

KILBOURNE PARISH

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

ELLEN (17) hurries along a well-worn path. She checks over her shoulder again and again.

A FIGURE jumps from behind a tree near Ellen, wraps two massive arms around her.

Ellen SHRIEKS.

BRUCE

You're not going anywhere.

BRUCE (17) holds Ellen tight.

Her shrieks turn into LAUGHTER. She kisses at Bruce's neck, nibbles at his ear.

Bruce's grip shifts to groping.

ELLEN

Wanna bet?

Ellen slips out of his grasp and starts running again.

Bruce gives chase.

Ellen enters a clearing deep within the woods. Bruce stops behind her, wraps his arms around her again.

BRUCE

Wow. How'd you find this place?

ELLEN

Oh, uh, Jenny told me about it.

BRUCE

Jenny, huh? You're sure you've never been here before?

She goes into full seduction mode.

ELLEN

Huh uh. This is my first time.

They're back to kissing and groping in a snap.

Bruce puts his hands beneath Ellen's shirt and undoes her bra in one fluid motion. Ellen pulls away, still playful.

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN (cont'd)
If I didn't know any better, I'd
swear you've been practicing. You
seeing someone behind my back?

BRUCE
No, baby. Of course not. You know
you're the only girl for me.

He punctuates the sweet talk with a kiss to cover his lie.
Less words, more action.

Bruce produces a JOINT, lights it up. He takes a hit, then
shares with Ellen.

Ellen kneels down. She undoes Bruce's pants.

Bruce moans with anticipation.

SLASH!

Bruce is YANKED off his feet, flies through the air. Ellen
blinks, stunned. She's covered in BLOOD. Bruce's blood.

She staggers to her feet, confused.

ELLEN
B-Bruce?

Bruce SCREAMS from somewhere to her left. She turns, but she
can't find him in the darkness.

Another SCREAM, this one behind her. She spins, more
terrified with each passing second.

Each scream is punctuated by a WET, RIPPING sound.

Ellen runs. The screams surround her as she flees. Tears
roll down her cheeks.

Bruce's screaming stops, replaced by sobs and whimpers.

Ellen stops, listens.

ELLEN (cont'd)
Bruce?

She leaves the path, homing in on the sound.

She finds what's left of her lover.

Bruce is CRUCIFIED between two trees, spread eagle. His
FLESH has been FLAYED from his body, but the poor bastard is
still alive.

He's tied to the trees with his own skin.

Ellen is so horrified, she can't find her voice.

BRUCE
(weak)
Ellen? Help... help me.

Ellen reaches for him.

ELLEN
Bruce, I...

She stops short of actually touching him.

ELLEN (cont'd)
I'll go get help.

BRUCE
Don't leave me...

Ellen turns, SCREAMS.

She finds herself face-to-face with another horror. Blocking her path is a horror wearing a pastor's clothing.

The MINISTER.

He looks as if he were cut into tiny pieces and then sewn back together again, held together by scar tissue and pure hatred.

When he speaks, his voice makes her want to vomit.

MINISTER
I'm back.

The horror lunges past Ellen and descends on the barely conscious Bruce. Bruce's screams start again as the minister tears into muscle and sinew.

Ellen is showered with her Bruce's blood. Again.

When she comes to her senses, Ellen SPRINTS from the scene.

She never stops screaming.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - MORNING

The mood of the congregation is somber. No trappings of a funeral can be seen, but the expressions and clothing suggests a mourning service.

A portrait of the butchered boy stands in a place of prominence at the front of the sanctuary.

The pastor, MICHAEL HAYES (early 40's), surveys his flock. He stands with poise and dignity, presenting the image that the congregation expects from the pulpit.

He speaks in quiet tones.

MICHAEL

The Lord giveth, and the Lord
 taketh away. That He works in
 mysterious ways goes without
 saying, but we can rest assured
 that this tragedy will yield a
 lesson that we can't yet perceive.

Sobbing and sniffing from the congregation.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Bruce Delrich was a fine young man,
 an example to other students his
 age. We can rest assured that his
 suffering was short-lived, and that
 he's resting at peace in the
 presence of our Lord.

From the congregation, a "psh" sound.

Murmurs. Who did that?

Michael is nonplussed.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Losing someone so young in such a
 violent manner is almost impossible
 to comprehend, but it isn't our
 place to understand. It is our
 place to look to God, and to one
 another, for solace.

TOMMY (O.S.)

Bullshit.

Gasps from the congregation. Michael falters.

In the midst of a group of teens, TOMMY HAYES (18) stands.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Excuse me?

TOMMY

You expect us to just sit here and nod in agreement while you stand up there and spout that bullshit?

MICHAEL

Tommy, we are in a church-

TOMMY

Exactly! We're in the one place where we're supposed to be able to hear the truth. So when are you going to talk about what really happened?

Michael doesn't respond. Tommy addresses the congregation.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Bruce snuck out there to get laid, and someone butchered him. He was literally cut limb from limb. They don't even know if they found all the pieces. Who the hell does that to a person?

Tommy's girlfriend, GABBIE SUMMERS (18), sits in the pew by Tommy, holding his hand. Tommy's friends DALTON REEVE (18) and DESTINY ABRAMS (17) sit nearby.

TOMMY (cont'd)

The worst part is that the bastard's still out there.

MICHAEL

Tommy, you stop this right now. Both Sheriff Reeve and Jerry are certain that Bruce was killed by a wild animal-

TOMMY

An animal? And what about what Ellen saw?

Michael's eyes dart toward Ellen and her parents. He doesn't want to say anything offensive, but he has to say something.

MICHAEL

Ellen may not remember things as clearly as she thinks she did.

