

Scourge

by

J.E. Clarke

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Janetgoodman@yahoo.com  
917-328-5253

FADE IN ON:

**INT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT**

Filth clogged alleyways. Shifting shadows punctuate the menacing vibe.

This is no place old ladies should be.

And yet: sensible heels CLICK-CLACK across cobblestone. ELEANOR (60s) clutches an expensive purse to her chest. Looks equally frightened and repulsed.

MIMI (70s, short and stout) bustles along and leads. She uses a cell phone to light the way. Looking for... something. She's on the hunt?

ELEANOR

Are you SURE we're heading the right direction?

MIMI

Eleanor, don't be such a worry wort.

ELEANOR

Getting things right isn't a "worry". Just plain good sense and smart.!

MIMI

I've traveled this route over a year. I know where I'm going. You, on the other hand -

An alley opening yawns to the left. Mimi veers towards it. Alarmed, Eleanor grabs her arm.

ELEANOR

Don't!

MIMI

Eleanor, relax. If this was the pit of sin you're conjuring in that active imagination of yours, I wouldn't have lasted half this long on my own. Would I?

ELEANOR

Consider that God's Blessing. But it's not my imagination. Look around!

She points towards shifting shadows. A closer squint reveals a homeless MAN, curled up on cardboard. Whether asleep or stoned, he thrashes.

Then rolls towards the wall, the back of his pants more stained than the front. Eleanor wrinkles her nose in disgust.

ELEANOR

You expect me to "relax" with things like... well, that nearby?

MIMI

Not "that." HIM. Kevin. At least based on what I see from here.

ELEANOR

I see many things. I'd rather not.

Mimi shrugs. Eleanor's panic grows.

ELEANOR

Including the danger we've thrust ourselves in.

MIMI

Danger? Kevin's a love bug. At least after he sobers up.

Mimi digs into a LARGE HANDBAG. Eleanor's face lights up.

ELEANOR

Let's give the package to "Kevin". Then we'll be on our way!

MIMI

Package? I brought twenty - not just one. And Kevin's asleep. Let's just pass by, let him be.

Mimi beelines left. Eleanor gulps, races after her.

ELEANOR

I have parish seniority, Mimi Von Patterson. When the deacon learns how you commandeered -

A RAT streaks across the alley, almost trips Eleanor! The tall woman shrieks, stumbles back.

And bumps HARD into... someone. Kevin?!? A terrified Eleanor swings around.

A broken nosed, tattooed face grins back at her: RANDY (20s). He flashes a gap-toothed grin at her dismay.

RANDY

Boo - I guess?

Eleanor half-faints.

Mimi darts forward, blocks her fall. Randy scoops up Eleanor - effortless. Transfers her to a trash can, sits her down.

Eleanor's eyes bug at the TRACK MARKS on Randy's beefy arm. She opens her mouth to scream:

ELEANOR

Hellllll -

MIMI

Help? That's already served up. Randy saved you from that big ole rat!

Mimi hands a sandwich to Randy as reward.

He holds out hands in a praying/thank you gesture - takes the food with gentle grace.

MIMI

Your dinner, Dear Sir?

RANDY

M'lady - don't mind if I do!

He peeks under the bread - nods at what he sees beneath.

RANDY

Roast beef AND cheese? Mimi, you've outdone yourself tonight!

MIMI

Well, I was plumb out of peanut butter. So I figured, time to splurge. Everyone deserves a taste of luxury, now and then.

ELEANOR

You - he -

MIMI

Eleanor, this is Randy. Our resident guardian angel, who just prevented you from planting your tucchus in mud. And Lord knows what else. Randy, this is Eleanor. She leads the choir at our church. I've been crowing so loudly about our little "meals on heels program" lately, Eleanor insisted on tagging along to find out what it's all about!

ELEANOR  
You *know* each other?

Randy whips out a POCKET KNIFE. Eleanor flinches, though it's in no way aimed at her.

Randy cuts the sandwich in classic quarters, chomps down like he hasn't eaten for days.

RANDY  
You kiddin'? Mimi and I are tight!  
She's like the grandma I never had.  
Or at least knew about!

Mimi smiles at Randy's words. Despite his rough exterior, she's fond of this youth.

MIMI  
And Randy's like the grandson I would  
have whooped into shape.

The two share a grin.

MIMI  
But still loved unconditionally.

RANDY  
Ms. Eleanor, you got grandkids?

Randy helps Eleanor up. She shudders at his touch.

ELEANOR  
That's none of your business!

MIMI  
Sssssssh! Wouldn't Jesus be polite?

Suddenly prim and proper, Eleanor shifts her tone.

ELEANOR  
Oh. Well. I'm afraid children just  
weren't part of God's plan for me.

Randy wolfs down the remainder of the sandwich - shrugs.

RANDY  
Mysterious ways n' stuff. Different  
strokes. All's good.  
(to Mimi)  
You ready?

ELEANOR  
Ready for what?

Mimi grabs BOTH Randy and Eleanor's hands.

MIMI

Randy is my nightly tour guide. He keeps an eye on where everyone's moved in the encampment. AND he pinch hits as a bodyguard.

ELEANOR

A "bodyguard"? Or a thug?

Mimi reaches up, pinches Randy's cheek.

MIMI

My Randy's the best "deterrent" a gal could have. Who would trouble this cute, sweet face!

**INT. ANOTHER ALLEYWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

Darkness and squalor continues. More HOMELESS here. Randy weaves past tents. Sleeping bags. Piles of junk. Mimi hands out SANDWICHES to HOMELESS RESIDENTS.

MIMI

Jasmine - want some?

JASMINE (30s) huddles with a GREASY MAN. Dressed in revealing clothes, heavy makeup, it's clear what they're negotiating.

Jasmine grabs the food - stuffs it in her purse.

JASMINE

For later. Thanks!

In Jasmine's purse, Mimi blushes at the sight of NEON PINK HANDCUFFS. Eleanor sees them too, suppresses a scandalized squeal. Mimi beelines for another resident:

MIMI

Jerry: Turkey or Ham? Your choice!

JERRY (40s) fumbles with a NEEDLE. Mimi gently pulls that away. She passes it discretely to Randy.. hands Jerry the sandwich instead.

MIMI

Honey, no judgments. But what matters is you eat, above all else!

Randy squeezes Jerry's shoulder fondly.

RANDY

Spot on, man. We all need fuel.

Mimi passes onto the next HOMELESS RESIDENT. Randy and Eleanor exchange looks.

RANDY

You're not on lunch lady detail, too?

ELEANOR

Mimi knows what she's doing. I...  
don't. At least not here.

RANDY

Then why come at all, Ms. Eleanor?

ELEANOR

(sniffs)  
Supervision.

Mimi rejoins the group, a hint of worry on her face.

MIMI

Randy, where's Krystal? Her corner's  
empty. Is she OK?

RANDY

Krystal? Good news - she found a  
better place.

MIMI

(brightens)  
An apartment?!? Praying worked!

RANDY

Not... exactly. She's sharing a tent  
with Corky these days.

MIMI

Corky?

RANDY

You know, the guy who used to own a  
bookstore? He n' Krystal set up camp  
on McGwire Ave.

MIMI

McGwire? Just around the corner.  
Good!

Mimi turns towards a different alley. Randy holds her back.

RANDY

Dunno if now's the time.

(whispers)

She and Corky might be busy. Get the drift?

Mimi understands. But... ultimately refuses to be denied.

MIMI

You go first, make sure the coast's clear. There's an art opportunity Krystal should hear. A shopkeeper I know needs a mural painted. That'd be exposure. Maybe pay. And - well - I have this, too.

Mimi pulls a CUPCAKE from her bag.

MIMI

Please don't be jealous. I'll bake one for you, too. But Krystal's had some lean days recently. She could stand to gain a few pounds!

RANDY

(snorts)

Not according to Corky.

But still, he leads Mimi and Eleanor towards...

**EXT. MCGWIRE AVENUE - CONTINUOUS**

TENTS every few feet. A community built on fragile despair.

Mimi follows Randy. Eleanor trails after, checks her watch. The tall woman plucks MACE from her purse, shakes the contents. Gulping back panic, she looks around.

ELEANOR

This is atrocious! Why doesn't the Mayor clean this up?!?

MIMI

If he did, where would they go?

ELEANOR

Shelters, of course.

MIMI

There's no room. Just as there wasn't at the Inn.

ELEANOR

Blasphemy. One can't compare such  
n'er do wells to the Savior.

MIMI

I'm reminded of Isaiah 58:7 "Is it  
not to share your food with the  
hungry and provide the poor wanderer  
with shelter - when you see them  
naked, to clothe them, and not to  
turn away from your own flesh and  
blood?"

Mimi hands out more sandwiches, follows Randy's path.

ELEANOR

God helps those who help themselves!  
If these people weren't engaged in -

She points to a MAN shooting up nearby.

ELEANOR

Sinful deeds, would they be here at  
all?

MIMI

Ephesians 4:32: "Be kind and  
compassionate to another, forgiving  
each other - just as Christ God  
forgave you."

Ahead, a tent looms. Randy angles towards it. Mimi, too.

ELEANOR

WHO is this "Krystal" person?

MIMI

A young woman I've talked to in the  
last few weeks. She... has her  
demons. But her gifts, too. I've  
tried to get her to join our parish.  
But she's Wiccan, and won't convert.

ELEANOR

A witch?!?

MIMI

(chuckles)

The crunchy, granola kind. And a  
painter of flowers, too. Wait until  
you see - so spiritual! If I can just  
get Krystal to focus on her talents,  
vs... other things...

(MORE)

MIMI (cont'd)  
 there may well be a blessed future  
 for her beyond all this!

In the tent: a thin, female silhouette. At first, it stands motionless. Then it starts to seize. Jerk.

RANDY  
 Krystal!

He runs towards the tent. Mimi, too.

ELEANOR  
 Don't leave me here!

Though reluctant, Eleanor tags behind.

**INT. KRYSTAL'S TENT**

A pocket of privacy from an unforgiving street.

Inside: a cluttered mess. A FOLD UP COT in one corner. BOOKS, CANDLES and loose leaf DRAWINGS OF FLOWERS litter the ground.

Smoke wafts from incense. The faint outline of a PENTAGRAM drawn in dirt.

Above it, a zoned out KRYSTAL (20s) hovers. Pale, pretty - wild eyed. Wrapped in a tattered hippie dress.

Randy stops at the entrance. He, Mimi and Eleanor linger at the tent's "door".

RANDY  
 Hey, Krystal. You look... tense.

KRYSTAL  
 "Krystal"? Do you invoke that name?

Krystal spasms. Then VOMITS - a massive torrent. The bile destroys some drawings. The incense flares up even more.

Randy exchanges a look with Mimi. Uh-oh.

RANDY  
 Krys - did Corky give you something?  
 No big. But I'm thinkin'... bad  
 batch? Come here. I ain't gonna hurt  
 you. I just gotta check your eyes.

Mimi steps towards Krystal, digs in her purse.

MIMI

Honey, remember how you said you'd give just about *anything* for chocolate? Well, surprise!

Krystal rears towards Mimi like a snake. Eleanor stumbles back in shock.

KRYSTAL

I smell piousness.

With insectoid speed, Krystal launches OVER the cot towards Mimi. Drool sprays.

KRYSTAL

Your blood will taste so very sweet!

The rest happens in horrific, bloody slow motion. Krystal grabs Mimi's face. Artfully painted nails dig into the old woman's cheeks, draw blood.

ELEANOR

Help, police!

MIMI

Krystal, wait. You're not yourself-

Krystal YAWNS - as wide as possible. Teeth bared to bite.

Randy shoves himself between Krystal and Mimi. Krystal accidentally impales herself on Randy's blade. It sinks into her stomach.

She flails, foams. Squeals. Trying to reach Mimi, Krystal "climbs" Randy-

Inadvertently dragging the knife down her abdomen. Guttled, Krystal groans. DIES.

Eleanor collapses in the tent doorway. Dials 911... sobs.

Mimi tries to run to Krystal. Randy holds her back.

RANDY

Ms. Mimi, no. You don't wanna see.

Mimi stares at the beautiful flower drawings on the floor - some now stained with Krystal's blood.

#### **INT. CHURCH - MORNING**

Choir music lilts in the background. Judging from the lack of other parishioners, the music's just a practice run.

Mimi and Eleanor huddle side by side on a pew.

ELEANOR

Do your research! Drugs make people do crazy things. I read an article in *Women's Daily* about bath salts ages ago.

MIMI

Krystal wasn't *that* sort of druggie!

ELEANOR

"That sort"? They come in different flavors, then?

MIMI

Well, I mean, she offered me "Weed Gummies" once. But that was to "expand my mind". Not much more dangerous than the Deacon's communion wine.

ELEANOR

She tried to eat your face, Mimi!

MIMI

No, she didn't.

ELEANOR

Yes, she did. Don't pretend we didn't all see that girl. You may have a soft spot for those reprobates, but lying for them's a sin.

MIMI

Maybe her weed got laced with... something else?

Mimi sniffles, pulls a BOOK from her jumbo bag. Krystal's drawings sprout between pages - like the flowers they depict.

**INT. KRYSTAL'S TENT - FLASHBACK**

Distant sirens WAIL. Curious HOMELESS crowd at the tent's entrance. Many murmur, peek in.

Randy tries to resuscitate Krystal.

RANDY

Krys - I'm sorry. Please come back!

His efforts are useless. Intestines roll from Krystal's body - so much blood congealing on the floor.

A numb Mimi scoops up a random book. Stuffs Krystal's drawings into the pages, too.

**INT. CHURCH - PRESENT**

Mimi pulls out a drawing, shows it to Eleanor.

MIMI

If lying's a sin, tell the truth.  
Would someone who can imagine THIS  
spoil their body with bath salts?

ELEANOR

You're the one associating with them.  
You tell me!

MIMI

Fine. Krystal absolutely would NOT.

Mimi flips through pages. Far away, Eleanor's voice intrudes.

ELEANOR

Why not leave that for the police?

MIMI

What would they do with it? Krystal  
had no family. But she was a child of  
God, as are we all. Her memory *should*  
be preserved. Not left on some  
neglected "evidence" shelf to gather  
dust.

A quick read of the tome reveals: It's a SPELL BOOK. On one  
dog-eared page -

"How To Summon Glistphel, Demon of Opportunity".

MIMI

Oh sweet, sweet Krystal. If life had  
granted you opportunity... magical or  
not, you'd still be here.

Further down on the page: a grotesque INK DRAWING of the  
demon. Mimi touches it with her finger, frowns.

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT**

The same alleyways. A new night begins.

Randy leads Mimi and Eleanor. Just as dark as before, but  
*less* congested. Some of the residents and belongings - MIA.

Mimi hands out sandwiches. Eleanor looks around.

ELEANOR

Did the Mayor clean up after all?

Mimi shoots Eleanor a dirty look. Shhhh.

RANDY

Uhhhh - they'll be back soon. A few folks went underground. Krystal and - some other stuff - got the people sorta spooked.

ELEANOR

What other "stuff"?

RANDY

(beat)

Never mind.

Nabbing a sandwich from Mimi, Randy heads for a sleeping Kevin - tucks the food into the man's jacket.

At Eleanor's sharp look, Randy shrugs.

RANDY

Why not? Kev's sure to have munchies when he wakes up. And if he rolls over on it, it'll still taste fine going down.

Randy finds - and feeds - Jasmine next.

RANDY

(to Jasmine)

You seen Jerry? He's gonna want some, too.

Jasmine points towards an empty corner. Jerry's usual spot - but he's gone. Randy yells across the alley.

RANDY

Miss Mimi, that Baloney special was the last I got. I need inventory restock, now!

Mimi digs through her bag of goods. Then sidles over to Randy, a sudden sly grin on her face.

MIMI

I propose a trade.

Randy blinks. That came out of the blue.

RANDY

For what?

Mimi makes extra sure Eleanor's not looking.

MIMI

Information. I'm looking for someone, too.

RANDY

That someone got a name, Miss Mimi?

MIMI

Corky. That man who was with Krystal. Rest her precious soul.

Randy gulps, looks oddly... scared.

RANDY

No can do. Corky's -

MIMI

Don't get me wrong. I respect his privacy. I wouldn't be at all surprised if he's in mourning and needs time alone. But you said he collected books?

She fishes the Spell Book from her bag, shows it to Randy.

MIMI

I'm guessing Corky gave Krystal this. It seems antique. I have questions as to where it came from and what it is.

Randy pulls Mimi aside, whispers in her ear.

RANDY

About that "other stuff" I mentioned? Last night, someone killed Corky too.

MIMI

Oh my stars!!!

RANDY

Shhhh!

He glances towards Eleanor. Bored, she drifts along the alleyway, explores walls. Steers clear of actual residents.

RANDY

Someone ripped him to bits, a day after Krystal.

(MORE)

RANDY (cont'd)  
In the same damned tent. With their  
hands and teeth, so I hear.

MIMI  
Who did?

RANDY  
They haven't caught the guy yet. Zero  
clue.  
(dark chuckle)  
They still haven't taken the tent  
down. Dunno what they're waiting for.  
Who's gonna be dumb enough to sleep  
in it now?

Randy shivers. Mimi melts.

MIMI  
If you ever need to talk, my church -  
  
Feet away, Eleanor inches towards a DUMPSTER. RATS scurry  
under it. An indignant Eleanor takes pictures with her cell.

ELEANOR  
Rats and vermin everywhere! Let City  
Hall explain this!

In the viewfinder: a SHOE protrudes from the dumpster at an  
odd angle. What's holding it up?

Eleanor squints. Zooms in.

Panning her camera down into the dumpster, she SCREAMS.

Randy and Mimi run over, look where she points:

The stiff, gray face of Jerry stares up at them from the bin.  
One of his shoes is missing. Judging from the bloody foam on  
his lips - and the needle in his arm - he's OD'ed.

RANDY  
Jerry, no. You promised!!

**MOMENTS LATER**

Eleanor won't stop screaming.

Randy fishes Jerry from the dumpster. Holding the body of his  
friend in his arms, he weeps.

Mimi makes the sign of the cross, whispers a prayer.

**INT. CHURCH - MORNING**

More discrete communion at the pew.

Eleanor and Mimi huddle together. ORGAN MUSIC fills the air. A brief chord error makes Eleanor wince.

ELEANOR

Sophie still stumbles on that chord?  
When I'm back in charge of the choir,  
I'll -

Mim shoots Eleanor the stink eye.

MIMI

You don't *have* to go on more food  
runs. I can fly solo absolutely fine.  
I did plenty before you signed on.

ELEANOR

With those... those..

MIMI

They're called "people", Darling.  
Write it down.

ELEANOR

Dropping like flies from God knows  
what? If something happens to you,  
I'd be responsible. It's my duty. I  
can't let you go out alone!

MIMI

I'll have Randy. Problem solved.

ELEANOR

That so called bodyguard couldn't  
even save his "friend" Jerry. And  
don't think you can pull the wool  
over my eyes. I saw those scars on  
Randy's arms. He's a junky, too. Why  
you trust those bums is beyond me!

Mimi crosses her arms, grows annoyed.

MIMI

Randy is a recovered addict. Past  
behavior doesn't define us as  
sinners. Forgiveness and present  
actions - do.

ELEANOR

You want "present behavior"? Here's  
some action you should see!

Eleanor whips out her cell, Googles: "Overdose Epidemic Downtown."

A picture of the alleyway glows onscreen. Beneath it, a headline:

"Two more found dead on McGwire Avenue. Is a new deadly designer drug to blame?"

Below that, a picture of Jerry and...

MIMI

(gulps)

Kevin, too?!?

ELEANOR

These people are a scourge on humanity. They're doing this to themselves. Don't pity them. They can't be saved!

MIMI

That's very unChristian, Eleanor.

Mimi clutches her big bag to her chest - slides away from Eleanor on the pew.

ELEANOR

UnChristian? You're judging me. I'm just preaching the God's honest truth!

Mimi pulls the Spell Book from her bag. Opening it to the dog-eared page, she flinches at the drawing of demon "Glistphel."

MIMI

What a horrendous thing to use one's artistic talents for. Better to draw moments of nature, like this!

She pulls out one of Krystal's flower drawings. Blood stains a corner. But the elegant art work still shines through.

Mimi turns to Eleanor, defiant.

MIMI

"Scourges" don't create such beauty. It's those who refuse to see the best in humanity who can't be redeemed!

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT**

Even less populated than last time.

Randy wanders through the encampment, drinks from a WHISKEY BOTTLE. He passes Kevin's regular "spot" - now empty. Randy blinks back tears, turns away.

And walks blindly. Until -

FLICKERING LIGHT catches his eye. It's a makeshift memorial for Jerry. Just three candles. Accompanied by...

Jerry's MISSING SHOE. In it, something shines. Randy picks the shoe up, shakes it upside down.

A FILLED SYRINGE clatters out. Randy gasps. Palms it. Warily contemplates the faded tracks on his arm.

Has he reached the breaking point?

A GROAN jolts Randy from that spell. He swings around.

It's Jasmine, propped against a wall. Delirious, she makes odd noises. A not-quite-human rattle in her throat.

RANDY

Jasmine!

Randy runs over, squats down. He gently cradles Jasmine's face in his hands. The woman's eyes roll up in her head.

RANDY

Jasmine - it's Randy. What did you take? Look at me!

The rattling noises STOP. As does Jasmine's breathing. Her jaw drops - slack. Randy shakes her, terrified.

RANDY

Don't you leave me, too. Goddammit, breathe!

She doesn't. But her eyes pop open, milky white. Foam pours over Jasmine's graying lips. A demonic voice echoes from her open mouth.

DEMONIC VOICE

You smell like one of them. Yet different. Why?

RANDY

Jaz - I dunno what's going on, but we gotta get you to an ER. Now!

DEMONIC VOICE

Jasmine is rotting. I must make the leap now. Are you prepared?

RANDY  
I'm - confused?

DEMONIC VOICE  
And available. Good enough.

Jasmine's corpse lurches forward, kisses Randy *hard* on the mouth. Between them, something seems to - bulge and transfer.

Randy struggles. Despite his muscles, he can't break free.

**LATER**

Eleanor and Mimi walk past Jerry's memorial. The alleyway's even more deserted than before.

Eleanor squeezes her can of mace with a death grip. Mimi juggles bags of sandwiches, looks high and low for -

MIMI  
Randy? Where are you?!?

ELEANOR  
How many more times are you going to call that boy?

MIMI  
He's not a "boy".

ELEANOR  
He is to me! Maybe your "Randy" got smart, and left with the others?

MIMI  
Perhaps. But not without telling me!

Mimi turns onto McGwire Avenue. Eleanor trails behind.

**EXT. MCGWIRE AVENUE**

Krystal's tent is still up. A candle flickers inside, projects shadows.

On the folded cot - SOMETHING writhes.

Mimi runs for it.

ELEANOR  
Mimi, have you lost your mind? When I tell the Deacon -

Still, she follows. It's either that, or leave Mimi behind.

**INT. KRYSTAL'S TENT**

Randy moans on the cot, in the throes of... what?

Mimi runs to his side.

MIMI

Randy, what's wrong?!? You didn't -

Hovering over him, Mimi stares down.

Randy's right wrist is handcuffed to the cot with Jasmine's pink cuff.

Lashing out with his left hand, Randy grabs Mimi's collar, pulls her close.

RANDY

Bring me the keys. Or the syringe!

MIMI

What? Where? Randy - what happened?  
You're not well!

From the tent entrance, Eleanor quavers.

ELEANOR

I should dial 911.

RANDY

No!

Randy's voice sounds - strange. It alternates between human, and the brutish voice that rolled from Jasmine's dead lips.

RANDY

Fetch me the implements, Mortal. Over there, across the tent!

Randy twists Mimi's collar, forcing her to turn around.

Though terrified, she sees what the voice means:

Tiny HANDCUFF KEYS in the dirt. And the filled syringe on a battered drawing table.

MIMI

Oh, Randy! Did you relapse?

RANDY

What HE wants is irrelevant. I shall partake in the offering - whether he wishes it or not!

Randy swings Mimi back around.

RANDY

Bring me either. Your choice. I *will*  
be given heaven - or else distract  
myself from Hell with you as a feast!

Randy bares his teeth, inches from Mimi's face. Horrified, she tries to pull away. Randy's too strong to break free.

Another shove from Mimi, Randy twists. And the cot...

FLIPS!

Mimi and Randy crash to the ground. Still cuffed to the cot, the awkward weight holds Randy down.

The Spell Book spills from Mimi's open purse. Seeing it, Randy's eyes light up.

RANDY

You have the book?

The look on his face: disturbing.

Mimi scoops up the book, skitter crawls quickly out of Randy's reach.

Over to Eleanor. Who's too terrified to help her up. Mimi manages on her own. Brushing off her clothes, she shoots Eleanor a nasty look.

And rips the cell phone from Eleanor's hands. " 9.1" glows on the screen.

ELEANOR

Give that back!

MIMI

Forgive me for stealing. But it's  
best police not be involved.

Randy roars, tries to lunge. The cot tangles with tent furniture. Holds him back.

RANDY

Give me the book, woman!

Mimi flashes the book at Randy, back pedals.

MIMI

You want this? Whatever for?

RANDY

That man who hoarded books like dragon's treasure didn't give it to me, either.

MIMI

You mean Corky? The man who was murdered the other night?

RANDY

Now he's in Hell. Give me the book, and those keys. If not, you will see him soon. If you do, I will show mercy, let you flee!

The threat just makes Mimi dig in her heels.

MIMI

Randy's like the grandson I never had. He would *never* speak that way to me!

ELEANOR

The boy is high as a kite. It's the drugs talking!

MIMI

No, it's not.

Her eyes flit to the filled syringe.

MIMI

But he - it - wants to be.

Mimi opens the Spell Book. Randy rages. Eleanor flutters. Mimi does her best to act nonchalant.

MIMI

Randy's a good boy. He wouldn't have relapsed like this. I'm guessing your name is...

She flips to the page with the Opportunity Demon, reads:

MIMI

Glistphel?

Randy recoils at the name, like he's been hit. Mimi observes. Lets that sink in.

MIMI

Ah, I see. Introductions are in order then. Glistphel, my name is Mimi. My friend here is Eleanor-

ELEANOR

Don't you dare involve me!

Randy/Glistphel lunges again. The cot legs ram the tent's center pole - shake the entire structure. The fabric ceiling droops, threatens to collapse.

Mimi clutches the book, holds her ground.

MIMI

Mr. Glistphel, I'm not one for presumptions. So as a Christian -

RANDY/GLISTPHEL

Your kind burns in Hell too!

MIMI

I'll ask you straightforwardly. Don't be rude. What are you doing in my friend Randy? He's a very good man. He has flaws, but don't we all? And I gravely doubt he asked you in.

Randy/Glistphel foams, struggles to free his cuffed wrist. Skin RIPS. Blood runs. Though it doesn't seem like the demon even feels the damage being done.

RANDY/GLISTPHEL

Your lovely Krystal invited me with her spell. But when I entered her body, I found the book man had given her a substance which made me feel -

His voice bizarrely softens.

RANDY/GLISTPHEL

As if I were in Heaven. So after her body turned to worms on THIS shell's knife -

He roars and lunges again. Mimi jumps back, out of reach.

RANDY/GLISTPHEL

I had to feel that again. Thus I chose my hosts wisely.

Eleanor tugs Mimi's arm.

ELEANOR

Let's go! This boy is babbling.

MIMI

What he's saying may be crazy, but it also seems to make sense.

Careful to keep her distance, Mimi paces with the book.

MIMI

So, Glistphel: Let's see if I've got this right. You killed Corky because -

RANDY/GLISTPHEL

That book must be destroyed. I used the Jerry creature to approach him. He claimed to not know where it was!

MIMI

And Kevin?

RANDY/GLISTPHEL

(spits)

That shell was too weak. After I possessed it, its feeble heart gave out before the end of the first dose!

MIMI

But Randy hasn't used in over a year-

RANDY/GLISTPHEL

This shell is young, primed for use. An ideal host! All I had to do was -

Mimi glances towards the filled syringe, nods.

MIMI

Convince poor Randy to shoot up. But he tricked you, cuffed himself to the cot and threw the keys out of reach.

(soft)

Pardon my French, but you fucking bastard. You were the cause of all those recent OD's. Weren't you?

She flips through the book, winces at the full description of Glistphel: "Possesses victims, consumes human flesh." Mimi skims past, reads the section underneath:

MIMI

Ah - just as I'd hoped. A handy-dandy banishment spell right here.

ELEANOR

Oh come on! You don't believe all this silly nonsense, do you? This pathetic creature is dangerous, but he's no demon -

Randy/Glistphel turns wild eyes to Eleanor.

RANDY/GLISTPHEL

You dare deny me? How did you feel  
when you absconded with \$100,000 from  
the Church's coffers? What will your  
Dear Deacon say when he finds out?

Eleanor gasps. Mimi whirls around - sees her face. There's  
zero doubt: Glistphel tells the truth.

MIMI

Randy wouldn't know that. Would he?

ELEANOR

How dare you! Did YOU put him up to  
this, Mimi? What is this insanity?  
Some sort of Candid Camera Sting?

Eleanor ventures too close to Randy/Glistphel. He whips out  
the pocket knife, slashes.

Opening a flesh wound to Eleanor's shoulder. Fragile Eleanor  
half-faints - falls. Then crawls into a corner, cowers.

ELEANOR

Please, please don't judge me!

MIMI

Yes, it does very much seem that  
"banishment" is the ticket here.

Mimi skims through the Spell Book, intones.

MIMI

Glistphel: Andenatium par Verquistis -  
(beat)  
Wait. Am I reading this properly? If  
you're banished back to Hell,  
whatever host you inhabit... BURNS?

Eleanor wails, clutches her wounded shoulder.

ELEANOR

Don't stop now! What's wrong with  
sacrificing one lousy bum?

MIMI

Randy's not a bum. He's a gentle soul-

ELEANOR

That's how you want it? Fine! It's  
probably for the best anyhow. Let  
that demon jump between addicts, use  
them up. That'll clean up this town,  
even if the Mayor won't.

(MORE)

ELEANOR (cont'd)

All they are is a scourge. May as well let the fires of hell burn it clean!

The evil of that comment gives Mimi pause. She exchanges a wistful with Randy/Glistphel.

MIMI

Randy's told me it's best to kick addictions "cold turkey". What do you really want, Glistphel? To suffer through limbo eternally, seeking another fix through hundreds of imperfect hosts? Or to free yourself now and just... go home?

Randy/Glistphel stops struggling. Thinks it over.

RANDY/GLISTPHEL

Woman, you have a point.

He stands up. Closes his eyes. Spreads his arms.

RANDY/GLISTPHEL

Banish me back to Hell. I bless you for doing that.

MIMI

Not *quite* yet.

Randy/Glistphel's eyes snap open.

RANDY/GLISTPHEL

What?!?

MIMI

Randy deserves to live. I refuse to punish him for YOUR sins.

She points to the NEXT spell on the book's list: Transference. Then over to a cowering Eleanor.

MIMI

If someone must be sacrificed, I know a name.

(tears in eyes,  
reads)

Glistphel expellorum - transectorism  
ELEANOR.

Randy gasps, suddenly free. Eleanor SCREAMS. Flesh BURNS.

FINAL FADE OUT: