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# Cut Above the Rite

By Jessica Johnston

**MAN 1:**

**MAN 2:**

WOMAN [WHISPERING]:

There's nothing to believe.

"The battle against the Devil, which is the principal task of Saint Michael the Archangel, is still being fought today, because the Devil is still alive and active in the world."

Pope John Paul II

What follows is inspired by true events.

**THE RITE:**

-You finished?

-Yep.

Then wash up and come eat.

I've washed up.

Well, then eat.

And when you're done,

I'll need a hand with the casket.

How'd she do it?

What?

Kill herself.

Michael, I've told you this many times.

We serve the dead,

but we don't talk about them.

It brings bad things.

We keep dead people in the house, Dad.

How much worse could it get?

-Are you kidding me?

-No, Eddie. I'm not kidding.

Wait, why?

So I can get out of here.

Why not tell him

you wanna go to college?

I mean,

you got the grades. You can do it.

-You think he'd pay for that?

-Shit, man. Seminary school?

Wait, wait, wait. Wait.

Seminary school, really?

Wait, is this your way of telling me

you're gay? I'm just joking. Okay? Joking.

Man, you don't get it. In my family, you're

either a mortician or a priest. That's it.  
Well, then change your name.  
It's too late. I took the entrance exam.  
-You what?

**MICHAEL:**

I'm leaving Monday.

**EDDIE:**

**MICHAEL:**

It's a four-year degree  
before you even take your first vows.  
If it doesn't work out,  
I can always leave.  
Wow. Such faith.

**MICHAEL:**

You're such a dick.

**EDDIE:**

I will never confess to you.  
You know that, right?

**NINA:**

**EDDIE:**

-Gonna get heat for giving away beers?  
Not if they don't know.  
How about for banging the customers?  
Screw you, Eddie.  
Drink up. I'm off in 10.  
Lickety-split.  
"Lickety-split"? Pbbb.  
You better make the most of that  
before they chop your wiener off.  
Goodbye, wiener.

**ISTVAN:**

The pain is gone.  
God has taken it...  
...away.  
Michael. Come.  
Don't be afraid.

Four years later

**MAN:**

This is always a special Mass for me...  
...as I look upon our new deacons...  
...as they prepare to go into the world  
with Christ's message.  
So in the next few months,  
you will face your last assessments...  
...and then be asked to take  
your final vows to become priests.  
So I leave you  
with these words to consider...  
...from the Gospel of Saint John:  
You did not choose me...  
...it was I who chose you...  
...and I send you forth  
to bear fruit that will last.  
[CROWD APPLAUDING]

**MATTHEW:**

Exam results.  
You aced psychology.  
-Art history too. Congratulations.  
-Thank you.  
So, what happened with theology?  
It's like you blew it on purpose.  
I've been distracted.  
End of the year, that's all.  
Drop by my office this week.  
We'll discuss it.  
Okay.  
[GUNFIRE PLAYING ON VIDEO GAME]

**MAN:**

Dude, honestly?

**MATTHEW:**

Michael, wait!  
[GRUNTS]  
[WOMAN SCREAMS]

**MICHAEL:**

Bless me, Father.

Father.

Bless me.

Please, Father.

I don't wanna die like this.

Uh, through the power vested in me:

Let the fire of the Holy Spirit descend,  
that this being may be awakened...

...in the world beyond  
the life of this earth...

...and infused with the power  
of the Holy Spirit.

Lord Jesus Christ, I ask  
that you receive this child--

What's your name?

Sandra.

I ask you to receive this child,  
Sandra, into your loving arms...

...that she might pass in safety  
from this crisis...

...as you have taught us  
with infinite passion.

By this sign, you are anointed with the grace  
of the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ...

...and absolved of all past error  
and freed to take your place...

...in the world he has prepared for us.

[SPEAKING IN LATIN]

Amen.

[BELL TOLLING]

[KNOCKING]

[DOOR OPENS]

Michael.

I still don't even understand  
how it happened.

You shouldn't think about it.

It was an accident. Really.

It's hard not to think about.

I feel somewhat responsible.

You know the average age  
of a nun these days?

Sixty-nine.

Three thousand parishes across the U.S.  
don't even have a priest anymore.

You give this speech

to everyone who tries to leave?  
No, just those I believe in.  
I quit smoking and  
now I'm addicted to these.  
You know, what I saw the other night,  
it was really something.  
I know experienced priests  
who wouldn't have handled that.  
I just repeated a few prayers  
over a suffering girl.  
And the words meant nothing to you?  
Father, listen to me,  
did you understand my letter?  
Yes, I decided not to  
pass it on to my superiors.  
-Why not?  
-I think you're making a mistake.  
I think this is the part where I say,  
"It's not you, it's me"  
and "Let's just be friends."  
Here's the thing.  
Tastes like shit.  
If a seminarian doesn't complete  
his vows, then under Article 15...  
...the Church has the right to convert  
the scholarship to a student loan.  
That's over 100 grand of education  
you'd owe us.  
Why would you do that?  
Oh, no, no, no.  
I'm not saying I'm going to do it...  
...just yet.  
You were a mortician  
before you joined us, am I right?  
I imagine that means  
you're not very squeamish.  
What is this about?  
Last year, the Vatican received over a half  
a million reports of demonic possession.  
-That's something of a record.  
-I'm still not following.  
An order has been passed down...  
...to place an exorcist in every diocese  
across the U.S. by this time next year.

As you might imagine, it's not  
a highly sought-after position.  
There's a new program at the Vatican...  
...designed to retrain the clergy  
the rite of exorcism.  
I've been asked to keep an eye out  
for potential candidates.  
Wait a minute, you...  
You want me to be an exorcist?  
Why?  
Why would you want me?  
I don't know what I believe in.  
That's right.  
I remember in your letter...  
...you explained how you used  
the priesthood to run away from things.  
The truth is, you could have run  
in any direction, but you ran here.  
Why?  
Just take the course.  
And then if you still wanna leave when  
you get back, we can talk about it then.  
Two months in Rome.  
How bad could that be?  
Keep the change. Thank you.  
I'm guessing there's no cable.

**MAN:**

to assess a possible possession...  
...the parish priest would have ensured...  
...that all psychiatric explanations  
had been exhausted.  
He would have questioned  
the possessed himself...  
...and forwarded his assessment  
on to his bishop.  
With the bishop's permission...  
...an exorcist is then summoned  
to determine possession.  
Often, early signs of a possession  
are subtle.  
Social withdrawal...  
...apathy...  
...a persistent tremor in a limb.

It can go unnoticed  
until the victim is deep within...  
...the demonic spirit's grasp.  
This was taken at an exorcism in Turin.  
[WOMAN YELLING ON VIDEO]  
The woman survived without food or water  
for eight weeks...  
...before the demon released her.  
This man's jaw spontaneously dislocated  
while being read the Lord's Prayer.  
He made no physical contact  
with any object...  
...nor was he met with  
any physical force.  
Demons are the devil's foot soldiers...  
...often operating in groups  
much like a squadron...  
...infesting their victims.  
It is the job of an exorcist...  
...to determine the number of  
possessing demons and their names...  
...something the demons protect  
with great ferocity.  
And when the exorcist has a name...  
...he can then begin to  
assert control over the entity...  
...and cast it out.  
Who have we here?  
-Michael Kovak.  
-I'm sorry?  
[LOUDER] Michael Kovak.  
Oh, yes.  
The American.  
-Yeah. Sorry I'm late.  
-Yes, I prefer punctuality to apologies.  
Welcome. Sit down.  
[MAN YELLING ON RECORDING]  
MAN [IN RUSSIAN ON RECORDING]:  
Die, priest, die!

**XAVIER:**

of a possession...  
...is the negative reaction  
to sacred objects.



Crucifixes, holy water.  
The man that you have just heard...  
...was reacting to a crucifix  
placed on his head.

**ANGELINA:**

**XAVIER:**

**ANGELINA:**

the delusion that he's possessed?  
Wouldn't he react in the same way?

**XAVIER:**

confuse psychotic illness with possession.  
It's up to the exorcist  
to discern the difference.

**WOMAN:**

Well, there are many ways.  
For example, paranoid schizophrenics  
are not aware that they're deluded.

**MICHAEL:**

while they're being possessed, are they?  
But people who are possessed have  
periods of lucidity. That's my point.  
So do schizophrenics.

**XAVIER:**

abilities simply because one is deluded.  
The man on this tape is German.  
How does he spontaneously speak Russian?  
How could a boy in a village in Africa  
found 400 miles from his home...  
...claim that he was abducted by aliens?  
It's just as unlikely.  
But we're willing to call him crazy  
and your German man not...  
...because he believes in aliens,  
not God.

**XAVIER:**

to scrutinize religion with science.

The object of this course is to view phenomena through the lens of faith.

So which do you believe in, aliens or God?

The jury's out on both.

Interesting perspective for a priest.

I'm not a priest...

...yet.

So you're having a final fling with atheism?

Well, I guess it's more like an ex-girlfriend who keeps coming around.

**WOMAN:**

[IN ITALIAN] We are going to the library. Are you joining us?

[SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]

**XAVIER:**

Thank you, gentlemen. See you at Mass.

Michael. Walk with me a moment.

I understand you were taught by Father Matthew.

**MICHAEL:**

**XAVIER:**

We studied together at Loyola.

He's asked me to keep an eye on you.

He thinks you've got great potential.

**MICHAEL:**

For both of us.

What do you think of the course so far?

To be honest, I don't know

what to make of it.

**XAVIER:**

Tell me, Michael, do you believe in sin?

Yeah, I just don't necessarily believe the devil makes us do it.

He that committeth sin is of the devil.

Then that'd be all of us, wouldn't it?

And if we're all of the devil,

how do we fight him?  
Tomorrow, I recommend you take  
your doubts for a walk around Rome.  
You can pay a visit  
to an old friend of mine.  
Father Lucas?  
He's Welsh. Jesuit.  
His methods are a little less orthodox.  
Studied under  
Father Carmine De Filippis.

**MICHAEL:**

-It means he knows his stuff.  
He'll be happy to provide you with  
the kind of proof you seem to need.  
Excuse me, I have a Mass to say.  
[BELL TOLLING]  
[CATS MEOWING]  
[MEOWS]  
Jesus.  
[MAN SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

**MICHAEL:**

-Yes?  
Hi. I'm Michael Kovak.  
-Oh. You're the American.  
-Yeah.  
-You don't like cats?  
-Not particularly.  
Welcome to Rome.  
It's infested with cats.  
I've tried giving them names  
but it's pointless.  
A cat won't come no matter what  
you call it. They do as they please.  
Anyway, welcome.  
Make sure they don't come in.

**MICHAEL:**

Father Xavier tells me you're troubled.  
I don't think Father Xavier  
explained the situation.  
He explained it well enough.  
I've arranged for you to meet someone.

[KNOCKING]

Speak of the devil.

[LUCAS SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]

[ADRIANA & ROSARIA SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]

[IN ITALIAN] God bless you, Father,  
thank you for seeing us.

LUCAS [IN ITALIAN]:

There's no need to thank me.

Put it in the kitchen.

[BOTH SPEAK IN ITALIAN]

**LUCAS:**

ROSARIA [IN ITALIAN]: Have you fed them?

**LUCAS:**

**ROSARIA:**

Lucia. Gabriella. Dante. Federico.

[SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]

**ROSARIA:**

**LUCAS:**

**ROSARIA:**

After. Come.

[SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]

to help me. I'll need to absolve you first.

**MICHAEL:**

The exorcism. What do you think?

Or you can stay down here

with her aunt.

That could be fun.

It's up to you.

Whatever you do, don't address the girl  
directly, no matter what she says.

And if I ask you to hold her down...

...it's best you grab her arms  
from behind...

...and try keeping her  
in a seated position.

The spirit is pretty devious.

Hasn't shown itself yet.

-The spirit?

**LUCAS:**

Demon. The devil.

If it hasn't shown itself,  
how do you know she's possessed?

All right, give me something,  
anything that's yours.

Put it in this.

What is it, a dollar bill?

Come on, do it. Quickly.

It's for your benefit.

What else?

Oh, yes. It's Michael, isn't it?

I absolve you of any sins you may  
have committed now or in the past...

...in the name of the Father,  
Son and Holy Spirit.

-Amen.

-All right, come on.

Oh, yes, one other thing. If it does manifest,  
don't even look into the girl's eyes.

Whatever you do, do not address it.

Do not speak to it. It's the devil.

-Leave that to me. Do you understand?

-Cool.

-Do you understand?

-Yeah, I get it.

Well, just say so.

Bow your head, keep praying  
and good luck.

LUCAS [IN ITALIAN]: How are you?

The same.

**LUCAS:**

What about your baby?

You need to eat.

Um....

[IN ITALIAN]

What's happened since Tuesday?

**ROSARIA:**

Even when I sleep it talks.

[SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

[CHUCKLES]

Now she's gonna guess what's in the bag.

Rosaria?

[IN ITALIAN] See the bag?

[ROSARIA SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

Tell me what's in it.

How could I know that?

Then I want you to guess.

I don't know.

Clear your mind and guess.

It's not a test. Just guess.

I don't want to.

I'm ordering you to guess! Guess!

[SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

There you are.

Knowledge of the unknowable.

It's the quickest test for possession.

The devil is working in and through her right now.

Okay.

Uh....

[IN ITALIAN]

Did it tell you what was in the bag?

[ROSARIA SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]

Is it talking now?

What's it saying?

Disgusting things.

It's important you tell me.

[WHISPERING INDISTINCTLY]

**LUCAS:**

Do you know its name?

Tell me its name.

Tell me now.

[LUCAS SPEAKING IN LATIN]

[CELL PHONE RINGING]

[SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

[MICHAEL SPEAKING IN LATIN]

LUCAS [IN ITALIAN]: I can't talk now,  
I'm in the middle of something.

[ROSARIA GRUNTING]

[LUCAS SPEAKING IN LATIN]

ROSARIA [IN ITALIAN]: Shut up, shut up.  
Shut up, priest.

You must not touch me.  
You are disgusting.  
Keep your dirty hands off me.  
Shut up! You must not speak.  
Don't touch me!  
Go away, priest. Go away!  
You stink, you are disgusting.  
Rosaria.  
Rosaria.

Open your mouth.

[LUCAS SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

How do you feel?

[SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

Okay, that's it.

**MICHAEL:**

Well, what'd you expect?  
Spinning heads, pea soup?  
Spiritual liberation can take months,  
sometimes years.  
So she's still possessed?  
Yeah.  
I know you don't believe me, but....  
Tell me...  
...does a thief or a burglar turn on the  
lights when he's robbing your house? No.  
He prefers you to believe  
that he's not there.  
Like the devil. He prefers you  
to believe that he doesn't exist.  
It gets complicated when no proof of  
the devil is somehow proof of the devil.  
Yeah.  
The interesting thing  
about skeptics, atheists...  
...is that we're always looking  
for proof, certainty.  
The question is, what on earth  
would we do if we found it?  
-"We"?  
-Oh, yes.  
There are times when I experience  
a total loss of faith.  
Days, months when I don't know

what the hell I believe in.  
God or the devil,  
Santa Claus or Tinker Bell.  
But...  
...you know, I'm just a man.  
I'm a weak man. I have...  
...no power.  
Yet there's something that keeps  
digging and scraping away inside me.  
Feels like God's fingernail.  
And finally I can take  
no more of the pain...  
...and I get shoved out  
from the darkness...  
...back into the light.  
Something like that.  
[SPEAKS IN LATIN]  
Anyway, enough philosophizing  
for one day.  
If you have any more questions,  
you know where to find me.  
I got my eye on you. What you doing?  
[CHATTERING]  
[SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]  
[HORNS HONKING]  
You're in Rome and you go to McDonald's?  
Oh, hey.  
Come on. Let me buy you  
an Italian coffee.

**ANGELINA:**

Xavier kicked you out, didn't he?  
Yeah, I've plea-bargained down  
from being burned at the stake.  
So you're just vacationing now  
on the Church's dime?  
Yeah, and yours.  
Seriously, why are you taking the course?  
Why are you?  
Are they recruiting nuns for exorcists?  
"Nuns"?  
I'm sorry, I just naturally assumed....  
Yeah, naturally.  
Well, if you're not a nun,



why are you taking the course?

I'm a journalist. I'm covering  
the course for an article.

I see. And I thought  
you were just buying me a coffee.  
There's a lot of interest in this.  
A lot of debate.

Look...

...I know you saw Father Lucas today.  
I've been trying to get an interview  
with him, but he's been reluctant.

What is it you want?

-I'd love to know what you saw.

-You're asking me to spy?

No, I'm asking you to report  
your own experiences.

Listen...

...I'm just interested in the truth.  
Seems like you are too.

**XAVIER:**

of angels, ranked in ascendant order...  
...so, too, is the realm of evil ranked.  
And just as each angel has a name...  
...so, too, does every demon.  
Beelzebub, Leviathan, Ba'al.  
These are some of the names  
we look for...  
...when performing an exorcism.

[PEOPLE GASPING]

Just bear with me for a moment.  
Well, I think we should leave it there  
and pick it up tomorrow. Thank you.  
Michael, how's my old friend Lucas?