(CONTINUED)

TOMMY
Because she was high?

A silent stand-off between Michael and Tommy. Tommy makes eye contact with Ellen.

TOMMY (cont'd)
I believe her. I just wish you did,
Dad.

Tommy storms out of the church, followed by Gabbie, Dalton, and Destiny.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - MORNING

Tommy leans against a car, one arm wrapped around Gabbie. Dalton and Destiny stand nearby in a similar pose.

GABBIE
It needed to be said. I just don't
understand why you had to make a
scene.

TOMMY
Because they're lying, Gabbie. All
of them.

GABBIE
They're not lying, Tommy. They're
just afraid. I mean, if Ellen's
story is true-

Tommy pulls away.

TOMMY
So you don't believe her either?

GABBIE
I don't know what to believe. What
makes you so sure she's telling the
truth?

TOMMY
I know what people look like when
they're lying, and she's not lying.

Destiny slips away from Dalton and sidles up beside Tommy.

DESTINY
Well, I don't care either way. You
standing up for her like that, in
front of everybody? Hot.

(CONTINUED)

DALTON

Boyfriend, right here. Remember me?

Destiny gives Tommy a flirting glance before slipping back into Dalton's arms.

DALTON (cont'd)

I've gotta be honest, Tommy. I'm inclined to side with the sheriff on this one. If he says it was an animal, I believe it was an animal.

TOMMY

I still don't understand why you call him "the sheriff" instead of "Dad."

DALTON

When he's on the job, he's the sheriff. Keep work and family separate.

TOMMY

Well, your job is to report the news for that little piece of shit paper. What kind of journalist just accepts what everyone else tells him?

Tommy and Dalton have been friends long enough that Tommy knows how to hurt him, and that cut deep.

Dalton clams up.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Look, Dalton. I'm sorry. I'm just-

The church doors open. The service is over, and the congregation streams into the parking lot.

Tommy steps away from the car to stand straight, a little defiance in his posture. His friends all inch closer to him.

Michael, the pastor, is first to emerge. Shaking hands and offering solace.

Tommy's mom, LINDA HAYES (early 40's) stands by Michael, the perfect pastor's wife. JACOB HAYES (5) stands at his mom's side, holding her hand.

The sadness in Linda's eyes is heartbreaking. She doesn't look at Tommy. She reaches down to pick up Jacob instead.

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Those churchgoers who bother to look at Tommy do so with frowns and scowls on their faces. All except one.

Ellen lifts her tear-stained face to look at Tommy. She silently mouths two words: "Thank you."

Tommy allows himself a slight smile. It fades when he makes eye contact with his dad, the pastor.

The impassive look on Michael's face is one that Tommy's all too familiar with.

He can expect to hear about this later, in private.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Tommy and Gabbie walk hand-in-hand through the crowded halls. They find Dalton and Destiny at Dalton's locker.

DALTON

Hey. You guys going?

GABBIE

I want to. Tommy thinks we should go to class instead.

TOMMY

Most of the people going never said more than two words to Bruce. They're just going to get out of class.

DESTINY

Like that's a bad thing. Come on.

Destiny grabs Dalton's hand and pulls him along. Dalton shrugs and allows himself to be led away.

The bell RINGS.

GABBIE

Come on, Tommy. Please? I really want to go.

Tommy doesn't want to go, but he can't say no to Gabbie.

TOMMY

Fine.

Gabbie smiles. She takes Tommy's hand and they walk together into the auditorium.

A sign taped to the door says "GRIEF COUNSELING SESSIONS."

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

The auditorium is dim. The only illumination comes from a projector on the stage.

A few students are scattered throughout, some paying attention, others goofing off.

A single TEACHER stands on-stage near the projector, reading from the screen.

TEACHER

Psychology tells us there are seven stages of grief. Stage one is shock and denial. Stage two is pain and guilt. Stage three is-

Tommy sits with his friends near the back of the auditorium. He leans toward Gabbie.

TOMMY

(under his breath)
You've gotta be kidding me.

GABBIE

Give them a break. At least they're trying. It's not like they have a lot of experience with this.

Tommy grumbles and settles back in his seat. His mind wanders as the teacher drones on and on.

A FLICKER of movement near the edge of the light. Tommy squints.

A figure stands in the shadows. Another teacher?

TEACHER

So the goal is to ultimately reach the stage of acceptance and hope. Now, show of hands: how many of you are at stage one?

A few hands go up, including Gabbie's. Dalton tries to raise his hand, but Destiny places it on her thigh instead.

Tommy strains to get a better look at the other teacher.

Now why would a teacher be wearing a minister's robe?

The minister looks right at Tommy, eyes ablaze. He makes a gesture of slitting his throat.

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TOMMY
What the hell?

Tommy half stands. The teacher on stage stops mid-sentence.

TEACHER
Tommy Hayes? Do you have something
to say?

Tommy glances at the teacher, then back at the edge of the light. The minister has VANISHED.

TEACHER (cont'd)
It's okay, Tommy. This is a safe
place. You can tell us what's going
through your mind.

A few snickers. Tommy and Gabbie exchange a glance.

TOMMY
That's okay.

He sits back down. The teacher returns to the presentation.

TEACHER
Show of hands: how many of you are
at stage two?

Gabbie lowers her voice.

GABBIE
What was that all about?

TOMMY
I thought I saw someone.

GABBIE
Who?

Tommy looks past Gabbie to see the minister walking toward the back of the auditorium. The minister slips out the back door.

Tommy jumps to his feet and scrambles toward the end of the aisle.

GABBIE (cont'd)
Tommy, wait.

TEACHER
Mr. Hayes, you're going to need a
hall pass to return to class.

Tommy ignores them both as he bolts out the door.