

The Madness of Bethany Rose

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FADE IN ON:

BLACK SCREEN

We hear fidgeting.

Someone is fiddling with a Lavalier microphone. It scrapes against fabric, making thuds and loud grating noises. This happens for a few moments as the subject attaches the microphone to their clothing.

VOICE

Can you see it?

The camera turns on. It pulls in and out of focus as it locks onto the subject in front of it...

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

We see a man sitting in a theatre seat, middle aisle row, facing outward so his legs hang out into the aisle. The man is in his mid to late thirties, greying hair, sharp grey eyes, strong chin. He sits poised in the seat, like a cat about to pounce.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Pull the collar across.

The man sitting in the seat folds his collar over the mic, concealing it. It clunks and scrapes. He flattens the collar over the lump.

He looks up for confirmation.

MAN

Like this?

INTERVIEWER

Perfec-

(JUMP CUT)

INTERVIEWER

So tell us about yourself.

MAN

I am Raymond Marks. I am-

Ray looks over and into camera.

INTERVIEWER
Don't look at the camera-

(JUMP CUT)

RAY
I am Raymond Marks. I own a small Theatre Group Company based in Berkshire. We perform three shows a year, two Shakespeare performances and then something more obscure in the latter part of the year. Usually German expressionist pieces from the 20's or 30's-

(JUMP CUT)

RAY
I have worked with many of the current stars of stage and screen before their big breaks. I know how to get the most out of them. I am the catalyst that brings out their potential. I mould them from innate clumps of nothing and I make them shine up there on the stage.

Camera swings right to see an empty stage, barren but full of promise.

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

We are in a different location within the same theatre.

A woman is sitting in one of the box seats that overlook the stage. She is in her mid to late twenties, pretty with dark eyes and dark brown hair.

She is very wide eyed and excited.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Tell us about yourself.

WOMAN
My name is Bethany Rose. I am an actress. I've been acting since I was in school-

She glances over and into camera.

INTERVIEWER
Don't look at the camera-

(JUMP CUT)

BETH
I started in a touring theatre
company when I left drama school. I
was the understudy to Marie Curtis.

(JUMP CUT)

BETH
You don't know who Marie Curtis is?
She is only the best-

(JUMP CUT)

BETH
I started out doing bit parts at
first, then progressed to doing
supporting roles alongside Marie in
productions around the country.
Learning the craft from veteran
stage performers. I got my first
break when one of the leads broke
her collarbone falling off the
stage during rehearsals.
Lucky for me... Unlucky for her.

Beth looks briefly off to the side, nostalgia in her eyes,
and also a touch of sadness.

(JUMP CUT)

BETH
I hear she's fine now. Still
working with Marie.

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

We are back talking to Ray in the middle aisle.

RAY
This year, for our finale, we had
(MORE)

RAY (CONT'D)

initially decided to do Faust, but I've done it so many times over the years and I wanted a new challenge. Something both new and old, something primal -- biblical -- and would really get the crew excited. I tried to source something original, something never done before. I had searched all over Europe, even the Americas, to find something suitable, a story that opens up human nature. But in the end I found this gem among stories I had heard from some local people about the history of the area. The writer is anonymous...

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

Ray is talking to someone in the wings of the stage behind the curtain, out of sight of the cast and crew. He appears as though he is having an argument with this person but we can't hear what he is saying. The camera is handheld, spying on this exchange, probably without Ray even knowing he is being filmed.

This other person looks scared and Ray looks menacing.

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

A man (30's) climbs up the stairs that lead up to the stage. He has chiselled features, piercing eyes and a masculinity that isn't too overbearing.

He points at the top step and looks back at the camera.

MAN

Here?

(JUMP CUT)

MAN

I am Andrew Harris. I have been acting full time for the last three years.

I have done any and everything. My

(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

most famous role was Iago in Soho-

(JUMP CUT)

ANDREW

I guess it was Ray that brought me here. The Golden Goose. I've worked with many directors, and I'm grateful for the experience they've given me, but to be cast on a Ray Marks Project... This is what so many actors dream about and so few can say they've been where I am now.

INTERVIEWER

What's so special about Ray?

ANDREW

Wh... Dude, really?! Ray is like... The most-

(JUMP CUT)

ANDREW

Ray is like the Holy Grail of small time theatre. If you take a sip of his genius he'll make you live forever. Every show he does there's people camped out waiting for tickets. And he only does three plays a year, and only three performances of them each.

He looks at the camera.

INTERVIEWER

D-

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

Beth is shaking with excitement. She is sitting with her hands between her knees, trying to hold them still.

BETH

Sorry. I'm just really excited.

The Interviewer asks her something we can't hear.

BETH

No, no. All this. This is the biggest thing I've done to date. I mean, Ray Marks...

(JUMP CUT)

BETH

Ray? Yeah, I've only seen one of his productions. He's a genius. He has this presence. He demands everything of you. He breaks you down and builds you up from nothing, into this -- god -- up there on the stage.

Bethany looks down at the stage. She has a glint in her eye.

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

Ray is leaning forward, his ear cocked for a question.

INTERVIEWER

...hard on your actors?

RAY

I don't force them to do anything they don't want to do. They want to do well because I want to do well. It's a symbiosis. I give, they give; I take, they take. If they can't keep up then they've let themselves down. And above all they will have let me down.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

Ray is talking to Beth. We can't hear what they're saying because we're too far away.

Beth has her arms folded and her head lowered. She looks like she is being scolded and she's struggling to keep from crying.

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

We are back talking to Beth in the box seats.

BETH

The character is a young girl named Elizabeth. Elizabeth Shaw. It's a part made for me. I mean, Bethany is derivative of Elizabeth. I read the play when it was announced that Ray was casting for his next production. I begged and pleaded to be in this. I was up against the best actresses in the country in this age group. Even a number of actresses from outside Britain. There were over 16,000 applicants... And Ray chose me.

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

We are back talking to Ray.

RAY

The story is based on the real events surrounding the Witch Hunts England experienced in the 1600's. The character is Elizabeth, a young woman who is accused of using witchcraft against the people in the village she lived in.

INTERVIEWER

Is this based on a particular trial?

RAY

No, no. It's a collection of different trials that took place around that time. It has been embellished with a narrative that follows Elizabeth through her experience of being tried and found guilty of witchcraft.

(JUMP CUT)

INTERVIEWER
...anything like "The Crucible"?

RAY
This is nothing like "The
Crucible". This is a piece on the
English Witch hunts which took
place long before the American
ones.

Ray becomes more agitated.

RAY
This is silly. I want this cut from
the-

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

We see Andrew again.

ANDREW
I play Beth's husband, Martin Shaw.
I guess I'm sorta one of the
villains in the piece. Not openly,
though. I think there's something
to him that isn't in the script.
They don't come right out and say
it, but there's passages of
dialogue and certain nuances to his
speech which I think makes him more
culpable to Elizabeth's degrading
sanity, and ultimately, her death.
Although, to be honest, the real
bad guy is the one in Beth's head.
The little devil on her shoulder.

Is she guilty...? Don't know. But
Martin doesn't make it easy for
Elizabeth. His agenda is hidden
behind his ignorance and playing on
the town hysteria.

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

We are back talking to Beth.

BETH
It's going to be fun. A lot of hard
work... But fun.

The camera lingers for a few moments, just watching Beth.
She tries to keep her smile for as long as she can.

FADE TO

(INSERT)

TWO SHILLINGS FOR A DEAD CAT
(first week of rehearsals)

FADE IN ON:

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

All the stage crews and actors are gathered around the base
of the stage occupying the first two rows of seats in the
theatre. Ray is standing in front of everyone, just in front
of the stage.

He stands there for a moment, looking at everyone, singling
some people out with a look.

RAY
Look around yourselves...
These people will be your family
for the next month. You will be
relying on them... and they will be
relying on you.
There will be times when we will
want to tear our hair out. There
will be times when we will want to
beat each other over the head.
Like a family, we will have our
differences, but let us use that
passion and put it up there...

He points behind him at the empty stage.

RAY
...into the show.
Let's make this another one that
people will remember.
Together we are strong... together
we can make this the best show
ever.
We don't do this for the critics.
This is for us.

Everyone applauds.

Beth is visibly excited and her eyes are glassy as she tries to hold back the tears.

She looks around to see the others with a mix of expressions, from awe to indifference.

Then she notices a girl in the front row. She has a subtle resemblance to Beth. This girl is stuck on Ray's every word, a gleam in her eyes.

RAY

Now, let's meet the talent...

He looks at Bethany.

RAY

Bethany Rose. Come up here.

Beth rises from her seat and moves down the aisle to the middle walkway. She steps down to the bottom of the stage and stands next to Ray. He puts his arm around her and gives her a kiss on her cheek.

RAY

Bethany will be playing Goodwife Elizabeth Shaw.

Bethany looks over the faces looking back at her. She smiles and waves briefly.

RAY

Next up we have Andrew Harris.

Andrew rises from his seat and makes his way down to the bottom of the stage.

Andrew stands next to Ray on the opposite side to Beth.

RAY

He will be playing Elizabeth's husband, Master Martin Shaw.

Andrew looks over the faces looking back at him and gives a brief nod.

RAY

Next up there's the two lead understudy's...
Rebecca Burns.

Rebecca (the girl Bethany noticed earlier) rises from her seat and skips up to the group. Instead of standing on either end, she forces Andrew to step aside and stands between him and Ray. Ray puts his arm around her shoulders and gives her a kiss on the cheek. Rebecca turns to Andrew and he gives her a kiss on the cheek too.

RAY

Rebecca will be Beth's understudy.

Rebecca waves confidently at the remaining cast and crew.

Beth looks over at her, intimidated.

Rebecca is all smiles and confidence. She looks up at Ray as he continues.

RAY

Dylan Taylor.

A young man rises and makes his way to Beth's side, putting his arm around her and gives her a quick kiss on the cheek.

RAY

Dylan will be understudying Andrew.

Bethany looks at Dylan momentarily, then turns to look at Rebecca. Rebecca notices her looking and gives her a big toothy grin. Bethany smiles wanly, then takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

Time has passed.

The big room is busy with people working in every part of the theatre. There are loud noises as sets are being built, scaffolding being erected, lights being calibrated...

Beth is onstage, a script in her hand. She is going through lines, testing the acoustics, blocking out movements.

Andrew is sitting on a stool downstage, a script in his hand.

Ray is at his desk in the audience, a folder open in front of him.

BETH

What of it, my love? It is not I of whom thou thinks when these words are said-

RAY

Louder!

Beth stifles a retort.

She takes a breath, looks at her script to regain her place.

BETH

It is not I of whom thou thinks
when these words are said. There
must be-

ANDREW

Poor Elizabeth. Thou believeth that
I am not sincere in my willingness
to be here with thee.

BETH

Not willingness. I do not doubt thy
willingness. I believe thou stayest
out of pity-

RAY

Pronunciation!

Beth stops a moment, breaking character. She takes a breath
to calm herself.

BETH

...you stay out of pity-

RAY

Let's take it from the beginning of
the scene!

Beth looks flustered. Her cheeks redden and she has a strong
look of annoyance on her face.

She flicks the pages of the script back huffily.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

There are people dotted around the theatre, but mostly empty
now. There are stage hands moving scenery around and
painting props on the stage. Around the perimeter of the
theatre there are men on ladders setting up lights.

INT. THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

We pass actors, technicians and stage-hands making their way around the labyrinth of passages behind the stage. The documentary camera crew travel down corridors; we see actors in costume fittings, others rehearsing lines and others in makeup tests.

The camera enters a dressing room. We see Beth sitting quietly, on her own, separate from everyone else.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Hey.

Beth looks up, teary eyed.

INTERVIEWER

Is now not a good time?

Beth composes herself. She wipes the tears from her eyes and sniffs.

BETH

No, no, please. I'm fine.
I'm fi-

(JUMP CUT)

Beth is more composed now. She is sitting in her makeup chair looking into the mirror while she applies her makeup.

There is a bouquet of flowers sitting on a table next to Beth.

INTERVIEWER

Who are those from?

BETH

They're from my boyfriend. Aren't they beautiful? I've not really seen him since rehearsals began but he's just so supportive. We've been together for a year and last week was our anniversary. I couldn't make it as I was here... but he understands. He knows how much this means to me.

Beth has a far away look in her eyes.

(JUMP CUT)

Beth was back to applying her makeup but has now stopped and she is looking at the Interviewer in the mirror.

BETH

Yesterday?

Oh, no. It was just a long day.

Long hours with few breaks.

But no one said it was going to be easy.

It's also trying to get into the head of this character. She was born in 1651, the middle child to a poor family right here in Berkshire.

INTERVIEWER

Is this a backstory you've concocted to get into character?

BETH

Oh, no. This is all real. I went on the internet and researched people from the same time the story is based and found records of a young girl with the same name, born in the same area and around the same time.

INTERVIEWER

So this play is based on fact?

BETH

No, I don't think so. I couldn't find any info on how she died, but the facts don't seem to correspond with the story that Ray had found. So I think a lot of it is just coincidence. But it gives me a concrete basis to explore this character.

There is a knock at the door.

Bethany looks round, then looks at the Interviewer questioningly, then back at the door.

BETH

Yes?

The door opens and Rebecca pokes her head in. She has a file with papers sticking out of it in her hand. She notices the documentary crew.

REBECCA

Hi. Sorry. I didn't know you were busy. I can come back later...

BETH

No, it's fine. What's up?

REBECCA

I just wanted to talk to you about Elizabeth. You know, get your view on her so we can correlate and keep her consistent.

Beth looks to the camera crew as if subtly pleading for them to make an excuse on her behalf.

No one says anything for a few moments.

BETH

Yeah, okay.

Rebecca comes in and sits down in the makeup chair next to Beth. Rebecca opens her file and gets a pen out.

REBECCA

So, firstly, how do you see Elizabeth?

BETH

Well, I see her as a strong woman. She doesn't relent to all the questioning she endures by the court, but her convictions to her innocence are what get her into trouble because people didn't like strong women. I guess she's confident in her faith, which makes her unafraid. Even if she is put to death.

Rebecca watches Beth for a few moments. There's a glint in her eye.

REBECCA

I've been watching your rehearsals and I think you're struggling with how to make her more likeable. Don't get me wrong, I think you're doing a really good job. I just think there's a side to Elizabeth you're having a hard time connecting with.

BETH

What do you mean?

REBECCA

I've been going through the lines with Andrew and he agrees that there is a different side to Elizabeth. In the subtext there's evidence that Elizabeth knows what she's doing. That she's not just an innocent party caught up in the craziness. She's orchestrated the whole thing from the beginning.

BETH

I don't understand. You're saying that Elizabeth is guilty of witchcraft and that she wants to be executed...?!

REBECCA

No, not "wants"... Just that it's the only way for her to get what she wants.

BETH

That makes no sense.

REBECCA

It does.
I mean, it will.
Don't worry. I've spoken to Ray about it-

BETH

Ray?! You've spoken to Ray about my character?

REBECCA

No, Beth. Our character.
Elizabeth is also mine.

Beth looks at Rebecca incredulous.

BETH

I don't think you should be talking to Ray without talking to me first. Elizabeth is mine first. If I have ideas on the character I'll let you know if you need to know.

REBECCA

Okay, sorry. I'm just trying to help. I've made notes on my script, if you'd like to take a look.

Rebecca hands a copy of her script to Beth. Beth doesn't take it.

Rebecca puts the script down on Beth's makeup desk. We see a pentacle doodled in red pen onto the front page in the right hand corner.

REBECCA

Just let me know what you think.

Rebecca rises and walks to the door. She exits and closes the door behind her.

Beth looks at the script in front of her, not really seeing it because of her hurt pride.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

Ray is talking/shouting at one of the stage-hands.

Beth and Andrew are on the stage, annoyed by the interruption, but sympathetic to the stage-hand being reprimanded.

Rebecca can be seen sitting in the wings of the stage.

RAY

The light begins on this end. Blue-white for the moonlight. Then at the height of the scene, when Beth and Andy start talking about her pregnancy it changes to red stage left. Jesus Christ! It's not that fucking difficult.

The lighting guy cringes with the onslaught from Ray.

Rebecca has a big grin on her face. Beth turns toward her and notices Rebecca stifling a laugh.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

Beth and Andrew are deep in a scene. They are in full costumes which still need to be stitched back.

The stage is bare except for a wooden table and two chairs.

BETH

I do not understand. How has it come to be my fault if Reverend Grant says it was not-

ANDREW

Leave it, Elizabeth. This is of no concern to us, least of all thine.

BETH

But if I am the one blamed for the fire, then I have a right to defend myself. And it is thou, husband, who should be on my side.

ANDREW

I said leave it.

BETH

They will listen to thee. They respect thee in this village. Whatever thou sayest, they will have to believe. Or is it that thou does not believe in my innocence?

ANDREW

I believe thee, Elizabeth. But things have happened for which I have no explanation.

A few moments pass where neither of them speaks. There is a pregnant silence.

BETH

I am not a witch, Martin.

ANDREW

We will not speak of this. I shall not tolerate the use of that word in this house. It is blasphemy to mine ears.

BETH

But this is what is being said. That word is spreading through this village like a wildfire.

ANDREW

They can say what they like. I have no control over the people of this village, but I forbid thee to speak like this under my roof.

BETH

Thou will not defend me?

ANDREW

Do not try my patience, Woman. This conversation is ended.

BETH

But-

Andrew swings his arm around and slaps Beth across the face.

She stands still, stunned, her head lowered. Slowly her hand rises to touch her cheek.

She breathes hard through her nostrils.

Andrew stands watching her, his fingers clenching, then unclenching, clenching, unclenching. He keeps the same stern look on his face.

Nobody says anything for a long while.

Ray, in the audience, sits at the edge of his seat, watching, waiting expectantly. Rebecca sits next to him, a grin on her face.

People all around have stopped what they are doing and stand, mouths agape, waiting, watching.

RAY

Stop!

Everyone breathes out. Andrew's expression softens instantly and he runs to Beth's aid.

Beth collapses to the ground, crying.

Ray makes his way down to the stage.

INT. THEATRE - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Andrew is sitting in his makeup chair being interviewed by the documentary crew.

ANDREW

I don't know what came over me. I guess I was so involved in the scene I forgot who I was for a moment.

I just... My hands were shaking, my heart was racing, but I... It felt just.

I didn't mean to hit her.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

We see a montage of Beth in her dressing room covering up her bruise with makeup. She has a distant look on her face.

FADE TO

INT. SMALL ROOM - DAY/NIGHT

We are in a small room, like a hotel room, the curtains match the furniture.

There is a woman (20's) sitting on a couch in front of a television screen. Her eyes are red-rimmed, sore from lack of sleep and crying. She watches the television screen intently.

On the TV screen she is watching Ray being interviewed by the documentary camera crew in his office.

INTERVIEWER

Do you worry about her?

RAY

Beth is very strong. She has taken to the character very quickly which is good, because there isn't a lot of time to find the meat. There are things at work there on the stage. The magic of Theatre is taking over and it's beautiful when you can feel it. It soaks into the floorboards like blood and you can just feel it.

INTERVIEWER

Has this ever happened before, where your actors become so involved in the work that they lose control?

RAY

Losing control is what we aim for. The rehearsals take you on a journey of discovery, continually kneading at the constraints of reality and fantasy, until all you are relying on is muscle memory to get you where you need to be, association and emotion to open you up to possibilities not experienced before. I like to be surprised in rehearsals, the immediacy of it.

INTERVIEWER

But do you worry about her?

Ray doesn't say anything for a few beats.

Then the woman in the room who is watching this interview on TV answers where Ray has left an audible gap.

WOMAN

Yes.

FADE TO BLACK

(INSERT)

CLOSED CASKET FULL OF BEES
(Second week of rehearsals)

FADE IN ON:

INT. THEATRE - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Beth is sitting at her makeup desk getting ready. She is looking at herself in the mirror while she absentmindedly applies lipstick. She is distracted.

There is a knock at the door.

Beth doesn't say anything, only continues drawing in her lips.

The door opens and Ray enters.

RAY

Do you have a minute?
I've been thinking about scene
twelve we did yesterday. I'm
getting a lack of energy coming
from you. Your passion seems to be
dwindling by the time we get to
that scene.
What's wrong?

BETH

Nothing's wrong. I'm just tired.
Every time we get to that scene
I've done every scene that precedes
it at least twice.
I'm spent by then.

RAY

What are you saying?
Are you saying that I'm overworking
you? Am I pushing you too hard...?
If that's the way you feel then I
gotta say, you're making me doubt
your commitment to this play.

BETH

I'm not saying that at all. I'm
fully committed.
Honest.
I'm just tired of doing the same
scene over and over again.
It'll be alright on the night-

RAY

Don't give me that bullshit.

BETH

If I'm giving everything in rehearsals then what you'll get on stage is flat, two dimensional acting.

No character and stale lines. I don't want to push myself too far too early and fuck up the live shows for you.

RAY

Come on, Beth. You can't believe that bullshit. Pushing yourself only makes arriving at the emotion easier. Once you've been there you know how to get back.

You of all people should know that. So stop bullshitting me. There's something else...

Beth sits there, fidgeting with her hands in her lap. She can't look Ray in the eye.

Moments pass.

Eventually Beth relents and swallows to wet her throat that has become very dry all of a sudden.

BETH

I'm scared.
Of... Elizabeth.

RAY

What are you talking about?

BETH

Elizabeth.
I've been feeling something strange. I don't know how to explain it...
I can feel this presence. The more I give, the closer I get to her...
The more I feel her taking over.
It scares me.

Ray watches her.

BETH

And Andrew... There's something not right when he's Martin. It's like, when I'm her, I feel such crazy mixed emotions toward him. They're

(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)

not nice feelings.

RAY

Is this all about the slap last week-?

BETH

It's not about the slap!
It's about this play. It's about what I see in Andrew's eyes when he's Martin.
It's about Elizabeth's voice that I can hear in my head.

Beth hits herself in the side of the head with the heel of her hand a few times, trying to shake loose the demons that have taken root there.

BETH

I don't know what's happening, Ray.

Ray softens.

RAY

This is what happens. When you live the character on the stage you breath life into this... Thing! You make it alive.
You feel it, and you must invoke it to evoke it. To show people, the audience.
Make them believe. Make them believe that you are Elizabeth.

Ray touches Beth's knee. She looks at his hand resting there, uncomfortable with the intimacy of the gesture, with a pang of disgust. She struggles not to flinch away.

RAY

What you're feeling is Elizabeth building inside you. Created from nothing. She is your voice. She is the one who will show the way.
Her voice, your mouth.
Listen to it, Beth.
It'll show you the way.

Ray slowly rises.

RAY

I want you onstage in ten minutes.

He leaves the room and closes the door quietly behind him.

Beth sniffs a few times.

She takes a deep breath, looks up at herself in the mirror for a few moments, then continues to apply her makeup.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

Beth is onstage, acting alongside an old lady. There is some scenery flats to illustrate that they are in a meadow and there is the sound of running water playing out of a speaker in the background.

BETH

...it is not a need. What you offer
is-

RAY

Stop!

Ray walks down the aisle toward the stage.

Beth watches his approach. Her face is stiff.

Ray stands at the bottom of the stage and looks up at Beth and the Old Woman.

RAY

This is important, Beth. This woman
is critical to the story. She is a
major crossroad in Elizabeth's
life. She has to choose. The path
is already laid out for us, but we
must see her make the choice.
One way is salvation, the other
damnation.
This woman is a symbol of what
drives Elizabeth past rational
thought.

BETH

How tempting is the path to
salvation? Why does she choose
damnation?

RAY

There is probably a very good reason. She chooses damnation because she is instinctually drawn to it, or chooses it out of preservation for herself, but there is yearning... Something burning within her that makes her risk everything. Turn her back on her husband, her family, her sanity. You have to discover what it is that Elizabeth needs, more than anything this world could ever give her. Then you have to find something inside yourself, your need, your desire.

When she kills for the first time... It's nothing. Murder out of self preservation. But now... It's different. She is changed by how it made her feel. Her attitude has changed. For whatever reason she enjoys it.

BETH

But there's no evidence that she really killed those people. It changes the story. It makes Elizabeth out to be guilty. It changes the theme entirely.

RAY

I've decided that in the interest of the story we will assume she is guilty.

Beth looks to find Rebecca sitting in the front row in the audience. She gives nothing away, but Beth surmises that it is her doing convincing Ray to alter the story.

RAY

Look at me, Beth.

She reluctantly turns her head and looks down her nose at Ray.

RAY

Find that thing inside you that
would make you sacrifice everything
to get it.
Now...

Ray turns and makes his way up the aisle to where he was sitting before.

RAY

Again! From the top of the page!

Beth turns to look at Rebecca again. This time Rebecca is smiling. They keep eye contact for a few moments.

(JUMP CUT)

OLD WOMAN

My dear. Wouldst thou care for any
of my wares?

BETH

What are you selling? I care not
for trinkets today.

OLD WOMAN

They be not trinkets. They be
stones and amulets of power. Each
one a portent to wisdom, a vessel
for what thou yearns.

BETH

What witchcraft is this? Are they
magic charms?

OLD WOMAN

Oh, no. Not charms. Amulets that
possess power. Only a shilling.

BETH

I have no need for anything thou
wouldst offer. And I carry no
money, besides.

OLD WOMAN

These be items of desire, my child.
You no more need any of these as
you might have need of a dead cat.
What I offer is not a necessity.

BETH

That may be, Old Woman, but I carry
no money with me today.

The old woman looks at Beth and notices the crucifix
dangling at the end of a chain around her neck.

OLD WOMAN

Thou hast that chain round thy
neck. I wouldst not be averse to an
exchange. Unless thou hast an
attachment...

Beth holds the little crucifix in her fingers, twisting it
this way and that.

The old woman holds the box of charms open for Beth to see.
They glint in the light.

Beth reaches her hand into the box and picks up one of the
crystals that catches her eye.

BETH

There is one thing...

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Beth is leaving for the day. She has taken her makeup off
and she is dressed in normal clothes. There are dark rings
around her eyes and she looks very tired.

She walks through the labyrinth backstage, turning corners
and walking down long corridors. She passes a few people,
mostly crew who are leaving for the night too. She says
goodnight to them.

When Beth gets to a corridor that leads out toward the
auditorium she can hear voices. One of them she recognises.
She hesitates, deciding whether to leave or to see who it is
on the stage.

Curiosity gets the better of her. She walks toward the
voices.

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Beth stays in the shadow offered by the doorway. She looks
out onto the stage and sees Rebecca rehearsing with Andrew.

REBECCA
 ...I am with child.

ANDREW
 Are you certain?

REBECCA
 I am.

ANDREW
 (little enthusiasm)
 This is... Great news.

REBECCA
 You say thou are but thou do not
 seem it.

ANDREW
 It is only the timing. I am happy.
 It has been a long year of trying.

Rebecca and Andrew embrace on the stage.

Beth watches the two of them. She has a look of betrayal on her face.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

Andrew and Beth are rehearsing a scene together. There is a kitchen table in the middle of the stage. Andrew has just entered from outside. He is carrying two slaughtered birds.

BETH
 What have they said in the village?

ANDREW
 Not now, Woman.

Moments pass where neither speak. Andrew slams the birds onto the table. Then he sits down and removes his boots.

BETH
 Did Master Stiles say anything more
 about his horse-

ANDREW
 I said not now. Can I just sit.
 I've been on the road for hours.

BETH
 If not now, when? I need to know
 (MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)

what people are saying.

ANDREW

I went to Mayor Crosse. I told him I have no suspicions that you are responsible for any of what has been happening in the village.

BETH

And... What did Mayor Crosse say?

ANDREW

He has agreed to not pass judgement until he has heard all the evidence.

BETH

What evidence? How is there evidence when it is not I who has done anything.

ANDREW

He has not said what the evidence is or who is making the charge.

BETH

That is absurd-

A black woman enters the room. She clears her throat.

MARGARET

Begging you pardon, Miss. I am finished now.

BETH

Mary. Come.

ANDREW

Leave it, Elizabeth.

BETH

What hast thou heard from the people in the village? What is the rumour?

MARGARET

Nothing, Missus. I have not heard anyone say anything about what happened.

BETH

What happened? What has thou heard happened?

MARGARET

I only heard that Mr Stiles' horse was cursed and it bore a dead foal.

BETH

Who has said it was cursed?

MARGARET

Mr Stiles himself. I heard him tell it when I was at the market. He claims his horse had bore him healthy foals in the past, yet this one was born still. He say there is no explanation other than an evil influence.

BETH

It is an old horse. It could not carry a healthy foal to term.

ANDREW

That is enough. I will not endure these accusations in my house.

BETH

Please, Mary. Dost thou believeth that what Master Stiles sayeth is truth? Dost thou believeth that I be responsible for the outcome of his horse's death? Or the fire that destroyed the Friedman's barn?

MARGARET

Of course not, Missus. What they say is wild rumour. But everyone's scared. The Devil is out, whoever he is. And after Mrs Tilling died under awfully strange circumstances.

ANDREW

Leave now, Mary.

BETH

I had nothing to do with any of those things. Least of all the death of Mrs Tilling. That is pure fabrication.

MARGARET

Begging thy pardon, Miss, but three people heard thee cursing Mrs Tilling in public not a fortnight before she was discovered dead.

BETH

I may have spoken ill of her but I did not murder her. Mary, thou must believe me.

MARGARET

I do believe thee. It is just the coincidences-

ANDREW

Thank you, Mary.
Now, out!

MARGARET

Thank you, Master Shaw.
Good night, Missus.

BETH

Good night, Mary.

Mary exits stage left.

BETH

What say you now?!
Everyone is taking these allegations seriously. They would like to see me hanged.

ANDREW

Calm thyself, woman. There is explanation for everything. These people have known thee for a long time. They have no reason to distrust thee now.

BETH

Thou hast such faith in people, husband.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Beth is sitting at her makeup desk, her eyes red. She plays a voice message again on her phone.

VOICE (PHONE)

I know this isn't the best time,
god knows I know this isn't the
best time.

I can't do this anymore. This play
is taking over and I can't be that
guy anymore, I can't be there
waiting for you anymore.

Fuck.

Just... don't hate me, and don't
hate yourself. I just... don't know
who I'm talking to anymore.

There is quiet on the line for a few moments, just some
breathing, then a click as the call is disconnected.

Beth holds the phone in front of her. The voice on the phone
asks if she wants to save the message or delete the message,
she opts to delete the message.

She sits there, holding her phone. To the left of her we see
the flowers that her boyfriend had sent her the week before;
they are dead and brown.

BETH

Why the fuck did you do that,
Elizabeth.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Beth is dressed and is finished for the day. She walks down
dark corridors towards Ray's office.

Beth comes around a corner and sees that Ray's door is
slightly open. A shard of light cuts into the darkness.

Beth approaches the door but slows when she hears grunting
noises coming from Ray's office.

She edges closer. She can see movement through the gap in
the doorway.

When she's close enough Beth can see Rebecca's face through
the gap. She has a contorted expression on her face. At
first Beth thinks she is being assaulted, but the closer she
gets she can see that that is not the case.

Rebecca is bent over Ray's desk, half-naked, and he is
thrusting into her from behind.

Beth is shocked and puts her hand over her mouth in order that she doesn't make a sound.

Ray pushes Rebecca's head down flat onto his desk. Rebecca looks in Beth's direction and sees her there, standing in the light offered through the gap. Through her heavy breathing she grins, her teeth bared, and then her grunts turn into laughter.

Beth steps away from the light, into the darkness, ashamed, betrayed.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL ROOM - DAY/NIGHT

We are in the small room again with the strange woman. She is still sitting on the couch watching the television screen.

She is watching Ray in his office again, but this time he is looking directly into camera, talking to the audience.

RAY

Open yourself. As if opened for the first time. Spread apart like the wings that cover a withered body... Open to the flame... open to the biting cold.
Do you see yourself?

WOMAN

No.

RAY

What are you? How have you come to be here?

Moments pass. The woman thinks, considering her existence.

WOMAN

I am hair. I am... Skin.
I am sweat.
I see.
I hear.
I... feel.

RAY

What else?

WOMAN

I have seen you before.

RAY
 You have seen...?
 You have seen... Me?

WOMAN
 Yes.

RAY
 How do you come to see me?

WOMAN
 I have seen you before. I have seen
 you... not like this. Someplace
 else. Some other time. You are
 different, but it is still you,
 like a ghost of you.

On the television screen Ray stands up, challenging.

RAY
 How have you come to see me?

WOMAN
 I do not know. I just... do. And I
 have the power to see you whenever
 I want.

Ray looks scared.

RAY
 Who are you?

WOMAN
 I... am the one who sees.

FADE TO BLACK

(INSERT)

A DROWNED WITCH WILL BE CLEANSED
 (Last week of rehearsals)

FADE IN ON:

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

The house lights in the theatre are off.

The stage is dark except for an orange glow coming from stage left. In the background we can hear birds chirping.

Then there is a loud knock; a heavy hand hammering on a wooden door. We can hear voices; a group of men talking under their breaths to each other.

Andrew enters stage right. He has just awoken from sleep, dressed in his sleeping attire.

He crosses the stage and opens the door to find five lawmen standing on his doorstep.

ANDREW

Yes?

1ST OFFICIAL

Master Shaw. We do apologise for this late hour-

ANDREW

Yes, it is very late. What is the meaning of this?

2ND OFFICIAL

We are here on orders from the County Court of Berkshire to bring thy wife, Elizabeth, to stand trial in front of the Magistrate-

ANDREW

Thou come in the middle of the night like -- thieves! -- to take my wife...?!
This is madness. You will not take her.

1ST OFFICIAL

We have a warrant for her arrest, Master Shaw. The Magistrate has left London early this evening to be with us first thing tomorrow. Do not get in our way or thou too shall be arrested for obstructing-

ANDREW

On what charge? On what charge are you here to arrest my wife?

2ND OFFICIAL

For being a witch.

There is a burst of agreements from the group of men.

ANDREW

Preposterous. Where's the proof.
Arthur, thou hast known Elizabeth
for as long as I. Is she capable of
witchcraft?

2ND OFFICIAL

That is not for us to decide.
Elizabeth will be tried in a court
appointed by the Mayor of this
Village. But until then she must
remain in custody.

ANDREW

But thou hast known her a long
time. How has it come to be that
thou distrust her now...?

1ST OFFICIAL

The devil only needs a moment of
weakness to take hold, Master Shaw.
We are all Christian men here. We
must be wary of the Devil's
influence.

No one says anything for a moment.

ANDREW

And where will she sleep?

2ND OFFICIAL

In the gaol.

ANDREW

I will not let you do that. The
gaol is full of beggars and
thieves.

1ST OFFICIAL

She will have her own cell, Master
Shaw.
I will see to it personally. We are
not monsters.

Andrew doesn't move. He is deep in thought.

2ND OFFICIAL

We will use force if we need to. We
have the proper authority.

Andrew is about to argue more, but Beth comes to the door, dressed. She gently moves Andrew out of her way.

ANDREW

Elizabeth! What art thou doing?

She puts her finger to his lips to shush him.

BETH

It's okay, Martin.
There is no use fighting. They will take me either way. I will pray to God that these people see the truth.

ANDREW

I will pray for thy safe return.

Beth walks to the men, her arms outstretched. One of the men grabs her arm. His sharp grip makes Beth break character.

BETH

Ow, you idiot.

They exit stage left.

We stay on the scene for a few moments, listening to the birds tweet. The orange glow gradually gets brighter as the "sun" rises.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Ray enters the room, a stern look on his face.

RAY

Beth! What do you think you're doing? Breaking character in the middle of the scene... We're a week away from live shows.

BETH

Ray. That jerk hurt me.

RAY

They're supposed to hurt you. It's part of the scene.

BETH

Well, they should be more professional. They can't go around hurting the actors. What if they

(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)

seriously hurt me...?

RAY

Beth, listen... If the pressure is getting to you, just say the word. Rebecca is more than capable-

BETH

Oh, yeah, you'd love that wouldn't you?!

I bet this is just what she's been waiting for as well. Waiting for you to drop me so she can take my place. Don't think I don't see what's going on here-

RAY

Elizabeth! Stop it! Stop this right now! Rebecca is not the problem here. You're making yourself crazy over this.

Listen to what you're saying...

I don't know what's going on here, but I want you to stop it.

You're making me doubt my decision to put you forward for the lead, and I don't like doubting myself.

If you can't cope, say it.

BETH

No, you don't. I've worked too hard for this. You can't give it to Rebecca just like that. Just because you're fucking her it does not mean the window is open so you can push me out of it.

You chose me, Ray. Out of everyone who auditioned you chose me. I can't believe you would be rid of me just like that.

RAY

Then show me, Beth. Prove to me that you belong here. Show me that you belong on that stage.

BETH

I am. I will. I'll do whatever it takes.

RAY

I want your commitment. No more
complaining, no more
interruptions...
I'm not being unreasonable.

BETH

I'm there.
One more week.
No more interruptions.

CUT TO:

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stage left. In the background we can hear birds chirping.

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will be tried in a court appointed
by the Mayor fo this village. But
until then she must be kept in
custody.

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time. How can thee distrust her
now...?

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BETH

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There is no use fighting. They will take me either way.

I will pray to God that these people see the truth.

ANDREW

I will pray for thy safe return.

Beth walks to the men, her arms outstretched to be chained. One of them grabs her arm and they lead her away.

They exit stage left.

Andrew stands in the middle of the stage, a look of mixed emotions on his face.

Behind him, in the wings of stage right, in the shadow of the curtains, we see a man watching.

It is the actor playing Master Stiles.

He has a smug look on his face.

FADE TO

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

On the stage there is a long table with three Magistrates sitting abreast from each other. They are dressed in black robes and barrister's wigs. They are Gray (30's), Blake (50's) and Usher (40's).

Blake is the Head Magistrate; he is stern-faced and the most experienced Magistrate in the South of England.

Gray is the youngest of the three. He has a goodly face and wears a large crucifix around his neck. He fidgets in his seat, uncomfortable.

Usher is slightly hunched, red faced and has a holier-than-thou demeanour.

On the other side of the stage there is a crowd of seated villagers. Andrew is sitting in the front row with Margaret beside him.

Magistrate Blake rises from his seat.

BLAKE

Bring in Mrs Shaw.

The bailiff brings in Beth. She is shackled at her wrists and ankles. She is dressed in dirty clothes. Her hair is unkempt.

Andrew looks down, upset with how she appears to have been treated but unable to speak out of turn in Court.

The bailiff brings Beth to stand in front of the table of Officials.

BLAKE

This court is assembled on this day, September 21st, the year of Our Lord, 1672. The people of the County of Berkshire have sent for us in regards to the suspicions of evil agents amongst them.

I am Magistrate Blake. On my left is Magistrate Usher. And on my right is Magistrate Gray. We have been called because of our notorious dealings with Satan's servants. In the case of the people versus Goodwife Elizabeth Shaw... The charge is witchcraft.

Affirmation from the crowd.

USHER

How do you plead?

BETH

Innocent.

There is uproar from the crowd.

Magistrate Gray rises from his seat.

GRAY

Silence!

You understand, Goody Shaw, that if found guilty of witchcraft this court has the authority, ordained by God, to put you to death?!

There is a moment of quiet as everyone in the room awaits Beth's response.

BETH

I understand.

Some people gasp.

GRAY

And you understand that in confessing to being in league with Satan, and by repenting your sins to God, this court will grant you sanctuary from eternal damnation?!

BETH

I am aware.

BLAKE

And you feel no need to confess at this time?! It would save you, and this court, what could be a lengthy proceeding...

BETH

I have done nothing wrong-

There is an outburst from some of the villagers in the crowd. They continue to berate Beth as she continues talking.

BETH

I am innocent of all charges. I will prove my innocence.
I am not a witch.
I am not a witch.

BLAKE
This court will decide.

This court calls its first witness.
Is he ready?

BAILIFF
Aye. He is waiting out those doors,
your Honour.

BLAKE
Then fetch him.

The court calls Master Stiles to
the stand.

The bailiff retreats and fetches Master Stiles.

Master Stiles enters from stage right and shambles up to the
stand.

BLAKE
Thou art Master Stiles?

MR STILES
Aye. I am he.

BLAKE
And what is thy relationship with
the accused?

MR STILES
My farmland runs alongside Goody
Shaw's property.

BLAKE
And thou hast lived there how long?

MR STILES
Her and Master Shaw had taken
ownership of the house and land
last Winter.

GRAY
And in this time what evidence hast
thou to warrant such a serious
accusation?

MR STILES
Aye, I have been privy to many a
strange occurrence.

BLAKE

What hast thou seen exactly?

MR STILES

Well, some nights I find it difficult to sleep. I hear Goody Shaw late at night tending her garden.

When I seen Molly eating out of Goody Shaw's garden I make haste to retrieve her... Because of what I seen going on there.

It's unnatural.

BLAKE

Molly be thy horse which had lost her foal?

MR STILES

Aye.

USHER

And what is it thou had seen to give thee suspicion?

MR STILES

I seen markings in the dirt of Goody Shaw's garden.

GRAY

Markings?

MR STILES

Symbols. Cut into the earth.

USHER

And that is where thou had seen the symbols in the earth?

The very spot where Molly was seen eating Goody Shaw's plants?

MR STILES

The very spot, aye.

GRAY

Could these markings have been made by any natural occurrence... An animal or by nature itself?

MR STILES

No, it is my knowledge of the bible that tells me that it is not anything other than what I claim it is.

I seen 'em. With my eyes as clear as day. I seen 'em carved into the ground. I seen Goody Shaw tending that garden late at night when she believes there is no soul about.

GRAY

Perhaps Goody Shaw has difficulty sleeping herself and indulges in late night gardening to ease her back to a state that encourages sleep.

MR STILES

I seen her in her garden, the night of the solstice. She was naked, and I seen the Devil's mark upon her.

BETH

That is a lie.

MR STILES

And I seen a figure with her on that night also. A tall figure with hoofed feet and two protruding horns atop his head.

BLAKE

Thou art in a House of God, Master Stiles. Truth will out in the eyes of Our Lord.
Choose thy words.
What sayest thou?

MR STILES

I seen Goody Shaw fornicating with Satan and the Devil Himself.

There are loud gasps from the crowd of villagers.

BETH

All lies.
That is a blatant lie.

There is uproar from the crowd. A woman faints.

BLAKE

(to Beth)

Enough. We will get to you soon,
Goody Shaw.

(to Mr Stiles)

Are thou certain thou hast seen
what thou claim to have seen?

MR STILES

I seen it. With mine own eyes.

GRAY

Is Doctor Miller present?

A man (40's) stands up.

GRAY

Didst thou see any marks upon Goody
Shaw's body which could be
construed as those of the Devil?

MILLER

I did not find any marks upon her
person which she did not have an
explanation for.

GRAY

Then it is not evidence enough.

There is uproar from the crowd.

BLAKE

Step down Master Stiles.

Master Stiles leaves the stand and shambles back to his
seat. Beth gives him a cold, disgusted stare.

BLAKE

This court calls Mary Barker to the
stand.

Mary walks out of the crowd and takes the stand.

GRAY

Thou ist Ms Mary Barker, cleaning
woman for Master and Goodwife Shaw?

MARGARET

Aye.

GRAY

And thou hast been in their employ
for how long?

MARGARET

I have cleaned for Martin and Elizabeth Shaw for six month now.

GRAY

And in this time thou hast been in close proximity to Goody Shaw?

MARGARET

Aye. They been real good to me.

USHER

Now, Ms Barker. Dost thou remember the incident that took place between Goody Shaw and Master Stiles?

MARGARET

Well, Master Stiles' horse, Molly, she likes to go wondering into other people's fields. She never harmed nobody, just she don't know better. And nobody has any reason to mind. Well, this day she wondered into Martin and Elizabeth's, like she done many times before. But this time she was eating Elizabeth's flowers from her garden. So Master Stiles goes in and fetches Molly. Elizabeth was not pleased with him on account of Molly eating her flowers. So she said so to Master Stiles. They fought, and then Master Stiles left with Molly.

USHER

Then what happened?

MARGARET

At the time Molly was with foal. A fortnight later Molly went into labour. Master Stiles struggled with poor Molly for six hours before he pulled the foal from her. Unfortunately the foal was born still.

Murmurs from the crowd.

USHER

Master Stiles says he had seen symbols in Goody Shaw's garden. Did you see these marks?

MARGARET

No. By then Elizabeth had turned the soil back, on account of her flowers all been eaten.

USHER

She had already turned back the soil? She did not hesitate until the matter was reported?

MARGARET

No. She did it soon after.

Affirmation from the crowd.

BETH

I was angry. It was not a crime.

BLAKE

(to Beth)

Hush. Thou shalt have thy turn to speak.

Beth falls silent.

Blake nods at Usher to continue.

USHER

(to Margaret)

And what canst thou tell us about the incident that occurred with Mrs Tilling?

MARGARET

Oh, that woman. They always been fighting, long as I known them. Elizabeth got mad at Mrs Tilling on that occasion on account of her dog been digging up her plantings. He a mean dog too. He a biter, and not just me... Other people too-

USHER

It is Goody Shaw on trial here, not Mrs Tilling's dog.

People in the audience snigger.

MARGARET

Sorry, Sir.

Well, Elizabeth was mad, so she visited with Mrs Tilling to discuss their grievance. It resulted in the two women making a scene. The discussion ended with shouts and curses. They been fighting for as long as I known them, but this one was bad.

So Elizabeth gets really upset because Mrs Tilling isn't listening to anything she has to say.

Elizabeth is shouting, Mrs Tilling is shouting. With all the noise it was difficult to make out the words.

USHER

She was speaking in tongues?

MARGARET

If that's what you call it, yes Sir.

Members of the audience gasp.

BETH

This is ridiculous.

MARGARET

(to Beth)

Sorry, Missus. I just telling what I seen.

GRAY

Do you believe that Goody Shaw is a good Christian woman?

MARGARET

Aye, I believe she is. She lives by the Bible.

USHER

The Devil has many faces.

There are affirmations from the people in the crowd.

BLAKE

Thank you, Mary. You may step down.

Margaret leaves the witness stand. Beth looks at her with hurt in her eyes.

Margaret walks off with her head down.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

Beth sits to one side of the stage on a bench in the gaol, her hands clasped together. She is chained at her ankles.

Andrew enters stage right, led by a guard who opens the door for him.

Beth rises from her perch. She is bruised and dirty.

Andrew's expression is that of pity. He stands a few feet away from her.

ANDREW

My poor Elizabeth. What have they done to thee?

BETH

Oh, Martin. I thoughtst thou would not come. After yesterday...

ANDREW

I am here.

They linger apart from each other, an awkwardness between them.

BETH

I am worried these judges are convinced. Master Stiles was ruthless. He said things that were untrue, but his conviction appeared earnest.

ANDREW

They cannot believe the mad rantings of an old man.

BETH

And Mary... She was so bewildered. I do not think she even knew what she was saying. Her accounts put me in a bad light. Her words cut me very deep.

ANDREW

These men have heard many stories.
I believe they would know what is
false and what is true.

BETH

Oh, Martin. Even now thou still
hast such faith in people.

ANDREW

It is all I can do to not lose my
sanity. It is all I can do in wait
for you to return home with me.

BETH

There is something I must say,
Martin... I wanted to tell thee
soonest but the opportunity never
arose.
I am with child.

ANDREW

Are you certain?

BETH

I am.

ANDREW

(unenthusiastic)
This is... Great news.

BETH

You say thou are but thou do not
seem it.

ANDREW

It is only the timing. I am happy.
It has been a long year of trying.

Beth and Andrew embrace on the stage.

ANDREW

All the more to get thee home.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

The three magistrates sit at their long table. Beth stands
before them.

BLAKE

This court is now in session. We will have the deliberation of our third witness.

The court calls Bethany Rose to the stand.

Beth looks up, stunned. She looks around, unsure why someone has said her actual name. At first she is about to break character, but then resists out of fear.

She looks around at the other actors; everyone is serious and remains in character.

She hears a cough from the direction of the audience and some quiet shuffling. She turns in that direction, carefully, and sees featureless shadowed faces looking back at her, watching her.

Every seat in the auditorium is occupied.

Beth is confused. She tries to look behind the curtain in the wings of the stage to catch the eye of someone, but everything is dark and she cannot see anyone other than the actors on the stage with her.

All of a sudden everything is very real and she tries to stay in character.

A person enters from stage right.

It's Rebecca.

Beth is even more confused.

Rebecca walks up and takes the stand, unable to look at Beth.

Beth watches her.

GRAY

You are Ms Bethany Rose?

REBECCA

Aye. I am.

GRAY

Can you explain to the court thy relationship to Goody Shaw?

REBECCA

I am Elizabeth's... friend.

GRAY

And how long has thou known Goody Shaw?

REBECCA

I have known Elizabeth a long time. We have been friends since a very young age.

GRAY

And what kind of person is Goody Shaw? Is she a good Christian woman?

REBECCA

Yes.

USHER

Remember, Ms Rose. Thou art in a house of God. Lies are not permitted in the house of our Lord.

REBECCA

Yes, Sir.

USHER

There is an incident I would like you to talk about, Ms Rose. An incident which took place last Summer.

Rebecca looks around shyly, unable to look Beth in the eye. She tentatively answers.

REBECCA

I had only wanted to go down to the river to wash my feet. We had been traipsing through thick mud picking berries for the new moon festival last Summer. We had gone down to the river where it meets with the brook that flows into the village.

There we came upon a traveller, an old woman who was doing her washing. She was most interested in meeting Elizabeth. She showed us her wares. I had only

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

to look once and did not want anything she had to offer. But Elizabeth... She was taken in by the old woman's tale of woe.

She traded her soul that day.

BETH

These are all lies.

There is uproar from the crowd and even affirmations from the unseen audience.

Blake strikes the table with his hand.

BLAKE

Settle!

(to Rebecca)

And what happened after that, my Dear?

REBECCA

After that... Elizabeth was not the same. She appeared so, but underneath...

I could tell she was different. I could tell she was changed. She was no longer my friend. From that day she has had the Devil in her heart.

BETH

This is madness. She is telling lies.

I don't know this woman. She was not with me on that day.

USHER

Dost thou admit to this meeting with the old woman?

BETH

No. Yes. I bought a trinket from a poor old woman. But I do not know this woman in front of you. Bethany is no friend of mine.

USHER

Dost thou deny thy friend?

REBECCA

Oh, Elizabeth. I am Bethany. Hast

(MORE)

REBECCA (CONT'D)

thou lost touch with the truth?

BETH

I do not know you. Who are you?!

Bethany makes an attempt to approach Rebecca, her chains rattling, her teeth bared, her hands outstretched, but is quickly grabbed by the guards.

Rebecca, momentarily frightened, begins to cry.

The crowd grows uproarious, from shouts to people standing and throwing things.

Beth is removed from the court, dragged away quickly.

BETH

I do not know you.

Rebecca has her face down. She appears to be crying.

FADE TO

(INSERT)

OPENED TO THE LIGHT

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

Beth is shackled to the stone in her prison. She sits solemnly in the corner.

Andrew enters. He has a distrustful look on his face.

Beth stands but stays where she is, reading the look on his face and unsure how to respond.

BETH

Oh, Martin.

Hast thou spoken with Mayor Crosse?

ANDREW

I hardly know thee, Elizabeth.

BETH

Thou knowest me, Husband. I am still the same as I have always been. These people have conjured lies to implicate me in practises I know nothing about.

ANDREW

Enough! Please. Thou do not make it
easy for me to help thee. This
madness must end.
If thou confess-

BETH

Confess to what? If I confess it
only implies that I am guilty.
Please do not tell me thou hast
been taken in by these lies.
Anyone but thee.

ANDREW

If thou confess, Elizabeth, then-

BETH

They will not let me go home. I am
already guilty in their eyes.
Master Stiles' deposition hast
convinced people's opinion quite
easily.

ANDREW

Hast thou, Elizabeth?

BETH

Have I what?

ANDREW

Hast thou done what Master Stiles
claims? Hast thou been outside...?

BETH

Never. I cannot believe thou
wouldst ask this of me.

ANDREW

I do not know what to believe
anymore.
All of this... It has come
suddenly.
And the child...?
I must know, Elizabeth. Is the
child mine.

BETH

It is thine, Husband. Of that I
have no doubt.

There is a moment where neither speaks. Beth takes a chance
and whispers under her breath.

BETH
(whispering)
Andrew...? What's going on? What's
Ray doing?

ANDREW
Who is Ray?

Beth looks around and sees the faces in the audience.

ANDREW
Is he your familiar?

She is confused as to why Andrew is speaking so openly and loud enough for the audience to hear.

BETH
(whispering)
Andrew?! Shh...

ANDREW
I am Martin Shaw. I am thy husband.

Andrew takes Beth by the shoulders and shakes her.

ANDREW
Tell me! Tell me who these Demons
are! What hast thou done to my
wife?!

BETH
Martin, please. You are hurting me.

Andrew slaps Beth across the face.

When she turns to look at him he slaps her another time on the other cheek.

Beth begins crying. She falls to the ground and curls up into a ball.

Andrew looks down at her for a few moments, his nostrils flaring and his breathing heavy.

Andrew leaves.

FADE TO

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

The three Magistrates sit at their table.

Most of the villagers are in the audience. Rebecca, Andrew, Margaret and the rest of the main cast are sitting in the

front row.

Andrew has his head lowered.

Beth is then led onto the stage. She is emaciated, dressed in dirty clothes. She is bruised and dirty. She is chained at her wrists and ankles.

People gasp when they see her. Rebecca has tears falling down her cheeks.

Andrew looks away, disgusted.

Beth is placed before the three Magistrates.

BLAKE

We, the people, have found
Elizabeth Shaw...

Guilty...!

...on all counts of practising
witchcraft. Based on the evidence
given by Master Bernard Stiles,
friend and neighbour to Martin and
Elizabeth Shaw, we have no doubt of
her dealings with all that is evil.

Maid Mary Barker also gave a
convincing account of Elizabeth
Shaw's involvement with the Devil.
Working closely with Goody Shaw she
has first account information about
her private practises.

Then there is the deliberation of
her closest friend, Maid Bethany
Rose. She has given us the most
convincing conviction yet. Being
witness to Goody Shaw's dealings
with the Occult first hand, we have
no doubt of her involvement.

In the face of these accusations,
Elizabeth Shaw, how do you plead?

BETH

Innocent.

Uproar from the crowd.

Andrew is silent.

Magistrate Gray tries to convince Beth to change her mind.

GRAY

Goody Shaw... The evidence against thee is staggering. Please, for thine own sake... Repent. Admit thy guilt and thy will be spared a horrible death.

BETH

Admitting to guilt only makes me guilty.
I am not guilty.

Do what thy will.

Gasps from the crowd.

GRAY

Repenting to thine sins will hold you in good stead with God, for when thou transcendeth this life into the next, He will grant you entrance to Heaven.

BETH

I already hold God in my heart. There is already a place reserved for me in His Kingdom.

USHER

That is blasphemy.

Affirmations from the crowd.

BETH

(angry)

This court is blasphemy! Preying on the weak and spreading a disease of unease amongst the people of this country...

BLAKE

Restrain her!

BETH

...sentencing innocent people to death with ignorance.

Two guards approach Beth and hold her back.

Beth's demeanour changes from anger to concern.

BETH

What of my child?!

Blake holds his hand up. The guards let go of Beth.

BLAKE

How far along are thee?

BETH

Only four months.

There is quiet in the court. The three Magistrates confer between themselves.

Gray shakes his head; Usher nods his.

After a few moments, Usher speaks.

USHER

If the rumour be true of Goody Shaw's late night fornications with the Devil, then it is this court's commendation that the child be executed also.

There is a mix of shock and cheer from the crowd.

BETH

It is only a child! They hold no allegiance either way!

USHER

If the child be born a spawn of Satan, then its allegiances are predestined.

(to Blake)

What sayeth thou, Your Honour?

BLAKE

In this instance, I can see no alternative.

Elizabeth Shaw and the child within her shall be burned at the stake in the village square an hour after sunrise.

Beth's face drops.

There is affirmation from the people in the court.
Andrew stands up, angry and upset, and exits stage right.
Rebecca begins to wail.
Margaret is saying prayers and crossing her chest.
The curtains close.
The audience applauds.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Beth looks up to see the curtains close.
A backstage red light comes on, illuminating everything in a dim glow.
The two guards holding Beth's arms let go and walk off and disappear in the wings of the stage. The other village people who had gathered in the court audience get up quietly and file out and disappear in the wings too.
Rebecca stands up from where she is sitting and wipes the tears from her eyes, her expression neutral. Margaret does the same.
No one looks at Beth.
She tries to attract Rebecca's attention, confused more now than ever.

BETH

Rebecca.

Rebecca doesn't look. Her and Margaret disappear in the darkness.
After the actors have left the stage, stage-hands dressed all in black come out of the darkness and remove the scenery and furniture of the courthouse and replace it with the scenery of the gaol.
The clapping behind the curtain slows and stops.
Beth stands up and tries to get someone's attention but can't go far as she is chained. She is weak and thin.

BETH

Please. I want to know what's going on.

Once the scene is ready and in place the red light begins to strobe signalling everyone to hurry up. The stage-hands leave the stage.

BETH

Please.

The red light strobos faster, then the curtains begin to open and the red light cuts out.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Beth turns to see the spotlight on her. Her eyes are red and helpless. Behind the bright light she can see the phantom faces of the audience, watching her, unable to help.

She wanders around the stage, as far as she can move in either direction, crying and distraught.

Beth collapses onto the ground, crying.

After a few moments a figure shuffles onto the stage from the wings.

Beth doesn't look up, defeated.

The figure makes its way to Beth's side and kneels down next to her.

RAY

Hello, Beth.

Beth looks up and sees Ray kneeling down next to her. A fresh bout of tears fill her eyes and she can't make words with her mouth out of relief.

BETH

Ray. I... I...

RAY

I know, Beth.

She doesn't reach out to him. She drops her head, exhausted.

RAY

You're doing good, Beth.

She looks up, uncertainty on her face.

BETH

I am?

RAY

Yes.
I've been watching.

BETH

You have?

Ray nods his head.

BETH

Thank you.

RAY

It's not over yet. There's just a
little more to go.

Beth looks sad and tired.

BETH

How mu... How much more?

RAY

Just one more scene.
The last scene.
This is your crowning moment, Beth.
This is the moment you've been
waiting for. Your time to shine.

Her eyes become glassy.

BETH

I do want to shine.
But I'm so tired, Ray. I don't know
if I can give the last bit.
I just feel... So tired.

RAY

I know, Beth.
I've been watching.
I've seen how much you've put into
this. You've put so much of
yourself into this, and I thank
you.
With everything that I am, I thank
you.

And I don't want to push you into
the last scene if you're not going
to give it all you can.

But you see these people...

Ray motions toward the audience, shadowed faces staring back.

Beth looks at them.

RAY

These people have come to see you.
You are showing them that you
belong here. You make them feel
like they belong there, the
audience, the ones who see, the
ones who watch... Empathising...
Learning.
This duality of life is everything.
They feed off of you like you feed
off of them.

You can't let them down.

BETH

They've come... For me?!

RAY

Yes.

BETH

I can't let them down. They are me
and I am them.

RAY

Yes, Beth. Open yourself to the
last scene.
Let it take you where it needs to
be.
Let it show you the way.

Ray rises, turns and leaves Beth there in the middle of the stage.

He disappears behind the curtain.

Beth begins to rise, slowly, awkwardly.

The light changes; the colours become orange, like the morning sun creeping over the horizon.

A church bell chimes somewhere in the distance.

We hear voices and footsteps approaching.

Beth stands upright in the middle of the stage, waiting.

Four men enter stage left; the gaol warden, two guards and Magistrate Gray.

GRAY
 (to the guards)
 May I have a word with Elizabeth
 before you take her?

The guards nod and stand at the door.

Magistrate Gray turns to Beth.

GRAY
 Elizabeth, please, for the sake of
 thine child, let me help thee. It
 does not have to end like this.

BETH
 Thou art a good man, Gray. A godly
 man, fair and true.

GRAY
 Then allow me to help thee. There
 is still time.

BETH
 There is no time left for me.
 I am where I need to be. It must
 end like this.

GRAY
 But a burning... And a woman with
 child...

BETH
 It must be this way. I am prepared
 for it.

Gray doesn't say anything, just looks at Beth with pity in his eyes.

He nods at the the guards to take her.

They take her and lead her out of the gaol.

Beth is led out, a guard on either side of her. She walks awkwardly, but confidently, her head held high.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

Beth is led into the town square.

In the middle of the square there stands a stake with wood and kindling around the bottom.

There is a crowd gathering around it. People shuffle and whisper among themselves when they see Beth approaching.

Beth is taken up to a platform in the middle of the pyre. The two guards tie her to the post.

Blake, Gray and Usher arrive, dressed in ceremonial black robes. They walk into the square and stand before Beth.

All the whispering stops.

BLAKE

The Church has granted us the
power, we men of God.
We were summoned to this village
with the belief that Evil walked
among you.
We have located this Evil now.

Through deliberations from trusted
members of this community, we have
found out the Devil.
He resides in the heart of
Elizabeth Shaw.
This woman is to be executed,
burned for the sins she has
committed so that we may rid this
village of such Evil.

Beth says nothing. She looks out into the audience, her head held high. She shows no fear.

BLAKE

(to Beth)

Hast thou anything to say?

Beth smiles, content, prepared.

BETH

I fear not... What these men deem
God's work is nothing but what is
meant to be. I am here... I have
suffered... I will suffer no more.
I will be ascended to a Heaven of
my making. I am open to the light.
This is not the end.

Blake nods his head at the guard holding the burning torch.

The guard moves around the pyre, lighting all four sides. It slowly takes.

The crowd of people begin to cheer.

Rebecca is standing amongst the crowd, her face expressionless.

Smoke begins to erupt in clouds.

Beth's breathing becomes heavier; the fire is taking her oxygen. She has her eyes closed tight.

The fire has spread around the pyre and is growing. The fire licks higher, reaching upward.

Andrew is also amongst the crowd of people; his face too is expressionless.

The flames make their way toward Beth. Her clothes begin to catch.

Her feet, ankles and lower legs redden and the skin bubbles.

Tears begin to fall from her eyes.

Usher has a grin on his face; Blake looks on, his head raised, justified; Gray turns away, unable to watch.

Beth begins to cough, taking in big gulps of air. She opens her eyes and looks around at all the people. Her eyes are redlined and watering. She sees the crowd of people come to see her executed; she sees the audience in the Theatre through the flames that lick close to her face.

The flames take Beth's clothes, burning them to her skin. The flames rise up and she is engulfed...

Beth lets out a dry throaty wail that sails through the auditorium.

Then her body slumps on the stake.

The audience begin to applaud. People rise from their seats.

Beth is a blackened figure engulfed in fire on the stage.

The curtains close. The applause continues.

FADE TO

INT. THEATRE - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

We see the back of a woman sitting in a makeup chair. She is

reading something in her lap.

As we get closer we can see that it is Rebecca in the seat. She is reading a script. She is dressed in 17th Century clothing.

There is a knock at the door.

Rebecca turns her head.

VOICE (O.S.)

Ten minutes to curtain.

She turns back to the script. She closes it and we see the red pentacle doodled on the front corner.

She takes a deep breath... Then slowly exhales.

CUT TO:

EXT. THEATRE BACKDOOR/ALLEY - LATER

Rebecca leaves through the backdoor to the theatre on her own. She enters the alley and there is a group of young fans standing at the door to get autographs. They thrust posters and pens at her. She obligingly signs them, asking questions and thanking them. The group of fans squeal and giggle, excited.

Once she has signed the group's posters Rebecca notices a shy woman standing on the other side of the alley, waiting. There is a moment of deja-vu for Rebecca. We recognise her as the woman from the room.

REBECCA

I know you.

The Woman casually walks closer to Rebecca, a look of indifference (distrust) on her face.

WOMAN

I am a big fan of... yours.

Rebecca smiles.

WOMAN

I've been following you on TV.

REBECCA

Thank you.
Have you seen the show?

The woman shakes her head.

REBECCA

There's still one more show
tomorrow, before we pack it in.

WOMAN

There won't be any tickets left.
Besides, I wouldn't be able to
afford a ticket even if there were
any.

Rebecca looks at the woman.

REBECCA

Where do I know you fr-

WOMAN

I would really like to see your
show. It's just...

She shrugs.

REBECCA

I could comp you a ticket if you
tell me your name.

Audrey's face lights up briefly then her expression reverts
back to indifference.

WOMAN

Audrey.

Audrey reaches her hand out, hiding her palm.

Rebecca hesitates, then reaches out and shakes her hand.

REBECCA

Audrey.
Would you like me to comp you a
ticket for tomorrow's show? It'll
be a balcony seat?

AUDREY

That would be great. But don't you
have someone you want to be there
instead of me?

Rebecca doesn't know why but she wants Audrey to see the
show.

REBECCA

My parents have already seen the
show, my friends too. I want you to
have it. It'll be empty otherwise.

AUDREY
I would like that.

REBECCA
Good. It's settled then. I'll leave
the ticket with the ticket-master
tomorrow under your name.

AUDREY
Thank you, Miss Burns.

REBECCA
Becky. Call me Becky.

AUDREY
Okay, Becky. Thank you.

Rebecca nods. Then she turns towards the entrance of the
alley and walks off.

Audrey watches her leave.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

The corridors of the theatre are full of stationery cast and
crew as they wait for their queues. As the CAMERA moves
slowly down the corridor the eyes of the cast and crew
follow it as it makes its way down.

In the background we can hear Rebecca and the other actor's
voices echoing around as they do their scene in the
auditorium in front of an audience.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Ray is standing in the wings of the stage, watching the
performance. His expression changes from strain to
excitement to frustration to elation with each line that is
said.

In the foreground we see Rebecca being interrogated.

Ray is engrossed in the scene, he mouths the lines as the
actors say them. Then his concentration is broken. Something
in the audience has caught his attention. He looks, squints,
sees... His brow furrows.

INT. THEATRE - AUDITORIUM - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

We see Audrey sitting in Rebecca's balcony seat (the same place that Beth did her first interview). She watches the show, unaware of Ray watching her from the side of the stage. She has an almost euphoric look on her face. Her eyes are wide, glassy. A tear falls down her cheek.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Ray continues to watch Audrey and is only brought back when the curtain begins to close and the audience begin to applaud when the scene has ended. He claps his hands together and gets a last glimpse of Audrey before the curtains cut off his view. She is standing while she applauds.

Ray has a concerned, almost frightened, look on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - LATER

We see Rebecca's dressing room door. A hand appears and knocks on the door.

REBECCA

Yes?

The door opens and we see that a backstage hand has brought Audrey to Rebecca's dressing room. Rebecca is sitting at her mirror, changing her makeup to look more dirty for the last Act.

She sees Audrey at the door.

REBECCA

Thank you, Ed. Come in, Audrey.

Audrey enters the room.

INT. THEATRE - DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca continues to apply her makeup. Audrey stands in the middle of the room, watching her.

REBECCA

So? What did you think of the 2nd Act?

AUDREY

Amazing. It's so much better than I
(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)

could have imagined.

REBECCA

Thanks.

AUDREY

And you... you're so good as Elizabeth, Becky. It's like when you're her I'm right there with you. It's heartbreaking watching you go through it.

REBECCA

That's acting.

AUDREY

It's much more than that. It's viewing history first-hand, it's like living in a dream. I can't describe how it makes me feel inside. It's like loving a child I never knew I had.

REBECCA

I'm glad you enjoyed it. There's still the last Act to see tonight.

AUDREY

I can't wait to see how it ends.

Rebecca looks at Audrey in the mirror and Audrey's face momentarily looks distorted, featureless. She turns around, a gasp caught in her throat.

Audrey looks normal, a smile on her face.

Then there's a knock on the door.

VOICE

Fifteen minute warning.

Rebecca calms down.

REBECCA

You'll have to excuse me, Audrey. I've got to get ready to go back out.

AUDREY

No problem. Break a leg, Becky.

There is a moment where Audrey just stares back at Rebecca not saying anything, the last thing she said sounding more

ominous than it should. Rebecca watches her, expectant, waiting for something else...

Then she turns, exits the room and closes the door behind her.

Rebecca takes a moment, confused as to what she saw.

She takes a breath, looking at the mirror itself, checking that it isn't warped... then continues with her makeup.

INT. THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS EARLIER

We see Audrey leave Rebecca's dressing room and disappearing down one of the corridors leading out.

Then we see that Ray is hiding around a corner, watching as Audrey disappears. He is confused, a look of fear on his face.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - LATER

Rebecca arrives at the stage edge. People rush around getting ready for the next curtain. Ray is standing there, waiting, pacing, nervous.

He sees Rebecca. He goes to her. He speaks to her in a hushed voice so that the audience don't hear.

RAY

Who was that girl in your dressing
room?
What is she doing here?

Rebecca is taken aback by his tone. She answers warily.

REBECCA

That was Audrey. She's... A fan.

RAY

A fan...?!

He looks away, confused, thinking.

REBECCA

Who is she, Ray? Do you know her?

Ray looks at Rebecca.

RAY

I don't want you talking to her.

REBECCA

Why not? Is she Press?

RAY

Just don't. Trust me. You don't need to be thinking about her at the moment.

REBECCA

Why not, Ray.
If there's something wrong then I need to know.

RAY

Don't worry about it now.

REBECCA

I am worried. You're making me worried.

RAY

Keep your head on the Play. You don't need any distractions now.

REBECCA

Just tell me.

RAY

This is the reason I didn't want you talking to her. You need to focus now on the last Act. You fumbled your way through it yesterday and I want you-

REBECCA

What is this... who is she? And why are you so scared of her?

RAY

(in a raised voice)

I am not scared of her.

People around them stop to watch them.

Rebecca looks at the fear in Ray's eyes.

Out of the corner of Ray and Rebecca's vision they see the red backstage light begin to flash. The Intermission music comes to an end. Backstage hands and cast get ready.

REBECCA

When this is over you're telling me
who she is and why you look like
you've seen a ghost.

Ray doesn't say anything. He wipes his mouth and looks around at everyone who is watching them. Ray watches as Rebecca walks out to the middle of the stage. She turns to look at him when she is there. They stare at each other for a moment.

Two stagehands come out from the side wheeling out a prop rock and a chain. They kneel behind Rebecca and chain her ankle to the rock.

Then Ray leaves the stage.

Rebecca drops her head.

CUT TO:

FADE IN ON:

BLACK SCREEN

We hear shuffling, voices of people in a studio environment, then a clear voice says, "Places, everyone. Two minutes to Air."

There's more shuffling. Then a voice says, "Here, Ms Burns."

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

A studio camera's picture suddenly comes into existence.

The picture is wild as the camera finds it's subject... And then we see Rebecca being shown a seat in the middle of a TV Studio. All around her there are runners and people with headsets shuffling quickly around the Studio floor. Rebecca sits down, daunted by all the people around her. She has a makeup person applying last minute touch-ups.

After the makeup person is finished the CAMERA slowly dollies toward her. Rebecca is nervous, her eyes unable to focus on anything as she is deep in thought...

Then a voice brings her out of it.

VOICE

One minute, People.

INT. STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

We see Rebecca, tightly framed, being interviewed for a Television Program. There are graphics on the screen; a ribbon at the bottom of the frame stating her name, another on the top left of the TV station and another on the bottom right of screen of Ray's Theatre Company.

INTERVIEWER

My guest tonight is Rebecca Burns who was in Raymond Marks newest Play at the Rotund last weekend where every seat was filled for the three nights it was performed, breaking records for the Rotund and setting a precedent for the quality of shows we will hopefully see there in the future. Critics are incensed with praise for the Play giving it the highest rating than any that has come before it.

It is no surprise really because of the acclamation that Raymond Marks attracts that Rebecca is now catapulted into Public discussion.

(to Rebecca)

Hello, Rebecca.

Rebecca smiles, nervous, humbled.

REBECCA

Please, call me Becky.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca watches the house lights dim under the curtain. She hears the audience settle down.

INT. THEATRE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Ray slowly ascends some stairs that lead upward to the upper seating area. He is trying to be quiet, his eyes darting all over the place.

A couple surprise him as they run past him to get to their seats. They giggle and bound off down a dark corridor.

Ray stands there for a moment waiting for his racing heart

to slow down.

After a moment he continues up the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

REBECCA

It's been a rollercoaster. But I've enjoyed every minute of it. In the back of my mind I try and convince myself that none of it is happening, just to stay grounded, but it's difficult when the phone won't stop ringing, I'm being driven around in limo's, I haven't spent a night in my own bed yet...

It's certainly a new experience that I'll never forget. Especially for a small town girl like me.

And it's been especially good working with Ray. It's all thanks to him that I'm here now.

INTERVIEWER

How was your relationship working with Ray?

REBECCA

Ray was good to me. He knew how to push me, how to get me out of my bad habits, how to keep me grounded.

There were moments where I wanted to strangle him...

Rebecca and the Interviewer laugh at that.

REBECCA

But I think you'll find that in any Artistic relationship. I am grateful for what he has done for me. He knows what he wants and he knows how to get it. But it's not entirely one dimensional. He would let me explore aspects of Elizabeth that seemed at first to be leading

(MORE)

REBECCA (CONT'D)

nowhere just so I could feel her,
let her become a part of me.
It's been... A journey.

INTERVIEWER

It sounds like a fairy-tale dream
come true.
Now, Becky. This part of the
interview we will be focussing on a
slightly sore point...

Rebecca knew it was coming. Her lips purse.

After a few moments she nods her head slightly.

INTERVIEWER

I'd like to talk about what
happened with Bethany Rose...

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca is standing with her head lowered in the centre of
the stage. The curtain is about to rise. The red light
behind her goes off.

She is trying to latch back onto her character, whispering
her lines under her breath.

INT. THEATRE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

We see Ray slowly creeping down a corridor in the dark.
There is an uncomfortable stillness in the air.

He arrives at a curtained doorway. He stands in front of it,
taking a moment.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The curtain rises in front of Rebecca. Shadows disappear and
others lengthen. She still has her head lowered as the
floodlights illuminate her face.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca doesn't say anything for a few moments as everyone
in the studio waits for her reply. She just stares at the

Interviewer, then looks away.

When she looks back at the Interviewer after a moment, her eyes are glistening slightly.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Ray puts his hands into the curtain separation. He spreads the curtains apart, slowly, quietly...

He looks into the Balcony seat and sees the back of Audrey's head as she watches Rebecca on the Stage.

Ray swallows but his mouth is dry.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca swallows, but her mouth has become dry.

She clears her throat then takes a moment to prepare her answer.

REBECCA

What happened with Bethany was a tragedy.

During rehearsals we had a good dynamic. Elizabeth was hers first, so she created a whole backstory for her, to define every motivation in the play. It was amazing. Really amazing how much work she put into it.

And then we would discuss aspects of her, I would bring my own notes, my own experiences, to flesh her out.

It just worked.

Ray could see. He would never have said anything to Bethany, but he told me that this would be his best so far.

The Crew, the Cast, we could all see.

Bethany was Elizabeth.

Rebecca looks away for a moment, remembering.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Ray steps onto the Balcony. He stands there, not really knowing what he's doing. He raises his hands in a strangling motion. He has a crazy look in his eye.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca raises her head to deliver her first line but out of the corner of her eye she sees Ray standing behind Audrey in the Balcony.

Her words catch in her throat and she freezes.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca begins talking, still looking to the side.

REBECCA

And then...

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Ray looks past Audrey and notices Rebecca watching him, frozen on the Stage.

He retracts his hands, ashamed, guilty.

Then Audrey turns in her seat, slowly, to look at him. She has a huge grin on her face, her face slightly featureless, her eyes flat and wide.

Ray's breath catches in his throat.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca notices everyone in the audience slowly turn their heads to look up at Ray. Their faces are featureless, a sea of ghosts behind the floodlights.

INT. THEATRE - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Ray sees all the faces of the audience turning to look at him. He tries to swallow.

He retreats.

As he steps toward the darkness of the corridor we see a Demon-faced Audrey leap out of the black and grab Ray around the neck.

Rebecca screams from the Stage.

REBECCA

No...!

The Demon-Audrey sinks its teeth into Ray's flesh and pulls him suddenly into the darkness.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca attempts to run off the stage but she is restrained by the chain around her ankle. She pulls the chain but the prop rock that moved a moment ago won't move now.

She turns to look and sees the crew behind the wings just staring at her, not making any attempt to help.

REBECCA

Help! Why are you all just standing there...?!

She turns to look at the audience and sees them all, past the floodlights, just sitting there, featureless, staring back at her.

REBECCA

Somebody... do something!
What's wrong with you...?

Then the doors to the back of the Auditorium open and Rebecca sees a shadowed figure standing in the bright light.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

REBECCA

It happened so fast. No one saw it coming. And when it happened there was this moment. You could see it in everybody's face, like, "Oh, my god."

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The figure enters the Auditorium, the doors close behind them.

Slowly the heads of the Audience turn to look at the figure and then one by one they stand, like a wave that travels down to the stage, and they begin applauding but there is no sound.

The figure slowly descends the aisle walkway that leads toward the stage, toward Rebecca.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca watches, motionless, as the figure makes its way toward her.

The figure is dressed in a white dress that flows when she walks.

The heads of the Audience turn to watch her as she walks past.

INT. THEATRE - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Audrey is standing in the Balcony, also clapping with no sound, also watching the figure walk down toward the Stage.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

REBECCA

We all stood there, unable to move.
Processing what happened. It was
the blood more than anything. And
the look on her face.

And the screaming.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The figure is almost at the Stage now, their face shadowed and lowered.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The figure gets closer to Rebecca and she sees something glinting in the figure's hand.

When the figure gets to the bottom of the Stage she levitates swiftly and ends with her bare feet on the edge of the Stage, balancing there, waiting.

The audience behind the figure stop applauding.

Rebecca cannot see the figure's face as the light is too bright behind her.

REBECCA

Who is that?

She looks down and sees that the figure has a knife in her hand.

Rebecca looks frightened.

REBECCA

What do you want?

The figure smiles and lifts her head up...

We see that it is Bethany.

Rebecca's eyes go wide.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca swallows.

REBECCA

Just an... Unlucky accident.

INTERVIEWER

Lucky for you, though...

Rebecca looks up at the Interviewer, a look of shame on her face.

REBECCA

Something like that.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Bethany's grin widens.

BETH
Lucky, lucky me.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

INTERVIEWER
It was an accident that changed
your life. Bethany put everything
into this Play and you took
everything out of it.

REBECCA
It's not like that.

INTERVIEWER
She put in the work and you reap
the benefits.

Rebecca is speechless.

REBECCA
No.

INTERVIEWER
I'd like to introduce you to our
other guest tonight... Ms Bethany
Rose.

There is applause from the audience in the Studio.

Rebecca has a frightened, bewildered look on her face. She looks around to the Studio entrance and sees Bethany enter. She is unkempt, her hair a mess, her arm in a sling.

Bethany walks up the steps to the stage, determination on her face. She puts her hand into the sling on her other arm and retrieves a pistol from there.

She points it at Rebecca and pulls the trigger before anyone can say anything. Rebecca barely registers the gun as everything happens so fast.

Rebecca's face explodes in a mist of red. Her head is flicked back and then comes to rest sideways.

People in the audience scream while others cheer.

The cameraman loses control of the Studio camera; the image spins wildly and comes to rest on a wide shot of the Studio.

The Interviewer falls out of her seat and stumbles away,

keeping low to the ground.

Bethany stands in front of the limp corpse of Rebecca. She lowers the gun to her side.

INT. SMALL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

We see the Studio interview as a continuous shot as the camera pulls back and we see we are watching a TV. On the screen we see Beth standing in front of Rebecca.

The camera pulls away and pans around and we see Audrey sitting in front of the TV.

She emits a giggle.

CUT TO BLACK