**MICHAEL:**

**XAVIER:**

**MICHAEL:**

that I believe needs psychiatric care.

**XAVIER:**

Father Lucas has been doing this

longer than anyone I know.

**MICHAEL:**

I'm telling you because I'm concerned.

It's not uncommon...

...to be overly concerned for the subject  
in one's first exorcism.

You have to see that

it is the demon that's in pain.

Trust me. Father Lucas gets results.

At what cost?

[KNOCKING]

Oh. What can I do for you?

**LUCAS:**

[IN ITALIAN] You remember this man?

He was sent by the Vatican.

I want you to answer his questions.

Hi.

It was terrible to see you  
go through your suffering.

This is unimportant. Just nod.

**MICHAEL:**

He wants to know if you remember things  
when the devil takes over your body.

[SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]

it's like a dream or a nightmare.

**MICHAEL:**

[MICHAEL SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

Do you know how it got in my pocket?

[IN ITALIAN]

Did you put it in his pocket?

Tell the truth now.

It wasn't me.

**LUCAS:**

Rosaria, who was it?

[SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]

**MICHAEL:**

-She's 16.

-Yes.

And she's pregnant.  
Who's the father of her child?  
She won't say.  
Ask her who gave her  
the bracelet, please.  
[LUCAS SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

**MICHAEL:**

**LUCAS:**

**MICHAEL:**

**LUCAS:**

A few months ago, I believe.  
-What are you doing?  
-I'm giving it back to her.  
[MICHAEL SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]  
[LUCAS SPEAKING IN LATIN]  
[GASPING AND GRUNTING]  
Remember the fat little bitch?  
Killed herself.  
She says to say hello.  
Hell-o.  
In the name of Jesus Christ,  
name yourself.  
[ROSARIA WHISTLING]  
In the name of Jesus Christ,  
name yourself.  
By the authority of Jesus Christ,  
I command you to declare yourself!  
By the authority of Jesus Christ,  
I command you to declare yourself now!  
ROSARIA [IN ITALIAN]:  
We are the fruit of her womb.  
Speak the truth, in the name  
of Jesus Christ.  
Speak the truth, in the name  
of Jesus Christ.  
We're strong in the Lord  
and the power of his might!

**ROSARIA:**

Demon, name yourself.

Your name, demon! Your name!  
Tremble before the Lord!  
We're strong in the Lord  
and the power of his might!  
Now!  
By the authority of Jesus Christ,  
I command you to--  
Hold her!  
Help me. Help me.

**MICHAEL:**

The Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou amongst women....  
[ROSARIA GRUNTING AND SCREAMING]  
[LUCAS SPEAKING IN LATIN]

**LUCAS:**

in the secret place of the Most High...  
...shall abide under the shadow  
of the Almighty. He is my refuge...  
...my fortress and my strength.  
He shall deliver thee  
from the snare of the fowler....  
Rape me.  
--my fortress and my strength.  
Lickety-split.  
Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror  
by night, nor for the arrow...  
...nor for the destruction that wasteth.  
A thousand shall fall...  
...and 10,000 at thy right hand....  
ROSARIA [IN NORMAL VOICE IN ITALIAN]:  
Father, please.  
Don't let it hurt my baby.  
They shall bear thee up in their hands,  
lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.  
[LUCAS SPEAKING IN LATIN]  
Take it out!  
Shit it out and eat it!

**LUCAS:**

hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive  
us our trespasses, as we forgive those....

[IN NORMAL VOICE IN ITALIAN] Help me.

**LUCAS:**

The Lord is with thee.

[IN DEMONIC VOICE IN ITALIAN]

Go to hell, priest!

**LUCAS:**

Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, mother of God,

pray for us sinners...

...now and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

-Hail Mary, full of grace.

**MICHAEL:**

**LUCAS:**

And begone, you unclean spirits

of terror and darkness. Out!

Damned Legion, Satan, Lucifer, out!

Begone! We banish you,

we cast you out...

...in the name of the Virgin Mary, mother  
of Christ, the son of the living God...

...in whom we live, and move,  
and have our being.

Who lives in us and reigns in us  
supreme.

We cast you out from  
the nothingness and the darkness...

...from whence you came.

Out, demon! Out, Lucifer! Out, Satan!

Now! Begone! In the name  
of the Holy Spirit.

[ROSARIA COUGHS]

**LUCAS:**

of the fowler, from the pestilence...

...from the darkness.

[SPEAKING INDISTINCTLY]

Well, she's asleep.

She needs to rest.  
So I'll send her home in a few days  
so she can recover.  
I thought you were required  
to have a doctor present.  
I am a doctor.  
Has she seen a psychiatrist?  
-Yeah.  
-What happened?  
Oh, she doesn't respond to treatment.  
-Is she on antidepressants?  
-No.  
-No, she's pregnant.  
-So she hasn't been medically treated?  
Yeah. I'm looking after her.  
Weren't you concerned for her health  
up there?  
Yeah, of course I was.  
Well, how will her baby survive this?  
See, it's very difficult to predict how  
any of this stuff is gonna work out.  
-Have you ever lost a patient?  
-Yeah.  
Yeah, a boy I once treated.  
He was about 15 years of age...  
...and he committed suicide...  
...and I was depressed  
for a few months...  
...and I started to doubt everything  
I believed in.  
And I thought the devil had defeated me.  
Don't you think she should  
see a psychiatrist again?  
You're still not convinced--  
Oh, Christ! She was raped by her father.  
She's internalizing her guilt.  
"Internalizing"? Okay.  
Still doesn't explain everything,  
does it?  
It doesn't explain  
how she started to speak English.  
Well, she's a teenager. She's listened  
to a thousand songs on the radio.  
What about these nails?

It could be that she swallowed them  
to hurt the baby.

She clearly doesn't want it.

What about the voice inside her? That  
wasn't a human voice, though, was it?

You be careful, Michael.

Why?

Choosing not to believe in the devil  
won't protect you from him.

ISTVAN [IN VOICE-OVER]: Michael.

Come.

Come closer.

You're not a coward. Don't be afraid.

It's just your mother.

Now...

...blow.

We want to do a good job, don't we?

The best we can.

Good. Now...

...pray.

Hail Mary, full of grace.

The Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou among women

and blessed is the fruit of thy womb....

[IN HUNGARIAN] My love.

My flower.

Mother of God, pray for us sinners....

My beautiful.

Amen.

[WHISTLING]

**LUCAS:**

Doing house calls today.

Take that, it's gonna rain.

Shut the gate after you.

[THUNDER CRASHING]

[CHILDREN CHATTERING]

**LUCAS:**

[IN ITALIAN] What happens in your dream?

BOY [IN ITALIAN]: I'm being hurt.

**LUCAS:**

**BOY:**

With red eyes.  
It kicks me.  
And bites me.

**LUCAS:**

[VINCENZO SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]  
Why not?

**VINCENZO:**

my father and I must obey him.  
Oh.

What else does he tell you?  
He tells me...  
...to kill myself.

FRANCESCA [IN ITALIAN]: Show him.  
He woke up with these.

[WINCES]

[SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

[BRAYS]

[LAUGHS]

The mule from the dream?  
Vincenzo?

The mule in the dream?  
Mama?

Not Mama?

[SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]

You hit him?  
Are you lying?  
Are you a liar?

Okay.

Come here.

Open your mouth.

Ahh.

Bring me his pillow.

[SPEAKING IN LATIN]

[SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

of evil from this pillow.

Vanquish them. Destroy them!

Now!

Ah.

[LAUGHS]

[SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]

[IN ITALIAN] The devil!



We cast you out, every unclean spirit...  
...every Satanic power...  
...every onslaught of  
the infernal adversary.  
Be gone and stay far  
from this creature of God...  
...for it is he who commands you,  
it is he....

[INDISTINCT]

[WHISPERING INDISTINCTLY]

--he who would still the sea...

...the wind and the storm.

[WHISPERING INDISTINCTLY]

--flee, enemy of the faith,  
you foe of the human race.

That's enough now, do you hear me?

No one is going to die.

**LUCAS:**

--put the unholy tempter to flight.

[SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

**LUCAS:**

[SIGHS]

I'm supposed to take care  
of this place...

...but I feel so bad.

Never seem to have any time.

You ever wonder if the people  
you help are just mistaken?

**LUCAS:**

**MICHAEL:**

**LUCAS:**

hurt anyone yet.

So you're happy to have them continue  
believing something that may not be true?

**LUCAS:**

And what is it you believe?

I believe that people prefer to lie  
to themselves than face the truth.

The truth, yeah. Certainty.

[PHONE RINGING]

LUCAS [IN ITALIAN]:

I will leave immediately.

I understand. Thank you.

Rosaria just tried to drown herself.

[ROSARIA YELLING]

[IN ITALIAN] We gave her pethidine  
and trazodone but she won't calm down.

Legally we can't give her anything else.

**ROSARIA:**

Look what I've done to her, priest!

And I'm not finished yet!

[LUCAS SPEAKING IN LATIN]

**LUCAS:**

Let her see who is in command.

Demon. Deceiver.

Speak your name.

[IN DEMONIC VOICE] Never.

**LUCAS:**

Because her suffering is sweet.

**LUCAS:**

Eat the flies from her rotting flesh.

**LUCAS:**

With her father's seed.

-So you remember being raped?

**LUCAS:**

[IN GREEK] When the devil has nothing  
better to do, he rapes his children.

I don't understand.

[SPEAKS IN GREEK]

[LAUGHING]

You know how to swear  
in every language?

ROSARIA [IN LATIN]: Therefore let us  
go down and confound their tongue...

...that they may not understand  
one another's speech.

**MICHAEL:**

We know it very well.  
Very clever.  
Don't patronize me, doubter!  
It is I who chose you.  
-Why do you call me "doubter"?

**ROSARIA:**

A liar knows a liar.  
Are you a liar, Rosaria?  
What is it you want me to believe?  
There's nothing to believe.  
Then there is no devil  
and you're not possessed?  
You fear me, mortal!  
How can I fear you if you don't exist?  
You think you outsmarted him?  
That's not the devil.  
It's just a very, very sick girl.  
She doesn't need a priest,  
she needs a shrink.  
He still has you fooled, hasn't he?  
You forgot your bag of tricks.

**LUCAS:**

He's a deceiver.  
[MONITOR BEEPING]  
[ALARM BEEPING]  
[ALARM BEEPING]  
[WOMAN SPEAKING IN ITALIAN OVER SPEAKER]  
[IN ITALIAN]  
Hold on. Hold on, Rosaria.  
[PEOPLE CHATTERING IN ITALIAN]  
MAN 1 [IN ITALIAN]: This is a tragedy.  
How could this happen?  
Who worked here today?  
I want to talk with everyone.  
MAN 2 [IN ITALIAN]:  
Tell me about the mother.  
[IN ITALIAN] There was  
internal bleeding, massive hemorrhaging.  
We did everything in our power...  
...but unfortunately

we couldn't save her or her baby.

**MICHAEL:**

Oh, nothing.

It's finished.

He took a life.

That's what he wants, ultimately.

He'll probably find someone else.

You should go home, get some rest.

You've had a hard night.

Yeah.

Are you okay?

I failed her.

You did what you thought was best.

Yeah.

I gotta go.

Take care of yourself.

You're a good man, Michael.

You have a good soul.

Defend it.

Guard it.

Cherish it.

Oh, God. Oh, God.

[SOBBING]

-Hey.

-Thanks for coming.

You picked a perfect day for it.

I appreciate you doing this.

-No names.

-No names. Promise.

There's no way she touched the baby

because she was restrained.

That's right.

What do you make of that?

It's confounding.

That's the story.

It's yours to interpret as you will.

You can call me

if you have any questions.

Thank you.

What changed your mind?

To do this?

I just needed to tell someone.

ANGELINA [IN VOICE-OVER]:

So let me get this straight.  
You ran away from home  
and chose a life of celibacy?  
-How bad could home be?  
-It sounds stupid when you say it like that.  
It sounds stupid  
because it doesn't add up.  
Are you saying you never felt a calling?  
My mother...  
...she used to say  
she felt the hand of God on me.  
Did you feel it?  
I wanted to.  
-So how did you end up in all this?  
-It's a long story.  
We're not going anywhere,  
so come on.  
My parents committed my brother  
to a mental institution when he was 19.  
He was so tormented.  
He said he heard voices  
telling him to do things.  
He used to tell me  
it was the devil speaking to him.  
Sometimes he would tell me  
what the devil said.  
And sometimes the things he said  
would come true.  
It frightened me.  
He frightened me.  
I know it sounds terrible, but it's just  
easier when I don't think about him.  
[WHISTLES BLOWING]

**YOUNG MICHAEL:**

The Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou among women...  
...and blessed is the fruit  
of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary...  
...mother of God...  
...pray for us sinners now  
and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

[KNOCKING]

I'm sorry to wake you, Michael.

I thought it best to tell you myself.

It's your father.

And he hasn't regained consciousness?

MAN [OVER PHONE]:

No. The stroke was massive.

He could stabilize

or he could stay like this.

I see.

I'm sorry. There isn't much more

I can tell you at this point.

I'm sorry, Michael.

I'll include him in my prayers.

We can help arrange your travel.

Thank you.

You gotta be fucking kidding me.

**WOMAN [ON TV]:**

passengers to expect more delays...

...even when the dust from

the volcano in Iceland has settled.

Tonight, the ash plume has shut the

airports of 22 countries on the continent...

...with Italy and Switzerland among

the latest to close their airspace.

[SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

Thousands of passengers are stranded,

with some being told...

...it could be a week

before they get another flight.

-Once the ash clears...

-I need a room.

-...a backlog of flights...

...will mean further disruption.

Valerie Rigg, Egetsa Coverage.

I'm calling to check

on my father's condition.

Istvan Kovak.

K-O-V-A-K.

WOMAN [OVER PHONE]: I'll connect you.

[LINE RINGING]

ISTVAN [OVER PHONE]: Michael.

-Yeah, yeah. It's Michael.

I'm scared.  
It's okay. Dad, you're okay.  
No. Something happened.  
-It's okay, Dad.  
-Where are you?  
I wish you were here.  
I'll be home soon.  
Something happened with my flight.  
Where am I?  
You're in the hospital.  
[ISTVAN GRUNTS]  
What is it, Dad?  
Dad?  
They're hurting me.  
Who?  
Dad?  
MAN [OVER PHONE]: Mr. Kovak?  
-Yeah.  
-It's Dr. Vorachian.  
-Yes.  
Mr. Kovak, I'm afraid  
I've got some very bad news.  
Your father passed away this afternoon.  
Uh, what?  
Your father died this afternoon.  
I'm very sorry, Mr. Kovak.  
Well, that's impossible. I....  
I was just speaking with him, just now.  
Mr. Kovak, your father was  
declared dead about six hours ago.  
I was a witness.  
I'm very sorry to have to tell you....  
[SOBBING]

**PRIEST:**

in me will never die."  
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy...  
...Lord have mercy.  
Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon her.  
May she rest in peace.  
ROSARIA [IN VOICE-OVER]: Doubter!  
[WOMAN GASPS]  
[WOMAN CACKLING]

ISTVAN [IN VOICE-OVER]: Michael.

**ROSARIA:**

[WOMAN CACKLING]

**ISTVAN:**

**MICHAEL:**

**ISTVAN:**

**MICHAEL:**

Wait! Dad!

**ISTVAN:**

**ROSARIA:**

Padre.

**ISTVAN:**

The pain is gone.

**ROSARIA:**

[MULE SNORTS]

**MICHAEL:**

I'm hallucinating. I'm seeing things,

I'm hearing things.

I can't explain it.

I don't even know what I'm doing here.

ANGELINA [OVER PHONE]:

Michael, what happened?

Look, I need your help.

I feel like I'm going insane.

Can you come meet me?

FRANCESCA [IN ITALIAN]: He's feeling

much better since the Father prayed for him.

Did Father send you?

[SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]

The other day I saw her son

whisper something to her.

I need to know what it was.

[IN ITALIAN] Your son whispered

something to you the other day.



He's a baby.  
He doesn't know what he's saying.

**ANGELINA:**

that you tell us.  
Please.  
[SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]  
...your father was going to die.  
Who told him that?  
[ANGELINA SPEAKS IN ITALIAN]  
[SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]  
He says you know.  
He says you've seen it too.  
Seen what?  
The demon.  
The mule.

**ANGELINA:**

-My father died last night.  
What did you say?  
I said, my father died...  
...last night.  
Oh, God.  
That's awful. I'm so sorry.  
How did that kid know?  
I need to talk to Lucas.  
[IN ITALIAN]  
Bless my dolly, Father?  
Hm?  
[LUCAS SPEAKING IN ITALIAN]  
[GIRL SCREAMS]  
[GIRL CRYING]  
Father?  
Father.  
Let's get you inside.  
[LUCAS SINGING INDISTINCTLY]  
-I don't want to lie down.  
-Okay.  
Then what were you doing out there?

**LUCAS:**

I said, what were you doing out there?  
LUCAS [IN VOICE-OVER]: I'm not sure.  
I found myself walking and I....

I think....  
I think I did something awful.  
It was terrible.  
I can't pray any longer because  
I'm no longer in a state of grace...  
...and prayer is our only salvation.  
It's your only salvation.  
And remember this:  
It knows you, it knows all your sins.  
Secrets.  
[COUGHING]  
So you'll need help.  
-With what?  
-You'll have to lock me up.  
Go find Father Xavier.  
Because it is strong...  
...this thing, this terror.  
The terror is real, Michael.  
It's real.  
But you'll only defeat it  
when you believe.  
So go now, lock me up.  
Go now. Lock me up!  
[IN ITALIAN] I think Father Xavier  
has left for the day.  
[IN ITALIAN] Please. It's very urgent.  
for the weekend.  
What's his cell number?  
XAVIER [IN ITALIAN ON RECORDING]:  
Hello, this is Father Xavier.  
I am currently unavailable.  
Leave a message after the tone.  
[BEEPS]

**MICHAEL:**

a serious problem with Father Lucas.  
Contact me. I'm going to his house.  
[CAT SCREECHES]  
LUCAS [IN DEMONIC VOICE]:  
He belongs to me now.  
Michael.  
What was that?  
What?

**ANGELINA:**

[SINGING] Lover of my soul  
Let me to thy bosom fly  
When the nearer--  
[FLOOR CREAKS]  
Father?  
I'm afraid he's out.  
Come in, please.  
Ah.  
So shall we begin?  
In time, Father.

**LUCAS:**

**MICHAEL:**

**LUCAS:**

**MICHAEL:**

-Yeah.

**MICHAEL:**

Oh, you follow me, Michael.  
You've always followed me.  
Did you enjoy our gift,  
the one we hung on your door?  
You following me now...  
...Michael?  
Close the door, please.  
We don't want to be disturbed, do we?  
Your father says to say hello,  
by the way.  
Hell-o.  
You don't know my father.  
Oh, he says he enjoyed  
his final little chat with you.  
I'm guessing you didn't enjoy it  
as much.  
-You're a liar.  
-Yes, that's what they all tell me.  
Your father died at 4:20 p.m...  
...in the same miserable hospital  
in which your mother died...  
...or passed away, as they say.

And his last conscious moments...  
...were full of panic and full of terror.  
Alone in that house of the dead  
with no family to hold his hand...  
...no loved ones to kiss him goodbye.  
Because you deserted him, Michael...  
...and this caused him great pain,  
you know, in the end.  
You hurt him most.  
And all for God.  
Are you reading my mind?  
[LAUGHS]  
Yes. No.  
Maybe. No. Yes. Perhaps.  
-Are you reading mine?  
-What am I thinking now?  
Oh, you're so tedious,  
you little piece of mouse shit.  
Do you think I'm afraid of you?  
You couldn't even stand up to your father,  
could you? Your daddy, your mommy.  
-Mikey, Mikey, Mikey!  
-Stand back!  
-You don't command me.  
-No, God does.  
Oh, God does. Is that so? Wow, cool.  
Awesome. Whatever, dude.  
You and your puking truth!  
You are nothing! You know nothing!  
Doubter!  
[IN DEMONIC VOICE]  
Cherish your doubts, Michael.  
[LUCAS SPEAKS IN LATIN]  
Jesus, lover of my soul.  
This is lovely, isn't it?  
Oh, I will never leave you. I will never.  
So please, Mr. Preacher Man, please,  
Mr. Priest, pray for God to help me.  
Me, I'm just a poor little Welshman.  
All dressed up for the carnival, Mommy.  
God is not here, priest.  
[YELLING]  
Oh, God, help me!  
God help me!

God help me!

God help me!

[IN NORMAL VOICE] Michael...

...what's happening to me?

-Oh, God help me.

-Father.

**LUCAS:**

Angelina!

Angelina!

Angelina!

Help me.

Now!

-Now what?

-I don't know.

-Maybe we should wait for Father Xavier.

-We can't keep him tied up till Monday.

[GROWLING]

If you don't wanna do this,

I'll understand.

No.

This is what I asked to see.

MICHAEL [IN VOICE-OVER]: In the name  
of the Father, and of the Son...

...and of the Holy Spirit,

bless this, your servant.

Keep her safe from harm,

protect her from evil. Amen.

**ANGELINA:**

[IN DEMONIC VOICE] Amen.

Just repeat what I say.

**LUCAS:**

**MICHAEL:**

-Have mercy.

**LUCAS:**

-Christ, have mercy.

-Have mercy.

**LUCAS:**

**MICHAEL:**

-Lord, have mercy.  
Hell has no mercy!  
I took the priest, I'll take you.

**MICHAEL:**

"Save this man, Lucas Trevant,  
your servant.

**LUCAS:**

-Because he hopes in you, God.  
-Hope is dead!  
Let the enemy have no victory  
over him. Lord, hear us.  
Lord, hear us.  
He can't hear you, he's not here.  
God is dead!  
Drive out, O Lord,  
the power of the devil.

**LUCAS:**

Hey, Angie, has he done it to you yet?  
That's what he wants.  
That's what you want too, right?

**MICHAEL:**

in body and soul.  
Hey, Mikey, I think she likes you.  
Nice titties, yeah?

**MICHAEL:**

and humbly request...  
-...that you snatch from this demon...  
-Pokey hokey, pocus holy....  
-...this man who was created in--  
-Created in sin.  
-Who was created in your likeness.  
-In your likeness of sin and filth.  
In the name of your Lord,  
Jesus Christ, your son.  
-Climb up on my knees, sonny boy.

**MICHAEL:**

**LUCAS:**

Amen.

**MICHAEL:**

By the mysteries of the incarnation...  
...the suffering, the death and resurrection  
and ascension of our Lord, Jesus Christ...

...I command you.

By some sign, give me your name."

Your name, demon.

Your name, demon.

Tell me your name!

[WHEEZING]

[IN HUNGARIAN]

My love.

My flower.

My beautiful.

[SPEAKING IN HUNGARIAN]

[SPEAKING IN HUNGARIAN]

Hey, Daddy's calling from hell.

[LUCAS CACKLING DEMONICALLY]

**ANGELINA:**

Michael.

What happened?

I can't do it.

It's more than just saying the words.

You've seen him.

What's not to believe in?

Me.

Don't you understand?

Then why are you here?

Something brought you here, Michael.

All the decisions you made.

You left your home, your father.

You came here.

It all led to this.

It's fate.

You're not alone.

What did you just say?

You're not alone.

LUCAS [IN DEMONIC VOICE]: Michael.

Father.

Give up.

You don't have the strength.  
You don't have the faith.  
Just pray, Michael.  
[MICHAEL SPEAKING INDISTINCTLY]  
Well, hello, Angie.

**MICHAEL:**

May I ask you a question?  
When was the last time  
you saw your brother?

**MICHAEL:**

as it is in heaven.  
You little slut.  
Don't listen.  
Oh, don't listen. But isn't that  
what you did, Angie?  
Not listen to him? Your little brother.  
Leaving him to rot away in that stinking  
booby hatch, turning your back on him...  
...when he was being strangled  
by his own screams.  
Do you remember that, Angie?  
Do you remember?  
You will never forget.  
So we do what we do with him now.  
He's living in the land of misery  
and dread, thanks to big sister.  
Oh, why the tears, sweetie pie?  
I thought you wanted the truth.  
Like laughing boy here.  
He just lives for the truth.  
Isn't that so, Mikey?  
Just leave her alone.  
You think I don't know all your festering  
secrets? Your nickel-and-dime sins?  
You were ashamed of your father,  
he was ashamed of you.  
You hated him, he hated you back.  
It was a charming family.  
How could God possibly love you  
when your daddy didn't? Hm?  
No. You were never  
meant for God, Michael.



You were always meant for me, honey.  
Enough!  
Oopsie-daisy.  
Close to home.  
And that was no squeaky angel  
your mother saw all those years ago.  
No.  
'Twas I.  
You chose me long, long ago...  
...when you were just an itsy-bitsy  
little boy pooping in his pants.  
Remember, Michael.  
You remember, Michael?  
Remember when you bent that cross?  
If only you remember.  
Remember, Michael. Remember.  
Remember.  
Oh, dear.  
[IN VOICE-OVER] Our poor little savior  
all alone on his cross.  
Yeah.  
God chose you, Michael.  
That's why you're here.  
Just accept it.  
-Yeah.

**ANGELINA:**

**LUCAS:**

-You can't win without him.  
No.  
All alone.  
[LUCAS SPEAKS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE]  
No!  
[ANGELINA GRUNTING]  
Shall I pour the sick and rotting truth  
of the dying world...  
...into your precious, golden womb?  
You remember his strangling screams...  
...when you turned your back on him  
and walked away?  
You wanted the truth, little lady.  
Well, here I am.  
So how about you, kissy lips?

Do you feel that probing around  
inside you, Michael?  
Lucas, listen to me, please.  
Lucas is not here.  
He's never coming back.  
You feel that digging and scraping around  
inside you like God's dirty fingernail?  
Do you believe in me now, Michael?  
Do you believe in me now?

**MICHAEL:**

Yes. I believe in you.  
I believe in the devil.  
I believe in you...  
...so I believe in God.  
I accept him in this moment.  
I accept God.  
I believe in God the Father,  
the maker of heaven and earth...  
...of all that is seen and unseen.  
I believe.  
I exorcise you, most unclean spirit.  
Warp of vices, creator of agony.  
In the name of Jesus Christ,  
leave this man.  
In the name of the Virgin Mary,  
leave now.  
I command you.  
I, who believe.  
In the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ...  
...be uprooted and expelled  
from this creature of God.  
He who commands you is he  
who ordered you to be thrown down...  
...from the highest heaven  
into the depths of hell.  
Hear therefore and fear,  
Satan, enemy of faith.  
Fear him who was crucified as man  
and who rose from death!  
I will never leave you, Michael.  
I will never leave you.  
[GROWLING AND THUDDING]  
Speak your name.

In the name of Jesus Christ,  
I command you, speak your name.  
In the name of the Holy Spirit,  
I command you. Give me your name!  
It is God who commands you!  
Your name!  
Your name!  
Give me your name!  
Ba'al!  
Ba'al!  
Ba'al!  
Ba'al!  
I know you, Ba'al.  
And I command you, retire therefore.  
Depart from this place. Leave!  
Surrender now.  
In the name of the Father, and  
of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...  
...forever and ever.  
[BELL TOLLING]  
It's good as new, huh?  
Yeah.  
Well, she wasn't a bad little bike.  
You know, back in her golden days...  
...she brought me out here  
all those years ago.  
Anyway....  
So you're off. You're leaving.

**MICHAEL:**

Well, I hope you find your place  
in the world one of these fine days.  
-I hope so.  
-Now, when you do...  
...don't forget to say a few prayers  
for an old sinner.  
Throw a couple of Hail Marys this way  
if that's not too much trouble.  
That a deal?  
-It's a deal.  
-Good.  
You know, the first day  
you showed up...  
...I thought you were so full of it, I was

tempted to kick you into the street.

But I didn't because I saw  
quite a bit of myself in you.

Scary, isn't it?

-Yeah, it sure is.

-Yeah.

All right, that's it. Thanks for everything.

Safe journey. And one other thing.

Faith becomes you. Stay with it.

Keep fighting the good fight  
with all thy might.

Cool.

Get out of here.

Goodbye, Father.

[KNOCKING]

**WOMAN:**

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.

It has been six weeks  
since my last confession.

**MICHAEL:**

Father Michael Kovak is one of 14 exorcists  
practicing in the United States today. He now works  
out of his parish near Chicago.

Father Lucas Trevant has performed over  
two thousand exorcisms. He continues to practice  
in a township outside of Florence.