

GUARDIAN

by

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INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

1

The windows and walls are covered with BLANKETS and MATTRESSES, creating a dim, soundproof asylum. The sole light source is a small READING LAMP near a wooden chair.

MARY (45) sits bound to the chair. She's dressed in a dirty white nightgown, head down, chin resting on her chest. She struggles against her restraints, loosening the knot at her wrists.

The door opens. CLAIRE (16) enters with a tray of food.

Mary looks up. Her dark, matted hair shifts, revealing a face covered in SCRATCHES and SCARS. SICKNESS and DECAY mar her complexion. She's inhuman, possessed.

She snarls at Claire.

CLAIRE

Hi, Mom.

2

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

2

Claire sits in her reading chair, absently holding a copy of THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS. THOMAS (45) sits on the loveseat, facing her.

He removes his minister's collar and sets it down beside the half-empty scotch bottle. He sighs.

CLAIRE

How much longer, Dad?

THOMAS

I don't know.

The silence settles.

THOMAS (cont'd)

Maybe I can try another exorcism.

CLAIRE

That isn't going to work. We're Methodist, for Christ's sake!

THOMAS

Watch your mouth!

Silence again.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

We can't do this alone, Dad. We need help. We need to tell someone.

THOMAS

No.

CLAIRE

If you cared about her half as much as I do-

THOMAS

I care about her ten times as much as you do. She's my wife, Claire! My wife!

CLAIRE

And she's my mom!

THOMAS

What am I supposed to do?

Thomas can't bear to look at his daughter. He looks away, ashamed.

Claire storms out of the room.

Thomas pours himself a glass of scotch and knocks it back.

3 INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

3

Claire lies perfectly still on her bed, staring at the ceiling, listening to her iPod.

A FRAMED PICTURE of Claire and her mother holds a prominent place on her nightstand.

Her eyes glisten with angry tears.

4 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

4

Thomas clumsily reaches into the top drawer of the hallway table. He withdraws three items, one at a time:

A CRUCIFIX, attached to a thin metal chain.

A small METAL TOKEN, bearing the symmetrical cross of Saint Benedict.

A black, comb bound BOOK, its bold white title standing out against the dark cover: RITE OF EXORCISM.

He closes the drawer slowly. Gathering the items in his hands, he staggers toward the door at the end of the hall.

5 INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 5

An eerie MOAN drifts down the hall and into Claire's room.

Claire bumps up the volume on her iPod. The music, dark and angry, drowns out the moans.

Then the SCREAMS begin.

Over her music, Claire hears the hermaphroditic demon voice yelling at her father in some ancient language.

She hears her father's voice, monotonous and ritualistic, matching the volume of the demon's screams.

THOMAS (V.O.)  
(muffled)  
I cast you out, unclean spirit.

Claire's iPod reaches the end of the song, and her ears are assaulted with the sounds of the exorcism down the hall.

THOMAS (V.O.) (cont'd)  
(muffled, louder)  
... begetter of death, you robber  
of life...

Claire yanks the pillow over her head.

6 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 6

The entire house is still, silent. The door at the end of the hallway stands slightly ajar.

A low wind whistles outside.

Claire emerges from her bedroom, peering into the hall.

The door at the end of the hall creaks slightly.

Claire steps out into the hall, her bare feet soundless.

She creeps toward the guest bedroom door.

As she passes the family room, she sees a FLICKER OF MOVEMENT from the corner of her eye. She turns quickly in that direction.

Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

She moves toward the guest bedroom door. She eases it open.

The room is set exactly as it was before.

Almost...

This time, the CHAIR in the center of the room is facing AWAY from the door. The figure in the chair is perfectly still beneath a WHITE SHEET.

Claire checks the hallway behind her.

Empty.

She looks back into the room and ventures inside.

7

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

7

With hesitant footsteps, Claire maneuvers around to face the front of the chair.

The white sheet is soaked wet with BLOOD.

Claire reaches for the sheet and pulls it away.

Her FATHER'S DEAD, EMPTY EYES stare back at her. His chest is covered in blood, his throat slit.

Claire's eyes widen in surprise and horror.

A FLASH of white near the door. SLAM!

Mary stands just inside the door, broken restraints hanging from her wrists. A bloody CARVING KNIFE dangles in one hand.

CLAIRE  
(terrified)  
What do you want?

MARY  
You know what I want.

The demon LUNGES at her daughter, HOWLING.

Claire SCREAMS.

8 INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 8

Claire sits bolt upright in her bed, still screaming.

Panting and tear-streaked, she tries to calm herself.

Thomas appears in the doorway. They regard one another. He wants to comfort her, but he's forgotten how.

Thomas turns and leaves.

9 INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT 9

Thomas lies passed out in the easy chair. His BIBLE rests on his chest, an EMPTY SCOTCH BOTTLE on the stand beside him.

Claire appears in the hallway. She glances in the family room with a blank, accepting stare. She walks toward the kitchen.

The sound of rummaging travels down the hall, into the family room. Thomas stirs, but doesn't wake.

The sound stops. Claire reappears in the hallway, carrying a CARVING KNIFE.

The looks she gives her dad is heartbreaking. She hesitates, then continues toward the guest bedroom.

10 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 10

Clair stops at the door to the guest bedroom. She shudders with a sob, then takes a calming breath.

She nudges the door open.

CLAIR

Hi, Mom.

Claire closes the door behind her with a soft...

Click.

CUT TO BLACK