

BRIMSTONE  
"Stations Of The Cross"  
By Derek Saul

TEASER

EXT. A FOREST SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE L.A. - EARLY MORNING

YOUNG KIDS, not more than 10 years old, are trudging and playfully shoving their way through the trees and thick shrubs. A WIDER SHOT reveals they are a large group, maybe 30 kids.

Among the group we see TWO ADULTS, one male, one female. The female, JULIE (32), is trying to contain the wily and excited children. The male, OWEN (35), is dressed in a Forest Ranger uniform.

JULIE  
Alright, kids, settle down. That's enough.

A few kids at the head of the group begin to RUN OFF ahead of the others. Julie notices.

JULIE  
Tommy! Mitch! Get back here right now!

TOMMY  
But Ms. O'Connor, we saw some deers up there...

JULIE  
Now, Tommy. You too, Mitch. Come on.

The kids grudgingly walk back toward the rest of the group.

Julie sighs, turns to Owen walking beside her, offers him an apologetic smile.

JULIE  
I'm so sorry about this, Owen.

OWEN  
(chuckles)  
It's no problem. You know how kids get on field trips. All restless and excited.

JULIE

I know, but they should be learning something too.

OWEN

Oh don't worry. The Memorial Village should be just up ahead, at the next clearing. We'll get them hiking on the academic path soon enough.

ANGLE ON TWO KIDS, RICK AND TIMMY, walking somewhere in the middle of the group.

TIMMY

My friend Marius says this forest is cursed.

RICK

Your friend Marius says everything is cursed.

TIMMY

Yeah, but I think he's right this time.

RICK

You think he's right every time.

TIMMY

But now he knows. He says that when the sun goes down, the trees come to life, and anyone walking in the forest at night is attacked by the trees and ripped apart.

RICK

How does he know?

TIMMY

He said someone he knows came here one night, and he never came back. They found him a week later with his arms and legs torn off.

RICK

Your friend is nuts, Timmy. He's just trying to scare you.

TIMMY

But it's true.

ANGLE ON JULIE AND OWEN

OWEN

So how long have you been teaching  
at Jefferson Elementary?

JULIE

Oh, been going on five years now.

OWEN

Do you enjoy your work, Ms.  
O'Connor?

JULIE

Julie.

Owen looks at her. They share a smile.

JULIE

Yes, I love my job. You know, most  
people might tell you that teaching  
is an unrewarding profession, but  
these people have never looked at a  
child's face when something  
connects with them for the first  
time. That in itself is the  
reward.

OWEN

I admire your dedication. Most  
people will just do something  
because they have to, but I can  
sense the passion in your words. I  
can tell that this is special to  
you.

They look at each other again. The beginning of something  
perhaps?

ANGLE ON RICK AND TIMMY

RICK

Well if it's true that this forest is  
cursed, then how come they didn't say  
anything about it on TV or the  
newspaper?

TIMMY

Because they don't want people to get  
worried and panic. You know, like  
the UFOs.

RICK

I don't believe anything until I see it on TV or in the newspaper.

TIMMY

Well if you're ever caught here at night and the trees attack you, don't expect me to help.

RICK

Fine. I don't need your help.

TIMMY

Good, 'cause I won't.

RICK

Good.

TIMMY

Good.

RICK

Shut up.

TIMMY

No, you shut up.

ANGLE ON JULIE AND OWEN

Ever the sharp teacher, Julie picks up on the scuffle between the two kids nearby.

JULIE

Timmy, what's going on over there?

TIMMY

(pointing at Rick)  
He started it, Ms. O'Connor.

RICK

No I didn't, you stupid idiot. You started it.

Julie is obviously fed up. She marches toward the two boys, plants herself in front of them. The rest of the group stops as well.

JULIE

That's enough. I don't care who started it. The point is, you stop it now. Now look, Mr. Carter was nice enough to be our guide today on this field trip, which you all

decided you wanted over a track and field day.

(turns to everyone)

Now show the proper respect and courtesy to Mr. Carter and myself by behaving yourselves. That goes for all of --

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)  
AAAAAAHHHHHH!!!!

Julie spins toward the LITTLE GIRL who is shrieking and pointing her finger OFFSCREEN. Julie follows her gaze offscreen, as does the rest of the group. Upon resting their eyes on what the Little Girl sees, several more of the kids join her in shrieking. Some begin to RUN OFF in the opposite direction.

From JULIE'S POV, we see a CLEARING up ahead, where in the center of the clearing WE ALSO SEE --

A LARGE CROSS, erected high into the sky. Only the cross is NOT empty. We see the unmistakable shape of a MAN hung there, NAILED TO THE CROSS, long thick steel ingots driven through pieces of wood placed at the wrists and ankles. The man's body is TORN, spattered with SWEAT and DRIED BLOOD, STRIPPED OF CLOTHING save for a LOINCLOTH. He's wearing a CROWN OF THORNS on his head. But he hangs there, lifeless; unmoving.

Julie's feet have grown heavy with fear, unable to move or tear her gaze away. She can no longer contain the children, who are scattered and cluttered together and whimpering.

OWEN races up next to her, and looks at the cross before them, his mouth open in awe, his eyes wide with horror.

OWEN

Oh God...

OFF A HAUNTING SHOT of the CROSS silhouetted against the morning sun, we --

END TEASER

## ACT ONE

EXT. THE FOREST - LATER THAT MORNING

The area has become a crime scene. Cordoned off with yellow CAUTION TAPE. Buzzing with POLICE OFFICERS, MEDICAL EXAMINERS, MEDIA REPORTERS.

The sky has DARKENED considerably as well, grey and heavily clouded over.

The CROSS still stands, EMPTY now. The body has been removed. But the wood is still stained with BLOOD.

A FEW YARDS AWAY from the scene, STONE stands there, hands in his trenchcoat pockets, watching things unfold with a blank expression.

STONE'S POV

Julie, Owen and a few of the kids are off in the distance, being questioned by police.

BACK TO SCENE

Stone continues to survey the surrounding area, spotting one of the FORENSICS EXAMINERS nearby, crouched low, scouring the ground intensely. We only see him FROM THE BACK.

Stone watches him curiously. This examiner seems to be alone, separated from the rest of his co-workers.

Stone takes a step forward.

STONE

Excuse me.

Forensics Examiner continues his work. He seems to not have heard.

STONE

(louder)

I was wondering if I could ask you a few questions.

FORENSIC EXAMINER

I'm afraid I won't be of much help to you, detective...

Examiner turns around. It's THE DEVIL.

DEVIL  
...I just work here.

Stone rolls his eyes, irritated as usual by his employer's presence.

STONE  
(off his disguise)  
Clever. So did you find any clues?

DEVIL  
None you'd be interested in.

The Devil stands up, approaches Stone.

DEVIL  
Finally showing some initiative, eh Mr. Stone? Managed to drag your lazy ass to a possible crime scene before I've had a chance to nudge you in the back. I must say, I'm impressed. Maybe now you'll realize that sometimes all it takes is switching on your TV to the local news. What made you think that this particular homicide was worthy of your investigation?

STONE  
Oh I don't know. A person is found crucified on Good Friday. Seemed a little suspicious to me.

DEVIL  
Don't get so overcocky, "Zeke".

STONE  
This coming from the guy who decided to take God on?

DEVIL  
And look where it got me.

STONE  
(exhausted)  
Alright, if I hit the bullseye at this crime scene, then what the hell are you doing here wasting my time?

DEVIL  
I'm here to send you a warning.

STONE

What warning?

DEVIL

Tell me something, detective: How's your faith these days?

STONE

Right now, it's not so hot.

(laughs)

Why? Are you gonna make me a believer?

DEVIL

I wouldn't dream of it. In fact, I applaud your lack of spiritual direction. And it further proves that I'm doing my job... and in this case, even saving lives.

STONE

What do you mean?

DEVIL

Beware, Mr. Stone. This will be a dark day for believers.

POOF! The Devil VANISHES.

For a moment, Stone contemplates what was just said, then...

STONE

Crazy bastard.