

## WHEN THE BELL TOLLS

EXT. COBBLED STREET. NIGHT.

SILENCE.

WIND.

A **CREATURE** FLASHES PAST.

INT. CHURCH. NIGHT.

BELLS RINGING INTERMINABLY LOUD.

A **PRIEST** – PALE, HOLLOW-EYED, CLAD IN BLACK – GRASPS A CRUCIFIX AND STARES DEEP IN THOUGHT.

**PRIEST:**

He has awoken.

THE **PRIEST** COLLECTS A BIBLE, A VIAL OF LIQUID, A CHAIN; MAKES THE SIGN OF THE CROSS AT A SHRINE, AND THEN HEADS OUTSIDE (HIS CAPE FLARES TO COVER THE CAMERA.)

EXT. COBBLED STREET. NIGHT.

THE BELLS RING (BLOCKING ALL OTHER SOUND.)

THE CAMERA IS STATIONARY AS A **COUPLE** WALK THE PROMENADE. THEY SCREAM AS THEY TURN A CORNER, THEN RUN AWAY. GARBAGE FLIES INTO SHOT (FROM THE CORNER.)

A **DRUNKARD**, BRANDISHING A BEER BOTTLE, TUMBLES INTO FRAME. HE BATTLES THE FLYING GARBAGE. THE **CREATURE** FLASHES PAST AND SNATCHES HIS BOTTLE. THE **DRUNKARD** STANDS, TEETERING, AND THEN COLLAPSES.

EXT. COURTYARD. NIGHT.

THE BELLS RING.

THE **PRIEST** IS PRAYING, WHISPERING.

THE BELLS FALL SILENT.

WE HEAR THE WHISPERING. THEN –

A SCREAM!

THE **PRIEST** OPENS HIS HOLLOW EYES AND SPRINTS.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

THE **PRIEST** IS RUNNING. THE **CREATURE** FLASHES PAST HIM. THE **PRIEST** TURNS AND PURSUES.

EXT. ALLEY. NIGHT.

A **YOUNG WOMAN** IS PLAYING WITH A HOOP AND STICK. THE HOOP TRUNDLES DOWN AN ALLEY OF SCATTERED BINS. THE **YOUNG WOMAN** FOLLOWS THE HOOP AND RETRIEVES IT BY A PILE OF RUBBISH.

BEHIND THE RUBBISH IS THE **CREATURE** – A HALF-NAKED MAN WITH A STONEY COMPLEXION AND GARGOYLE FEATURES.

THE **YOUNG WOMAN** AND THE **CREATURE** LOCK EYES. THE **CREATURE** SOFTENS.

FOOTSTEPS.

THE **CREATURE** SHRIEKS AND SCARPERS OVER A WALL AS THE **PRIEST** APPEARS, CLASPING HIS EARS.

THE **YOUNG WOMAN** JUMPS. HER HEARING IS MUFFLED.

**YOUNG WOMAN:**

Did you see that?

THE **PRIEST** IGNORES HER. HE LOOKS FOR A WAY OVER THE WALL. IMPOSSIBLE. HE TALKS TO THE **YOUNG WOMAN**, BUT SHE CANNOT UNDERSTAND HIM. THE **PRIEST** GROWS ERRATIC, PACING. HE PRODUCES THE VIAL AND DRINKS THE LIQUID. HE TAKES THE **YOUNG WOMAN'S** HAND. THEY WALK OFF. THE HOOP IS LEFT BEHIND.

EXT. RIVER. NIGHT.

MUSIC FROM A RADIO.

A **FISHERMAN** IS CAMPED BY THE RIVER'S EDGE, HIS LINE CAST INTO THE WATER, AND HE WHISTLES TO THE MUSIC FROM THE RADIO.

THERE IS A TUG ON HIS LINE. HE STOPS WHISTLING AND BEGINS TO REEL IT IN. THE TUGGING GROWS VIOLENT. THE **FISHERMAN** BATTLES THE LINE. THE FISHING ROD IS SNATCHED, SWALLOWED BY THE RIVER.

THE WATER RUMBLES. ERUPTING FROM THE FROTH, THE **CREATURE**. IT SHRIEKS – A DEAFENING, PIERCING SOUND, LIKE DEATH ITSELF.

THE **FISHERMAN** STARES IN HORROR, CLASPS HIS HANDS TO HIS EARS, THEN RUNS.

THE **CREATURE** LEAPS ASHORE AND GORGES ON THE FISHING TACKLE.

INT. POLICE STATION. NIGHT.

TWO **POLICE OFFICERS** ARE LAUGHING.

**FISHERMAN:**  
You must believe me.

THE **POLICE OFFICERS** POINT TO A PLAQUE: *NO UNLIKELY STORIES*. THE **OFFICERS** CONTINUE LAUGHING.

THE **FISHERMAN** GRUMBLES AND EXITS.

EXT. CROSSROADS. NIGHT.

A **NEWS VENDOR** STANDS IN THE STREET, ACCOSTING PEOPLE WITH A NEWSPAPER.

**NEWS VENDOR:**  
The Terror of the Shrieker Continues! Another person missing!  
The mayor tells people to stay calm! "It's a myth." he says!

THE **FISHERMAN** PURCHASES A NEWSPAPER. HE READS THE ARTICLE ON *THE TERROR OF THE SHRIEKER*. HE SEES AN ADVERTISEMENT: *HAVE YOU SEE ANY STRANGE HAPPENINGS? GET IN TOUCH. THE CHURCH*.

THE **FISHERMAN** FOLDS THE PAPER.

INT. CHURCH. NIGHT.

THE **FISHERMAN** IS SAT ON A PEW, THE NEWSPAPER TUCKED UNDER HIS ARM. THE **PRIEST** APPROACHES FROM BEHIND.

**PRIEST:**  
What troubles you, brother?

THE **FISHERMAN** POINTS AT THE NEWSPAPER AD. THE **PRIEST** BECKONS HIM TO A PRIVATE ROOM.

INT. PRIVATE STUDY.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE GARGOYLE PLASTERS THE WALLS.

**PRIEST:**

This is the beast you saw.

THE **FISHERMAN** NODS.

**PRIEST:**

It is an ancient creature that terrorises our city. I can stop it – I have done so before – but first it must be captured. I have tried everything to lure it into my grasp. Alas, it alludes me.

**FISHERMAN:**

Tackle. It likes the fishing tackle.

**PRIEST:**

It does?

**(TO HIMSELF)**

The waterspout – water creature. Of course.

THE **FISHERMAN** IS PUZZLED.

**PRIEST:**

I have a plan. Stay.

THE **PRIEST** EXITS.

THE **FISHERMAN** LOOKS AT THE MATERIALS PLASTERED TO THE WALLS: MISSING PEOPLE, EXORCISMS, TRAPPED SPIRITS, SUSTAINING SPIRITS, PHOTOGRAPHS OF GARGOYLES...

THE **PRIEST** RETURNS WITH THE **YOUNG WOMAN**.

**FISHERMAN:**

She's been reported missing.

**PRIEST:**

The Lord guided her to me.

**FISHERMAN:**

**(TO YOUNG WOMAN)**

Hello. Are you okay?

**PRIEST:**

She is fine. We can use her to get close.

**FISHERMAN:**

She's a girl.

**PRIEST:**

The Lord will protect her.

THEY WALK BACK TO THE NAVE.

INT. CHURCH.

**FISHERMAN:**

She's going home. There will be another way.

**PRIEST:**

Very well.

THE **FISHERMAN** TAKES THE **YOUNG WOMAN** BY THE HAND AND GOES TO EXIT.

THE **PRIEST** GRABS A CANDLESTICK AND HITS THE **FISHERMAN** OVER THE HEAD FROM BEHIND.

THE **YOUNG WOMAN** RUNS TO THE DOOR. IT IS LOCKED.

THE **PRIEST** DRAGS THE **FISHERMAN'S** BODY INTO THE STUDY, SHUTS THE DOOR, THEN APPROACHES THE **YOUNG WOMAN...**

INT. CHURCH ALTAR.

THE **YOUNG WOMAN** IS SAT AT THE ALTAR. THE **PRIEST** PERFORMS A RITUAL ON HER. THE **YOUNG WOMAN'S** SPIRIT RELEASES LIKE STEAM AND IS CAUGHT BY THE **PRIEST** IN A VIAL. THE **YOUNG WOMAN** SITS, EMOTIONLESS. THE **PRIEST** POCKETS THE VIAL.

A SHRIEK!

THE **PRIEST** LOOKS UP. HE TAKES THE **YOUNG WOMAN** BY THE HAND; THEY EXIT.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

WE FOLLOW A TRAIL OF FISHING TACKLE...

A BUCKET OF TACKLE. THE **YOUNG WOMAN**.

THE **YOUNG WOMAN** WEARS A CROSS, AND THERE IS A GLOWING HUE TO HER.

THE **CREATURE** APPEARS. IT SHRIEKS. THE **YOUNG WOMAN** IS UNAFFECTED.

INTRIGUED, THE **CREATURE** APPROACHES.

CLOSER... CLOSER...

IT SCANS THE **YOUNG WOMAN**.

TOO CLOSE –

ZAP!

THE **CREATURE** IS STUNG BY THE CROSS – THE **YOUNG WOMAN'S** HUE HARsher.

THE **CREATURE** IS WOUNDED.

THE **PRIEST** APPEARS, CROSS IN HAND, CHANTING:

**PRIEST:**

The Power of Christ compels you!

The Power of Christ compels you!

The Power of Christ compels you!

THE **CREATURE** IS BADLY HURT, COWERING, TRYING TO SHRIEK...

THE **PRIEST** PERSISTS.

THE **YOUNG WOMAN** WATCHES.

THE **CREATURE** MANAGES A SCREAM –

THE **PRIEST** CLUTCHES HIS HEAD – A RED, MALEVOLENT VERSION OF HIMSELF SPILLS OUT, AS IF HE IS SPLITTING, AND THEN REVERBERATES BACK IN.

THE **PRIEST'S** GRIP ON THE **YOUNG WOMAN** WEAKENS; SHE WATCHES THE **CREATURE**. IT IS LOSING.

THE **PRIEST** PRODUCES THE VIAL. HE GOES TO DRINK.

THE **YOUNG WOMAN** SCREAMS – THE LOUDEST SCREAM YOU EVER HEARD –

THE **PRIEST** DROPS THE VIAL. IT SMASHES.

FROM THE SPILT VIAL, THE **YOUNG WOMAN'S** SPIRIT RETURNS.

THE **PRIEST** CONTINUES TO FIGHT THE **CREATURE** – EXORCISM. THE **CREATURE** IS WEAK.

**PRIEST:**

The Power of Christ compels you!  
The Power of Christ compels you!  
The Power of Christ compels you!

THE **YOUNG WOMAN** LOOKS FROM THE **CREATURE** TO THE **PRIEST**.

**POLICE OFFICERS** ARRIVE, HAVING HEARD THE COMMOTION.

THE **YOUNG WOMAN** IS PULLED TO SAFETY BY THE OFFICERS. SHE FIGHTS BACK. SHE MANAGES TO WRIGGLE THROUGH AND RUN AT THE **PRIEST**, WHO KNOCKS HER BACK.

THE **CREATURE** SEES THIS AND CONJURES ALL ITS ENERGY – SHRIEKS!

AGAIN, THE **PRIEST** “SPLITS” – THE RED, MALEVOLENT VERSION SPILLS OUT ENTIRELY AND EVAPORATES. THE **PRIEST** FALLS TO THE FLOOR.

THE **OFFICERS** ARE PUZZLED. THEY GO TO ARREST THE **CREATURE** BUT THE **YOUNG WOMAN** GETS IN THE WAY. SHE GESTURES TO THE **PRIEST**. THE **OFFICERS** IGNORE HER AND SEIZE THE **CREATURE**. THE **YOUNG WOMAN** POINTS TO THE CHURCH IN THE DISTANCE. THE **OFFICERS** STILL DON'T PAY ATTENTION. THE **YOUNG WOMAN** POINTS ADAMENTLY AND TUGS THE **OFFICERS** – SHE WANTS THEM TO GO TO THE CHURCH. SHE RUNS OFF. ONE OF THE **OFFICERS** FOLLOWS.

THE **CREATURE** IS CUFFED. THE **PRIEST** IS NURSED.

INT. CHURCH.

THE **OFFICER** FINDS THE **YOUNG WOMAN** INSIDE.

HE NOTICES THE RESIDUE OF THE RITUAL.

THE **YOUNG WOMAN** SHOWS HIM TO THE STUDY.

INT. PRIVATE STUDY.

THE **OFFICER** TAKES IN THE DOCUMENTS ETC.

THE **YOUNG WOMAN** POINTS TO A SIDE DOOR. THE **OFFICER** INVESTIGATES.

INT. CRYPT.

THE DOOR LEADS DOWN INTO THE CRYPT.

THE **OFFICER**, YOUNG WOMAN BEHIND, DESCENDS A DARK STAIRCASE. THE STENCH OF MOLD, SWEAT, AND FAECES. AT THE BOTTOM, A GATE. IT IS LOCKED AND BOLTED.

BEYOND, THE RAGGED, MALNOURISHED PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN ABDUCTED FROM THE CITY – INCLUDING THE **FISHERMAN**. THEY ARE GLASSY-EYED, NARCOTISED – THEIR SPIRITS HAVE BEEN DRAINED.

THE **OFFICER** PUTS HIS HANDS TO THE GATE; THE PEOPLE SWARM AND CLUTCH HIS HAND.

EXT. CHURCH COURTYARD.

A POLICE CORDON.

THE **PRIEST** IS ARRESTED. HE IS HARDLY CONSCIOUS NOW THAT THE DEMON HAS BEEN EXTRACTED FROM HIM.

THE **YOUNG WOMAN** STANDS WITH HER **PARENTS**. SHE RUNS TO THE **CREATURE** AND GIVES IT A HUG.

THE **CREATURE** RESTS BY THE CHURCH, RETURNING TO STONE – TO GUARD ITS GROUNDS.

THE END.