

THE BESTORCIST

"Pilot"

Written by

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TEASER

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

A large, airy funeral parlor adorned with floral arrangements and coffins waiting to be filled.

The profile of JOAN, 80s, sits eerily still in a chair. She's unnaturally pale in a simple black dress.

NOTE: only Joan's profile is visible through the following.

A pair of heavy boots THUDS into the room.

HAROLD (O.S.)
Mrs. Van Camp? You requested our
services?

Joan remains motionless.

HAROLD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
A problem with one of the bodies?

Joan's face TWITCHES. She moves, turning to reveal the other side of her head.

A CHUNK OF SKIN DANGLES below a GAPING HOLE in her temple (yup, there's brain poking out). A NEEDLE AND THREAD hang from the skin, evidence of stitching abandoned in a hurry.

The boots take a step closer. Reveal HAROLD TOBIN, 50s, an entirely humorless man in a black trench coat and wide-brimmed hat a la Father Merrin in *The Exorcist*.

SUPER: HAROLD TOBIN, NUMBER OF EXORCISMS COMPLETED - 1,553

HAROLD (CONT'D)
Ah. The body.

LOU (O.S.)
Let me see!

LOUISE "LOU" TOBIN, 25, eagerly pushes past Harold. She's cheerfully energetic in a neon purple hoodie and BRIGHT PINK FANNY PACK. There's something bedazzled on the pack, though we can't yet see what.

She spots Joan and recoils.

LOU (CONT'D)
Oh geez. Oh geez. I'm gonna throw
up.

SUPER: LOU TOBIN, NUMBER OF EXORCISMS COMPLETED - 0

HAROLD

Do not vomit.

LOU

I'm gonna. There's brain. Do you see it? Brain!

HAROLD

Control yourself, Louise.

LOU

Okay. You're right. Sorry. Gotta be profesh.

Lou takes a DEEP BREATH. She confidently approaches Joan.

LOU (CONT'D)

Hiii! I'm Lou, I'll be your exorcist today. A bit about me: this is my first exorcism so it's *kind of* a big deal and-

Harold loudly CLEARS HIS THROAT.

LOU (CONT'D)

Dad! What? I'm exorcising!

HAROLD

You're chattering.

LOU

Okay ignore him, this is just between us, lady and possessee - oh my gosh you are possessed, right?

Joan opens her mouth, the sound of SCREECHING BABIES emanating from it as her head SLOWLY SPINS IN A CIRCLE.

LOU (CONT'D)

Sweet! I mean you've definitely got that whole "corpse being controlled by a demon" vibe going on, but it never hurts to check.

Joan studies Lou curiously. When she speaks it is in a DEEP, MENACING GROWL. The movement of her lips never quite matches up with her voice.

JOAN

You are very happy. I shall make you cry.

LOU
 You can try! But fair warning I
 have a very stiff upper lip.

JOAN
 Your appearance is whorish.

LOU
 (stung)
 Okay.

Lou bites her lip, holding back tears. Joan LAUGHS LOUDLY.

JOAN
 I have succeeded.

LOU
 (fighting back tears)
 Have not! It's just, like, ashy in
 here. From all the cremations.

Lou runs a finger under her eye and shows it to Joan.

LOU (CONT'D)
 See? Dead people in my eye.

HAROLD
 Just do the exorcism, Louise.

LOU
 But she's being a jerk!

HAROLD
 The beast will behave much worse if
 you don't expel it!

LOU
 Okay chill!

Lou digs through her fanny pack. Various religious items
 (vials of holy water, rosaries, etc.) fall out.

HAROLD
 I told you that pack was a mistake.

LOU
 But Mom made it for me!

JOAN
 Whorish creature has a mother?
 (gentle woman's voice)
 This body...it...I had a mother
 once. Evelyn. She was so beautiful.

Tears fill Joan's eyes. She reaches a hand out to Lou.

JOAN (CONT'D)
 (terrified)
 My soul. I can feel the demon
 shattering it. Please save me.

LOU
 Aw sad lady-

Lou reaches for Joan's hand.

HAROLD
Don't!

But it's too late - Lou's taken Joan's hand. Lou's jaw drops open, EYES GLOWING YELLOW.

Joan unhinges her jaw with a CRACK. A BEAM OF WHITE LIGHT flows out of Lou's mouth, transforming into an OILY BLACK MIST as Joan gulps it down.

Harold swings a LARGE CROSS out of a leather holster at his side, brandishing it in Joan's face.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
 (in Latin)
*Ad quos eieci te de terra hac in
 nomine mali spiritus Dei.*

Joan starts SHAKING, eyes rolling around in her head.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
*Ad quos eieci te de terra hac in
 nomine mali spiritus Dei.*

Joan points her mouth at Harold, SEVERING HER CONNECTION with Lou. Lou drops to the floor, UNCONSCIOUS.

Joan sends a JET OF BLACK MIST at Harold, who DUCKS and ROLLS behind a row of coffins.

Joan stands, knees BENDING BACKWARDS in a horrible SYMPHONY OF CREAKS. She STALKS toward the coffins, but STOPS at a sudden RUSTLE behind her.

Joan SNAPS HER HEAD AROUND to see...nothing. She slowly turns back and Harold appears as though out of thin air, THRUSTING A CROSS OVER JOAN'S HEART.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
*Ad quos eieci te de terra hac in
 nomine mali spiritus Dei!*

Joan's head jerks up at the ceiling, body rigid, mouth frozen in a SOUNDLESS SCREAM.

Harold slowly WRENCHES the cross from her body with all his might. As he tugs a GRAY HORNED SHADOW emerges from Joan's chest, connected to the tip of the cross.

The Shadow finally disconnects from her body. It YIPS in pain, struggling to break free from the cross's hold.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Et mittam te!!!

Harold THRUSTS the cross up at the ceiling. The Shadow gives a last pitiful SCREECH before EXPLODING, ash raining down in its wake.

Joan's body collapses to the ground.

COMPLETE SILENCE, then-

Lou bolts upright as though nothing happened.

LOU

Did I do it?

Harold, completely unfazed after his battle, shakes his head in disappointment. He exits.

LOU (CONT'D)

Aw man.

Lou dejectedly shoves her fallen exorcist equipment back into her fanny pack. She stands and pats herself on the shoulder.

LOU (CONT'D)

(to self)

It's okay, buddy. You'll get 'em next time.

We finally see what's bedazzled on Lou's fanny pack in bright yellow letters: "YOU ARE THE BESTORCIST." The image fades until only "THE BESTORCIST" remains. On these words we

END TEASER

INT. TOBIN HOUSE - ENTRANCE - DAY

Lou BURSTS through the front door in excitement.

LOU

Mom! Guess who exorcised a demon today?

INT. TOBIN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A standard living room save for a LARGE CORKBOARD set up next to the TV. A sign reading "EXORCISM ASSIGNMENTS" dangles from the board's top, with an array of MULTI-COLORED NOTECARDS arranged below it.

Harold lopes in after Louise.

LOU

Mom?

HAROLD

(exhausted)

Louise...

LOU

What? Mom loves first exorcism stories. She always brags about her first time!

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK)**SUPER: 30 YEARS AGO**

YOUNG HAROLD, 20s, rushes down the dark, torch-lit hall brandishing a LARGE CROSS. He wears the exact same outfit from the teaser, a roguish grin plastered on his face.

INT. CONVENT - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Young Harold crashes through heavy oak double doors. The bodies of DEAD NUNS litter the room.

Only two nuns remain standing: DEMON SISTER BEATRICE, 50s, FIRE SPARKING from her fingertips, and

YOUNG MARY ANNE, 18. Despite being covered in blood, it's impossible to deny her innocence and pure beauty. She holds a HEAVY SWORD loosely at her side, clearly running out of gas.

Sister Beatrice cups her hands, a BALL OF FIRE forming between them. She aims at Young Mary Anne, ready for the kill.

Young Harold moves to intervene, cross held aloft, when

Young Mary Anne, with a strength seemingly impossible for a woman of her size, RAISES THE SWORD over her head. She lets out a MIGHTY ROAR and CHARGES at Demon Sister Beatrice.

Young Mary Anne swings the sword. It pulses a BRIGHT, HOLY WHITE before slicing through Demon Sister Beatrice's neck. Her head FLIES off her body, landing with a PLOP among the dead nuns.

The decapitated body CRUMBLES INTO ASH. The SMOKY SILHOUETTE of a SICKLY YELLOW HORNED DEMON, AZUZUL (more on him in future episodes), rises from the ashes.

It hovers in front of Young Mary Anne before FLYING through a wall. An UNEARTHLY SCREECH echoes in its wake.

Young Mary Anne drops the sword, completely drained. A beat as she studies the carnage.

YOUNG HAROLD

Wow.

Young Mary Anne whips around, finally spotting Young Harold.

They hold gazes for a beat. Without warning they SPRINT at each other, coming together in a PASSIONATE KISS.

END FLASHBACK

INT. TOBIN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - PRESENT DAY

MARY ANNE, now in her late 40s, stands in the doorway with a smile. Though she's put on a few miles, her inherent goodness still shines through.

SUPER: MARY ANNE TOBIN (NEE HIGGINS), NUMBER OF EXORCISMS COMPLETED - 577

MARY ANNE

As the saying goes: 29 holy sisters
lost is a husband gained.

(to Lou)

How did it go?!

LOU

I poofed the h outta that demon.

(off Harold's look)

(MORE)

LOU (CONT'D)

Okay *technically* Dad did the
poofing, but I 100 percent helped!
So get the notecards out, 'cause
I'm ready for my first assignment!

Lou points to the board. We get a closer look to see a row of
cards with NAMES written on them (HAROLD, MARY ANNE, P TRISH,
etc.), a column of dates, locations, and times below each.

A lone card reading LOU is stuck to the edge of the board.
There are no assignments beneath it.

Mary Anne excitedly grabs a pile of notecards.

HAROLD

No. No notecards.

MARY ANNE

Ooh, are we finally switching to
Post-Its? So much easier.

HAROLD

She's not getting any assignments,
Mary Anne. Our daughter almost got
her soul sucked out.

MARY ANNE

Oh, sweetie...

LOU

Almost. I'm totally fine.

HAROLD

Because I intervened. If I hadn't
been there you would be nothing but
a soulless sack of bones.

MARY ANNE

He's right, darling. Like bone soup
in a person suit.

LOU

Well I love bone broth so that
actually sounds kind of nice.

MARY ANNE

Bone broth *is* good for colds-

HAROLD

Enough! Louise, you are not mature
enough to handle exorcisms on your
own.

LOU

That's not true! I'm very mature. Remember that time Mom walked in on me m-ing to pictures of the Jonas Brothers?

MARY ANNE

You're 25, honey. Just say "masturbate."

LOU

No thank you. Anyway Mom said it made her feel really uncomfortable to know I was m-ing in the same house as you guys so I stopped m-ing. Like I just don't m now. Even though I live in my own house. If that's not a sign of maturity then I don't know what is.

HAROLD

I've made my decision. You will receive a mentor until I believe you're fit to navigate the field alone.

LOU

But I thought you were my mentor?

HAROLD

Clearly that isn't working out. From now on you will be supervised by cousin P Trish.

Harold RIPS Lou's notecard off the board. Lou GASPS.

LOU

Not cool, Dad! You're treating me like a baby. Claire never had a mentor and now I have two?

Mary Anne blesses herself. Harold rounds on Lou, furious.

HAROLD

Your sister was a prodigy! On track to be the family's finest exorcist before her untimely demise.

LOU

Claire disappeared. We don't know she's dead.

MARY ANNE

It's been seven months, sweetheart.

LOU

But she was on a mission in the Amazon. Like maybe Claire did some exorcisms then on her way to the airport found an injured sloth so she decided to just stay with the local villagers until she could nurse it back to health. I hear that happens a lot.

MARY ANNE

...It's possible. Right, Harold?

A beat as Harold and Mary Anne silently communicate. Harold finally shakes his head.

HAROLD

I will not indulge this fantasy.

He exits. Lou stares after Harold, defeated. Mary Anne gives her a weak smile.

MARY ANNE

Know what you need? A snack!
Fighting demons is hungry work. How about it?

LOU

Yeah, okay. I'm just, uh, gonna go through my inventory really quick.
(points to her fanny pack)
You know, make sure I didn't leave anything behind.

MARY ANNE

That's my little exorcist.

Mary Anne kisses Lou on the head before exiting.

Lou quietly unzips her pack. She sneaks a look around before grabbing one of P Trish's assignment notecards. She shoves it in her pack, quickly zips it, then follows Mary Anne.

EXT. TOBIN HOUSE - DAY

Lou hugs Mary Anne on the porch. Lou walks to her BEAT-UP BUBBLEGUM PINK VW BUG. Harold watches her from an upstairs window.