

BRIMSTONE
"Hellbent"
By Derek Saul

TEASER

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Not the ordinarily calm scene typically associated with a church at night.

Police are everywhere. Uniformed cops. SWAT team officers in headmasks and combat gear, armed with assault rifles and submachine guns, awaiting orders.

Catholic images and holy statues look on with stony glares from their pulpits. St. Joseph at one end of the church. The Virgin Mary at the other end. And the cruciform Christ, just above the altar, head tilted to one side, face etched in perpetual agony. The humidity in the air makes his eyes appear as if they are weeping, drops of condensation slowly trailing from the corners of his eyes.

DETECTIVE WILLIAM KANE bursts through the entrance doors, marches in with a purposeful stride. Several officers seem to have been expecting him, one tossing him a bulletproof vest, another handing him a fully loaded Beretta pistol.

Kane takes the gun just as he's done slipping himself into the vest, cocking back the hammer. Loads a bullet into the chamber. All without breaking his stride.

He spots the central crowd gathered near the confessionals -- a couple of UNIFORMED OFFICERS, LT. GWYNN, commander of the SWAT team, and FATHER DALTRY, a bald middle-aged priest with glasses.

Kane calls out before he even reaches the group.

KANE
So what's the story?

Lt. Gwynn motions to the priest standing beside him.

GWYNN
Detective Kane, this is Father
Daltry.

They shake hands.

KANE
Any word yet on the hostage?

GWYNN

Suspect assured us just a few minutes ago he's still alive.

KANE

Is he a priest with this church?

FATHER DALTRY

Yes. Father Cletus Horn. He's been head of this parish for thirteen years. He's also --

KANE

-- blind.

Father Daltry looks at Kane, somewhat stunned.

FATHER DALTRY

Yes. How--?

KANE

I just... know him.

GWYNN

We don't know how long the suspect's been in the church.

FATHER DALTRY

Father Horn was working in the confessional tonight. This man came in, I don't know what time, or how long he was in the booth with Father Horn. But I started hearing loud shouting and struggling noises.

GWYNN

The Father believes the suspect dragged the hostage across the floor here through that narrow hallway --

(points)

-- and into the study, where he's holding him now.

KANE

(to Father Daltry)

Did you get a look at the suspect at all?

FATHER DALTRY

I caught a very quick glimpse just as they slipped into the study. Very ragged-looking. Dark clothes. A long coat, I believe. He could be one of the homeless who come seeking shelter here on occasion.

KANE

Was he armed? Did you happen to see any kind of weapon on him?

FATHER DALTRY

I don't know.

Gwynn raises his rifle, anxious. Looks at Kane.

GWYNN

How do we do this, sir?

Kane looks at Gwynn, then at Father Daltry. His mind is racing.

FATHER DALTRY

Detective...

Kane spins, looks at the priest.

FATHER DALTRY (CONT'D)

...I've met many people during my years and travels as a man of God. Father Horn is the most devoted person I've ever met.

(pause)

Please, look after him.

Kane nods, takes this in. He stands up straight, breathes in deeply.

KANE

Lieutenant Gwynn, have your guys on stand-by.

(pause)

I'm going in.

GWYNN

(dumfounded)

What?! Alone?

KANE

Keep your radio handy. If things get tricky, I'll send you a coded

signal. Five of your boys will storm in then, and only then. Have two sharpshooters positioned at the north and south ends of the church.

Kane begins moving toward the hallway. Gwynn is right on his heels.

GWYNN

Sir, I really don't agree this is the proper course of action --

Kane stops walking, turns around, looks Gwynn in the eyes.

KANE

You heard me, lieutenant. Stand by.

Kane turns back around, resumes his march. Gwynn watches him go, pissed off.

INT. HALLWAY

Kane is moving very slowly and cautiously down the corridor, his back against the wall, gun gripped tight in both hands. Voices are growing louder as he approaches the study.

He comes to the door, positions himself right beside it, back still to the wall. The door is slightly ajar. Low murmurs are heard coming from the other side.

Then, a sharp clear voice calls out from behind the door.

VOICE (O.S.)

Who's there?

Kane raises his gun, his grip tightening.

KANE

Father Horn, are you all right?

VOICE (O.S.)

The priest is fine, detective.

(pause)

Come in. We've been expecting you.

Kane takes a step, tilts his head slightly forward, attempting to gain a peek inside the door. Can't see a thing.

He throws his back up against the wall one last time, inhales deeply, then charges in, gun first.

INT. STUDY CHAMBER

Kane kicks the door all the way open, the door slamming hard against the side wall. His knuckles are white from the ferocious grip on his gun. Beads of sweat taint his forehead.

Directly in the center of the room, FATHER HORN is seated on a chair, hands on his lap, looking in the general direction of Kane. Standing behind him, the suspect, more or less as Father Daltry had described him -- ragged-looking, dark long coat, possibly a DERELICT, with long ruffled hair and a beard. His hands are resting on Father Horn's shoulders, his right hand lightly holding a KNIFE. Derelict is smiling.

DERELICT

How good of you to join us,
detective.

He gestures toward an empty chair beside Kane.

DERELICT (CONT'D)

Please, won't you have a seat?

Kane doesn't budge a muscle.

KANE

Father Horn, are you all right?

Father Horn raises his head slightly upon hearing this familiar voice.

FATHER HORN

Detective Kane. I'm all right.

Derelict's smile widens.

DERELICT

Detective Kane...

He says the name as if coming to some sort of realization.

KANE

Drop the knife and step away from
the Father.

DERELICT

I sense we are the same,
detective... you and I...

KANE

I said drop it!

DERELICT

Father Horn here, he is a man of
the cloth, a man of God. We've
made our sacrifices to the Lord...

He pauses, stares blankly into the air, as if sifting through
forgotten memories.

DERELICT (CONT'D)

...but the places I've been, the
things I've seen... would make God
Himself shudder...

Kane realizes he's dealing with a disturbed mind. He tries a
different approach.

KANE

What's your name?

Derelict snaps out of his brief flashback, looks again at
Kane.

DERELICT

Name? Names are not of any
significance now. The only thing
left for me to finish is the
mission.

KANE

What mission?

DERELICT

The mission, Detective Kane, to
claim my place in God's kingdom,
to win his undying acceptance...

Kane doesn't like where this exchange is headed. He attempts
a sympathetic tone.

KANE

Look, we all want to be accepted.
We all want to believe that,
beyond this surface -- this
material surface -- God is waiting
for us...

DERELICT

(enraged)

THEN WHY DID HE SEND ME TO HELL?!

Kane freezes as he hears these words, his veins cold, his eyes wide.

DERELICT

Why was I rejected? Why did He
turn His face away from my
embrace? Was my sacrifice not
good enough for Him?

Kane remains frozen, his gun still pointed at Derelict, unable to fathom any comforting, sympathetic words.

Derelict raises his knife, teasing Father Horn's throat with it.

DERELICT (CONT'D)

Now, when He sees the sacrifice I
will make tonight, He will be
pleased with my offer, and He will
welcome me into His arms as a
son... the way it's always been
meant to be... and the aeons spent
in solitude, tortured by His
hollow absence, will be washed
away by His absolution.

Derelict grabs Father Horn by the jaw, spins his head, exposing his throat, leaning in with the knife.

KANE

NOOOOOOOO!!!

Kane opens up on Derelict, pumping three rapid-fire bullets into his chest.

Derelict falls backward, the knife flying out of his hand. He tumbles back into a couple of chairs and a pile of books, landing on his back.

Then... silence.

Kane rushes toward Father Horn, crouching down, examining his throat for injuries.

KANE

Are you okay, Father?

FATHER HORN

I think so.

Kane helps him up off the chair.

KANE

Why don't you head back to the others. I'll get the squad in here, have this area sealed off --

And then Kane is JUMPED FROM BEHIND by Derelict, the both of them plowing into Father Horn, knocking the priest to the floor.

Derelict's arms maintain their iron grip around Kane's head, tossing him back and forth across the room, crashing into the desks and chairs and bookshelves.

Father Horn begins feeling his way across the floor, crawling toward the door as the two men continue their clumsy rampage across the room.

Kane blindly lets off two shots from his pistol, his other hand trying to get a grip on his assailant. Derelict brings his fist down hard on Kane's wrist, knocking the gun away.

Finally Derelict grabs Kane by the collar of his bulletproof vest and throws the detective effortlessly into another bookshelf.

Wood shatters and hardcover books rain down on Kane as he crumbles to the floor. Derelict grabs Kane again by the collar and hoists him up from the ground, roughing him up against the wall. He leans in, almost nose to nose.

DERELICT

Why do you fight me, Detective Kane? Can't you see... you and I... we are the same person...

He pulls out ANOTHER KNIFE from inside his coat.

DERELICT (CONT'D)

We are both seeking absolution...

Kane suddenly delivers a punishing headbutt, shattering Derelict's nose. The knife slips from his hand as he falls back to the ground.

Kane dives on him, the both of them rolling across the floor, end over end, Kane finally ending up on top, effectively pinning him to the ground.

Derelict spots the knife nearby. His hand lashes out with lightning speed, grabs the knife, lunges toward the detective.

But Kane grabs Derelict's wrist, holding the knife back. They struggle, their arms shaking.

DERELICT

Kill me, Detective Kane, and you will know my wrath.

He twists the knife closer to Kane's side. But Kane lands a crushing elbow into the Derelict's chest -- where the three bullets are lodged in -- overpowering him.

Kane locks onto Derelict's hand holding the knife, and PLUNGES IT INTO HIS ABDOMEN, slicing it down all the way to the handle.

Then, Derelict's head pulls back, his eyes rolling up into their sockets, exposing only the whites of his eyes. His mouth opens, unleashing a blood-curdling SHRIEK... a deafening cry seemingly from the bowels of the abyss.

Father Horn lies by the door, shielding his ears from the agonizing scream.

Then, a BLUE MIST begins forming from the sockets of Derelict's eyes, rising into the air... DRIFTING STRAIGHT INTO KANE'S OWN HORRIFIED EYES.

The mist enters his sockets, floating deeply in. The strange ether finally completes its release from Derelict's lifeless eyes and its entrance into Kane's.

Kane slides off the body of Derelict, covering his own eyes as if he'd been sprayed with mace. Tears trickle through his clenched fingers, tinged with drops of blood.

Father Horn lifts himself off the ground, using the doorknob for support. He trudges his way toward Kane.

FATHER HORN

Detective Kane, are you all right?

KANE

Yeah...

He wipes his eyes, sniffing, getting up from the floor, dusting himself off.

KANE (CONT'D)

Yeah, I'm all right...

(pause)

I think the situation here is pretty much under control. Why don't you get back to the others.

Father Horn lays a hand on Kane's shoulder.

FATHER HORN
(sincerely)
Are you sure you're all right?

KANE
(looks at Father Horn)
I'm fine, Father.
(pause)
Really.

Father Horn offers him a half-smile, then turns, starts heading slowly out the door. Kane watches the priest go.

Suddenly, the skin on the back of Kane's neck BECOMES INFLAMED, just underneath his hair -- heating up, red and scorching, smoke pouring out.

But Kane is unfazed, standing there without reaction.

The smoke clears, and the skin is now etched with a small black RUNIC TATTOO.

For a split second, Kane's eyes flash a red, fiery color.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

TIGHT ON a pair of running shoes sprinting on the wet pavement.

A WIDER SHOT reveals those running shoes belonging to KYLE, a fast, street-smart kid (late teens, early 20s), with spiky blond hair and a leather jacket. He's barreling down the street, pushing beyond his limits. He takes frequent glances over his shoulder. Someone is after him, and the fear in his eyes is evident.

ANGLE ON EZEKIEL STONE, giving chase a few yards behind Kyle, his tattered grey trenchcoat flapping behind him, running at almost inhuman speed, but unlike Kyle, Stone's face shows no signs of wearing down.

Kyle fast approaches the intersection, disappears around the corner toward the next street.

KYLE'S POV

A few yards ahead, a crowd of people are milling around outside a nightclub, waiting to gain entrance.

BACK TO SCENE

Kyle races toward the throng of clubgoers, immersing himself among them.

Stone rounds the street corner, jogs to a halt.

STONE'S POV

We see the crowd up ahead. No sign of Kyle.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

A long, dark alleyway between two buildings. A high chain-link fence bars the other end of the alley. Kyle comes running in from the street.

He peers behind him over his shoulder once again, slows down his pace. Satisfied that he's lost his pursuer, he throws his back up against the brick wall of the alley, catching his breath. He's panting heavily, his brow drenched in sweat.

Suitably rested, he heaves himself off the wall and continues calmly down the alley toward the chain-link fence.

STONE SUDDENLY LEAPS FROM THE SHADOWS, with such velocity he almost appears as a blur. He slams hard into Kyle and flings the shocked kid into a fence.

Kyle bounces violently off the fence and tumbles into a pile of trash cans. Stone grabs him again by the collar of his jacket and roughs him up against the fence.

KYLE

Get the fuck off me!

STONE

Party days are over, Kyle.

KYLE

I didn't do nuthin'!

STONE

That's original. Word on the street is you've been handing out hefty paydays to the junkheads on Absolution Street. Trying to round up an army or something.

KYLE

You best back off, pig. Shit's goin' down you ain't got no idea how to deal with.

STONE

Then why don't you fill me in.
(beat)
Where is she?

KYLE

Man, I don't know what the fuck you're talkin' about --

Stone slams him viciously against the fence.

STONE

(calmly)
Where is she?

KYLE

Pig...
(spits blood)
I don't know where the fuck she at. Last we saw her, she fell in with a bunch of bums uptown.

Stone stares at him, waiting for more.

KYLE (CONT'D)
I swear, that's all I know. I
ain't lyin'.

Stone maintains his grip on Kyle for a moment longer. Kyle smiles, his mouth bloodied.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Beware... the Devil is among
you...

Stone hangs on for another beat, then lets him go.

Kyle looks at Stone, still smiling. Then he breaks into uproarious laughter, starts running back up the alley toward the street.

Stone stands there alone in the dark alley, watching him go, till we hear:

VOICE (O.S.)
Well, he is right about one
thing...

Stone spins around.

THE DEVIL steps out from the shadows, dressed in prim and proper corporate attire.

DEVIL
...I am among you.

Stone turns away, irritated.

STONE
You've got quite a flair for
timing.

DEVIL
Well, I didn't want to interrupt
your performance with -- Kyle, was
it?

Stone starts walking back up the alley. The Devil follows along casually.

DEVIL (CONT'D)
But maybe you should stop
scratching the surface and start
attacking the root, don't you
think, detective? Your little
goose chases with these minor
characters are throwing you off

kilter somewhat, hmm? Losing sight of your main objective here.

STONE

I know my job.

DEVIL

Then do it. You've been on the DL for a while now. Get your priorities straight and remember your goal.

STONE

I'm focused. These "minor characters" are cooking up something major and I know Ash is involved.

DEVIL

Don't you mean "Ashur Badaktu"?

Stone stops walking, turns around to face the Devil.

DEVIL (CONT'D)

When the time comes, Mr. Stone, you will get your chance to confront her, but until then, stop wasting time paddling after her sidekicks and hunt down the other damned souls.

STONE

She'll lead me to them.

The Devil takes a step closer to Stone, looks him in the eyes.

DEVIL

It's not easy to fall out of love, is it... Ezekiel? And what about your wife, Rosalyn? The one you're doing all this for? What would she think about your feelings toward this... other woman? What would she think -- knowing you went to Hell because of her? Because you killed the man that raped her? And then finding out that everything you did for her... was for nothing... everything you did would lead you into another woman's arms?

Stone lowers his head a moment, as if in shame, then suddenly POUNCES on the Devil, slams him against the brick wall, gripping the lapels of his suit jacket.

STONE

Get the fuck away from me.

The Devil smiles, with no trace of guilt or remorse, then drives his knee up into Stone's abdomen, kicking the wind out of him, then swings a backhanded fist up Stone's jaw, knocking him down to one knee.

DEVIL

(furiously)

Get to work.

Stone stays bent on the ground for a beat, wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, then SWINGS HIS FIST UP in a lightning-quick arc.

But his fist passes through thin air.

Stone lifts himself to his feet, looks around him.

WIDE SHOT: Stone stands alone in the dark alley. The Devil is gone. Vanished.

CUT TO:

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Dark. Crowded. Strobe lights flash incessantly. "ISOLATED" by SKRAPE is pounding ferociously through the speakers.

ELIXIR enters the club. Early 20s. Straight black hair with purple streaks. Dark lipstick. Pale skin. Leather longcoat. The atypical goth girl.

She moves her way through the crowd of sweat-soaked bodies on the dance floor. Approaches the bar.

ELIXIR

(to bartender, over the music)

I'm looking for Ash.

The bartender says nothing. Simply points toward a back door.

INT. CLUB - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

A small cozy room. Dimly lit. A few sofas and duvets.

Elixir enters, closes the door shut behind her. We can still hear the pounding bass reverberating through the walls.

ELIXIR'S POV

A figure sits on a red sofa at the other end of the room. Dark. Shapely. A silhouette. But the green eyes are unmistakable.

BACK TO SCENE

ASH
Welcome, Elixir. Come. Sit down.

Elixir moves toward the sofa. Slowly. Sits beside Ash.

ELIXIR
You wanted to see me?

ASH
Yes.
(smiles)
Alexandria Gray. In the late eighteenth century, you were the most seductive and sought-after prostitute in London... up until your death in 1793, when it was discovered that you murdered fourteen of your male "tricks". They called you "Elixir" because you drank the blood of your male victims. You believed the blood of men would bestow you with the power of the gods.

Elixir smiles, nervously.

Ash notices. She slides closer to Elixir, their bodies touching.

ASH (CONT'D)
How does it taste? Human blood...?

ELIXIR
Salty. Warm. But never satisfying. There's pleasure, but there's pain... pain for more... always...

Ash moves her lips dangerously close to Elixir's. Strokes her face.

Elixir closes her eyes. Feels her breath. Loses herself in Ash's touch.

ASH
(whispering)
The smell is still strong on your
breath... on your lips...
(inches closer)
...but the taste eludes me... the
taste of the gods...

Their lips touch, but they don't kiss. Ash slowly pulls back. Opens her eyes.

ASH (CONT'D)
Do you still want to feel the
power of the gods?

ELIXIR
Yes...

ASH
I have an assignment for you.
Very simple, for someone of
your... talents.
(beat)
A man is out there, somewhere. A
bounty hunter from the abyss, sent
by Lucifer himself to find us, to
put an end to our cause. He must
not succeed.
(beat)
His name is Stone. Ezekiel Stone.
Find him... and kill him.

ELIXIR
His blood is mine, Queen Badaktu.

Ash stares into Elixir's eyes. Smiles.

Her green eyes glow.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE