

Empyrean

written by

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EXT. OUTSIDE PERG'S ONLY CHURCH - MORNING

The church bells ring out over Main Street, welcoming the new day better than the sunrise. The trees which line the sidewalk have only just started to change, emphasizing the church's white exterior.

MRS. ALMA KEPLER, a stout middle-aged woman, is humming a quiet hymn, something she will likely have the choir practice in this morning's rehearsal. She Bounces up the church's steps, fumbling though her purse and nearly drops the cluster of sheet music that's tucked under her arm. After a moment, she finds what she's looking for. She swiftly unlocks the churches main doors, and drop the keys back into her purse. We follow her in.

INT. THE CHURH'S NAVE - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Kepler stuck humming the same measure of her hymn, repeating it with varying alterations. She slides deeper into the room and a sharp squeak escapes her.

MRS. KEPLER
(shocked)
Jesus, Mary and Joseph!

She's frozen but sweeping down the aisle, her gaze lands on the back of a young altar boy. He's dressed in his vestments, bent in prayer at the front of the altar.

MRS. KEPLER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Goodness, you frighten me! How did
you even manage to get in here?

No response. The click of Mrs. Kepler's heels echo through the nave as she approaches, still unaware.

MRS. KEPLER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Young man, I am impressed with your
devotion but you are not supposed
to be in here unsupervised.

Circling the boy, we get a closer look before Mrs. Kepler reaches him. His wrists are slit. Wet. Dripping. His fingers are snapped and woven together locked in prayer. His eyes are cold and stuck on the cross above him. Drool coats his cracked lips, which are forcefully parted with pages of scripture from yesterdays service shoved in his mouth. The pages absorb blood from his severed tongue which lays as an offering on the altar.

Mrs. Kepler's clicking heels stop. Silence. She gasps, hard. She screams harder.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MORNING

The meager Perg police department has somewhat successfully blocked off the church. Yet people have begun to gather around, clustering in groups tied by whispers about the boy.

Perg's SHERIFF exits the church, letting the heavy wooden door slam behind him. He needs a cigarette. He's given a mess instead. He marches over to a group of officers, his presence stops their chatter.

SHERIFF

(frustrated)

I swear! Are you boys cops or housewives? Do your job or get out of the way.

A few officers nod in understanding.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

We need to get everyone off the sidewalk and away from the church. The ambulance will be here soon.

The officers scatter. Different conversations bleed into one another as the crowd moves. At the front, Mrs. Kepler cries into her husband's uniform. A few members of the church choir surround her.

MRS. KEPLER

(hiccupy)

He was so young and looked so broken. His hands... Oh god.

MR. KEPLER, an older police officer that never managed to climb the ranks, squeezes his wife tighter while making eye contact with the angered Sheriff.

MR. KEPLER

Alma, please no details.

Mrs. Kepler gulps for air, regains the attention of her choir and babbles even louder giving the approaching ambulance a run for its money.

Across the street, a striking woman and her 15-year-old daughter examine their neighbors. They look almost identical; blonde, slim, simple in an early Hollywood kind of way. Yet where MRS. BONNIE BOWMEN is cruel, MARCY BOWMEN is pure sunlight.

MRS. BOWMEN

That women is shameless.

MARCY

Mother, she's upset.

MRS. BOWMEN

Please, She's performing. It's
wildly inappropriate considering,

Mrs. Bowmen directs a pointed hand towards the EMT's lifting a stretcher over the church steps and into the ambulance. The body is covered, but not bagged.

MARCY

Do you know who it was?

MRS. BOWMEN

An Altar boy. The older boy by the
looks of it, the Payne's son.

MARCY

Ben.

Mrs. Bowmen tuts in disgust.

MRS. BOWMEN

Always had a feeling about him.

Marcy doesn't engage, too focused on the covered silhouette of Ben.

MRS. BOWMEN (CONT'D)

I mean he must have been up to no
good to end up like that.

Marcy pulls back into the conversation.

MARCY

(hesitant)

You don't mean that-

MRS. BOWMEN

(interrupting)

It's a shame, it really is, and in
the church of all places! Lord have
mercy on us.

The pair take one more look over the crowd before Mrs. Bowmen grabs her daughter's hand and pulls them on their way.

MRS. BOWMEN (CONT'D)

Come on now, you need to get to
school. Pray for the Payne family
as we go.

INT. SCHOOL BUS

JOAN, a 15-year old with dark features filled with equal parts soccer knowledge and heresy, sits alone on a beat up school bus filled with about 35 other students. It's chaotic in the way you expect a school bus to be, but Joan blocks it out. Thank god for her Walkman.

The bus falls silent, catching Joan's attention. She follows the eyes of her classmates as they pass the church. Mumbles grow to whispers which quickly return to chaos. She puts her headphones back on- unchanged.

INT. PERG HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY

Like their parents, the kids of Perg seem to share info through clusters of whispering clicks. Meaning Joan, to her delight, is rarely told town gossip. The morning announcements play through the halls' loudspeaker.

ANNOUNCER

The weather today looks ...

Joan's absently digging in her locker. A group of football player passes by, one knocks into Joan, her headphones fall off her head.

JOAN

Hey! Watch it!

JOCK

You watch it freak!

The Jock and his friends laugh a little as they keep walking.

JOAN

(under her breath)

Bastards.

ANNOUNCER

All after school activities will be canceled today...

This catches Joan's attention.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

A school wide assemble will be held during today's first period. All staff and students are required to attend.

Joan lets out a deep and aggravated breath, looks like she can't avoid the gossip this time.

Int. School Auditorium

The auditorium is small. With the full school, seats still remain empty. Joan's sat near the back, close to the door. On stage, a few of the administrators sit in a row off to the side. PRINCIPLE STEALER steps up, front and center. Even for a middle-aged white man, he is sweating too much.

PRINCIPLE STEALER

(Cluny)

Good morning students. I apologize for pulling everyone away from their first period lessons.

While I am sure some of you are already aware, I am saddened to say that a tragedy has struck our community. Ben Payne has died uh passed on. He was found in the church this morning and well that's about all I can say on that. But rest assured the police department is going to get to the bottom of this.

The whispers grow with talk of investigations. The Vice Principle shoots Principle Stealer a daring look, *he shouldn't have said that bit.*

PRINCIPLE STEALER (CONT'D)

Now everyone, we are forgetting what matters. Ben Payne was too young. From what our teachers tell me he was a brilliant student who loved math. He was kind and deeply involved in the church, serving as an altar boy and for 6 years he was in mass every Sunday, without fail. Our community is suffering from a great loss.

We may not understand why he was taken so soon but we must remember that the Lord has a plan.

The Vice Principle gives a suggestive cough, it doesn't stop him.

PRINCIPLE STEALER (CONT'D)

Oh now I know they don't want me preaching up here but in moments like this we must have faith.

Joan tunes out. Despite barely speaking to him, the news of Ben's death lands heavy in her chest.

In the front row, Marcy's holding hands with a burly and thumb-like boy, Tom. Marcy clutches her cross necklace and nods along to what the principle is saying.

PRINCIPLE STEALER (CONT'D)

As you move through the rest of your classes please take a moment to say a little prayer for Ben. And if anyone feels like they need to talk about this any further, I highly suggest attending this weeks youth group meeting here on campus. I'm sure Miss Bowmen would be more than pleased to have you.

Marcy solemnly smiles as she looks to her fellow classmates with reassurance.

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - SUNSET

Tom's room is all American with pictures of football players and even a cross hanging off his wallpaper. Marcy's taken over his desk, covering it in notebooks and paper as she replans this week's youth group. Tom's lying on his bed tossing a baseball up and catching it while listening to Marcy ramble.

MARCY

He could have asked me beforehand.

TOM

Stealer promoted youth group, isn't that what you wanted.

MARCY

Yes but not right now! I had a really fun activity planned this week and now it feels like it's in really poor taste.

She stops what she's doing and turns to look at Tom.

MARCY (CONT'D)

Oh goodness listen to me. I sound like my mother.

TOM

No you don't.

She waits for him to say more. It takes Tom a second to register this.

TOM (CONT'D)
You are just doing your part.
Stealer was trying to help and if
anyone new does come then I'm sure
they will love whatever activity
you set up.

Marcy smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)
Ben's death will be old news by
Friday anyways. Everyone's too
caught up in how gross it was to
actually miss him.

Tom snorts, missing his catch, the baseball landing on his face instead.

TOM (CONT'D)
Ow damn it!

MARCY
Don't curse!

Tom sits up, cupping the side of his cheek.

TOM
I didn't! Do I have a bruise?

Marcy gets up and sits next to Tom to inspect the damage.

MARCY
No bruise, you're going to be just fine.

TOM
Thank God. My father would kill me if he thought I got into a fight.

They sit together for a moment.

MARCY
You really shouldn't say that stuff.

TOM
What he would! My old man is very serious about that.

Marcy lightly shakes her head.

MARCY

I know that, but I was talking
about Ben. It's not good to speak
ill of the dead.

TOM

Yea sure Marcy.

MARCY

His family must be devastated.

TOM

Micky didn't look too upset.

MARCY

Oh now that's not true. He's his
brother.

TOM

By blood maybe but come on Marcy we
all know Benny-boy was a freak.

MARCY

(contemplative)

That doesn't matter, family is
family. Micky knows that.
Ben was practically martyred.

TOM

You mean murdered.

MARCY

No that's not... are people really
saying it was murder?

TOM

Jeez Marcy were you paying
attention at all today?

MARCY

Well I was really focused on youth
group plans and, we were still in
class you know.

TOM

The teachers were talking about it
too.

MARCY

Oh.

TOM

(without care)

Everyone knows he was murdered.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)
Brad's mom was the one who found
him. Did you know that?

MARCY
Yes I did. My mother and I saw her
crying this morning.

TOM
I bet she was. Brad can't do
anything without making that woman
cry. Imagine her after seeing Ben's
tongue on the altar.

Marcy goes pale.

MARCY
His what?

TOM
Damn you really weren't listening!
That's not even the worst of it,
Babe. From what I heard, he looked
straight of The Exorcist!

Marcy flinches at the pet name.

MARCY
You shouldn't watch that stuff, my
Mother says it's the devil's work.

TOM
And what do you think this was?
Benny got murdered and was left
without a tongue. Jack told me the
psycho left him praying in his own
blood!

MARCY
Okay! Enough Please! That is far
too gruesome and is nothing but
gossip.

TOM
(to himself)
How are they gonna get the blood
out of that old floor anyways?

MARCY
Tommy! Seriously I don't want to
talk about this anymore.

Tom's eyes glint in mischief.

TOM
(mockingly)
What, is Miss Bowmen scared?

MARCY
Oh please don't start.

TOM
Do you need someone big and strong
to protect you?!

He jumps off the bed, flexing his muscles dramatically.
Marcy laughs in shock.

TOM (CONT'D)
Well have no fear! I will protect
you from the ghost of that little
perv and who ever killed him!

Marcy's giggle fizzles out and so does Tom's performance.
It's awkward until the room lights up with headlights from a
car pulling into his driveway.

TOM (CONT'D)
Shit! That's my Father. Marcy you
have to go.

MARCY
Language! You didn't tell him I was
coming over?

TOM
Well I asked and he said no but you
were in distress and I'm supposed
to be your big hero. Remember?

Marcy starts getting her stuff together, ignoring Tom's
attempted joke.

MARCY
How am I supposed to get home?

TOM
Just walk, you aren't that far.

MARCY
(irritated)
Are you being serious?

Tom's opened his bedroom door, checking to see if the coast
is clear.

TOM
Yes now come on.

INT. TOM'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Tom holds Marcy wrist as he pulls her through his house. They creak down the stairs and to the back door, just as the garage sounds like it's opening. The pair stop in the doorway, Tom compulsively looking over his shoulder.

TOM
I'll make this up to you.

MARCY
Sure you will.

She turns to leave but he stops her.

TOM
You have to take the back path
okay?

MARCY
What? No, it's dark!

TOM
My Father is still out front, he's
gonna see you! Please I need you to
take the back path.

Marcy stews for a second.

MARCY
Make the football team come to
youth group and I will.

TOM
Yes fine, now go. I'll see you
tomorrow and remember: back path!

EXT. THE BACK SIDE OF TOM'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Marcy gets only a few steps out the door before its shut quickly behind her. She looks to her left, seeing the street brightly lit and then to her right leading to the dark dirt path. She takes a deep breath and turns to the right, following Tom's orders.

EXT. DOWN THE DARK PATH - LATER

The crisp autumn air rushes through the trees to Marcy's left. She's been walking for longer than expected and still isn't near her house. The light from Tom's Cul-de-sac is dying and without the light from the moon, it would be pitch black.

MARCY

(mockingly)

*Just Walk Marcy. It's not that far
Marcy. What a liar.*

The crunch of each step is overbearingly loud in comparison her silent surroundings.

A whisper of something else's steps syncopates with Marcy's. She feels it, like wind on her neck when the crushing leaves behind her grow in volume. Marcy turns her head to look behind her, in a way that's far too polite for the circumstances.

A shadow of a person. That's all she can see.

Marcy's steps get faster. So do the shadows'. She tires to stay calm.

MARCY (CONT'D)

*It's okay, they're just walking.
You're just walking. Nothing's
wrong.*

The steps get louder behind her and Marcy wants to run but doesn't, looking over her shoulder instead. She shrieks.

MARCY (CONT'D)

OH MY GOODNESS.

The Shadow's made up the distance and now standing only a few feet away is Joan, slightly out of breath, still carrying her school bag and is equally freaked as Marcy.

JOAN

God! You just scared the shit out of me!

MARCY

I scared you?! You were following me!

JOAN

(still out of breath)

Why would I do that?!

(MORE)

JOAN (CONT'D)
I was jogging home and there you
were muttering to yourself and
being all suspicious. I was just
trying to jog past you.

Marcy scoffs, slightly embarrassed that someone saw her talking to herself. She maintains her composure.

MARCY
You could have said hi at least
before sneaking up on me.

Joan thinks about it.

JOAN
Yea, I didn't think of that one.

The fear dies and in its place they are left wildly uncomfortable. While introductions aren't needed, they are practically strangers.

MARCY
It's fine.

Marcy collects herself while Joan looks around a bit, not really wanting to have to make eye contact with Marcy.

MARCY (CONT'D)
Next time maybe try being less of a
freak.

Joan's attention shoots back to Marcy, taken aback only for a second before lightly shaking her head and letting out a burst of air. She smiles.

JOAN
Jesus, you're a dick.

MARCY
Don't use the lord's name in vain.

Marcy starts walking again, Joan's laughing to herself and lets Marcy walk ahead.

JOAN
(irritated)
Are you being serious right now?

MARCY
Yes, I am.

Joan jogs to catch up with Marcy, who has decided the conversation is over. Joan isn't giving up.

JOAN

Right, of course you are. I expect nothing less from the "Virgin Marcy" herself.

MARCY

Comparing me to the Mother of God is not the insult you think it is.

JOAN

(playing into the joke)
Who said I was insulting you? I truly believe the next holy coming has already been placed in your underage uterus. That's God's style, right?

MARCY

That is very inappropriate.

JOAN

Maybe, but you aren't scared anymore so, you're welcome

MARCY

(frustrated)

You're the one that scared me!

JOAN

Oh sure, yea cause I'm definitely the big threat in town right now.

MARCY

Can you not talk about that.

This stops Joan, even she isn't about to joke about Ben's death.

JOAN

What are you doing out here anyways?

MARCY

I don't fully see how that concerns you, Joan.

JOAN

(sarcastic)

Ah, so you do remember my name, what an honor.

MARCY

We've gone to school together since seventh grade.

(MORE)

MARCY (CONT'D)
Our graduating class is less than a hundred people. If I didn't know your name, it would only mean I was an idiot.

JOAN
I mean I don't know everyone in our year's name.

MARCY
Point exactly.

JOAN
(serious)
Hey watch it.

Marcy's taken off guard by Joan's change in tone. The silence bubbles, and it's making Marcy itch.

MARCY
What are you doing here then?

Joan doesn't hesitate to answer, her tone unwavering.

JOAN
I'm going home. Missed the bus after soccer practice.

MARCY
But after school activities were canceled.

JOAN
Yea but that doesn't mean I can't practice anyways.

MARCY
That's really weird.

Joan just shrugs, looking exhausted. Her eyebrows crease in thought and Marcy sputters before Joan can say what she's thinking.

MARCY (CONT'D)
I was at Tom's and lost track of time.

Joan gasps. Taken out of her head.

JOAN
Marcy! Guess you aren't as "virginal" as I thought.

MARCY

(lightly)

It was nothing like that! We were
just doing prep for youth group.

JOAN

What ever you say...

MARCY

If you tell anyone, I will deny it.

JOAN

Isn't that a sin?

Marcy gives her a stern look, Joan puts a hand to her heart,
and the other up, like she's taking a vow.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Secrets safe with me.

Marcy doesn't respond. The sounds of the woods filling the
space. Again Joan's eyebrows crinkle, looking puzzled.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Wait, why didn't Tom just drive you
home? Not like he doesn't have a
car.

MARCY

People would talk.

Joan scoffs.

MARCY (CONT'D)

(defensively)

He has really nosy neighbors!
Besides, it's not a good look.

JOAN

And sneaking around is?

(pause)

You two practically are engaged at
this point anyways.

MARCY

Well I wouldn't say-

A loud cry cuts her off. Both girls go silent. Everything is
still, even as they speak.

JOAN

(whispered)

You heard that right?

MARCY
(whispered)
Yes of course.

From the same direction they catch the echos of thuds and struggle.

JOAN
I bet it's a deer.

There's a final *thump* and a matching growl from the forest. Joan's eye grow in realization.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Shit it probably got caught in one
of those stupid bear traps Mr.
Growly put out.

MARCY
Sorry, he did what?

JOAN
(dismissive)
Don't ask, that man is out of his
mind.

Joan abandons the path, moving into the woods towards the sounds.

MARCY
What are you doing?

JOAN
What does it look like? Whatever
that is, it needs help!

MARCY
What if it's a mountain lion or
something?!

JOAN
There aren't mountain lions in
Vermont, Come on church girl!

Marcy hesitates before following Joan in.

EXT. OFF THE PATH, IN THE WOODS

Joan pushes through the trees, searching for the sources of the cry. Marcy trails a few feet behind her.

MARCY
We should turn back.

JOAN

Why?

MARCY

(pointed)

I can think of a few reasons. And
if it is a deer, it's probably dead
now.

JOAN

Don't you think Jesus would want me
to try and save it?

Marcy grumbles to herself. Not being able to argue with Joan,
she quickly catches up to her. They continue searching but
can't find anything.

MARCY

Okay I'm leaving, this is a waste
of time.

JOAN

You shouldn't walk home alone.

A Beat.

JOAN (CONT'D)

(teasingly)

You'll get lost or scared again.

MARCY

I am going to be late to curfew.

Joan turns to look at her, taking a breath and preparing her
witty response but her eyes catch on something in the tree
line behind Marcy and the blood drains from her face.

JOAN

Marcy? What's that?

Marcy quickly turns around following Joan's gaze. Both girls
move closer. Just above their eye line is the tangled sight
of two hearts. Human. Blood drips from above as Marcy's eyes
find the source.

MARCY

(horrified but quiet)

Oh God.

With their ankles tied and suspending them, two bodied
separately swing. Their bare chest's have been reduced to
cavities, blood poring down and coating their faces. The
women's hair is dripping with it. The two hearts, freshly
removed, hang not from the tree branches but the hands.

As their extended arteries have been tied around two wrists allowing the hearts to intertwine in the breeze.

The tie snaps and both hearts fall to the ground. This breaks the girls out of their fear stricken trance. Marcy screams and Joan is panicking. She grabs Marcy's hand, and runs.

EXT. THE WOODS

Joan is still running and pulling Marcy with her. They both are breathing hard.

MARCY
Joan Stop! You're going the wrong way!

Joan's body jolts to a stop, frantically looking around them. Marcy watches her as she attempt to control her emotions before she starts looking around.

JOAN
(mumbling)
I don't Know. I -

MARCY
We need to go that way.

Mary points to their right. The two girls lock eyes before taking off again. But something moves behind the trees, and Joan pulls the both of them to the ground without thinking.

MARCY (CONT'D)
What are you -

Joan forcefully puts her hand over Marcy's mouth.

JOAN
Shut up. I saw someone.

Marcy's eyes grow wide both girls stay down. The figure is just past where they had been running, but is unaware of the girls. Joan peaks her head up, just slightly catching a glimpse of the figure's long hair as they wander towards the corpses. In their passing the girls hear it.

THE FIGURE
(croaking)
Amor condusse noi ad una morte.
Amor condu -

The figure repeats the phrase like a chant until dissolving back into the forest.

Joan is frozen until she is sure the figure is gone and when the coast is clear, she pulls away from Marcy and vomits.

Marcy gets back on her feet, shocked. Joan wipes her mouth, and in an instant both girls are running.

INT. THE POLICE STATION

Under the Fluorescent lights, Joan and Marcy sit across from OFFICER BRADLEY, a greasy young man who's new to the police force. His desk is a disaster in comparison to the row of sterile desks around them.

MARCY

We ran after realizing they had passed. Didn't stop till we made it here.

OFFICER BRADLEY

Must have been horrible, young things like you should never be exposed to that.

JOAN

Better to see it than be it, I think.

No one responds. Officer Bradley is reviewing the police report he's filling out. Marcy does not look at Joan.

OFFICER BRADLEY

Where exactly did you say they were?

JOAN

We already told the Sheriff that, weren't you listening?

OFFICER BRADLEY

Could you just answer the question?

MARCY

Off the path behind Rolling Pines, maybe ten minutes into the woods.

JOAN

For god's sake, in the woods behind the rich neighborhood.

Officer Bradley focuses on Marcy's answer. She's sitting with perfect, rigid posture. Joan is bouncing her leg incessantly next to her.

OFFICER BRADLEY

Anything else we should know?

Marcy goes to answer, already shaking her head "no" but Joan jumps in instead.

JOAN

There was a woman out there.

OFFICER BRADLEY

Yes, you mentioned that it was a woman and a man.

JOAN

No I mean there was a woman who wasn't dead. A living woman was out there.

Officer Bradley gives Marcy a puzzled look but Marcy avoids it by staring at her dirty shoes.

OFFICER BRADLEY

What did this woman look like?

JOAN

(concentrated)

Yea okay, so I only could see her back but she had really long dark hair, was pretty thin and walking right towards the bodies.

OFFICER BRADLEY

You insinuating this women is involved?

JOAN

I'm not saying she isn't.

Officer Bradley closes the case file and let's out a slight laugh.

OFFICER BRADLEY

I find that real hard to believe, young lady.

JOAN

I promise I'm not lying.

OFFICER BRADLEY

And how do you think such a frail thing was able to get those people in that tree?

JOAN

Well no, I hadn't really thought
about it.

Officer Bradley reopens the case file, looking ready to add
this information in.

OFFICER BRADLEY

(to Joan)

Of course, that's okay.
Now would you say this woman was
more ghostly or witch-like?

JOAN

(confused)

I don't know.

OFFICER BRADLEY

And did you possible see a house
made out of candy out there too?

Officer Bradley lets out a little laugh and Joan realizes he
doesn't believe her. Marcy doesn't react.

JOAN

(irritated)

Are you being serious?

OFFICER BRADLEY

(to Marcy)

What about you Miss Bowmen, did you
see this woman your friend here is
describing?

MARCY

We aren't friends and no I didn't
see a woman.

JOAN

But you heard her! She was speaking
and -

MARCY

We were so scared. I think the
shock must have messed with our
heads.

OFFICER BRADLEY

Now that sounds more likely.
Now, the sheriff and a couple men
are looking into this, so you two
don't need to worry your pretty
little heads about it.

MARCY
Thank you sir.

Marcy steps on Joan's foot underneath the desk in an attempt to get her attention.

JOAN
What!

Marcy's eyes resemble that of her mothers, pointed and harsh.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Right, Thanks Bradley.

OFFICER BRADLEY
You two can wait upfront till your parents get here.
Also do us a favor and stay out of the woods.

JOAN
Yes Sir!

Joan exaggerates a military salute towards Officer Bradley before she grabs her backpack and heads to the door. Marcy carefully gets her bag and follows, giving Officer Bradley an apologetic smile on her way.

INT. STATION HALL

Joan is storming down the hallway towards the receptionist's office. Marcy follows quickly behind and grabs her by the shoulder, forcing Joan to stop and look at her.

JOAN
What the Hell Marcy?

MARCY
You can't go out there all angry, we have to look innocent and disturbed.

JOAN
We are innocent and disturbed!

MARCY
You know what I mean.

JOAN
You do realize you just made us sound like idiots, right?

MARCY

No, I just saved us from being called insane.

JOAN

Leave it to you to put reputation before the truth.

MARCY

I told the truth, okay? I didn't see that woman!

JOAN

But you heard her and we both know it.

MARCY

What does that matter?

JOAN

They aren't going to take us seriously anymore.

MARCY

They were never going to, look at us!

Marcy and Joan really take a moment to look at themselves. They're covered in dirt and look thoroughly messed up. Joan sighs and sits down on a wooden bench next to the Shirff's office door. It creaks as she settles her head in her hands.

MARCY (CONT'D)

You have to let this go. We aren't the police and who knows maybe we really were just hallucinating that woman.

Joan's head shoots up.

JOAN

So you did see her! You god damn liar.

Marcy sits next to her on the bench. It creaks again.

MARCY

That doesn't matter.

JOAN

Like hell it does.

MARCY

Stop it!

Joan fumes in silence and is close to just leaving. Marcy can feel it.

MARCY (CONT'D)
I am only going to say this once
and then I never want to speak on
it again. Got it?

JOAN
Fine.

MARCY
Her voice has been echoing in my
head all night-

JOAN
(interrupting)
I knew it.

MARCY
But that does not mean I think
there was actually a woman out
there.

JOAN
What does that mean?

MARCY
The devil taunts us in mysterious
ways.

Joan stands up.

JOAN
You know I really don't appreciate
you making fun of me.

MARCY
I'm not!

JOAN
No right of course because you
saying it's the devil is just so
different from it being a witch or
a goddamn ghost.

MARCY
That's not what I meant.

Marcy stands too as sounds from the receptionist's office carry into the hall.

MR.BOWMEN (O.S.)
Where is the Sheriff?

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)
Evening sir, how can I help you?

MRS. BOWMEN (O.S.)
Where is our daughter?

The two girls listen in, Marcy looking physically ill while Joan revels in the moment.

JOAN
Looks like the cavalry's arrived.
Should we go say hi?

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)
Could I get your daughter's name by chance?

MRS. BOWMEN (O.S.)
Martha we have gone to church together for years, you know who our daughter is. Now where is she?

JOAN
(sarcastically)
This is going to be so fun.

MARCY
Could you just be normal for one second.

JOAN
Marcy, I don't care about what you want. You're a coward. So go ahead and tease me and tell me I'm weird or whatever you want but I'm not letting this go.

MARCY
Joan, please.

JOAN
Keep lying to yourself about what we saw but don't for one second think you can control what I do. Now run home to mommy and daddy.

Joan finally walks away, heading straight to the hall door.

MARCY
You are such an asshole!

Joan spins around right before walking through the door, snarling and making dead eye contact with Marcy.

JOAN

Looks like the bitch has some bite
after all.

INT. RECEPTIONIST FRONT OFFICE

Joan pushes through the door straight into the commotion. Mrs. Bowmen stands behind her husband looking furious and Mr. Bowmen is about to yell at the poor receptionist. They all stop at the sound of the door slamming.

MRS. BOWMEN

Marcy?!

Mrs. Bowmen gracefully dashes around her husband to get a better look, her face falls into a mix of disgust and disappointment as she sees Joan.

JOAN

Nope.

Joan walks past the Mr. and Mrs. Bowmen and takes seat in the corner. Marcy calmly enters the room as Joan gets her backpack open, pulls out her Walkman and swiftly puts it on.

MRS. BOWMEN

Marcy Elizabeth Bowmen you better have a very good reason as to why we are picking you up from the police station.

MARCY

I am so sorry, I was walking home and -

MR. BOWMEN

We don't want your excuses.

MARCY

Yes Sir, I'm sorry.

MR. BOWMEN

(to the receptionist)

Where is the Sheriff? I need to speak with him.

RECEPTIONIST

Like I mentioned before, the Sheriff is out investigating what these two reported earlier.

The receptionist gestures lazily towards Marcy and Joan. Joan has successfully tuned out the conversation while Marcy looks trapped.

MR. BOWMEN
Then it looks like I'll be waiting
here till he gets back.

MRS. BOWMEN
(to Marcy)
What is she talking about? What did
you report?

The bell above the front door breaks the conversation as, ESTER HUXLEY, a woman in her mid-forties in dirty overalls, enters. She's caught off guard by how packed the small room is. She scans it briefly landing on Joan, her daughter.

MS. HUXLEY
Joanie!

Ms. Huxley rushes to her daughter, Joan gets up and the two crash into a hug. As they separate, Joan starts talking and pulls her headphones off.

JOAN
I'm fine, I promise. I can explain
everything I just, I -

MS. HUXLEY
(to receptionist)
Is this one of those situations
where I need to sign something or
can we just go?

RECEPTIONIST
I would expect a call from the
station later this evening but yes
you all are free to leave.

MR. BOWMEN
We are not going anywhere.

MRS. BOWMEN
(to Marcy)
What were you thinking being
around that girl?

RECEPTIONIST
Mr. Bowmen, you are going to
be waiting a very long time.

MARCY
It was just a coincidence.

Ms. Huxley and Joan watch the uproar.

MS. HUXLEY
(to Marcy)
Wanna bet who throws something
first?

Joan snorts at her mom and shakes her head.

MS. HUXLEY (CONT'D)
Nah, you're right, isn't the right
crowd for that sort of thing.

JOAN
Yea don't think so.

MS. HUXLEY
How 'bout we go home then?

Joan nods as her Mom leads them towards the door. Ms. Huxley give a small wave to the receptionist before opening the door and walking out. Joan catches Marcy's eye one more time before turning and following her Mom out.

INT. MS.HUXLEY'S TRUCK

The ripped interior of the Huxley's truck exposes its age. There is a pair of dice hanging from the rearview mirror. Ms. Huxley drives quietly as Joan talks from the passenger seat.

JOAN
I really thought it was a deer or
something. Obviously I wouldn't
have gone after it if I knew... I
don't know who they were Mom, and
we really couldn't help them.

MS. HUXLEY
Oh sweetheart you probably wouldn't
have even been able to help a dying
deer let alone two fully grown
people. The police will do what
they can and you can just forget
all about this.

JOAN
Why does everyone keep saying that?

MS. HUXLEY
Well love, what else are they
supposed to say?

JOAN
I don't know but not that.

INT. MARCY'S BEDROOM

Marcy's bedroom is surprisingly bland, with white furniture and light floral wallpaper. On her nightstand is a pink rotary phone and her diary. Marcy is laying on her bed above the covers with wet hair a bathrobe. She's still and silent.

The phone rings. Marcy lets it ring a few times before she moves to pick it up.

MARCY
Bowmen residence. This is Marcy.

INT. TOM'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Tom is standing in his kitchen with a large white landline phone pinched between his shoulder and his ear. He readjusts when he hears Marcy's voice.

TOM
Marcy! It's Tom. What happened?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

MARCY
What?
TOM
You always call when you get back home. Why didn't you call?

Marcy sits up in bed, searching for the Right words.

MARCY
Oh gosh I must have forgotten, I'm sorry. I got home a while ago. you were right the walk wasn't that bad.

TOM
(Relieved)
Good! My dad didn't suspect a thing! He was too busy complaining about work to care...

Tom's voice fades as Marcy lays back down, mindlessly listening to him talk. As she stares at the ceiling she silently starts to cry.

INT. SOMEWHERE DARK

Cutting through the darkness, a single candle illuminates a small wooden table. It's old. In the limited light, only her scared and dirty hands are visible. She's holding a thin piece of dark chalk which scratches against the paper below. As she pulls away it exposes what she's been working on. She's been drawing and slowly, we see the outline of a familiar face. The killer is committing Marcy to memory.