'll take him by the shoulders. Come on.

They struggle to lift Matthew from his wheelchair. Thunder roars outside.

EXT. GRIMWOOD HOUSE - NIGHT

Emily and Father London emerge from the front door, straining as they carry Matthew with them.

They drag themselves along the gravel walkway, finally collapsing to the ground just before the front gates. Drenched from the pouring rain.

They hear a noise from the house.

EMILY

Look!

Matthew's empty wheelchair is slowly rolling out the front door, into the open rain. The wheel squeaking creepily.

It stops just a few feet in front of them, then tips over on its side. The wheel still rolling.

Emily stares at the chair. Long soggy hair clinging to her face. Rain dripping down.

EMILY

How--

FATHER LONDON

(getting up)

Come on. Let's get him to the car. We'll figure out what to do about him once we get him to the church.

They lift Matthew again, carrying him the last few steps to Father London's car. They lie him in the back seat, then climb into the car, the priest driving, Emily beside him, and drive off down the deserted street. Into the dark rain.

The wheelchair lies outside the front door, tipped over, its wheel still rolling.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The video camera is still on the table. The red "record" light is on.

ON VIDEO:

We see the table surface, and the sink out of focus behind it. The date reads "10/31/2010, 11:59 PM".

A HEAD SUDDENLY ENTERS THE FRAME - rotted. Half decomposed. Glaring directly into the camera.

Its left eye missing.

FADE OUT: