

THE PHANTOM OF THE PULPIT

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. VALLEY - DAY

- DREAM -

A light breeze strokes the tips of wheat stalks.

GABRIEL GREISEN (22) baby faced and toned, lies naked in a bed of untamed grass. Around him, swaths stretch for acres. His body's shaped like Christ's during his crucifixion.

His face is so serene he could pass for high. The rays of golden sun beam down, giving his body a shimmering glow. Slowly, his head cocks right--

Gabriel's POV: Three FULLY GROWN BUNNY RABBITS nibble hungrily on blades of grass. They never look up, oblivious to the man watching them.

FATHER WYATT (V.O.)

Happy is the man that hath not
walked in the counsel of the
wicked, nor stood in the way of
sinners, nor sat in the seat of the
scornful. But his delight is in the
law of the LORD; and in His law
doth he meditate day and night. And
he shall be like a tree planted by
streams of water, that bringeth
forth its fruit in its season, And
whose leaf doth not wither.

INT. SANCTUARY - DAY

MONTAGE

- A) Oak Hymnal Board, today's delegated page numbers.
- B) Shadows fly across a statue of a praying Mother Mary.
- C) Various stained glass windows depict the nativity story.
- D) Fingers dip into holy water fonts.
- E) Knee boards fall, knees find their bearings.

FATHER WYATT (O.S.)

And in whatsoever he doeth he shall
prosper. Not so the wicked; but
they are like the chaff which the
wind driveth away.

(MORE)

FATHER WYATT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Therefore the wicked shall not
stand in the judgment, nor sinners
in the congregation of the
righteous.

INT. SANCTUARY - LATER

FATHER WYATT (60) wrinkled and stoic, waves an accusing
finger at the CONGREGATION.

Gabriel, wearing the white robe and red sash of an
Episcopalian Deacon, stands beside a row of ALTER BOYS and
GIRLS.

FATHER WYATT
For the LORD regardeth the way of
the righteous; but the way of the
wicked shall perish. Psalms 1:1. In
the name of the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

CONGREGATION
Amen.

FATHER WYATT
Please rise.

The SOUNDS of bodies rising and babies whining--

EXT. ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, DARLINGTON INDIANA - LATER

Car horns BEEP as FAMILIES navigate around one o'clock
traffic.

At the entrance, Gabriel shakes hands with departing PARISH
MEMBERS. A PREGNANT WOMAN approaches him, he touches her
belly as they exchange small talk.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Father Wyatt's seated behind his desk. Gabriel's on the
opposing side, taking notes.

FATHER WYATT
Remember to contact the
choreographers.

GABRIEL
Okay.

FATHER WYATT

Tell them rehearsal time's been switched.

GABRIEL

Okay.

FATHER WYATT

I don't care how high ranking of a company they are, they're still kids. And wrangling kids into order after sundown is not something I intend on putting anyone through. Not even my worst, worst, worst enemy.

GABRIEL

Got it.

He hands Gabriel a sticky note.

FATHER WYATT

There are seven numbers listed. All of which belong to annoyingly persistent parents wishing to voice their concerns regarding this year's recital.

GABRIEL

What concerns?

FATHER WYATT

Scene one: the "Land of Sweets" supposedly, it espouses a belief in the occult sciences. Fairies, sugar plumb or not, are mythological creatures who practice in magical mischief, shape shifting, flying, sprinkling levitating dust, etcetera, etcetera.

GABRIEL

Talk about over analyzing.

FATHER WYATT

One lady found out about the story it's based on and sent her seven foot something, Ukrainian mail order husband to protest in front of our marquee. He stayed there for hours. Hours. I was too terrified to ask him to leave. Have you ever stood next to someone who's over seven feet tall?

GABRIEL

What story is it based on?

FATHER WYATT

I don't know. I haven't read it.
It's two hundred and some years
old. But apparently there's a seven-
headed mouse king that brainwashes
his underage lover while she's
asleep. In the lady's words it's
"disempowering to young women".

GABRIEL

THAT'S what the Nutcracker Ballet's
based on?

FATHER WYATT

Yeah, and a lot of vengeful deceit.
Just, call those numbers and
convince them that sticking to the
original script is best for our
creative aim. Bombard them with
niceties. Use the youthful charm
that YOU possess and I don't.

GABRIEL

And if my youthful charm isn't
convincing?

FATHER WYATT

Hang up.

INT. SANCTUARY - LATER

A paint brush, drenched in white-out, swipes across the
inside cover page of a book. It paints over an amateur sketch
of the male genitalia.

Gabriel sits in a pew. Piles among piles of vandalized Bibles
surround him.

BANG! His head jerks up to see a patch of blood spattered
across a stained glass window.

EXT. CHURCH - LATER

Gabriel makes his way down a handicap ramp with a rag and a
spray bottle of Windex.

A CROW lies belly up in a mound of its own black feathers,
appearing to be dead.

Gabriel cleans the fresh blood markings off the window. After a beat - GARGLING - like someone's bent over their sink with a mouthful of Listerine.

He turns around. The crow's positioning is unchanged. He crouches closer and stretches out his hand. As soon as he makes contact, the crow resurrects and takes off for the clouds.

Gabriel falls over, nearly wetting himself.

A rustic, privately owned GAZEBO comes into view. It's the church's property, though no one ever uses it... until now.

There's a body, a person sitting at one of its two picnic tables. We're too far away to make out their gender. All we see is a black mass.

EXT. GAZEBO - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON the top of the picnic table. The tip of a pocket knife spastically SCRATCHES into the wood, carving something. What it is, we can't see.

It's a girl... or a woman? Age indeterminable. She's head to toe in black and staring down at a ninety degree angle. Her frizzy, pitch black hair obscures her face.

Gabriel ascends the steps with "The Book of Common Prayer" in hand. He approaches.

GABRIEL

Excuse me, miss?

The SCRATCHING stops. The anonymous girl/woman's head lifts. Revealing a mid to late twenties face. Overall, she's attractive, though a few of her features are unkempt. Her brows are bushy, her lips are chapped, her makeup's ten shades too dark, and one of her eyes is a sterling-grey while the other's a honey-brown. Soon enough, she'll be known to us as DELPHINE.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

May I sit?

She nods.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Thank you.

He sits.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
What are you drawing or, uh,
carving there?

She abruptly starts carving in a new location, a location much closer to him. After a few seconds, she pulls away and STABS the knife into the center of the table.

The name "DELPHINE" is inscribed.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Delphine? Delphine, is that your
name?

No response.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Hello, Delphine. I'm Gabriel
Greisen, the ordained deacon here
at St. Joseph's.

He extends his hand, she rejects the cordial shake. He recoils.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
It's lovely to meet you.

An awkward beat.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
While you're here, would you mind
if I share some information about
our parish?

He takes her lack of a response as a green light.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Well, the Episcopal Church
originated from The Church of
England and is based on Roman
Catholic and Anglican ideas. Our
views on worship are very
conservative, while our views on
scripture are very liberal. We
don't have confessions of faith. We
condone clerical marriages. We
allow women into priesthood. We
support the LGBT community. We
participate in the seven
sacraments: baptism, holy
communion, confirmation--

A hanging Episcopal church flag FLAPS in the sudden GUST of
wind.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Windy, isn't it?

No response.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Uh, this is the "Book of Common Prayer".

He places the book on the picnic table.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
It's basically our companion to the Bible. It outlines our liturgies, morning and evening prayers, psalms, seasonal calenders, historical documents. It also unites us with other Catholics, especially those who follow the Apostolic faith which traces its roots all the way back to the apostles teachings. It essentially provides a framework for all of our services.

(beat)
You can keep this copy if you'd like.

He slides it towards her.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Would you be interested in attending one of our masses? New followers are always welcome.

The CHURCH BELL RINGS. Delphine yanks her pocket knife out of the picnic table and hauls ass out of the gazebo like the Devil's on her coattail. Gabriel watches her go.

INT. GABRIEL'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

A medicine cabinet opens.

Gabriel fingers through prescription paradise. An army of orange containers line the shelves.

He picks his poison, pours out three pink pills, and pops them into his mouth.

INT. GABRIEL'S KITCHEN - LATER

Gabriel HUMS a tune as he sautes a pan of hardy vegetables over an open flame burner.

INT. GABRIEL'S DINING ROOM - LATER

He's multitasking, eating dinner while consoling a nagging parish member over the phone.

GABRIEL

Ma'am... ma'am, please don't raise
your voice... no the kingdom of
talking dolls won't be in our
adaptation.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Father Wyatt teaches a Sunday school class. Gabriel's in the wing, blending in as one of the students.

FATHER WYATT

All men are born sinner, but who is
exempt? Babies. Babies, all flesh
and blood, are innocent until the
moment they reach what golden age?

STUDENT 1

Three.

STUDENT 2

No, five.

STUDENT 3

It depends.

FATHER WYATT

Ah, I heard it. It depends. It
depends on when a child learns the
difference between right and wrong.
The second a child thinks "huh,
mommy said not to swipe another
cookie from the cookie jar, but I
want one anyway". Once that becomes
their mind set, then they will be
held accountable. Do we understand
this? Nod for me.

They nod.

FATHER WYATT (CONT'D)

Isn't it peculiar how you NEVER
EVER have to teach a child to do
something bad? Isn't it? From the
get-go they know how to lie, cheat,
steal, disobey, tease. It's easy.
We're corrupted from conception. So
how do we fix this? By teaching
them manners, rules, courtesy,
respect. We must instill a sense of
humility. We must break them of
this illusion their parents have
created. The illusion that the
world revolves around them. That
their needs come before anyone
else's because, sadly, we don't
instinctively think this way. It
must be programmed... and this
programming must begin early in
order for it to last a lifetime.

(beat)

Now, do any of you have younger
siblings?

The students BLURT out an assortment of answers.

FATHER WYATT (CONT'D)

I heard some yeses. Those of you
who said yes, what happens when you
tell your snot nosed younger
sibling not to touch your bike or
your diary, what's the first thing
they want to do?

STUDENT 4

Touch it!

FATHER WYATT

And why is that?

STUDENT 5

Because of temptation.

FATHER WYATT

Good. Very, very good. Temptation,
the Devil, they're able to coax us
into exploring things we otherwise
would've never thought to explore.
Their influence, as unequitable as
it is, is forever present. Moving
on, can anyone tell me what the
definition of grace is?

STUDENT 6

Grace is the free unmerited favor
of God.

FATHER WYATT

Wonderful. Now can anyone tell me
what the definition of mercy is?

STUDENT 7

To pity someone.

FATHER WYATT

Half way there. It's the
compassion, pity, forgiveness of
someone who's undeserving. Emphases
on "undeserving".
Now, there are a lot of
similarities between the two--

As the conversation carries on, Gabriel turns and looks out
of the window behind him.

Gabriel's POV: It's the gazebo. Empty.

INT. CVS PHARMACY - NIGHT

Two thumbs play a game of thumb war. They both belong to the
same person.

Gabriel waits impatiently at the pharmaceutical counter. The
PHARMACIST approaches, presenting a white paper bag.

PHARMACIST

Here you are.

He hands over the bag.

PHARMACIST (CONT'D)

You're due back for another refill
on...

He glances down at his computer screen.

PHARMACIST (CONT'D)

February first.

GABRIEL

Perfect, thank you.

PHARMACIST

Happy holidays.

GABRIEL

You too.

EXT. CVS PHARMACY - SAME

Long, black fingernails root through the buried treasures inside of a metal trash can's ashtray.

It's Delphine, our Gothic mute. Every few seconds she consumes a disposed of cigarette butt and licks her ashy fingers clean. It's disgusting. Some LIGHT COUGHING follows.

Gabriel exits the CVS, makes his way through the parking lot.

DELPHINE

(calling out)

What's in the bag?

He turns, does a double take.

GABRIEL

Delphine?

DELPHINE

Vicodin, MiraLAX, Lotrimin,
Analpram-HC? Is it in the steroid
family? Am I getting warmer or
colder?

She methodically approaches him.

GABRIEL

Colder actually. Do you work here,
at the CVS?

DELPHINE

Well, not--

She practically COUGHS up a lung. Her hands clasp around her veiny neck as she HOCKS up spit ball after spit ball.

Gabriel cringes, but stays idle of assistance.

GABRIEL

Are you okay?

She raises an index finger and wipes her mouth on her sleeve.

DELPHINE

Hair ball.

She cackles (this cackle we will become quite familiar with).

GABRIEL
It's nearly midnight. Have you been
standing out here all alone?

DELPHINE
Why? Thinking about tying me up,
tossing me into your trunk?

She flirtatiously SLAPS his shoulder. He forces laughter.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
(mumbles)
I didn't think you had rope on you
anyway.

GABRIEL
How are you?

DELPHINE
I'm breathing, aren't I?

GABRIEL
It's nice to finally hear your
voice.

DELPHINE
Is that code for something?

GABRIEL
No. A few days ago, the last time I
saw you, you... never... spoke.

DELPHINE
Oh, about that, I wasn't wearing my
nicotine patch. Sometimes that
alone causes me to go mute. But
only sometimes and briefly. Very
briefly. And as for the knife
play... well, it's surprisingly
medicinal during the trying times
of detox. You should look into it.

GABRIEL
Detox?

DELPHINE
Yes, but I'm currently on a break.
Well, another break.

GABRIEL
(dawning on him)
Detox? That's the... oh, okay. I
thought I had offended you.
(MORE)

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
My informational rants, they've
been known to be lengthy.

DELPHINE
Offend me? Me, offended? Not
possible. Plus, with those dimples.
(flirtatious)
Tickle me black.

GABRIEL
You mean pink?

She tilts her head, squints in confusion.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
I think you mean "tickle me pink".

DELPHINE
Ah, a man who knows his idioms. But
is he as knowledgeable as he thinks?

She circles around him like a vulture would road kill.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Am I my brother's keeper? Cast
pearls before swine. Crux of the
matter. The land of milk and honey.
By guess and by golly. Don
sackcloth and ashes. Hold out the
olive branch--

GABRIEL
A live dog is better than a dead
lion.

She stops circling abruptly, as if mad he cut her off.

DELPHINE
(deadpan)
Right church, wrong pew.

GABRIEL
I don't know that one. What's it
mean?

DELPHINE
Something's in the air. Something's
off.

She takes a pack of cigarettes out of her pocket.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
I'd offer you one, but I'm, ah,
what do they... what do they call
it? Uh...

GABRIEL
Penny pinching?

DELPHINE
Close.

GABRIEL
Pinching pennies?

DELPHINE
A stingy cunt.

She takes out a studded, skull shaped Zippo, and shoves it
into Gabriel's face.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
I bought him at an oriental flea
market. I like him. Do you want to
know what his name is?

GABRIEL
Bonehead.

He laughs, she doesn't.

DELPHINE
It was a yes or no question. His
name's Asag, bringing along such
disease and such unsightliness...
(snaps open lid)
... river fish could boil alive.

The wind keeps blowing out her flame.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Would a gentleman help a lady out?

He cups his hand around the flame, blocking the wind. She's
finally able to light her fag.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Look at that. HE rebuked the wind.

She takes a cool drag.

GABRIEL
Do you...
(coughs)
Do you live in Darlington?

DELPHINE
Gibson's Grant.

GABRIEL
Gibson's Grant the apartment
complex?

DELPHINE
Bull's-eye.

GABRIEL
Wow.

She gestures to her tattered jacket.

DELPHINE
Don't be fooled by all the holes.
Growing up, I ate my Apple Jacks
with a silver spoon.

GABRIEL
I'll say.

DELPHINE
But you know, tis' the season to
stay humble.
(eying him)
Look, I realize I'm not eye candy,
if anything I'm a soggy box of
Raisinets, but you should know that
these scabs on my neck are purely
mosquito bites, nothing more.

GABRIEL
I didn't notice them. They're
hardly even noticeable.

DELPHINE
Huh, I thought you were staring. I
apologize, I've been known to get
insecure from time to time.

GABRIEL
Yeah?

DELPHINE
Yeah.

GABRIEL
You don't have any reason to be.

She blushes.

DELPHINE

I'm an entrepreneur. I sell fruit
scented lotions, perfumes, incents.
Tropical Papaya's my best seller.
It gets the teenyboppers all wet
and wild.

Held coolly between two fingers is her black laminated
business card. He takes it, examines. It reads: "Delphine",
no last name, and an itsy-bitsy phone number at the very
bottom in parenthesis. That's it.

GABRIEL

Cool card.

DELPHINE

I have more if you're interested in
passing them out to your disciples
or sheep herders. Whatever the hell
the modern terminology is.

GABRIEL

(politely as possible)
That won't be necessary.

DELPHINE

I'm just tugging your tassel.

GABRIEL

You mean "pulling my leg"?

DELPHINE

Whatever peels your banana.

He laughs.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

I feel safe around you, Gabe. I
feel real safe. Even if I am in a
parking lot after sundown.

GABRIEL

(flattered)
Well, I am a Deacon.

DELPHINE

So?

GABRIEL

I'm a man of God.

DELPHINE

Just because you wear a badge,
doesn't mean you're a good cop.

GABRIEL

Yeah, but--

DELPHINE

Are you hungry?

INT. DENNY'S - LATER

Delphine lies across the top cap of a poorly reupholstered booth. She smokes like an Englishman as she listens to Gabriel babble on and on. His story telling's putting her to sleep.

GABRIEL

Our cucumber garden desperately needed a face lift so, it was a darling idea actually, for every container of compost they donated we would give them these little ticket stubs with different "your wish is our command" currencies on them. One would say "free Santa Claus sticker pad" or "two extra glazed donuts after mass". The initial response was so-so, but by Friday kids were quite literally trying to knock each other out of the competition while they were still waiting in line. Like my mother always said, a healthy dose of rivalry never hurt anybody. But their smiles, oh my, you should have seen them. I should have taken pictures. Well, I was going to, but then my camera's doggone memory card--

DELPHINE

Do you know what a six point nine is?

GABRIEL

(taken aback)

Oh, I don't know. Is that a mathematical question?

DELPHINE

A good thing ruined by a period.

She topples onto the cushiony seat, amused by her own joke. Gabriel doesn't find it so amusing.

GABRIEL
Could you please keep your voice
down?

She turns, scans the room - it's desolate. Denny's doesn't
get much action this late - she turns back to him.

DELPHINE
(quick)
Yeah, yeah, yeah. Down. Down like a
grey hound, vowel sound, triple
crowned. HA-HA, rhyming. But lower
octave, I got it. Don't want to
disrupt that bangin' birthday bash
over by the artificial ficus or
that couple swapping slobber over
their Eggs Benedict. Thoughtless
monsters. PDA, it's never okay.

She leans over the table, signals for him to come closer. He
does.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Do you like stories?

GABRIEL
What kind of stories?

DELPHINE
Fables.

GABRIEL
(unsure)
Yeah.

DELPHINE
You schlep such uncertainty.

GABRIEL
Yes, I like fables.

DELPHINE
Huh? What was that?

GABRIEL
(a little louder)
Yes, I like fables.

DELPHINE
You sure?

GABRIEL
Yes.

DELPHINE
You sure you're sure?

GABRIEL
Yes.

DELPHINE
Would you care to hear mine?

GABRIEL
Yes.

DELPHINE
You sure?

GABRIEL
Yes, I'm VERY sure.

DELPHINE
You sure you're--

GABRIEL
(aggravated)
Yes, yes, yes.

DELPHINE
Okay, no need for litany.

She leans in even closer.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Once upon a midnight dreary...
Death married Life. It was a
perfectly blended wedding of
signature Absinthe frappes and
reblooming Iris Immortality
centerpieces. Hell, even the four
apocalyptic horsemen made a guest
appearance! Yet most doubted their
compatibility. Opposites can and DO
attract, but was this courtship
perhaps TOO literal? On the
newlywed's honeymoon, after a long,
stressful day filled with street
harassment and peculiar stares,
Life looked over at her husband and
asked "Death, my dearest, darling
Death, why does everyone love me,
but hate you?". Death cradled his
wife's rosy red cheek and said
"Because you my darling are a
beautiful lie, and I... I am the f-
ugly truth".

She blows smoke in his face.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

(mumbles)

He came in swift flight to bear the
good news. So he says, so he says.

GABRIEL

What?

DELPHINE

What?

GABRIEL

What?

She GASPS.

DELPHINE

(staring off)

She's eying me.

He turns, scans the room.

GABRIEL

Who?

DELPHINE

Yeah, she is.

GABRIEL

Who are you--

DELPHINE

What a fucking beauty.

GABRIEL

Could you watch your language?

DELPHINE

Solid ten out of ten.

GABRIEL

Delph--

DELPHINE

Good Samaritan, do you have any
idea what time it is?

He rolls up his sleeve to check his watch, she stops him.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

It's show time.

She winks, smoothly slides out of the booth.

GABRIEL

Where are you going?

She crosses to a VINTAGE JUKEBOX and plugs it into the wall, bringing it to life. Her black nails glide down the dusty glass casing as she reads the song title choice aloud.

DELPHINE

Do You Hear What I Hear. Deck the Halls. Grandma Got Runover By a Reindeer. Little Drummer Bitch.

GABRIEL

Hey, Delphine.

DELPHINE

(to jukebox)

There you are.

She presses a finger to the glass.

GABRIEL

I think that's unplugged for a reason.

"ROCKIN' AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE" by Brenda Lee plays. Delphine lip sings and dances. She's on rhythm and surprisingly good.

She hops on top of the table, kicks like a rockette. Just as the SAXOPHONE SOLO hits, she begins leaping from table to table. Salt and pepper shakers, napkin holders, sugar packets, and condiments go flying onto the carpeted floor.

The HIGH NOTE HITS and she sells it, pulling a classic ear holding Christina Aguilera pose.

Gabriel watches all of this, thoroughly entertained.

The song ends. A CHUBBY CHEF barges through the kitchen door. A greasy spatula's his weapon of choice.

CHEF

What the fuck are you doing?

Delphine collapses as if drunk. Gabriel loses it, laughs like a Hyena.

EXT. DENNY'S - MOMENTS LATER

It's snowing.

Delphine blows through the diner doors and heads down the street. Shortly after, Gabriel exits.

GABRIEL

Hey, where are you going?

She turns and shoots him a "follow me" smile. He does. As her pace quickens, so does his. A playful chase ensues. They weave around parked cars, postboxes, and street corners.

As he begins to gain up on her, she makes a hard turn into a damp ALLEYWAY. Laundry lines hang from apartment balconies above, raccoons rummage through dumpsters, used syringes infest the storm drains. Ignoring the filth, he continues following her.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Delphine!

She runs in between two buildings. He follows, though it's a much tighter squeeze for him. He slows down and shimmies through sideways.

Gabriel's POV: Delphine disappears out of an opening at the other end.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Hey, you're going too fast!
Delphine?

Stumbling on beer cans, he finally finds his way to the same opening. He emerges and immediately breaks into a sprint.

BOOM! A CAR HITS HIM. It turns out he sprinted across a dirt road before looking both ways. He tumbles over the hood, but manages to find his footing. Thankfully, the car was only going around twenty mph.

The DRIVER gets out of his car.

DRIVER

Hey, man, are you all right?

Gabriel's the least bit interested in the collision.

Gabriel's POV: Delphine's on the other side of the dirt road, sullenly watching him as she leans against a lamp post. She tosses her cigarette on the ground and walks away.

The driver continues examining Gabriel's uninjured body while endlessly spewing apologies.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Gabriel's POV: We hear the ORGAN begin playing inside the sanctuary. Ten feet tall oak doors open, we move into--

INT. SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

The procession.

CONGREGATION/CHOIR

(singing)

Father, we praise thee, now the
night is over, active and watchful,
stand we all before thee; singing
we offer prayer and meditation:
thus we adore thee. Monarch of all
things, fit us for thy mansions;
banish our weakness, health and
wholeness sending; bring us to
heaven, where thy saints united
joy without ending.

Low-key, Gabriel scans the congregation as if searching for someone in particular. He doesn't seem to find whoever he's looking for.

INT. SANCTUARY - LATER

The pulpit, empty. A few COUGHS slice through the silence. SHUFFLING. Then, a little red headed girl named SOPHIA (10) appears, carrying her Bible. She steps onto a stool, puts on a pair of crooked reading glasses, and adjusts the microphone.

SOPHIA

A reading from the Book of Isaiah.

Shaking, she takes a DEEP BREATH and moves her bangs out of her eyes.

The following is read with an occasional stutter--

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

This is what the Lord says...
Israel's King and Redeemer, the
Lord Almighty: I am the first and I
am the last; apart from me there is
no God. Who then is like me? Let
him proclaim it.

(MORE)

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come – yes, let them foretell what will come. Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one--

CLOSE ON three DROPS OF BLOOD as they absorb into the page.

Sophia's nose is bleeding, heavily. Gabriel rushes to her aid and cups his hand around her nose.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Sorry, it's probably my allergies.

GABRIEL

Don't apologize. Don't apologize.

He wheels her away.

INT. SACRISTY - LATER

Sophia sits in a rocking chair, holding a tissue to her nose.

The door opens and in comes Gabriel. He goes to her.

GABRIEL

Let's see the damage.

He gingerly removes the tissue. The bleeding has subsided. He wipes some remaining dried blood patches off her upper lip.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Good as gold.

SOPHIA

(hopeful)

I'm all better?

GABRIEL

Wait, hold on. Oh, no.

SOPHIA

What?

GABRIEL

What on earth is THAT?

Her face contorts in fear.

SOPHIA
What! What!

He pulls a lollipop from "behind her ear".

GABRIEL
Your ears, they're filthy.

SOPHIA
Is it strawberry!?

GABRIEL
Duh, it's strawberry.

She rips it out of his hand and swaddles him in the cutest bear hug you've ever seen.

SOPHIA
Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

INT. GABRIEL'S KITCHEN - LATER

A stove burner flickers on.

Vegetables saute in a nonstick pan with olive oil.

Gabriel hovers over his routine vegetarian stir fry dinner. His eyelids do the dippy bird. He's dozing off and drooling. It's like he's falling under hypnosis.

His finger slips off the pan's handle and falls into the flame, SIZZLE. He sharply inhales in pain.

GABRIEL
(wheezing)
OW!

As he turns to go rinse his growing blister off in the sink, he discovers Delphine sitting on his counter top, rooting through his private memory box (aka: a decorated NIKE shoe box)

DELPHINE
Boo.

He SHRIEKS, falls to the floor.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
No need to soil your vestments.

GABRIEL
Jesus!

DELPHINE

I don't think you're supposed to say that.

GABRIEL

How did, how do you know where I live? How, how did you get inside my house?

DELPHINE

The key under the doormat.

GABRIEL

I don't own a doormat.

DELPHINE

Who the hell doesn't own a doormat?

She pulls a dated Polaroid out of his memory box. It's a high school swim team photo. He hadn't quite shed all of his baby fat yet.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

So what's the backstory with this n' here? Did the prince of pudginess really know how to breaststroke or were you the alternate?

GABRIEL

(rubbing his face)
I'm losing it. I really am.

DELPHINE

I'll go with alternate.

One at a time, Delphine pulls precious keepsake out of the box, examines it, and places it back.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

Class ring, is that your birthstone? Never mind. A lock of... blonde hair? Report card. I didn't know teachers graded using numbers. Hopefully twos are passing. A Hot Wheels Bentley with a jolly rancher substituting as a wheel. A handkerchief. A melted crayon. NO! I've miscalculated. TWO melted crayons. Beeswax lip balm.
(pops off cap)
Melted Beeswax lip balm. A receipt for a novelty lava lamp. Fall Out Boy in concert 03'.

(MORE)

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

Not so gospel after all. Photos, photos, lame, lame, gum wrappers, amateur poetry written on a Dunkin' Donuts napkin. "Cherry blossoms in the dew. I wore a special smile for you". Touching. McDonalds happy meal toy. Nostalgia. Nostalgia. The very TIP of your nostalgia.

She picks up a plastic bag. His foreskin's inside.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

I'm guessing this isn't maple taffy.

GABRIEL

(hiding his face)

Oh my goodness.

DELPHINE

Hey, no shame. We could always toss this into your stir fry. It could really use a crunchy component.

She examines the bag closer.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

Ever heard of the Castrato phenomenon? King of the high C's? Male choir members and classically trained performers were often forced into castration at a ripe, green age in order to maintain a high pitch vocal range. An immature larynx. BOOM. Unrivaled lung-power.
(winks)

Snip, snip. Soprano roles are hard to fill.

GABRIEL

How did you find that box?

DELPHINE

Which one?

GABRIEL

That one.

DELPHINE

This one?

GABRIEL

The one you're rooting through.

DELPHINE
You want to know where I found it?

GABRIEL
Yes.

DELPHINE
Hoppin' down the bunny trail.

GABRIEL
What?

She pulls out his leather dream journal.

DELPHINE
I'm quoting your dream journal,
entries seventeen through ninety-
one. Here comes Peter Cotton Tail
hoppin' down the bunny trail.
Hippity hoppity. Blah, blah, blah.
It's somewhat repetitive.

She hops off the counter top, drops the box on the floor, and
rudely KICKS it over to him.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Mind if I revamp?

She throws the badly burned vegetables into the trash, takes
out a cigarette, and lights it on the stove's open flame
burner.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
(impersonating Johnny
Cash)
Love is a burning thing. And it
makes a fiery ring. Bound by wild
desire. I fell into a burning ring
of fire.

GABRIEL
Could you get me some ice?

She frowns, bugged by his neediness. She reaches for the
fridge, presses the button to the automatic ice machine, and
doesn't let go. A mini avalanche cascades onto the tile
floor. Cubes spew in every direction.

She finally lets go, bends down, and hands him a SINGLE CUBE.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
(timidly)
Thanks.

She resumes.

DELPHINE

I fell into a burning ring of fire.
I went down, down, down, and the
flames with higher, and it burns,
burns, burns... the ring of fire.

INT. GABRIEL'S DINING ROOM - LATER

Gabriel stiffly eats his dinner at the table.

Delphine stands by the room's only window, staring straight at us with such intensity it could crack stone. She never blinks.

Neither talk. Only the sound of CUTLERY until--

DELPHINE

Hi, Lloyd.

Gabriel lowers his knife and fork.

GABRIEL

Excuse me?

DELPHINE

A little slow tonight, isn't it?

She cackles, not her normal cackle, but one that's more masculine, more husky. Almost like it came from someone even more mentally unstable than herself.

Gabriel's POV: Delphine's backside faces us. She's as still as a statue.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

(English accent)

Yes, it is, Mr. Torrance. What'll it be?

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

Now I'm awfully glad you asked me that, Lloyd, because I just happen to have two twenties and two tens right here in my wallet. I was afraid they were going to be there until next April. So here's what: you slip me a bottle of Bourbon, a glass and some ice. You can do that, can't you, Lloyd? You're not too busy, are you?

She finally turns to face Gabriel and crosses to the table as she continues to act out the famous bar scene from the 1980 film "THE SHINING". Double-whammy, she plays both characters (Lloyd and Jack).

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
(English accent)
No, Sir. I'm not busy at all.

She SLAPS the table.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Good man. You set them up, and I'll
knock them back, Lloyd, one by one.

A plastic pitcher and a half empty glass of water. She takes them both, fills the glass to the brim, and chugs down half of the drink, acting as if it's a shot of Bacardi.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
White man's burden, Lloyd my man.
White man's burden.

She takes out her homemade duct tape wallet, opens it, and frowns. She's not pleased with the content, or lack of, inside.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Say, Lloyd, it seems I'm
temporarily light. How's my credit
in this joint anyway?

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
(English accent)
You're credit's fine, Mr. Torrance.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
That's swell. I like you, Lloyd. I
always liked you. You were always
the best of them. Best goddamned
bartender from Timbuctoo to
Portland Maine - Portland Oregon
for that matter.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
(English accent)
Thank you for saying so.

She guzzles down the second half of the drink and puckers her lips, still giving off the impression that it's alcohol.

GABRIEL
(freaked, concerned)
Are you okay?

DELPHINE

I never laid a hand on him Goddam it, I didn't. I wouldn't touch one hair of his goddam little head. I love the little son-of-a-bitch.

She smiles wickedly.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

I'd do anything for him. Any fucking thing for him.

A beat.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

That damn bitch. As long as I live she'll never let me forget what happened.

She throws her hands up, confession time.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

I did hurt him once, okay? It was an accident, completely unintentional. It could have happened to anybody. And it was three goddam years ago. The little fucker had thrown all my papers all over the floor. All I tried to do was pull him up. A momentary loss of muscular coordination. I mean... a few extra foot pounds of energy, per second...

She stops herself, stares off camera.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

It seems I've, ah... broken character.

She gets up and crosses to the wall. Its only decoration is a silver crucifix that hangs from a bent nail. She examines it like she's never seen, arguably, the most iconic symbol in human history.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

His nipples are lopsided. Is he wearing... is that a tiara?

Her mood flips, not so serious anymore. She SLAPS her knee and cackles her signature cackle (she's back).

GABRIEL

It's a crown of thorns.

DELPHINE
 (doesn't care)
 Do you know what I've always wanted
 to be, Gabriel?

GABRIEL
 What?

DELPHINE
 AN ACTRESS!

GABRIEL
 Oh.

DELPHINE
 (giddy)
 Could I have been any more obvious?

GABRIEL
 No. No, you couldn't have.

She rushes over to him, pulls a chair close, and sits.

DELPHINE
 So, what do you think? Could I pass
 for one? An actress?

GABRIEL
 Uh...

DELPHINE
 No. I get it. I do. I need breast
 implants, but hold on a sec. Let's
 rewind. I want the PERKS of being
 an actress. More or less.

GABRIEL
 What perks?

DELPHINE
 What perks! Wake up and smell the
 superficiality. I want to be a
 fucking star, not a spherical
 luminous gas. I want to be fucking
 A-list royalty. Entourages,
 centerfolds, bullshit fragrance
 lines. Wave to the lessors as I
 waltz my bulimic ass down a ruby
 red rug. It's all very dignified.
 OH, I could flaunt one of those
 studded anklets I've always wanted.
 The ones worth more than Ivy League
 tuition, plus room, board, and meal
 plans.

(MORE)

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

I'll be the first Goth to bite the head off of her Oscar during an acceptance speech. I'll even start my own charities to save the Bluefin Tuna and dehydrated Kenyans. Or, OR maybe I'll make an interracial porno and spawn my family empire from there. You don't need a brain to give brain, am I right?

She scoots even closer.

DELFINA

I get, from a blah-blah bushwah business standpoint, that the purpose of an actress is to portray a character. To transform it from one-dimensional in writing to three-dimensional in real time. I get that it's NOT MEANT to be a shortcut to laurels. But... you know...

GABRIEL

No, I don't know.

DELPHINE

Call me a Looney Tune, but I want e-bay bidding wars over who gets the privilege of sipping my piss straight out of the toilet with a fucking twisty straw. I want strangers to bow when I blink. I want them fist fighting over a napkin I've touched. Don't you want that, Gabriel? Don't you want to be worshiped?

GABRIEL

No.

She leans back in her chair, taking in his unexpected answer.

DELPHINE

(deadpan)

Well, you know what they say, opposites attract.

INT. CHOIR LOFT - DAY

Gabriel sits in dim lighting, reading a Bible.

SISTER JUNE (O.S.)
Deacon Greisen?

He sits upright, puts a bookmark in his page.

Gabriel's POV: Down below, every pew is empty.

SISTER JUNE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Deacon Greisen, are you up there?

FOOTSTEPS. He stands. SISTER JUNE (20) arises from the loft steps. She's everything Delphine isn't, radiant, bubbly, petite. There's a tint of red on her cheeks and lips. A very unnatural red.

SISTER JUNE (CONT'D)
There you are.

GABRIEL
Hello, Sister June.

SISTER JUNE
Oh me, oh my. Have I interrupted
your studies?

GABRIEL
No, I was just killing time between
masses. Did you need something?

SISTER JUNE
Yes, actually it's a... a private
matter, not private in regards to
myself, but... could we sit down?

GABRIEL
Be my guest.

They sit down.

SISTER JUNE
So as you know, I visit the E-
Street Elderly home regularly.
Twice a week to be exact.

GABRIEL
Uh-huh.

SISTER JUNE
Well, this week, particularly
yesterday, I met an old man. A
Korean war veteran, who had a
pressing question. A question I was
unable to answer.

(MORE)

SISTER JUNE (CONT'D)

So, I gave him my word that I would find my smartest advisor and...

GABRIEL

What was the question?

SISTER JUNE

He's very lonely. Very, very lonely. And his wife's been dead for well over a decade. He wanted to know if...

(blushing)

If masturbation renders as a transgression.

GABRIEL

Oh.

SISTER JUNE

Now, when I did my research all I could find was the story of Onan in Genesis where it says "spilling your seed" on the ground is a sin. However, it can be misinterpreted because God condemns Onan not for "spilling his seed", but for refusing his duty to provide an heir for his bother. I know this behavior mustn't be supported by the church, but if there's no glaring indication against it... do you see my dilemma?

GABRIEL

Yes, I do. But Sister, it's the actions leading up to masturbation that are sinful. Stimulants such as pornographic images or immoral thoughts. Those are the things laudable of repentance, not the act itself.

SISTER JUNE

(relieved)

Oh. Deacon Gabriel, you really are wise beyond your years. That never even crossed my mind. I'm such a numbskull sometimes.

GABRIEL

Sister.

SISTER JUNE

Yes?

GABRIEL
Your cheeks, they're sparkly.

SISTER JUNE
Excuse me?

GABRIEL
And your lips. Is that, are you
wearing makeup?

She freezes in embarrassment.

SISTER JUNE
Yes, I am. It is makeup. I do
apologize. It's just, I knew I was
going to be seeing you and well, I
wanted to present myself--

GABRIEL
Sister, I think you know as well as
I do that we do not condone
cosmetics here. Please go wash your
face.

SISTER JUNE
Now?

GABRIEL
Yes.

Like a little girl who's just been scolded by a father, she
bows her head in humiliation.

SISTER JUNE
(innocently)
Yes, Deacon Gabriel.

She gets up in a hurry and disappears down the steps. He
moves towards the balcony.

Gabriel's POV: Sister June is rushing towards the exit,
covering her face presumably because she's crying or getting
ready to.

GABRIEL
(sympathetic)
Sister! Please don't...

A sympathetic SIGH. Better go apologize for my brashness. He
crosses to the loft steps. Four steps down, THE PIANO PLAYS
the first few notes of the Easter anthem "HERE COMES PETER
COTTON TAIL".

He stops and ascends those four steps once again to find that no one is at the piano, no one is in the loft, and the music, as quick as it began, has stopped. He waits for an encore, but receives none.

Down he goes again, glancing over his shoulder every few steps.

INT. SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

He waits at the bottom of the steps for a beat, looking up at the loft. No sound. No music. You could hear a pin drop. He walks off.

INT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - NIGHT

MONTAGE

A) A beefy bearded EMPLOYEE snoozing behind a cash register.

B) A creepy life size, motion detector Santa Clause, waving.

C) A popcorn machine POPPING away.

D) A collection of disorganized, beat up red wagons.

E) A painting of a row of Christmas trees. One is cut down, underneath it says "Who cut one?".

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - SAME

Soft INSTRUMENTAL CHRISTMAS MUSIC sweeps through the grounds.

Gabriel and Delphine walk down a dirt path. He pulls along one of the beat up red wagons and studies passing directional signs. She lags behind, carrying a Styrofoam cup.

GABRIEL

Douglas Firs. Douglas Firs. Douglas
Firs.

BARK, BARK, BARK! A large German Shepherd sneaks out from behind a row of Virginia Pines. It's being choked by a leash, yet still lunging for Delphine, who's only reaction is to glare darkly at it.

A MAN (the owner) steps forth.

DOG OWNER

I'm so sorry, miss. He's only a
year old.

DELPHINE
It's no problem, Sir.

He SLAPS the dog on the snout and drags him away.

DOG OWNER
(to dog)
Maxwell, get over here you little
shit. Bad dog. Come here.

GABRIEL
That dog was huge.

She glares in the direction of the cowering dog for a moment longer.

DELPHINE
What's in this?

They continue walking.

GABRIEL
Complimentary cocoa.

She takes a sip, immediately SPITS it out.

DELPHINE
(mumbles)
Tastes like fucking top soil.

GABRIEL
What was that?

DELPHINE
I said, Douglas Firs, come out,
come out wherever you are.

He laughs. She crinkles up the cup and tosses it behind her.
He's doesn't notice her littering.

EXT. DOUGLAS FIR SECTION - LATER

One ugly, sparse Douglas Fir. It's the last one in a sea of
one-hundred plus chopped stumps.

Gabriel and Delphine scrutinize this sad excuse for a tree.
She smokes a fag.

GABRIEL
It's unique. I don't mind the
sparsity.

DELPHINE

You don't?

GABRIEL

No, I don't. Why? What are you thinking?

DELPHINE

(shrugs)

Kind of has that whole "barely escaped a concentration camp" feel.

GABRIEL

You don't like it?

DELPHINE

Honey-buns, if you like, I love it.

He smiles at her, she smiles back. As soon as he looks away, she frowns. He steps closer to the barren tree, tugs on a branch. Needles fall.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

(mumbles)

It's fucking shedding.

GABRIEL

I could probably get a good discount.

A group of SORORITY GIRLS, blonde and attractive, pass by the section. GIGGLING and CHIT-CHATTING amongst themselves. Gabriel stops what he's doing and does what any heterosexual man naturally would, he stares.

Their VOICES meld into the wind. They're gone.

DELPHINE (O.S.)

So, here's an idea.

Delphine steps closer to him.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

We make a papier-mache snowman head for the topper. Wrap a scarf underneath that. Slap two branches to the mid section for arms. And plant some rain boots under the base to give it the illusion of feet.

(almost forgot)

AND THEN spray paint it white. Wah-lah. Frosty the Snowman in tree form.

GABRIEL
Yeah, I usually just stick to
cranberry garland.

DELPHINE
(defeated)
Oh, well... tradition's fun too.

GABRIEL
But your idea was creative.

A beat.

DELPHINE
It's kind of romantic, don't you
think? The music. The snow flurry.
The smell of mistletoe and CO2
factory emissions from up the road.

GABRIEL
You mean the coal mine?

DELPHINE
Whatever.

She grabs his hand, examines his fingers individually.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
I hate to be overly observational,
but did you know that a man's ring
and index fingers are linked to
their testosterone levels? Ruh-roh,
I spy a large digit ratio.

GABRIEL
Is that bad?

DELPHINE
In short, very.

GABRIEL
Why?

DELPHINE
Something went wrong in the womb.
Second trimester? You're prone to
aggression, hostility.

GABRIEL
That can't be accurate.

DELPHINE
You ever hit a woman?

GABRIEL
No. What? Never. No. That's
impermissible. It's never okay to
hit a woman.

DELPHINE
Never?

GABRIEL
No.

DELPHINE
No as in, maybe?

GABRIEL
No as in, never?

DELPHINE
Maybe?

GABRIEL
Never!

DELPHINE
So you don't own a wife beater?

GABRIEL
No.

She lets go of his hand.

DELPHINE
Clean nail beds. Cuticle care,
things are looking up.
(beat)
Those girls were cute.

GABRIEL
From earlier?

DELPHINE
Much cuter than your average chain
smoker.

She takes a drag.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
It's easy, isn't it? Being pretty.

GABRIEL
Where's this coming from?

DELPHINE

I'm sorry. Dammit, I am. It's those blondes, you know? It's those fucking blondes. I can't compete.

GABRIEL

Compete.

DELPHINE

Yeah.

GABRIEL

Compete for what?

DELPHINE

Affection.

GABRIEL

YOU want affection?

DELPHINE

I'm not made of fucking stone!

He unintentionally backpedals.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

You're backpedaling. Stop it. Don't do that. Am I intimidating? Is that what it is?

GABRIEL

You have your moments.

She moves closer to him.

DELPHINE

I'm just a woman, frail, inferior. I want you to always remember that nothing garners more respect than a man. But I also want you to remember that intimidation doesn't pillage the castle or slay the dragon, desire does.

She takes one last, long drag of her cigarette before she squashes it into the snow with the bottom of her boot.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

My mother used to always tell me "Delphine, if you want to find a good man, you have to look the part".

(beat)

(MORE)

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Frankly, as long as he was well
endowed I never really cared if he
was any good.

She cackles.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
But I've always been the
disappointment. The ugly Betty if
you will. No one ever bought me a
fucking corsage. But unlike my
mother, I've come to accept that
I'm this greasy, grimy, no good
Goth. I've come to be proud. Hell,
we can't all descend from blue
blood. Sometimes the top of the
heap gets crowded. But you,
Gabriel, you're an exceptional
find. So untainted, so pure like a
winter's first snowfall or a
babies's first breath. Your face
alone could spark a thousand
conversations. Do you even know how
special you are? Do you?

She cups his face in her hands like she's ready to plant one
on him. She doesn't.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Tell me.

GABRIEL
What?

DELPHINE
Tell me what it's like.

GABRIEL
What what's like?

DELPHINE
Tell me what it's like to be
desired. To have courtship be a
breeze. Tell me what it's like.
Tell me.

She grabs his shirt collar, shakes.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Please, tell me. Tell me. Hurry up,
dammit. I need to fucking know.
Tell me. Do you hear me? Tell me
what it's like! FUCKING TELL ME!

She throws her arms around his neck, sobs into his chest. He rubs her back, genuinely trying to comfort her.

GABRIEL

It's okay. It's going to be okay.
Take a deep breath. In and out.

She's hysterical, quivering and hyperventilating. We don't actually see her face as all this unfolds.

She lifts her head. CLOSE ON her face. A malevolent smile. She's not blotchy or puffy. She hasn't shed a single tear. She keeps the believable SOUND EFFECTS going, but now we see it's all an act. A well planned, well executed one at that.

She's quite the actress.

INT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM BATHROOM - LATER

The sorority girls fix their updos in the mirror.

SORORITY GIRL 1

Just steal his credit card
information if he keeps giving you
mixed signals.

SORORITY GIRL 2

I second that.

SORORITY GIRL 3

(to self)
I really need to shave my window's
peak.

SORORITY GIRL 4

How?

STUDENT 1

I don't know. Check his wallet for
a social security number. Boys are
dumb enough to keep it there.

SORORITY GIRL 3

With soap and a razor--
(realizing)
Oh, I thought you were talking to
me.

A heavy CREAKING sound. All head turn to see Delphine leaning against the wooden bathroom door, intentionally blocking passage. A freshly lit fag hangs from her lips.

SORORITY GIRL 4
(awkward)
So... the car's running.

The girls gather their things and head for the exit. They wait for Delphine to move out of the way. She doesn't.

SORORITY GIRL 1
Hi.

DELPHINE
Hi.

SORORITY GIRL 1
How goes it?

DELPHINE
It goes good.

SORORITY GIRL 1
Cool.

DELPHINE
Cool.

SORORITY GIRL 1
Could we get through?

She blows smoke in her face.

DELPHINE
What's the password?

They all laugh uncomfortably, thinking she's kidding.

SORORITY GIRL 1
Please?

DELPHINE
Nope.

SORORITY GIRL 1
Pretty please?

DELPHINE
Nope.

SORORITY GIRL 1
Open sesame?

DELPHINE
Nope.

SORORITY GIRL 1
Okay, real funny, can you just move
aside so--

Delphine grabs her by the neck, kisses her, and while she's
at it, feels up her ass too. Sorority girl one SLAMS Delphine
into a bathroom stall door.

SORORITY GIRL 1 (CONT'D)
(wiping her mouth)
BITCH!

They all exit speedily, none wanting to be her next victim.
Once they're long gone, Delphine takes her hands out from
behind her back. She's been hiding a WALLET.

DELPHINE
And the correct password... irony.

She browses through the wad of cash inside sorority girl
one's stolen wallet.

She suddenly stops, turns, and faces the closed stall door
next to her. She smiles and KICKS her foot against it,
breaking the lock.

REVEAL a LITTLE GIRL sitting on the potty scared out of her
wits.

LITTLE GIRL
AHHHHHHH!

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

We follow a black hooded figure as it walks up the sidewalk
and ascends the church's front steps. At the sudden sound of
CHILDREN GIGGLING the figure stops dead in it's tracks.

We circle around this anonymous body until we REVEAL a face.
It's Delphine, sporting a pair of pricey sunglasses. Her head
turns in the direction of the GIGGLING. She takes off her
shades and REVEALS a new face.

Both of her eyes are the same dark chocolatey brown. Her
makeup is lighter and her brows are plucked to perfection.

Delphine's POV: The YOUTH GROUP plays a game of ultimate
frisbee on the lawn.

She GROANS in disgust, puts her shades back on with a diva
attitude, and continues ascending the steps.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

She enters. The CLACKING of her HEELS sends echoes. The door CLICKS shut behind her. She glances around, unimpressed, and turns into--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She walks past a few doors until she locates Father Wyatt's office.

INT. OFFICE - SAME

Father Wyatt does paperwork at his desk. KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK. He looks up.

There she is, standing in the threshold. She takes off her hood and smiles warmly.

DELPHINE
May I come in?

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Machinelike, Delphine sips a cup of steaming tea. She's in character. Father Wyatt remains behind his desk.

FATHER WYATT
I'm sorry, I never caught your name.

DELPHINE
Eleanor.

FATHER WYATT
Really? Coincidence.

"Eleanor" just stares.

FATHER WYATT (CONT'D)
My late wife's name was Eleanor.

"Eleanor" just stares.

FATHER WYATT (CONT'D)
She passed young. Actually, she was around the same height as you... even have the same chocolatey eyes, nearly black. It was a real challenge to find her pupils.

"Eleanor" just stares.

FATHER WYATT (CONT'D)
Don't tell me you have a birthmark
in the shape of Mississippi on your
shoulder too.

They laugh. Her's is sophisticated. No cackling whatsoever.

DELPHINE
More like Indiana.

His laughing subsides.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
You look well, David. Has Ginger
been taking her heartworm
chewables?

His jaw drops.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
I never reminded you. Make sure to
buy that topical ointment Dr.
Benedict prescribed. Those ticks
are parasitic demons and you know
how Ginger likes to roll around in
the rose garden come spring.

FATHER WYATT
How do you know about...

DELPHINE
Your boss, David Wallace, he gave
us a personalized coupon to that
bed and breakfast on Lake--

FATHER WYATT
Berkley.

DELPHINE
That was "his" take on a bonus. I
shouldn't hold grudges, but...
(rolls her eyes)
You always disliked him because of
his Saint's, or as the 1980's
called them, "Ain'ts",
superstitions. That fourteen game
losing streak, not only put stress
on you, but the company's entire
third floor. I mean, how many times
did you come home whining about how
he poured salt all over your
keyboard? The man was bizarre-o.

(MORE)

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Plus you both had the same first
name so--

FATHER WYATT
Stop.

DELPHINE
That always caused quite the
confusion in the old cubical
cluster.

FATHER WYATT
Stop.

DELPHINE
Don't you remember that morning we
were ironically watching The
Barkley's of Broadway?

FATHER WYATT
Yes.

DELPHINE
When we needed more ice from the
ice machine, you were already snug
in bed, swaddled in a slew of down
comforters, so I volunteered.

FATHER WYATT
How do you know about all this?

DELPHINE
When I went out in my fuzzy
slippers I saw this handicap dog
with only three legs hobbling along
behind a bike rack.

FATHER WYATT
Ginger.

DELPHINE
Chewing on a moldy orange rind.
Starving. So hungry.

FATHER WYATT
Our Ginger.

DELPHINE
I brought her back inside and
that's when Ginger Rogers and Fred
Astaire were ballroom dancing to
"They Can't Take that Away from
Me". Oh, what a scene.

(MORE)

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

We always wished that had been our wedding song, but Foreigner was just so BIG back then.

FATHER WYATT

Oh my God, you're her.

DELPHINE

So we figured it was a sign and we named our three legged companion, Ginger. God, I miss our games of tug of war. You always commented on how agile she was despite her circumstance. Do make sure to buy her topical ointment, David. I know you'd forget your head if it weren't attached to your neck, but really try to write it down in that organizer your Aunt Linda re-gifted. I know the floral print isn't the most masculine, but the appearance isn't what's important. It's the content you put inside that's important. And did you ever send her a thank you card? I left an envelope and a sticky-note with her address on it in your workshop, right by your hybrid table saw. All you have to do is pick a card up from Walgreens. And don't pick one with a corky catch phrase, be sincere for once. Okay?

His eyes roll into the back of his head, his bones go flaccid. He topples right out of his rolling chair.

For a beat "Eleanor" stares at his motionless body. Then, Delphine snaps back, wheezing for air as she cackles louder than ever before. She has officially broken character.

She gets up, slaps on her pricey shades, and runway struts right out of the office.

INT. GABRIEL'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

SHOWER

Gabriel puts his loofah to work. The PHONE RINGS three times before he get out to go answer it.

INT. GABRIEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Shimmying out of his bathroom, Gabriel finishes wrapping a towel around his torso and crosses to the telephone on his nightstand.

He picks up.

GABRIEL

Hello?

DELPHINE (V.O.)

Greetings fine Sir. Is this the Greisen residence?

GABRIEL

Who may I ask is calling?

DELPHINE (V.O.)

It's your local lotion and body spray representative.

GABRIEL

Like Avon?

DELPHINE (V.O.)

... Higher quality. I'm calling to inform you about our exclusive bath bomb collection. Branching from "Glitter Pompeii" to "Oily Oasis". Drop em' in and watch em' spin. These exfoliating puppies are priced, for a steal, at only nine-ninety-nine each or four for twenty-five-ninety-nine. Also we have a self tanner sampling package you may be interested in--

GABRIEL

(recognizing the voice)
Delphine?

DELPHINE (V.O.)

Let me put your trepidations at bay. A pasty pigmentation is nothing to fret about. It happens to the best of us. From bakers to candle stick makers.

GABRIEL

Delphine, what do you want?

DELPHINE (V.O.)
What I want... is to get out of the
fucking cold.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK!

INT. GABRIEL'S ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Gabriel's hand stretches into frame and opens the front door. Leaning coolly against the brick siding is Delphine, business casual in a pencil skirt. A black suitcase dangles from her middle finger.

She's not Eleanor anymore. She's Delphine again. She's back to her imperfect brows and discolored eyes.

DELPHINE
Hey stud, I knocked this time.

INT. GABRIEL'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Black clunky heels KNOCK a neat display of color coordinated lotions off of a wooden coffee table.

Delphine sinks into a couch, already lighting up her cigarette. Gabriel sits on another couch, holding a bottle of perfume he's been testing out.

GABRIEL
Why did you do that?

DELPHINE
What? You were really going to buy
"Cedarwood Custom Blend" or
"Midnight Bergamot"? Wait, don't
tell me. "Alpine Suede" was my
golden ticket item, right? The
scent of many jockstraps.

She takes a drag, wands her finger through a cloud of smoke.

GABRIEL
(gestures to the bottle in
hand)
"Nautical Rush" was more my tempo.

He sets it down, disappointed.

DELPHINE

I got so high on K2 the other night, the moon and I had a conversation. You ever take that shit for a test drive?

GABRIEL

No, I prefer clean blood.

DELPHINE

Pros, it doesn't show up in a urine test. Cons, you may just belly flop into an empty pool, and I'm not talking above ground.

GABRIEL

We're indwelled with the spirit of our savior therefor if we harm ourselves in any fashion, including and especially through drug use, we're defacing a temple of God. Beyond stewardship, he bought us with his own life.

DELPHINE

You're saying your body doesn't belong to you and my body doesn't belong to me?

GABRIEL

Yes.

DELPHINE

So, we're slaves?

GABRIEL

No, we're followers. We've chosen our path of loving devotion.

DELPHINE

But that's only because the other path leads to a fiery cesspool of persecution and impalement.

She sits up, leans forward.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

Have you ever done anything bad, Gabriel? Anything at all? Besides skimming through a Harry Potter book or coloring outside the lines?

A beat.

GABRIEL
Maybe one thing.

DELPHINE
(mumbles)
Here we go.

GABRIEL
I smoked a cigarette once.

DELPHINE
(gasp)
You scoundrel.

GABRIEL
It was the result of peer pressure.

DELPHINE
Hanging with the cool crowd, were
we? Wide receivers, f-ugly
cheerleaders, the whole shebang,
huh?

GABRIEL
I was at a party. Sarah Demargo's
party.

DELPHINE
Don't tell me daddy found out.

GABRIEL
He did actually.

DELPHINE
Uh-oh, spaghetti-o.

GABRIEL
He smelled it on my fleece.

DELPHINE
And how was the old man's iron
fist?

GABRIEL
Harsh.

DELPHINE
How harsh?

GABRIEL
He made me stand on a bible and
recite ten "Hail Mary's".

DELPHINE

No wooden spoon? No choke hold?
Where's the brutality?

GABRIEL

I was nude.

DELPHINE

Ah, curveball.

GABRIEL

I became a vegetarian at an early age. Maybe round' eight or nine. I had watched this uncensored BBC documentary on the meat packing industry and, in this one segment, a Chinese butcher skinned a cow's face off while it was still alive... that pretty much did me in.

(coughs)

At my family dinner table my father used to wave fork fulls of pork and steak in my face. Sometime's he'd throw half chewed pieces at me while I was eating... and no one would ever try to stop him because he'd flip the table over, so... and on special occasions he'd pack my lunch pail full of deer intestines since he used to go off road trucking and run over fawn just for the heck of it. He was a stand up guy.

(tearing up)

That night I got back from Sarah Demargo's party he took me outside to the backyard, made me kneel in the grass. He handed me his swiss army knife then headed for the cage. He, uh... he grabbed it, grabbed him... my bunny rabbit and made me, uh... he made me--

DELPHINE

Gut it?

Gabriel wipes the rolling tears away from his cheeks.

GABRIEL

He clawed at my fingers. He squealed. He squealed so loud. Oh my goodness, the squealing. I can still hear it.

(MORE)

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I tried snapping his neck to put him out of misery, but my father kept stopping me.

(composing himself)

Afterwards, I wasn't allowed to clean up, wash my hands, even go near a sink. I went to bed bloody. Drenched. I was a kid. I was just a kid.

DELPHINE

Did he have a name?

GABRIEL

Ben.

(nostalgically laughs)

I named him after my favorite G.I Joe.

She takes a drag, prepping for her speech.

DELPHINE

Ben was just a dim-witted pet. A dim-witted pet who was never justly informed about a God, and who really didn't need to be because to him, he saw a God in you. The one who refilled his water bowl. The one who cleaned out his litterbox. The one who scratched his cottony belly, but then you carved into it with a steel tip like a fucking decorative pumpkin. Sawing, in and out, in and out. No such Anesthetic. And when little Peter Cotton Tail looked deep into those blue lagoon eyes as a last ditch effort for mercy he saw what very few have the misfortune of seeing. He saw the accuser. That oh so infamous fallen angel who made an infamous den right below our very feet. He crept down, beside your ear, whispering sweet nothings until a Buzzard's three course meal sprawled out in front of you like sanguinary projectile vomit. Perhaps it was that moment when you felt your soul blacken, your legs weaken, your pure thoughts corrode away by gore. That moment when you realized your father's wrath wasn't the only thing capable of keeping you up until the wee morning hours.

(MORE)

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

That moment when true evil touched you and you touched it. How did it feel, Gabriel? Clammy? Damp? Soft like fur maybe?

CLOSE ON her cigarette, extended across the table.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

Was a life really worth a light? How you coping with that guilt, buddy?

GABRIEL

Not well actually.

DELPHINE

Not well indeed.

She leans back.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

Maybe this calls for a ceremonial exoneration. It could be time you exercise some new thoughts.

GABRIEL

Like what?

DELPHINE

Well, for example: maybe God doesn't like you. You could have been the by-product of faulty contraception.

GABRIEL

God loves me.

DELPHINE

Sure, that's why he blessed you with such a dreamboat childhood.

GABRIEL

Some suffering can be beneficial.

DELPHINE

Whatever.

GABRIEL

My father chose to abuse his free will, but I've forgiven him.

DELPHINE

You have?

GABRIEL

Yes.

DELPHINE

What's he buying you for Christmas this year? A tenderizer?

GABRIEL

(defensive)

Well, what about your childhood?

DELPHINE

Mine was peachy keen, playboy. Peachy keen. Never did I dissect my household pet.

GABRIEL

You don't have a bad memory? Not one?

DELPHINE

Once I skinned my knee during a scrappy game of double dutch. Those catty neighborhood bitches. Never lend them seven feet of nylon rope.

She picks her suitcase up off the floor, sets it in her lap.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

I have a surprise for you.

GABRIEL

Okay.

(impatient)

What is it?

DELPHINE

Close your eyes.

GABRIEL

Okay.

He half smiles, closes his eyes.

OVER BLACK:

DELPHINE (V.O.)

Hold out your hands, palms facing up.

(beat)

Just imagine you're cloud napping alongside twelve underage, oiled up virgins.

(MORE)

DELPHINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Fannies the size of, oh, fuck... do
 I have the wrong God again? Is it
 pedophilia, is it not? I can never
 tell anymore.

A LOUD BANG.

FADE IN:

A BUTCHER KNIFE pierces through Gabriel's left palm, jamming
 into the wooden table underneath.

Speechless, he gawks. Once the shock passes, AHHHHHHHH! Panic
 ensues.

GABRIEL
 Oh my Gosh. Oh my Gosh!

DELPHINE
 (looking around)
 What? Is there a spider?

He SCREAMS IN AGONY while trying to pry the knife out
 himself. Delphine dips her finger in the puddle of blood
 forming in his palm. She uses it as ink, doodles on the
 table.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
 Devoid of dogma, but ready to
 carve, to defy the transient.

GABRIEL
 Ah!

DELPHINE
 Strain every leash, run yelling
 down the mountainside of man.

GABRIEL
 Delphine!

DELPHINE
 With our stunning blaze.

GABRIEL
 Hey!

DELPHINE
 To stand before your killing gaze.

GABRIEL
 Delphine!

DELPHINE
Travel from flame to flame.

GABRIEL
(wheezing)
Help me. Help me. Help me.

DELPHINE
Agios O Baphomet. Agios O Baphomet.

GABRIEL
Pull it out, please! It hurts!

DELPHINE
That's what she said.

GABRIEL
Hail Mary, full of grace. Our Lord
is with thee. Blessed art thou
among women--

She HAMMERS her fists into the table. The vibrations only
cause him more pain.

DELPHINE
You pretentious fuck! You're
throwing a monkey wrench in the
divine plan. This is fate. This was
meant to happen. The galaxies have
aligned.
(calming breath)
God probably can't pencil you in
anyway. He's too busy banishing the
homosexuals. And, just an
unconnected question, a sort of
side note, would the Blessed Virgin
Mary have been canonized the same
if she weren't a virgin? Because I
don't get why a stretched pussy was
so fucking devalued by our bigoted
forefathers. It's like everyone
says; practice makes perfect.

Again, he tries to pry the knife out himself, fails. YELLS IN
AGONY.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
(rolling her eyes)
Jesus, you sound like a fucking
Screech Owl.

GABRIEL

Please. Please pull it out. I can't do it myself. Oh, God. Please. I'm begging!

DELPHINE

What do you think Monica Lewinsky's doing right now?

GABRIEL

Who cares!

DELPHINE

Buying spot remover?

GABRIEL

This isn't funny!

DELPHINE

You're right. That joke's so nineties. "Measure what is measurable and make measurable what is not so." What do you think that means? I don't know what the fuck it means. I feel smarter just saying it though.

GABRIEL

Why are you doing this to me?!

DELPHINE

Gabe-y-bear, you need to be cleansed, and not by special water.

GABRIEL

What?!

DELPHINE

Cuss me out.

He ignores her.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

Perk up those ears, powder puff. I said I want you to cuss me out.

GABRIEL

No.

DELPHINE

(snapping her fingers)

Do it. Rapid Fire. Go. Pull a "Pulp Fiction". I want you to go guns out, gangster on my ass.

GABRIEL

No.

DELPHINE

Last chance.

GABRIEL

Get the knife out of my hand!

DELPHINE

I thought suffering was beneficial!

She grabs the knife, digs it in further. He SCREAMS.

GABRIEL

FUCK YOU! FUCK YOU, YOU FUCKING
BITCH! FOR CHRIST SAKE, PULL IT
OUT! FUCKING PULL IT OUT!

She rips it out at lightening speed. He drops like a hot potato, wiggling on the floor, clutching his wound.

DELPHINE

(clapping)

Take a bow! Take a bow! Tour de
force finale! Bravo! Bravo, I said!

She slithers around the table and sits where he sat moments ago.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

(lovingly)

Gabe-y-bear. You still with me?

She pokes the side of his rib, takes a drag.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

I want to play a game. Let's play a game. Repeat after me. A big fat hen. A couple of ducks. Three brown bears. Four running hairs. Five facetious females. Six simple Simons sitting on a stump. Seven Sicilian sailors sailing the seven seas. Eight egotistical egoists eagerly echoing ecclesiastical ecstasies. Nine Nubian nudes nimbly nibbling gnats, nuggets, and nicotine. I'm not a fig plucker nor a fig pluckers son, but I'll pluck figs till the fig plucker comes. Okay, now it's your turn.

She waits, but he doesn't participate well. He's busy crying.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
I said repeat after me.

He only cries.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
I said repeat after me. A big fat
hen.

Like a rag doll, she grabs him by the ears and throws him
against the couch.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
(in his face)
A big fat hen. Say it. A big fat
hen. A couple of ducks.

As her attitude fades, her maternal side awakens.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Little bunny foo-foo went hopping
through the forest. Little bunny,
little bunny Ben. Ben's pain ended
in mutilation and buzzard snacking.
Yours ends in, what? Some measly
stitches? A scar?
(gestures to the blood on
the couch)
A trip to IKEA? You built your
chariot, now ride in it, twofold.
Let the blood absolve you. For Ben
is watching.

She lets go of him, back down to the ground he goes. She
grabs her knife and her suitcase and takes off. The front
door SLAMS SHUT behind her.

After a beat, Gabriel finds the will to stand up and get to
his home phone. He dials.

GABRIEL
Yes, operator... yes, I've been
assaulted. I've been stabbed... my
address is 216 Franklin Street--

Gabriel's POV: His hand's as good as new. There's no stab
wound, not a spec of blood.

With the phone still pressed to his ear, he moves around the
couch to view the crime scene. There is none. Just like his
hand, every spec of blood has vanished. It's like the past
five minutes never happened.

We can hear the 9-1-1 operator BABBLING, trying to get more information.

Gabriel drops the phone.

EXT. VALLEY - DAY

- DREAM -

From where we left off.

The only difference now is a light breeze that's starting to pick up. The clouds are moving in, blocking some of the sunlight. A storm is well on its way.

Tension builds in Gabriel's once so serene face. His hands raise, protecting his eyes from flying dust particles. His head cocks right--

Gabriel's POV: The bunny rabbits are frozen, paralyzed in fear. They no longer nibble on blades of grass or cutely interact. They see Gabriel and they recognize the sudden change in weather.

INT. THEATER - DAY

ON STAGE

A male CHOREOGRAPHER, late thirties and feminine, critiques two adolescent, but very well trained, ballet dancers. LOUIS and ELIZA.

CHOREOGRAPHER

Good timing. Decent timing. No comment. No comment. You're posing, Louis. Don't pose when you come onto her. Just stand with her. Make it flow or else your understudy will. And BOW here. Bow. Good. Then pull up, up, up! If you can, only use one hand. Nice curve, Eliza. Very nice. Scoot a smidgen closer then it'll be, yes, perfect. Lift! Keep those toes pointed when you're airborne. Right knee. Hold it there. There. Hold it. Hold it. Good. Up towards the ceiling and down. Good. Make sure to breath.

AUDITORIUM

Gabriel sits in a back row, watching rehearsal.

CHOREOGRAPHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I know I'm old fashion, but that was unstable. Drop the poses, Louis. They're harder to recover from. A little off center. Right there. Nice. Step and FLOAT to him. Hand high. Higher. Even higher. No extension. Good. Good. Up, up, up!

He sits up, grabs his stomach.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Gabriel sprints out of the theater, into--

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ready to blow, Gabriel sprints past a BODY at one of the urinals and into the first open stall.

STALL

He clutches onto the disposable waste basket for dear life, throws his head into the toilet, and PUKES consecutively for THIRTY SECONDS STRAIGHT.

When the worst is over, he flushes, and exits the stall.

Father Wyatt washes his hands in the sink.

GABRIEL

Father?

There's no response. As Gabriel inches closer to him, we see that Father Wyatt's not really washing his hands. Yes, the faucet's running and yes, he's rubbing his hands together, but they're not under the water, nor are they covered in soap.

Father Wyatt's face is vapid, zombie like.

He makes a gesture like he's turning off the faucet, though he misses the actual handle completely. Saying nothing, he then turns and walks out of the bathroom.

Dumbfounded, Gabriel goes and ACTUALLY turns off the faucet. What the hell was that?

INT. GABRIEL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

On a TV screen "It's a Wonderful Life" plays in fully restored color. We're about three-fourths of the way through. George is discovering that Mary's a librarian spinster.

Gabriel sits on the couch, watching.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK. He sits up, turns off the TV.

INT. GABRIEL'S ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The front door. KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

Quietly, Gabriel tiptoes closer and closer until he reaches the peephole... he peeps... pulls away.

GABRIEL
What do you want?

A long beat.

DELPHINE (O.S.)
(innocently)
To be saved.

INT. GABRIEL'S GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The light turns on. Gabriel crosses to a shelf, grabs a tool box, and opens it. Inside, he rummages through a variety of unused tools until he finds the holy grail, CABLE TIES.

INT. GABRIEL'S ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

With some semblance of confidence, he approaches the front door again. He kneels, slides a cable tie under the door.

GABRIEL
Tie it around your hands.

A beat.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Are you finished?

DELPHINE (O.S.)
Yes.

Just to be safe, he peeps through the peephole... pulls away. He opens the door. REVEAL her in full for the first time.

She just stands there, innocent as ever. A cable tie binding her wrists.

INT. GABRIEL'S BATHROOM - LATER

A bathtub runs, water nears the rim. Gabriel runs his fingers under the faucet every now and again, checking the temperature.

Delphine stands in the threshold.

GABRIEL
It's ready.

He takes her hands, guiding her as if she's blind. Into the tub she goes.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
How's the temperature? Too warm?

DELPHINE
(softly)
Just right.

He grabs his Bible and kneels down beside her.

GABRIEL
I ask thee, Delphine, before I
administer to thee the sacrament of
baptism... dost thou renounce the
Devil?

DELPHINE
I do renounce him.

GABRIEL
And all his work?

DELPHINE
I do renounce them.

GABRIEL
And all his pomps?

DELPHINE
I do renounce them.

GABRIEL
Does thou renounce the lust of the
flesh, the lust of the eyes, and
the pride of life?

DELPHINE
I do renounce them.

GABRIEL
Dost thou believe in God the Father
Almighty, maker of heaven and
earth?

DELPHINE
I do.

GABRIEL
Dost thou believe in the Holy
Ghost, the Holy Catholic church,
the Communion of Saints, the
Forgiveness of sins, the
Resurrection of the flesh, and life
everlasting?

DELPHINE
I do.

GABRIEL
I baptize thee in the name of the
Father, and of the Son, and of the
Holy Ghost.

He pinches her nose, under she goes. He holds her there for a few seconds. Underwater, her eyes stay WIDE open.

Delphine's POV: Above, the image of Gabriel is blurry from the rippling at the surface.

He lifts her out of the water.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Heavenly Father, we thank you that
by water and the Holy Spirit you
have bestowed upon Delphine your
servants the forgiveness of sin,
and have raised her to the new life
of grace. Sustain her, O Lord, in
your Holy Spirit. Give her an
inquiring and discerning heart, the
courage to will and to persevere, a
spirit to know and to love you, and
the gift of joy and wonder in all
your works. Amen.

He wets his finger, makes the sign of the cross on her forehead.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Delphine, you are sealed by the
Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked
as Christ's own for ever. Am--

DELPHINE
Homicida.

He freezes.

GABRIEL
What did you just say?

DELPHINE
(slightly louder)
Homicida.

GABRIEL
(mumbles)
That's Latin.

DELPHINE
(slightly louder)
Homicida.

GABRIEL
.... No, I'm not.

DELPHINE
(slightly louder)
Homicida.

She begins making hushed HISSING NOISES. He slowly backs
away.

DELFINA
(slightly louder)
Homicida.

GABRIEL
No, I'm not.

DELPHINE
(slightly louder)
Homicida.

GABRIEL
Stop saying that.

DELPHINE
(slightly louder)
Homicida.

GABRIEL

Stop.

DELPHINE

(slightly louder)

Homicida.

GABRIEL

I said stop!

She gets on her knees and leans over the side of the tub, HISSING and SNARLING.

DELPHINE

Lepus homicida! Lepus homicida!

Lepus homicida!

He's boiling with rage. We've never seen this so called "man of God" look so heinous. His face reddens, his BREATHING deepens. Something has come over him, and it isn't God.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)

LEPUS HOMICIDA!

GABRIEL

I'M NOT A FUCKING MURDERER!

He rushes her.

He slaps her across the face. Again and again and again. She doesn't scream or fight back or make the faintest sound. She takes it and she does so with a vindictive smirk.

Blood trickles into the water from her bloody nose and cut lip.

HE DUNKS HER UNDER THE WATER. She stays there, eyes WIDE open like before, calm as a cucumber.

Suddenly, an epiphany. A twinkle of terror appears in Gabriel's eyes. He finally comprehends what he's doing. He's killing her. He lets go.

She SPRINGS to the surface, but doesn't gasp for air. It's like she never needed oxygen. Superhuman.

Just as he tries to back away, she grabs him by the neck and yanks him close.

They breath HEAVILY about a millimeter away from each other's faces until... she kisses him. Gabriel hardly puts up a fight. The lust is too much. Before we know it, they're sloppily making out and using an excessive amount of tongue.

It permeates with sexual tension. For Gabriel, a lifetime's worth.

She pulls away, but he wants more. The shoe's on the other foot. He yanks HER closer, practically sucking off her mouth.

Then--

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

OW!

He jerks backwards so far he hits his head against the sink. His lip is bleeding. She has bitten him.

She jumps up and runs out of the bathroom. He scrambles to his feet and chases her.

INT. GABRIEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He chases her into--

INT. GABRIEL'S HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She's fast, already rounding the corner.

The ceiling light's bulbs BURST one by one. POP, POP, POP! Utter darkness. He enters into--

INT. GABRIEL'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She's fast, already entering into the kitchen as he enters into the living room.

The TV is fuzzy, total static. The volume goes UP and DOWN, UP and DOWN. A station finally comes through. "It's a Wonderful Life" plays.

ZUZU is in George's arms, pointing to the RINGING bell that hangs from the Christmas tree.

ZUZU

Look, daddy. Teacher says, every
time a bell rings an angel gets his
wings.

Static again. He enters into--

INT. GABRIEL'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He enters. There's a SULKING noise. He walks further inside.

Delphine's on her knees with her face buried inside of her folded arms. She rocks back and forth infantile like.

DELFINA

(whimpers)

Where are MY wings? Where are MY wings? Where are MY wings? Where are MY wings?

He backs away, fearful.

Gabriel's POV: Delphine - the wall telephone, 9-1-1? - back to DELPHINE WHO'S RIGHT IN HIS FACE.

DELPHINE

(a hellish cry)

WHERE ARE MY WINGS!?

We enter into the Twilight Zone. The lights BURST. Windows and appliance doors SLAM OPEN and CLOSED. Wind chimes CHIME and tangle into a knotted wed. The SHRIEKING CRY OF A THOUSAND CROWS.

Gabriel falls to the floor.

It all stops, aside from the faint teetering of the tangled WIND CHIMES. Delphine has vanished into thin air.

After a beat of shock, he begins to HYPERVENTILATE.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Gabriel sits on a parking stop, shaking as he smokes a cigarette for the first time since his childhood.

INT. CORRIDOR - LATER

Gabriel enters, wary, and rubbing his eyes. A cloud of smoke trails behind him. He's immediately confronted by WES (17).

WES

You guys are having the Nutcracker Ballet here tomorrow night?

Wes holds up a baby blue recital flyer he took down from the church's bulletin board. Gabriel takes a beat to adjust to this stranger's face.

GABRIEL

Yes.

WES

I'm Wesley or Wes for short. Either or's cool by me.

Gabriel nods, out of it.

GABRIEL

(unsure)

You're not in our youth group?

WES

No. I'm on a field trip. Well, I'm supposed to be on a field trip over at the Rec Center, but a few friends and I ditched. Just so happens, a church was the only place within walking distance.

Again, Gabriel just nods.

WES (CONT'D)

I go to West Ridge Alternative.

Again, Gabriel just nods.

WES (CONT'D)

I play the violin. I was first violinist in my "former" high school's all-select orchestra. I even had a scholarship in line, but I blew it...

(quick addition, shaking his head)

On a weapon possession charge, but whatever. That's in the past.

GABRIEL

(mumbles)

In the past?

WES

Waltz of the Snowflake is without a fucking doubt, oh, sorry.

GABRIEL

Without a doubt, what?

WES

One of the greatest pieces of sheet music ever composed. Besides "The Blue Danube Waltz" by Austrian native Johann Strauss II. But only BEFORE they turned it into a tacky fucking carnival anthem.

(MORE)

WES (CONT'D)
 Crap, sorry. Tacky stinking
 carnival anthem.
 (beat)
 Have you heard his famous quote?
 "The Devil take the Waltz, my only
 regret is for the coda. I wish it
 had been a success!".

Gabriel just stares.

WES (CONT'D)
 I wanted to know if I could play my
 violin in your show tomorrow night?
 I could really use the community
 service hours.

GABRIEL
 We have a soundtrack.

WES
 Yeah, but live music vs. a
 recording?

GABRIEL
 I don't think it's a good idea.

WES
 What if I just stand in the wing?
 No one will even know I'm there.
 I'll play ALONG with the
 soundtrack.

GABRIEL
 Then what's the point of the
 soundtrack?

WES
 Exactly.

TWO TEENAGE BOYS come hauling ass down the hallway. They
 carry a handful of bread-plate covers and pew end candles.

TEENAGER 1
 Dude, we found a bunch of silver
 petri dishes--

TEENAGER 2
 And these dildo sticks.

They freeze at the sight of an authority figure. Gabriel,
 still out of it, could care less. The teenagers toss
 everything on the ground and make a mad dash for the exit.

Wes takes off too, but not before saying--

WES
See you tomorrow night!

INT. SANCTUARY - LATER

A HOSTA (sacramental bread) is held high over the congregation.

GABRIEL
Blessed are you, Lord, God of all
creation. Through your goodness we
have this bread to offer, which
earth has given and human hands
have made. It will become for us
the bread of life.

Gabriel prepares the CHALICE, wipes the inside of the cup.

CONGREGATION
Blessed be God forever.

CLOSE ON a holy water font. There's a CREAKING sound as we
hear a nearby door open. Long, black nails dip into the water
and stir.

GABRIEL
By the mystery of this water and
wine may we come to share in the
divinity of Christ, who humbled
himself to share in our humanity.
Blessed are you, Lord, God of all
creation. Through your goodness we
have this wine to offer, fruit of
the vine and work of human hands.
It will become our spiritual drink.

CONGREGATION
Blessed be God forever.

INT. SANCTUARY - LATER

It's a Holy Communion assembly line. Gabriel places the white
wafer on tongue after tongue. With each person he says "The
Body of Christ" and they reply with "Amen". Last in line is
none other than... DELPHINE

GABRIEL
(stutters)
The Body of Christ.

DELPHINE
Amen.

Trembling, he places the wafer on her pointy tongue.

She swaddles her glossy lips around his fingers and SUCKS provocatively, symbolizing fellatio. She SUCKS off his ring, plays with it in her mouth, and puts it back on him.

She then gives him a loaded wink, wipes some dribble off her chin, and proceeds down the aisle.

Gabriel can't take his eyes off of her.

INT. SACRISTY - LATER

Gabriel stands in front of a three way, full body mirror. His eyes are shut tightly and his fingers are lodged deep inside of his mouth. He salivates over what's left of Delphine's saliva. He uses the same technique she did to suck off his ring.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

SISTER JUNE (O.S.)

Knock, knock!

He CHOKES on the ring, almost swallowing it whole. He GAGS momentarily before spitting it back up into his hand.

SISTER JUNE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's Sister June, can I come in?

GABRIEL

(through gags)

Yes.

She enters.

SISTER JUNE

Are you okay? Your face is bright red.

GABRIEL

I was choking.

SISTER JUNE

On what?

GABRIEL

(unconvincing)

On... on the air.

SISTER JUNE

On air?

With no proper explanation, he changes the subject.

GABRIEL

Is there anything I can do for you,
Sister?

Delphine appears in the mirror behind him with unmistakable
"fuck me" eyes.

DELPHINE

(whispers)
You can tell me how I taste.

He spins around. She's gone. The mirror's only reflection is
his own.

BACK TO Sister June, who has sprouted MASSIVE BLACK ANGEL
WINGS.

SISTER JUNE

Gabriel, have you been taking your
medication?

EXT. VALLEY - DAY

- DREAM -

From where we left off.

The STORM BREWS. Winds become hurricane like. The sun's rays
are obstructed by darkening clouds. Rain falls. As of right
now, it's only a light drizzle.

Gabriel continues to shield his eyes.

The rain, it's turning RED, almost like droplets of blood.
This is no longer a drizzle, it's a down pour. THUNDER
RUMBLES.

His head cocks right--

Gabriel's POV: The bunny rabbits are mutilated, gutted.
Brains and guts spill out of their furry bodies.

INT. GABRIEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON Gabriel's sleeping face, sweating profusely.
Suddenly, his mouth cracks open and a sort of MOAN seeps out.

At the foot of the bed a STOCKY FIGURE huddles around his
lower abdomen, making soft HISSING sounds.

As his eyes flutter open, he erupts into an even louder pleasure filled MOAN. He's naked. Mortified, he goes to pull up his comforter, but discovers that his hands are tied to his bed post with cable ties.

DELPHINE
(a sort of hiss)
Wet dream?

The figure's Delphine.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Once again, we're utilizing the
cable ties.

GABRIEL
Get off me!

DELPHINE
Oh, mister, what a mighty sword you
have.

GABRIEL
Don't touch me!

DELPHINE
Oh, mister, what a wet mouth I
have.

GABRIEL
You can't do this. This is against
my will. This is--

She theatrically flails her arms.

DELPHINE
RAPE! RAPE! RAPE! AHHHHHHH! HE'S
RAPING ME! HELP! HELP ME! SOMEONE!
ANYONE!

She cackles, looks off camera.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Looks like SHE came to the rescue.

Sister June appears bedside. She's dressed normally in her habit and veil, no angle wings.

GABRIEL
Sister June?

SISTER JUNE
Hello, Gabriel.

GABRIEL

I took a vow. Tell her I took a
vow. Please. Tell her it can't be
broken. My purity means everything.

SISTER JUNE

Excuse my blushing.

GABRIEL

What?

SISTER JUNE

I've never seen the male anatomy up
close before.

DELPHINE

It's a night of firsts.

SISTER JUNE

Oh, mister, what a chiseled chest
you have.

DELPHINE

And what tense thighs you have.

SISTER JUNE

Maybe they need a good rubbing-
down.

DELPHINE

With what?

SISTER JUNE

How about candle wax?

DELPHINE

Or Sulfuric Acid.

SISTER JUNE

Or the coveted flask oil.

DELPHINE

Five virgins made it to the feast,
five virgins didn't.

SISTER JUNE

I know what I'd feast on if I were
you.

GABRIEL

HELP! HELP! HELP!

Delphine digs her long, black nails into his thighs, quickly
putting an end to his tantrum.

The following is quick-fire--

DELPHINE
Love is patient and kind--

SISTER JUNE
Love does not envy or boast--

DELPHINE
It does not insist on its own way--

SISTER JUNE
It is not irritable or resentful--

DELPHINE
It does not rejoice at wrongdoing--

SISTER JUNE
But rejoices with the truth--

DELPHINE
Love bears all things--

SISTER JUNE
Believes all things--

DELPHINE
Endures all things--

SISTER JUNE
Love never ends--

DELPHINE
As for prophecies--

SISTER JUNE
They pass away--

DELPHINE
And as for tongues...

Delphine runs her pointy, scaly tongue from his abdomen all the way up to his neck. She gets right in his face.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
For future reference I have a VERY
roomy pelvic inlet. Superb birthing
hips.

She licks the ridge of his nose.

Gabriel's POV: Sister June is no longer bedside.

GABRIEL
(panicked)
Where's Sister June? Where did she
go?

DELPHINE
(could care less)
To a better place.

She hoists her self into position.

GABRIEL
(begging softly)
No, no, no, no. Please, please,
please, please.

DELPHINE
(mocking him)
No, no, no, no. Please, please,
please, please.

GABRIEL
I don't want to do this.

DELPHINE
Your manhood contradicts.

GABRIEL
I TOOK A VOW!

DELPHINE
Shut up and drown in my mossy bank.
For I'm bringing a crowbar to this
chastity belt.

They both MOAN. Her's is fake, his is genuine. Shame
stricken, he hides his face in his armpit. Her humping's
rapid.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Veni, vidi, vici. Veni, vidi, vici.

Gabriel GROANS, not from the sex, but from exertion of force.
He BREAKS free from the cable ties and elbows Delphine off of
him. She nose-dives onto the floor.

SLAM! The bedroom door shuts just as he's about to make his
grand escape. He tries the knob, it's locked and scolding
hot, SIZZLE.

GABRIEL
OW!

Second choice, he scrambles into the bathroom.

INT. GABRIEL'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gabriel's POV: Through the doorway, we see Delphine pick herself up off the floor and rush towards us whilst licking her lips.

Gabriel SLAMS the door shut and locks it. As a backup, he opens a drawer to block the entrance just incase the lock doesn't suffice.

It all goes dead silent for an agonizing beat. Gabriel backs up slowly, VERY slowly. Three knocks. KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

DELPHINE (O.S.)
Is anybody home?

Gabriel TRIPS over a scale.

DELPHINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Red alert, red alert. There's movement inside the cabin.

DELPHINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hey, where's the goody-goody hospitality? As the Semitic hooknoses once said, "for some strangers have entertained horny angels unaware".

DELPHINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Slimy shaft, oh that oily rubber raft. Inches thick, it sprang afloat and gave me a nutty coat.

INT. GABRIEL'S BEDROOM - SAME

Her ear's pressed up against the door.

DELPHINE
You can't cast me out yet, Gabe-y-bear. Not before I've tasted some of your low-carb frosting. Why don't you come on out of there and shovel that salty third course down my gullet? Shower me in your lukewarm broth. I don't have a gag reflex. I pinky, pinky promise.

INT. GABRIEL'S BATHROOM - SAME

DELPHINE (O.S.)

Baby. Baby, listen. We're like the Montagues and Capulets. We're like Life and Death. This is our forbidden love story. Let these breasts fill you with delight. For I am the graceful doe, and you the lovely deer. Stick your schnoz into this bed of grass. It's bug free.

She cackles.

DELPHINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hey, hey. I'll share something with you. My filthy fantasies usually consist of a Tickle-me-Elmo, a straight jacket, and a zucchini. One of those items is used for sodomizing... and vitamin C. Guess which one?

Gabriel backs into a towel rack.

DELPHINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Dies irae, dies illa. Solvet
Saeculum in favilla--

GABRIEL

(to self)
God, help me.

DELPHINE (O.S.)

(mocking)
God, help me.

She BANGS FURIOUSLY on the door.

DELPHINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And she huffed and she puffed and
she blew the door down.

She body SLAMS the door.

DELPHINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And she huffed and she puffed and
she blew the door down.

Again, she body SLAMS the door.

DELPHINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And she huffed and she puffed and
she blew the door down!

Again, she body SLAMS the door.

DELPHINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Little piggy, little piggy let me
 in. Let me in. No, no, no. Not by
 the hair on my pussy-puss-puss.
 Am I fucking up my fairy tales
 again?

He turns away, stuffs his face into a towel, and begins
 discreetly masturbating.

DELPHINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 This is holy ground, Gabriel. Come
 and give me a holy pound! I said,
 FUCKING LET ME IN!

ANOTHER BODY SLAM. She breaks right through the lock. The
 drawer's his saving grace. Though it blocks her entry, she's
 still able to squeeze a portion of her face through the
 crack.

She sees him masturbating.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
 Oh, yes!

She makes SLURPING and HISSING noises, unable to control her
 hormonal rage.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
 You thinking about me? Thinking
 about my clit spread wide and
 throbbing? Want to put me on a
 leash? I'll be your dripping wet
 slave. I'll be Satan's, sorry,
 Santa's naughty helper. Let's count
 how many candy canes can fit up my
 ass. Give me a big, fat fucking
 orgasm. Make my legs shake. Come
 on, Gabe-y-bear, it felt so warm
 inside me, didn't it? Let me ride
 you again. I'll ride you so good
 you'll scream to the high heavens
 as your eyes roll into the back of
 your fucking brain. Why don't you
 come over here and finish me off? I
 won't tell. Come on, little piggy.
 Oink, oink. Come on. Give me that
 cock. Give it to me. Momma's
 thirsty. We've already started the
 show, might as well end with the
 firework display.

He MOANS. He's nearing the finish line. She's feeding off of this.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
 Yes! Faster, faster! Spit on it!
 Choke it! Beat that fucking cock!
 Come already! Fucking come for me!
 SPILL YOUR JUICES ALL OVER THOSE
 FUCKING ABSORBENT TOWELS!

His ORGASMIC MOAN is loud enough to wake the neighbors. He sinks to the floor, guilty, defeated, a lifetime worth of devotion ruined. He sobs.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
 Look at you. You're so fucking pathetic.

He curls into the fetal position.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
 Oh, but uh, Merry Christmas and
 have a hippity, hoppity happy New
 Year.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Letters on the marquee sign are being changed, so far they say "NUTCRACKER BALLET OPENING NI____"

INT. THEATER - SAME

BACKSTAGE

Portable vanities have been stationed all around. BALLERINAS get primped by their doting mothers. Tubes of mascara and combs are being passed around like condoms at a frat house.

Someone's bratty LITTLE SISTER runs by waving a wig around.

CHOREOGRAPHER (O.S.)
 Gia, stop stealing the wigs!

The choreographer chases her. Hectic.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Father Wyatt stares blankly at a stack of manila folders. SNAPPING fingers float near his face.

GABRIEL (O.S.)
 Father. Father Wyatt. Hello?

He snaps out of his trans.

Gabriel stands before him, looking a total mess. His hair is matted, his eyes are baggy, his chin hasn't been properly shaved in days, and his hands are fidgeting like a Parkinson's patient.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
 I need to talk to you.

He sits down.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
 I know I, uh, I know I look a mess,
 but I'm...
 (welling up)
 I'm so scared.

FATHER WYATT
 (mumbles)
 She's in the kennel.

GABRIEL
 ... What?

FATHER WYATT
 She's still in the kennel, Eleanor.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

From the waist down, we follow behind a well dressed boy in slick, black slacks and matching dress shoes. He walks at a steady pace. In one hand, a VIOLIN CASE.

INT. SANCTUARY - LATER

CLOSE ON lips as they meet the rim of a WINE BOTTLE and chug.

Gabriel sits in a front pew, drinking away his sorrows.

GABRIEL
 Oh, Lord, I've let you down. I've
 dishonored the marriage bed. I've
 lost my purity to a crazed
 succubus.
 (sips wine)
 But I'm a good person. I'm a good-
 hearted person with good
 intentions. I'm a man of the cloth.
 (MORE)

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Divinity is me. I am divinity. No one can take that away. No one.

(sips wine)

What? I'VE been violated. It wasn't my fault. I'M the victim here. ME. She raped ME. I'VE stayed true to MY vows.

(beat)

I could have broken those cable ties sooner. I know I could have. He knows. Oh, Lord, you gave me strength and I procrastinated like a fool. How can I apologize enough? I don't... I'm not... I can't even say it...

(sips wine)

I guess most of all I'm ashamed because... because I somewhat enjoyed it... I hate myself. Oh, how I hate myself for it. I know you do too.

Again, he tends to his internal pain with yet another swig.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

This tastes horrible. Everything's horrible. Why is everything always so horrible?

He's officially drunk off his rocker.

INT. CHURCH KITCHEN - LATER

A slew of OLDER LADY VOLUNTEERS bake cookies, cupcakes, and other scrumptious treat for the evening's snack stand. Ecstatic, they all MINGLE about the upcoming show.

CHOREOGRAPHER (O.S.)

Ladies, group photo!

In one giant heard, they all exit simultaneously.

PAN ACROSS THE EMPTY KITCHEN--

The back door swings open, a chilly wind circulates. Delphine enters, wearing a show stopping trench coat, the kind the Columbine shooters wore.

She moseys her way through the kitchen, spitting into chocolate batters, "accidentally" knocking jars of homemade jam off the counters, and sabotaging well crafted posters with spilled paint.

INT. SOME BACK ROOM - LATER

The backside of Wes. He sits in a banquet chair, violin pressed into his shoulder blade. He practices the "WALTZ OF THE SNOWFLAKES".

In front of him is a music stand and his sheet music. After a beat, FAKE, attention grabbing, COUGHING. He stops, spins around to see Delphine standing in the threshold.

DELPHINE

You smoke?

WES

I can start.

She crosses to him, hands him a fag, and lights it with her infamous skull Zippo.

WES (CONT'D)

Who the hell are you? The coroner?

DELPHINE

Executive baker.

WES

Where's your apron?

DELPHINE

Being dry cleaned.

WES

Bullshit.

They both smile as if they've know each other for years.

CLOSE ON his front pocket. There's an odd outline. Though his jacket covers a good portion, it could easily be interpreted as the shape of a small handgun.

CLOSE ON his eyes, blood shot. Either from drugs or excessive crying.

DELPHINE

You seem like a bad seed.

WES

I'm not.

She raises an eyebrow, doesn't believe him.

WES (CONT'D)

I used to be. I'm not anymore.

DELPHINE
Why are your eyes blood shot?

WES
I'm down with the flu.

A beat of deep smoking and thinking.

DELPHINE
You know there is no God, right?

WES
I converted to common sense a while back.

DELPHINE
Good boy.

INT. CORRIDOR - LATER

Happy-go-lucky ATTENDEES flood through the double doors.

At the ticket booth two Sisters stamp hands with a smiling Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, a validation of their payment.

INT. THEATER - SAME

AUDITORIUM

Curtains remained closed.

Attendees find their assigned seats, flip through programs, and assemble their purchased snacks.

INT. SANCTUARY - SAME

Gabriel lies on the chancel's platform the same way he did in his dreams, mimicking Jesus on the crucifix. The spilled bottle of wine beside him. He slowly falls asleep.

The song "HERE COMES PETER COTTON TAIL" plays from the choir loft.

He awakens, sits upright.

INT. CHOIR LOFT - MOMENTS LATER

The uninhabited loft steps. The piano MUSIC, now louder, is coming from behind us. Gabriel ascends, eyes widening with every step.

Gabriel's POV: The piano PLAYS by itself. There's no pianist.

He sprints over to this possessed box of wood and begins looking around it, searching for a wire, a cord. Is he being pranked? He must be.

It's getting louder and faster. Something strikes a nerve. He looses it, picks up a music stand, and beats the living hell out of the piano until the stand snaps in half. Then, he tips the piano over. Only after it has collapsed does the music finally end.

WHISTLING, a soft feminine whistle.

DELPHINE (O.S.)
Jesus Christ, drama queen.

Gabriel spins around. There she is, Delphine, sitting ever so casually in a pew.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
I can play it in B minor if you're
THAT picky.

She stands and makes her merry way towards him.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Hey, sugar-pie, I'm back.

GABRIEL
(backing away)
You're a witch. That's what you
are. A witch.

DELPHINE
From the east or the west?

GABRIEL
The one with a house on her face.

DELPHINE
Maybe you're right. I do recall
having a prior habit of
interpreting omens and inquiring
the dead. Now, I haven't exactly
burned my child to a crisp as a
sacrificial offering... then again
I don't have a child.

(MORE)

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
But that's a quick-y fix. What do
you say, round two in the sacristy?

He takes off for the steps.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Or we can hump like jack rabbits on
top of the pulpit. I'm open to
suggestions. The ball's totally in
your court.

INT. SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

He flies down the steps, tripping on the last one. She
follows right on his coattail, barely breaking a sweat.

DELPHINE
Why are you running away, Gabe-y-
bear? God, you really have changed
since I robbed you of your rosebud.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

DELPHINE
Just wondering, does God love me
JUST as much as he loves you? I
mean, even if I forward my premium
porn subscriptions to the Red
Cross's P.O Box? Like, is the
equality legitimate or do you think
it's like this whole other
Americanized social ladder up there
in the high heavens? The hottest
get an ocean view and free bubbly,
while I get a foldable cot and tap
water.

GABRIEL
Go to hell.

DELPHINE
At least there aren't fucking
harpists in hell.

GABRIEL
You're too far gone. You can't be
saved.

DELPHINE
Oh, shucks.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

GABRIEL
Stop following me.

DELPHINE
Here's a little life lesson, honey.
Only the forgetful march to the
silence of a martyr. Come on. Shed
that whole armor and wrestle for
the rulers of the darkness. I've
yet to lay the nations low. It's
all fucking hearsay.

GABRIEL
What are you talking about!?

DELPHINE
You know exactly what I'm talking
about.

They turn a corner.

GABRIEL
Leave me alone!

DELPHINE
We have everything you want and we
hear your every impious thought,
Gabriel. Beware, our invitation's
on the table for a limited time
only so surrender now or a star-
crossed standing ovation you'll
receive. Though I can applaud good
showmanship, you and I both know
you're not as benign as you pose to
be.

He begins opening the theater's backstage door, but she SLAMS
it shut just in the nick of time, nearly chopping off his
fingers in the process.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Little piggy, little piggy.

He hides his face in fear of looking into the eyes of a
beast.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Look at me.

He doesn't.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Don't make me say it again.

Reluctant, he looks at her.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
(playful)
Repeat after me. A big fat hen. A couple of ducks. Three brown bears, ugh, you're one humbug of a drunk. Didn't Father Wyatt ever tell you spirits are the distant relatives of debauchery and sleep's the cousin of death? Oh shit. I forgot. He's out of town for a few days. Well, at least his MIND is.

Once again, he tries to open the door. She SLAMS it shut. That did it. Play time's over.

DELPHINE (CONT'D)
Your little pubescent violinist and I have a lot in common. There's an internal helter-skelter picking away at his good judgment.

GABRIEL
Let go of the door.

DELPHINE
Red colored silt churned into the Nile, pulling the wool over every set of Egyptian eyes across the fucking land. History's about to repeat itself, but what's new?

GABRIEL
Let go!

After a beat of staring, she lets go.

DELPHINE
You're blind.

GABRIEL
You're a sadist.

He enters--

INT. THEATER - CONTINUOUS

BACKSTAGE

He marches towards us, proud of his assertion. In the b.g we see Delphine's silhouette in the doorway.

DELPHINE
(calling out)
Maybe, but I'm not the one with a
gun.

Delphine's silhouette walks off.

He freezes, turns, and sprints with all of his might back to the doorway.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Gabriel enters, looks left and right. She's gone.

A door at the end of the hallway opens, it's Sister June.

GABRIEL
(to self)
Where is he?

SISTER JUNE
Gabriel? Where is who?

GABRIEL
Where is he? Where's the violinist?
(to Sister June)
No, no! Stay away from me you
whore!

SISTER JUNE
What!?

GABRIEL
(pointing)
WHORE!

Gabriel runs backstage again.

SISTER JUNE
Excuse me!?

She follows him.

INT. SOME BACK ROOM - SAME

The music stand is music-less. The banquet chair is folded and resting against a wall. All that's left behind is an empty violin case.

INT. THEATER - SAME

ON STAGE

Ballerinas, all dolled up in their flashy tutus, takes their places.

AUDITORIUM

Attendee's POV: The lights dim, the curtains open, the MUSIC plays. Scene one has begun.

INT. THEATER - SAME

CATWALK

Delphine's POV: We're looking down, bird's eye view, at the tops of blonde, red, and brunette pony tails as they spin and twirl.

Delphine coolly struts down the catwalk, smoking her cigarette and tapping the ash over the banister.

INT. THEATER - SAME

AUDITORIUM

Attendees point their fingers, aim their flashing cameras, and wave to their pointed toed starlets.

INT. THEATER - SAME

BACKSTAGE

Gabriel plows rudely through SET DESIGNERS, VOLUNTEERS, YOUTH GROUP MEMBERS, anyone standing in the way of his warranted manhunt.

GABRIEL

Wesley! Wes!

Sister June's close behind.

SISTER JUNE

Gabriel! Hey!

(to everyone else)

Stop him! Can someone stop him!?

A few set designers try to slow Gabriel down. They jump in his way and grab his arm, but he plows through them with ease.

GABRIEL

Wes! Where are you!?

CLOSE ON Wes, located on the stage's right wing. We're on the left wing. He plays violin along with the SOUNDTRACK.

After a beat, Wes stops playing, sets his bow and violin on the ground, moves his jacket away from his pocket, and reaches...

That's all the situation needs. Gabriel takes off, heroically sprinting across stage right in the middle of the scene.

Attendees stand up and YELL. "What the hell are you doing?", "Get off the stage!".

Just as he makes it across center stage - BOOM! A SPOTLIGHT FALLS FROM ABOVE and HITS HIM IN THE HEAD. He collapses. SCREAMS ping-pong around the theater. Ballerina's flee to their mothers. A few set designers rush to his side at the sight of blood.

SET DESIGNER

He's not breathing!

BACK ON Wes. Out of his pocket he pulls a miniature portable box of tissues and a clump of used, snot filled ones. No handgun.

The stage's left wing is now deserted. Everyone's either on stage, calling an ambulance, or headed for the exits.

FOOTSTEPS. Delphine runway struts down the catwalk's stairwell, cockier and more satisfied than we've ever seen her.

INT. CHURCH KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She casually passes through and exits from the same back door she entered from.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

As the back door SLAMS shut, so does the PANDEMONIUM inside. We're left with only the sound of WIND.

Delphine admires the snowfall as she finishes her cigarette. Finished, she tosses it into the snow and walks away, disappearing further and further into the darkness.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END